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**The Electoral
Knowledge Network**

The ACE Encyclopaedia: Civic and Voter Education

This is an introduction to civic education and to voter education, a popular but more limited component of civic education. It explores possibilities and constraints of civic education as a way to secure democracy in varying political contexts. It explains some of the terminologies used around the world and the institutional environments that are most effective. It offers the civic educator a comprehensive toolbox for establishing and implementing a programme. Guidance is given on various techniques, methods and materials, and sections deal with financing, monitoring, evaluating and institutionalizing programmes.



THE ACE ELECTORAL NETWORK AND THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA

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The ACE Encyclopaedia is comprised of 13 topic areas that cover key steps of the electoral cycle in depth. (This series presents each of these topic areas in print.)

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1. Introduction

The link between education and civic life was made by Aristotle:

“But the greatest of all the means ... to secure the stability of constitutions ... is a system of education suited to the Constitutions” (Politics V vii 20).

The topic area takes for granted that the educational endeavour is intended to promote and sustain democracy. It is possible to contemplate a civic education project which intends merely to sustain a civility entrenched in a civilised but essentially static and aloof aristocracy – the context within which the term emerged, first in Rome and then in pre-Elizabethan urban England.

This is an introduction to civic education and to voter education, a popular but more limited component of civic education. It explores possibilities and constraints of civic education as a way to secure democracy in varying political contexts. It explains some of the terminologies used around the world and the institutional environments that are most effective. It offers the civic educator a comprehensive toolbox for establishing and implementing a programme. Guidance is given on various techniques, methods and materials, and sections deal with financing, monitoring, evaluating and institutionalizing programmes.

The topic area considers civic education and then, where appropriate, the more specific voter education programmes which are necessary for election preparation. Election management authorities who have the broad civic education mandate will find this discussed together with the more restrictive voter education or even voter information mandate which other election management bodies must perform. Most of the text is of general educational interest, unless it specifically refers to the more circumscribed tasks of voter education.

2. Overview of Civic and Voter Education

This topic area discusses ways that civic and voter education programmes can be conducted in different contexts. It is written to assist those who are tasked with designing, implementing, and evaluating education programmes. While the scope of this topic area has been greatly expanded by providing information about civic education, not all election administrators have such a wide mandate. Election administrators who require only an overview of the voter education enterprise should view the introductory sections.

The topic area covers seven steps that educators can use to develop relevant, cost-effective and educationally appropriate programmes.

These seven steps include:

1. understanding the educational enterprise



2. establishing the educational mandate
3. assessing the context in which the programme will take place
4. developing an appropriate strategy
5. designing and implementing the programme
6. monitoring and evaluating the programme and;
7. ensuring that best practices and lessons learned are retained for future programmes

Close attention is given to a variety of methods and aspects that have been used in other civic and voter education programmes. These may form part of the programme currently envisioned by the user. Examples are given along with suggestions for complementary activities. Comments on their effectiveness in different situations are also provided.

The methods discussed include the following:

- The Media
- Printed Materials
- Arts and Culture
- Face To Face Interaction
- Other Strategies, including information on the use of telephones and postal services
- Commercial Advertising
- Distance Learning Techniques

Terminology

Very often, there is a tendency to use the terms voter information, voter education and civic education interchangeably. There are, however, important distinctions. These deal with the timing, duration, and scope of the programme as well as the entities typically involved in their implementation. This topic area is primarily concerned with practical ideas about planning and implementing civic and voter education programmes. However, early sections discuss some of the perspectives and issues relating to these concepts and ways in which they might be employed to promote democracy.

3. Guiding Principles of Civic and Voter Education

Civic and voter education is implemented by a wide variety of organisations and individuals. It is supported and sponsored by election administrators; democratically elected governments through various state agencies and/or offices; constitutionally established bodies such as human rights commissions; and international, regional, and domestic civil society organisations.

Such education became increasingly important during the wave of democratisation that resulted in founding and transitional elections in Africa and Eastern Europe. This upsurge in democracy also evoked reconsideration of the importance of organised initiatives to protect and stimulate democracy in more-settled democracies.

All these efforts made use of the best available insights into communication, information, and education technologies and methodologies. Practice rather than prescription became the norm. As a result, the field is driven by a commitment to an informed and invigorated electorate rather than to a set of readily discernible principles. This has made it possible for each national election enterprise to reconsider the important themes, methods, educational practice, available resources, and domestic limitations that govern not only the general voter and civic education programmes that might repeat from one year to the next, but also the specific programme necessary for each election, referendum, or plebiscite.

The topic area draws examples from a variety of contexts, but these are only indicative. Each country must develop its own programme within the broad parameters of the universal commitment to free and fair elections.

Why Educate Voters?

Voter education takes place to assist the election administration in its task of delivering a free, fair, efficient and cost-effective election. It encompasses the basic voter information that every voter must have in order to arrive prepared at the voting station and vote on the set voting day(s). Voter education sensitise the electorate on the importance of participating in elections.

Voter education provides the background attitudes, behaviour, and knowledge amongst citizens that stimulate and consolidate democracy. During an election, this education will ensure effective organisation and activism by citizens in support of parties and/or causes, behaviour by citizens that is appropriate to a peaceful election, acceptance of the results, and tolerance of competition and opposition.

Education on its own cannot sustain democracy. However, education can protect democracy when citizens are supported in their activity by a responsive and democratic state. Indeed, an educated citizenry can even overcome inadequacies in administrative preparations for an election.

Who Should Conduct Voter Education?

A national voter education programme is a costly activity if it is the sole burden of the election management authority. It is best done by an alignment of all the available resources in a country, especially if the particular election is of great significance. The election management authority will select ways in which to achieve this alignment by introducing regulations, incentives, and information that only they can provide.

Some election management authorities have found it easier to organize and stimulate voter education programmes than to ensure that the contestants in an election participate vigorously and fairly. Voter education must be matched, however, by the development of a climate of election activity and a public debate about the issues and contestants. Election management authorities should encourage partisan activities to educate voters as well as the necessary non-partisan voter education programmes over which they preside.

A National Programme

Constructing a national programme requires attention to the detail of this topic area, and due consideration should be given to an assessment of the context within which an election is to take place (see [Assessing the Context](#)). Without this assessment, educators can find themselves slavishly following inappropriate examples or adapting inappropriate educational and



informational models. Education is a melding of content with appropriate media and methods. These methods are well documented in development and educational theory and there is no need to adopt, for example, models from established wealthy democracies in countries with fewer resources and a different culture.

Having established the context, educators must establish programme goals and objectives (see Constructing a Mandate and Educational Objectives). Election management authorities can be involved in this activity and will be able to use these goals and objectives to evaluate the success of any programme and the budgets that should be made available to it.

4. Context of Civic and Voter Education

History

Voter education has a tradition that is as long and as brief as the conduct of modern elections. Civic education, on the other hand, has antecedents in both the development of ancient democracy and state formation.

Universal education in the modern, democratic state was itself intended to promote and support democracy. Those waging campaigns for extension of the franchise also conducted public information and education programmes. The League of Women Voters in the United States, for example, retains a strong, non-partisan programme to ensure that voters make informed political choices.

Voter education has long been the domain of electoral management authorities. More recently, however, organisations active in educating and mobilizing voters, as well as broader issues of citizenship and democracy, have become more diversified. Today, those interested and involved in voter education come from a broad range of backgrounds.

Some may have a background in electoral administration. Others may have experience in civic education, public advocacy, conflict resolution, mass communication, training, or primary, secondary, advanced or adult education. Some may have worked extensively with special constituencies such as youth, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic or linguistic minorities, or women. Their backgrounds are likely to influence the approach, style, content and audience of the voter education programmes with which they are involved.

The discussion about differing approaches and the implications of this can be found in the general section Civic Education. The manner in which educators' differing backgrounds and values can impact voter education programmes can be found under Educator Values.

The context in which education is done

Social and political context within which an election or a referendum takes place has a fundamental impact on the voter education programme that supports it. Any voter education initiative will be heavily influenced by the history and socio-political environment within which it is planned and implemented.

There are methodologies that are generally relevant and the selection of which may be determined as much by educational goals and ideology as by local context. At the same time, however, there will be goals determined primarily by the context. This is especially true when the goals are closely linked to the political and electoral environment.

Unfortunately, not all voter education materials available for reference make explicit the circumstances under which they were developed. The inclusion of such information could make these materials more useful, and might even provoke the use of existing materials in similar contexts even if these are separated in time and geography.

Established Democracies

In established democracies that have traditions of periodic elections, there are considerable differences in approach to voter education. Both Australia and Canada have long-standing and substantial voter education programmes that run not only at the time of elections, but also throughout the year. In some European countries, voter education activities are conducted primarily by civil society organisations. In India, a vibrant and highly partisan political environment sustains interest in elections.

In the United States of America, voter education and mobilization is carried out by a variety of entities including state level election authorities, media outlets (for example MTV's Rock the Vote campaign), and a host of civil society organisations, special interest groups, professional associations and unions (including the AFL-CIO), and political parties. Some of these may be considered political or advocacy organisations rather than nonpartisan voter educators, but others have a proud history of registering and educating voters and of 'getting out the vote.'

Transitions to Democracy

A large number of countries have experienced the establishment of a democratic order for the first time, or a return to democracy after a period of autocratic rule. Invariably the first, or 'founding', election, has been characterized by substantial political mobilization. Due to substantial systemic, legal, and procedural changes that occur during founding elections and during the subsequent election cycles, voter education is extremely important. When the international community has been involved in supporting the transition, investments are often made in voter education and election administration.

This investment has come in the form of technical assistance, support to the election management authority and to domestic civil society organisations, and the sharing of materials and resources through training. In some cases this has resulted in the establishment of local institutions that are sustainable. But there are also circumstances where it has not been possible to sustain local institutions dedicated to educating voters and maintaining citizen participation.

Rebuilding Failed States and Establishing New States

The collapse of states as a result of their own conflicts, or the decision by leaders, citizens, and the international community to recognise new state boundaries, places particular burdens on those who must assist in the development of these states. In some cases, referenda have been held before new boundaries have been established, and subsequently there have been elections for new assemblies at national and local levels.



Typically, the international community has been involved in these processes with an integrated programme that includes voter and citizenship education. Inevitably, these must go hand in hand with building new institutions and protecting and encouraging of civil society. Apart from traditional voter education and information components, an integrated programme may also address leadership, tolerance, conflict resolution, and the principles of democracy.

General Lessons

Although expectations within the international community and locally have been high, the experience of the past decade has made it clear that voter education and broader democracy building activities require a long-term effort. This means the creation or enhancement of local capacity and the encouragement of regional support and complementarity.

For voter and civic education initiatives to be successful, they must be accompanied by the establishment of sustainable democratic institutions including viable political parties, functioning assemblies, a culture of good governance, constitutional protections backed by an independent judiciary, an impartial election authority capable of conducting periodic elections, and an effective state.

In such an environment, citizens can exercise their rights and can be educated in their roles and responsibilities, including participation in elections. In less conducive circumstances, other educational goals may be necessary.

5. Basic Ideas and Definitions of Voter Information, Voter Education and Civic Education

As suggested in the introductory sections of this topic area, some distinction needs to be made between voter education, voter information, and civic education. Certainly, each falls along a continuum of mutually reinforcing educational activities in support of elections and democracy and is mutually reinforcing. It would therefore be correct to assume that voter education, should be one component of a broader civic education programme.

But the terms are not necessarily interchangeable. They involve some nuanced differences in goals, audience, message, approach, timing, and/or institutional mandates. Briefly:

Basic Civic Education deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interests, the mass media, and the business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections. It emphasizes not only citizen awareness but citizen participation in all aspects of democratic society. Civic education is a continual process, not tied to the electoral cycle. Voter information and voter education, however, may be part of larger civic education endeavours. Civic education may be carried out through the school and university system, through civil society organisations, and perhaps by some state agencies, although not necessarily the election authority.

Basic Voter Information refers to basic information enabling qualified citizens to vote, including the date, time, and place of voting; the type of election; identification necessary to establish eligibility; registration requirements; and mechanisms for voting. These constitute basic facts about the election and do not require the explanation of concepts. Messages will be developed for each new election. These activities can usually be implemented quickly (although sufficient planning is still required). Election authorities are typically required to

provide this type of information, although contestants in the election and civil society organisations will also do so.

Basic Voter Education typically addresses voters' motivation and preparedness to participate fully in elections. It pertains to relatively more complex types of information about voting and the electoral process and is concerned with concepts such as the link between basic human rights and voting rights; the role, responsibilities and rights of voters; the relationship between elections and democracy and the conditions necessary for democratic elections; secrecy of the ballot; why each vote is important and its impact on public accountability; and how votes translate into seats. Such concepts involve explanation, not just a statement of facts. Voter education requires more lead time for implementation than voter information and, ideally, should be undertaken on an on-going basis. This type of information is most often provided by election authorities and civil society organizations.

In societies where there have been major changes to electoral systems, processes, and procedures, and in the case of the newly enfranchised and first time voters, both voter information and voter education programmes will need to thoroughly address both facts and concepts.

There are some common information and educational features. These are discussed in Common Features of Voter Information and Education

5.1 Meaning of democracy

Democracy is an exciting concept,. The increase in the number of states ascribing to democratic practice has signalled a different life for many who now live free from political oppression or authoritarian rule. It is a complex term for many, especially those in newer democracies. It takes a long time coming to grips with its practical meaning. There is a lot of information about democracy. The duty of educators is to clarify this information at the appropriate level to the learners. Democracy provides a very special challenge because it incorporates aspects of behaviour, skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as questions of politics and power.

The manner in which educators act and teach will influence people's understanding of democracy. As a result there is considerable discussion in the literature of a democratic educational methodology - valuing interaction, participation and individual contributions to debate and discovery of meaning.

There is some basic information that provides a good foundation for developing an understanding and appreciation of democracy.

Defining Democracy

Democracy is a complex and contested concept, As a result there will always be differences of opinion, despite some considerable convergence on a core definition. Most definitions of democracy focus on qualities, procedures and institutions. Because, there are many expressions of democracy in the real world, and educators will want to guard against assuming that particular practices and procedures must be promoted and adopted universally. The learner's



own understanding, experience and beliefs, and the history country of their countries, should be incorporated to create a definition that is meaningful and practical for their everyday life.

Democracy does not consist of a single, unique set of institutions that are universally applicable. The specific form that democracy takes in a country is largely determined by prevailing political, social, and economic circumstances. Moreover it is greatly influenced by historical, traditional, and cultural factors.

Most readings on democracy begin with identifying where the word comes from and where the first, recorded and formalised practice of democracy started. They also provide definitions of democracy that have been used over time. Following are a number of definitions, from very simple to more complex. These definitions could be used to inform the definitions that learners have themselves formulated in discussion.

"Democracy comes from the Greek words *demos* meaning **people** and *kratos* meaning **authority** or **power**." [1]

"...government which is conducted with the freely given consent of the people." [2]

"...a system of government in which supreme authority lies with the people." [3]

"Rule by the people in a country directly or by representation." [4]

"The form of government in which political control is exercised by all the people, either directly or through their elected representatives." [5]

"The word **democracy** itself means **rule by the people**. A democracy is a system where people can change their rulers in a peaceful manner and the government is given the right to rule because the people say it may." [6]

Origins of Democracy

The word democracy was coined by the ancient Greeks who established a direct form of government in Athens. All adult males would gather to discuss issues and they would vote by a show of hands. Slaves and women did not have the right to vote. This mode of government is time-consuming and it is impossible for large populations to meet every time a decision has to be made.

Therefore, the step from direct democracy (in which people vote directly on issues) to representative democracy (in which the people vote for representatives or politicians who make decisions on their behalf) was inevitable as larger and more diverse societies established democracies. [7] Today there are forms of direct democracy such as referenda, petitions, plebiscites, and propositions, But these are most often practiced in the older and more technologically resourced democracies.

Democracy Today

Democracy exists to provide a way for people to live and be together in a way that is beneficial to all. Although many of today's democracies may not have existed before the Second World War, there are for a form of governance in most traditional societies where the ideals in which most people believed guide rulers and communities in the way decisions and rules were made, and in the way members of the society were treated and lived together.

Democracy is reportedly, a concept alien to Africa, a claim that rests on the confusion between the principles of democracy and their institutional manifestations. The principles of democracy include widespread participation, consent of the governed and public accountability of those in power--principles that permeated traditional African political systems.[8]

The political transition to a democratic state as well as the restructuring needed such as voting and elections, the constitution, and an independent judiciary may be overwhelming for new citizens. For this reason, focusing on people's own experience will be a useful means to getting people to have a practical and common understanding of democracy.

Educators who teach citizens about democracy should encourage people to express their views on the values that already exist in the way people interact with each other in communities in their everyday lives. From this collection of values the educator will be able to come up with a "custom-made" set of aspirations for and values underpinning democracy. This will form a usable basis from which to explore the form of governance that exists in their country and the extent to which it can be defined as democratic.

Types of democracy

Representative Democracy

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections. The election shall be held by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or the equivalent free voting procedures.

Voting is one of the mechanisms that guides a democratic state and keeps its leaders on track,. It serves to let the leadership know how they have performed. During elections, citizens vote for the candidate of their choice. The elected candidates or representatives become the government of the country. Elected leaders represent "the people" and govern for a set period of office. Representatives are chosen through elections based on the constituency or proportional representation systems, or on a combination of the two.

Civic educators in a particular country would decide to emphasise and illustrate in more depth the type of representative democracy that has been chosen. In addition, they will want to explain it and also explain the differences between possible systems, their benefits and costs.

Constitutional Democracies

Most, but not all, democracies are based on a written constitution or a supreme law that serves to guide legislators and the laws they make. Written constitutions serve as a guarantee to citizens that the government is required to act in a certain way and uphold certain rights.

The strength of a real democracy depends on certain fundamental rights and freedoms. These rights and freedoms must be protected to make sure that a democracy will succeed. In many



countries these rights are found in and protected by a constitution. The constitution also sets out the structures and functions of the government. It provides the guidelines for the making of other laws. It is normally protected from amendment by the whim of a particular government by having a special majority required before any clause can be changed or by submitting any changes to voters through a referendum.

Minimum Requirements for a Country to be Defined as a Democracy

Some theorists have developed a set of minimum requirements considering the upsurge in the number of democracies holding free and fair elections and declaring themselves democratic states. Elections on their own do not make a country democratic. A set of minimum requirements provides both a good overview of what democracy means and a standard against which to test whether or not a country is democratic. The following list of minimum requirements has been extracted by a study of democracies and by reading various theories of democracy:

- control over government decisions about policy constitutionally vested in elected representatives
- elected representatives chosen in regular and fair elections
- elected representatives exercise their constitutional powers without facing overriding opposition from unelected officials
- all adults have the right to vote in elections
- all adults have the right to run for public office
- citizens have the right to express themselves on political matters, defined broadly, without the risk of state punishment
- citizens have the right to seek out alternative sources of information, such as the news media, and such sources are protected by law
- citizens have the right to form independent associations and organisations, including independent political parties and interest groups
- government is autonomous and able to act independently from outside constraints (such as those imposed by alliances and blocs)

If any of these conditions is not met, experts argue that the country is not truly a democracy.

Criticism of Government

Educating citizens about the democracy in which they live means that educators will provide them with some of the tools to analyse their circumstances. In some instances this may provoke a strong critique of the government, the powers it has, the way it functions, and whether or not it appears to be fulfilling promises made at election time. Educators will want to prepare themselves for dealing with this critique in a constructive manner so that learners also learn how to deal with their criticisms in a democratic and peaceful way.

Notes:

[1] *Democracy For All*, (South Africa: StreetLaw, 1995), 4.

[2] *Ibid*, p4

[3] *Ibid*, p4

[4] *Ibid*, p4

[5] Civitas, *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1994).

[6] Namibia Institute for Democracy, *Democracy and You: A Guide to Better Understanding* (Windhoek: n.p.), 6.

[7] ML Strom, *Citizenship and Democracy* (Pretoria: Idasa, 1996), 13.

[8] Claude Ake, quoted in *Reflections on Democracy* (Pretoria: Idasa, 1997).

[9] General Assembly of the United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article 217 A (III).

5.2 Basic Voter Information

Information for Current Elections

As noted at the beginning of this section, the term voter information is typically used to refer to the fundamentals of the elections, ie. where to vote, when, and how. Disillusionment about the efficacy of more substantive voter education programmes or suspicion that voter education somehow suggests partisan campaigning have resulted in a number of election authorities deciding that their job is primarily that of voter information.

Information is the Role of the Election Management Authority

Despite the fact that neither of the caveats need to be true--voter education can be both effective and nonpartisan. There is something to commend the view that election management authorities themselves should concentrate on voter information and leave more voter education tasks in particular, and civic education activities in general, to a wider range of organisations.

First, election authorities are the only ones who have the necessary information. They are most familiar with election laws, regulations, and practices. And it up to them to disseminate the information required both by contestants and the electorate. Educational interventions, on the other hand, require many more resources and a concentration of effort that may go beyond an election authority's administrative responsibilities. The extent to which an election authority moves beyond basic voter information into the realm of education may be determined by their legal mandate. If an election authority must or otherwise opts to limit its activities to voter information, it would still have a role to play in developing a mechanism for encouraging voter education initiatives by others in a society. As for the information that is required, it too has to come from a thorough understanding of the needs of voters and from good and regular feedback.

Understanding Local Needs

Because information (the location of voting sites, lists of contestants, and so on) is often local--voting site locations, lists of contestants, and so on--voter information programmes have to develop ways in which they can be responsive to local needs and local knowledge. In some



cases, this is done by appointing information officers. In others, presiding officers have the role of providing local information.

Important Role of the Media

Whichever route is taken, such people need to develop good relations with the press. This media is often the only available route for getting information out to a large number of people in a short period of time. Press statements, press briefings, and press releases combined with the provision of documentation and materials to the press may be one of the most important tools of a local information programme (See General Media).

5.2.1 Timing of Information

Timely delivery of information

It is not always possible to manage an information programme so carefully that people get the information they need just in time to act on it. Timing will be a major challenge. In fluid electoral environments, where the legal or regulatory framework or important election deadlines and procedures are still changing in flux in the midst of an election and where the communications infrastructure may be lacking...

Where there are modern broadcasting and newspaper networks reinforced by a sophisticated advertising industry and solid communications infrastructure it may be possible to prepare messages at very short notice and to place these at precisely the right time.

This information will be useful where the same network operates in an environment where the large majority of people are reading and listening to or watching broadcasting media,. A lot can actually only be dealt with by information systems that are repetitive and have built in storage and redundancy, is left to chance.

Delivery of Accurate Information In poor societies, ownership of television and radio sets is limited. Electricity may also be a problem. In modern and affluent societies, audiences have become much segmented. In Single information-channel is risky in both these situations. On the other hand, information that has storage utility--pamphlets and other printed materials, recorded messages, and so on that can be distributed and kept for reference--must remain timely and accurate. And there is no guarantee that the information will be looked at when it is actually needed.

So there will always be a balancing act between getting accurate information to people just in time and getting information to the broadest possible audience.

Prepare a Detailed Programme

In a general sense, detailed voter information programmes have to manage timing quite carefully and a full and detailed programme will be necessary. If the content voter information is new, because of significant changes in election procedures or because it is a founding election, then there will need to be a reality check on all aspects of the programme. This reality check can be done by making sure there is good feedback from organisations and educators working out in the field; or from an information and complaints hotline. Surprisingly, election authorities often assume people have the information in an accurate form just because it has been made public.

Planning the delivery of information Finally, in addition to the general difficulties expressed above about getting information to people just in time, production and distribution of materials does itself take time. Some formats are more consuming time than others. The production and airing of a radio spot may be accomplished more quickly than the preparation, printing, folding, packing, delivery, and distribution of a leaflet. While there are possibilities for super-human effort, one should not expect miracles. And the only way to achieve super-human efforts and meet unrealistic deadlines is to spend money. The more complex the information programme and the tighter the deadlines, the more likely it is that costs will increase.

Voter Information Messages

There are no standard messages that have to be communicated in a voter information programme. All of them have to be specific to the particular election. There are, however, a set of categories that should be covered.

Level of Government for Election

Voters who do not understand the rationale behind an election, and the intended consequences of the result are at a serious disadvantage. It is hard for them to make informed decisions and easy for them to be misinformed. So suitable information about the body or office being elected and its roles and responsibilities, the manner in which votes will count and in some cases translate into seats, and the system of government that will result, are all essential in a voter information programme. While a voter education programme may go further in assisting citizens to understand these systems, an information programme may just give some basic information sourced from other government departments.

Times and Dates of Voter Registration

More complex, because of the many potential variations across regions and jurisdictions, will be information about the times and dates for the registration of voters. In particular, there may well be a temptation to provide all information regarding registration in one source. This should be avoided as voters should receive only the information they need. The more detailed information on inspections, challenges, review of the lists, and so on, should appear in separate more technical publications.

It should not be assumed with any information campaign, and especially not with voter registration, that a legal notice as required by many laws will be sufficient. Information needs to be available where people are, in a format that attracts their attention, and in terms that they can understand.

Location to Register

Perhaps the most confusing aspect of voter registration is to find out where to register, unless it is possible to register by mail or through some other telecommunication, is to find out where to



register. Unless the authorities chose to identify specially established centres that may later be used as voting sites, it is likely that registration will take place in a wide variety of venues. As a result, a standard banner that can be displayed publicly should be available to indicate the place. Such banners also alert the public to the fact that registration is taking place. In addition to this, other forms of mass communication should be used. Perhaps the least reliable means of communication of messages in this particular category are by mail and telephone communication, because there may be a lack of confirmation that the message is received by the voter. Registration drives are designed precisely to deal with the fact that people move.

Time and Date of Elections

A standard piece of information that can appear in any published material will be the hours of voting and the dates on which voting takes place. While this may be standard across the country, it may not be in larger countries. So the information may need to be regionalised.

While the information may begin on a low key basis, as the date approaches it is likely that it will attain greater prominence in communications both from the election authority and from candidates.

Candidates

Election authorities will have to communicate the list of those candidates who are legitimately nominated or registered to run for election. Such a list may only be posted on a notice board outside a magistrate's office or that of the returning officer. But it is likely that it should be published more widely through the press.

Some election administrations issue a publication that gives basic information about contesting parties, normally submitted by the parties themselves, and this information serves to inure voters to the propaganda wars and "mud-slinging" that parties may wage. This may also be done through the use of posters in voting sites on Election Day. This is a particularly important aspect of any election conducted in countries where sectarian or ethnic conflict has led to geographic separation of parties and "no-fly" zones.

Codes of Conduct

Finally, elections are contests for power. Many election laws, therefore, establish codes of conduct for political parties. Or they might list possible ways in which the election law can be broken and the penalties imposed. Citizens are the best watch dogs against candidate abuse, but only if they know what to expect from parties. Widespread circulation of codes of conduct will assist in reducing conflict.

In like manner, elections are a service provided by the state, or on behalf of the state, by an independent body. Citizens have a right to know what type of service they can expect; and the publishing of such information also guards against administrative mismanagement and possible malfeasance or fraud.

Location to Vote

Voting sites are usually identifiable, once a voter gets within eyesight. But the one in eye's view may not necessarily be the voting site for that particular voter. In towns where there are

many voting sites, and the nearest may not be the correct one, this can cause considerable confusion. Confusion may also arise when numerous voting sites are located in one place.

Information about where elections have been conducted regularly in the same venue; and where registration has taken place in the venue where the person is required to vote, may be less important. Information about where voting site locations are still being established after registration has taken place, such information is imperative. Yet information is not so easy to communicate, because it is different for each set of voters. A variety of methods is used to deal with this, such as:

- mailing postcards that confirm registration and noting the voting site venue
- putting up Posters and Banners in neighbourhoods
- giving the information to political parties
- using community radio stations (see Community Impact Media)
- publishing the information in local newspapers, either directly or through the use of inserts and
- advertising local and regional information centres and hotlines, where the details can be made available over the telephone

In each of these cases, some form of personal communication is essential. There are strategies for providing information upon request and unsolicited.

General voter information programmes would advertise at an early stage that people must ascertain where they are to vote, and must provide them with information as to how to do this.

Special Voting Services

Depending upon legal allowances, there may be a variety of special voting services offered to voters. These might include absentee voting, early voting, or voting by a mobile ballot box on Election Day. In order to use any of these services, it is likely that voters will have to make either a verbal or written (and in some cases an application) request. And, there will likely be a specific timeframe in which this request or application must be made. For this reason, it will be important for educators to inform voters about the existence of special voting services, to identify which voters are eligible to use these services, and to convey the timetable and means by which such services can be requested.

Documents Required

Once people know where to vote, they have to get to the voting sites with the necessary documents that will prove their identity and qualification to vote. Different administrations make use of different documents. The selection of documents required for proving one's identity may be different from that required on Election Day.

In both cases, there needs to be a concerted communication campaign well in advance of Election Day so that potential voters are able to get their affairs in order. Those countries that have national identity document requirements, or introduce voter identity cards, may need some



time to produce these. While this may not affect the majority, it is likely to affect young voters who have still not obtained such documents, immigrants and refugees, and other marginal groups who may not have a full set of necessary documentation.

Ballot Security Measures

For some elections, there may be a need to introduce new ballot security measures to ensure the integrity of the voting process and the outcome of the elections. There are a number of reasons why voters need to be informed about ballot security measures. Firstly, some of these measures will directly impact on how they are processed once they enter a voting site. One example of this would be the use of indelible ink and optical scanners to identify voters who have cast their ballots. Since this type of activity may be new to a culture, some negative perceptions or even fears may also need to be overcome to ensure that the ballot security measures do not have the result of keeping people from the polls.

At the same time, other ballot security measures, such as the use of special paper, seals, counterfoils, or halograms, may appear to be only the concern of poll workers. However, the whole point of ballot security measures is to increase the level of integrity of the electoral process and voter's confidence that their vote will count (just once!) and that the result will accurately reflect the will of the people. So, in order to raise public confidence levels, a concerted effort will need to be made to inform people about the ballot security measures being undertaken. This must be done prior to Election Day as a means of encouraging people to turn out to vote.

Correctly Marking One's Ballot

Once in the voting site, voters need to know how to correctly mark their ballot so that their vote can be counted at the end of the day. In countries where there is a consistent method for marking the ballot that has been used over some period of time and where there have been no significant modifications to ballot design, such efforts will likely be most necessary for first time voters.

In countries where there are inconsistent methods for making ballots for different types of elections, where a new method for making ballots has been introduced, where there have been major changes to ballot design, where some governing structures are being elected for the first time, or where the introduction of new technologies has impacted on the procedure of marking and casting one's ballot, there will need to be an education program directed at the entire electorate.

And, if there are provisions for dealing with spoiled ballots, the means by which voters can turn in an improperly marked ballot in exchange for a new one will also need to be explained..

5.3 Basic Voter Education

Overview

Education in support of the electoral process has become known as "voter education" where a voter is the primary target. There are a number of other areas of education required if an election is to be successful,. But these may variously be conducted by political parties and election administration officials. Voter education, on the other hand, is considered to be a separate and discreet function. It is usually identified as a function of the electoral authority and is occasionally subcontracted by them to private companies and civil society organisations. It is

also fostered by public interest organisations independent of any mandate from the election authority.

What is Voter Education?

At its core, voter education is an enterprise designed to ensure that voters are ready, willing, and able to participate in electoral politics. It has been assumed that this entails election literacy and confidence that the electoral process is appropriate and effective in selecting governments and promoting policies that will benefit the individual voter.

Is Voter Education Sufficient for Democracy?

As indicated elsewhere in this topic area, voter education is essential to ensuring that voters can effectively exercise their voting rights and express their political will through the electoral process. If voters are not prepared or motivated to participate in the electoral process, then questions may arise about the legitimacy, representativeness, and responsiveness of elected leaders and institutions. At the same time, voter education is a much focused undertaking. It is targeted at eligible voters and addresses specific electoral events as well as the general electoral process. While voter education is a necessary component of the democratic electoral process, it is not sufficient for democracy.

Voter education needs to be supplemented by on-going civic education efforts in order to achieve the democratic participation and culture that flows from and is, in fact, the rationale for periodic elections. Civic education employs a broader perspective than voter education. It is concerned with citizens, rather than voters, and emphasizes the relationship between active citizenship and democratic society. It is understood that citizens must engage the political process routinely, not just at the time of elections (for more on this see [Civic Education](#))

Certainly, participation in elections and the status of "voter" have a special weight in transitional countries holding founding elections and where the right to vote has been obtained through social struggle. As the democratic world moves toward a universal franchise, however, voting is viewed as one of the many ways in which citizens participate in and support democracy.

International Comparisons

The scope of voter education efforts required in any given country will depend upon a variety of factors. Does the country have a long history of democratic elections, or is this a founding or transitional election? Is voter registration mandatory or voluntary? Who is responsible for voter registration? Has the franchise been extended to include new groups of voters? Have there been changes to the system of representation or the voting process? Do the electoral process and political institutions enjoy the confidence of the electorate? Is the election campaign open and competitive? Have voter education efforts been undertaken in the past? Is there an on-going civic education effort? The answers to all of these questions and more will impact on the nature and reach of the voter education programme.



Whose Responsibility?

While voter information is certainly the responsibility of the election authority, voter education can easily be viewed as the responsibility of both of the election authority and civil society. A variety of other government agencies may also have some role in informing and educating citizens. The mandate of the election authority or other government agencies may be determined on the law, while civil society organisations may have, as part of their mission, a commitment to voter education and citizen political participation.

The need to educate people to take part in elections is not at issue. Whether these people are children or adults, there are many educational needs that relate to the conduct of elections. But there are also the needs related to active participation in competitive politics. One educational activity involves the use of mock or parallel elections. In Chile, for example, children accompany their parents to the polls on Election Day and actually cast ballots in a parallel election. In other cases, mock election activities may either be narrowly focused on voting behavior or incorporate the entire electoral campaign. Having children run for election or campaign for others provides important lessons that cannot be learned through an approach that focuses solely on Election Day activities.

Aims of Traditional Voter Education

Traditional voter education aims to create of a climate of knowledgeable participation by all potential voters in a forthcoming election. It also seeks to enable potential voters to cast their votes with confidence.

These objectives may also be achieved through other interventions, and educators will want to establish programmes that work in conjunction with initiatives that address such issues as voter security, basic voting procedures, accessible voting stations, and lively but nonviolent and least intimidating campaigns on the part of candidates.

Balancing voter education programmes against these other interventions is important in ensuring that budgets are not inflated. Costs of voter education programmes can and should be based on cost-per-voter estimates. It may be argued, and is on occasion argued, that elections, however expensive, are cheaper than war or endemic community conflict. This is true, but the purpose of democratic elections is to ensure ongoing periodic elections, and this cannot be done extravagantly forever. Costs need to be weighed carefully and cost effective programmes developed. Sometimes this may require constraining the objectives that really have to be achieved by the programme in order to have an effective election.

Timing of Information

The timing of voter education may - or may not - be the same as that of a voter information programme, although they are likely to run concurrently at some points. In particular, the timing of a voter education programme may depend upon the duration of the programme, the institution undertaking the programme, the mandate or mission of that institution, the parameters of the programme, the types of instructional materials being developed, and the needs of the target group(s).

In settings where there is no permanent election authority and where resources are limited, a voter education programme may only be conducted at the time of elections and in conjunction with any voter information efforts. In some cases, voter education may be initiated somewhat

earlier than voter information, particularly if major changes are being made to a country's system of representation and legal framework for elections, where the franchise is being extended, and where significant changes are made to political and electoral processes. In countries with longer standing democracies and where there is a permanent election authority and sufficient resources, however, voter education may be an on-going activity. Depending upon the mandate of the election authority and the mission of certain civil society organisations, voter education may be handled through a broader civic education program as a component thereof.

If conducted through the school system, a voter education short course may also be incorporated as part of a broader civic education curriculum. This course might be offered to children of various ages, or only to those approaching voting age. The amount of time spent on voter education in this case may also depend upon the depth and breadth of the course in question. Role playing, mock campaigns and elections, and learning exercises both inside and out of the classroom may be included. Activities might be limited to a particular class or include all classes and a number of grades. There might even be competitions between schools. The more thorough and complex the course, the greater amount of time that will need to be dedicated. Additional information on simulations can also be found under [Simulations](#)

Messages and Methods

Helping citizens understand and participate in elections, other than as a contestant or supporter of a contestant (an important and under exploited form of education), requires concentration on a few key concerns. These seem to have somewhat universal significance, although each election may have its own special features.

Educators will also have methodological considerations. These are addressed in [Potential Programme Elements](#). Various programme elements may be appropriate depending on the resources available and the objectives that have been set by the education organisation or, alternatively, by the organisation sponsoring the programme. Methodological variations demonstrate that voter education falls between "voter information" and "civic education".

Standard Voter Education Messages

Voter educators make use of certain standard messages. Standardization implies two things.

- Certain key elements of a message must be conveyed and
- A message document can be reproduced as is or be recast for further distribution.

There are four general messages that all voter education programmes will communicate. This will require that educators work with content specialists to ensure that the messages are discussed in ways that have meaning for the particular country in which democracy is being developed. Each country has its own history, and this history provides organising themes and democratic myths as well as procedural and principled nuances that will require a different



treatment from that prepared even in a neighbouring country. It is possible, however, to outline the concerns that are likely to be addressed in each area.

- *Elections and democracy*:. It is impossible to conceive of democracy in a modern and complex organisation or society being possible without a system of establishing the choices of large bodies of citizens through voting procedures. Elections are one of the defining events of modern democracies,, With periodic and fair elections come the additional prerequisites that citizens will have choices between individuals, parties, and policy options. They will also have the freedom to make these choices without undue intimidation, and will have the right to put themselves or others forward as candidates for office. Finally, they will have the necessary freedoms to discuss policy options and to form associations that will either compete in elections, or endorse certain candidates or parties, and/or provide them with the information and discussion they need to make their election choices at the ballot box. They will also have the freedom of movement to campaign on behalf of their cause or candidate throughout the country.

Developing these arguments is essential, as it is possible that there will be those who may think that elections could be conducted without such conditions being in place. In India, the election authority must determine whether such conditions are present before allowing an election to proceed. But there have been other times, in other places, when elections have been used to develop credibility and apparent legitimacy for a government that has no intention of ensuring that the necessary democratic rights are present during an election period.

- *The role, responsibility and rights of the voter*. The second message area provides citizens with motivation for participation in elections. They learn how individual participation in elections establishes representative government and ensures accountability by those who are elected.

It is not enough, however, merely to concentrate on roles and responsibilities. Educators must also consider the rights to a free and fair election. Helping voters understand these rights facilitates election monitoring by all citizens and not just specialised groups. It ensures oversight of both candidates and the election administration.

- *Your vote counts*. While all systems present the principle that every vote counts, there are some nuances in message depending on the electoral system used. In first past the post systems, electoral success or failure may be determined by a small number of votes where there will be a marginal winner and loser. In systems that use proportionality, every vote counts toward building up the proportional representation of the voter's preferred candidate.

Apart from the numbers game, voters need to be made aware that each individual vote has weight in determining the rights that they have over the elected party or representative once the election has been won or lost. If a representative relationship cannot be formed between citizens and elected officials, citizens may begin to feel that their vote does not, in fact, count for much.

- *Your vote is secret*. There are many circumstances where it is essential that voters be protected from intimidation and fear of subsequent political and personal consequences. In such circumstances, the message that a vote is secret has to be conveyed and, possibly, proved. Secrecy has both positive and negative connotations, and in societies that value community, secrecy may be suspect. Or there may be societies that consider

secrecy to be impossible, whether as a result of dysfunctional administration or prevailing belief structures.

In these circumstances, examples of matters that are secret, or that cannot be found out, provide educators with potential metaphors for the voting process. And there may be alternative approaches. Perhaps the most powerful is when elections are repeated and no dire consequences befall voters. But election legislation will have to back up the message by considering carefully the manner in which counting of votes takes place and results are announced. An individual vote may be secret, but a community preference may not, and this can have equally important consequences.

Other Messages

Each election will have an additional set of standard messages appropriate for the particular election. In many cases, these messages will include a catch phrase that can be used for shorter communications such as stickers, posters and clothing. These messages need to be prepared by educators in a form that can be widely used. They may even form part of a fax data bank so that educators with access to the correct telephone and fax facilities can dial in and obtain copies of the messages for further use and distribution. Those countries with e-mail and Internet access can provide distribution through these means.

In addition to these standard messages, there is an additional standard message tool that has obtained wide currency and may even be the most important and widely distributed document prepared by an education programme. This is the Frequently Asked Questions document.

Frequently Asked Questions

From the very beginning of an election, educators will start collecting lists of questions being asked in workshops, in telephone calls, and by election staff as they are recruited and trained. These questions should be catalogued and categorised. When there is an initial list of about ten questions, succinct answers should be prepared and the document containing the question followed by the answer made available in as many ways as possible.

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) list may be altered many times during the course of an election. Additional questions will be added, and additional information will be available that might change current answers or add to them. Someone should be given the task of keeping the list up to date and distributing it.

Because it will change often, and may be sent out by fax or e-mail, or even distributed at training workshops, it is essential that every version be numbered, dated, and in the last days before an election even timed. If the FAQs are being prepared by an organisation or by the electoral authority, it should have a cover that gives all the details of the organisation that prepared and distributed it, together with ways of making direct contact for further information.

There may be separate FAQs for election administration staff and for educators. It is important to understand that different people have different questions. Whatever the case, this summary



of all the concerns that people have about the election and the short and authoritative answers will be a tool that can have an impact that will more than justify its preparation costs.

5.4 Common Features of Voter Information and Education

There are some important distinctions between voter information, voter education and civic education activities, in turn one form of education may flow smoothly into another and, in many cases, may be a subset of the broader effort.

There are certain features that are common to both voter information and education. Both must incorporate their own version of the election calendar and timetable. Both can make use of various stakeholders, including political parties (see Political Parties in Voter Education), election officials (see Election officials in voter education), and/ or the civil society sector to increase the reach of the programme and enhance its effectiveness. Both will be concerned with not just with voting on Election Day, but with Voter Registration. And finally, both will have to consider ways in which Election Sites can be used to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness of the programme.

As a result of this overlap, this topic area deals simultaneously with voter information and education unless otherwise noted. Civic education is not the primary focus of this topic area but it occupies an entire section of its own. Since voter information and education are often an important component of civic education programmes, however, some civic education products have been included in the sample materials section.

5.4.1 Explaining electoral systems

Electoral systems are a human invention. It is inevitable that any specific electoral system, having been invented under certain conditions, to achieve certain ends and encourage certain values, is now having an influence on the political system within which citizens live. It has not dropped from heaven, although it may be protected within a constitution. Therefore it is itself a matter for public debate and, if necessary, political reform.

A civic education programme will provide citizens with some of the arguments in favour of particular systems and the strengths and weaknesses of their own system. This will have been done without undue proselytising for one or other system in case this severely undermines citizens' faith in their own electoral system or unduly disadvantages and stereotypes those who promote the merits of one or the other.

Without this more general education, public debates about electoral systems can become irrationally heated, and very rapidly move from consideration of the context within which elections must take place and the appropriate system for the time to a factionalism reminiscent of the 'bigendians' and 'littleendians' of *Gulliver's Travels*.

Once an electoral system has been selected, new voters will need an explanation of how it works. When a system is reformed, educators will have a particular challenge in explaining the new system, given the deep attachment which people develop towards their own systems and their imperviousness to change. Electoral systems seem to have the same visceral attachments as currency and weights and measures – generational change seems more efficacious than education.

Educators are often fascinated by politics and elections – It is a vocation and a hobby, and the arcane of electoral systems seem particularly seductive. There is a temptation to turn opportunities for educating people about a particular electoral system into jargon-full journeys

through increasingly detailed minutiae. The needs of the audience fall away in discussions of quota formulae, intricate constituency mapping information, negotiations between parties and election management bodies over list construction during vacancies and so on. While certain groups of people need to know these things, educators must first establish the needs and level of the audience.

The educators' trap

Below are some essential basics:

- **Why has the present system been chosen?**

Of course the reason why a country has a proportional representation system, a first past the post system or a single transferable vote system – to mention the most popular parliamentary systems - may be shrouded in the mists of time. A country may have an electoral college rather than a direct election for President for reasons more related to lack of certain technological advances such as telephones, safe and fast cross-continental transport systems such as motor cars and airplanes, reliable postal services and other later forms of communication than any immediate compulsions. Nevertheless, there are social conditions and values which keep the present system in place if it has existed before, or reasons why it has recently been adopted. These are worth explaining because they will address important political concepts of fairness, the history and struggle for expansion of suffrage, representivity and accountability.

- **What choice will people confront in the voting booth?**

Different electoral systems have different consequences for what will confront people in the voting booth. Will they see a list of political parties or a list of names of candidates? Will they get the opportunity (as in Sweden) to select a political party by choice of ballot paper and then see the list of candidates for that party so they can make some preferential choices amongst those candidates?

Voters should not be surprised when they get into a voting booth. They should know what choice they are being asked to make, especially if they are required to make multiple choices, whether on one complex ballot paper or a series of ballot papers as might happen in mixed systems, or in multiple elections taking place on the same day.

Knowing what choices they will be making on voting day provides the voter with guidance as to what they should attend to during the campaign. Are they going to have to make a binary choice – this party or that, this candidate or that – or will they be expressing a range of preferences. In the first case they may develop some decision criteria based on exclusion, in the latter they may attend to different aspects of party manifestos which interest them. Irrespective of the ways in which voters come to their preferences, they will adopt strategies based on the manner in which the electoral system confronts them with choices.

- **How will their vote get turned into seats?**



Once educators have mastered the conversion mechanisms, which are more complicated for PR and STV systems but which can also have complexities in FPTP systems in regard to tied votes, or in direct presidential elections in regard to run-off elections, they should find ways of explaining these through a combination of metaphors and scenarios. PR systems are often explained in terms of individual sports where participants receive prizes for coming first, second or third and so on. Educators talk about winners and losers in FPTP systems. In developing appropriate metaphors, care should be taken not to heap too much praise on those who succeed - after all they will have to represent even those who choose not to vote for them - and to work out ways in which election losers can retain respect and realise that all is not lost, otherwise the possibility of spoiling can increase.

Scenarios take examples either from the real situation or from dummy situations – normally safer – and show how different numbers of votes turn into different numbers of seats. PR systems particularly benefit from such examples. But mixed systems, which are becoming increasingly popular, are also often explained best in this way – where topping up to obtain proportionality can have different consequences depending on the number of FPTP seats won.

- **What can voters expect from parties during campaigning and who are they likely to meet?**

Political parties are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their management of campaigns. They are using survey and demographic data to plan their interactions with potential voters. However, FPTP systems are more likely to be characterised by local campaigning in which the candidates are introduced and profiled, and in which their merits are considered as well as their platforms. At the end of an election, the voter is going to recognise one or other of these candidates achieving elected office. They may see differences in the coverage of local media – focusing on their candidate, and the national media – focusing on party leaders and party manifestos or ‘marginal seats’ where a difference is possible or likely. PR systems brand the party and, in countries where ballot papers include the face of the party leader, that person as well. Profiling the party is everything. But while the lists of candidates can and should be evaluated, it often takes a back seat.

Voters will want to know whether it is really worth spending time interrogating a candidate about their personal politics, if the party caucus is going to be all powerful. On the other hand they may well want to find a maverick candidate if they feel that his or her success, whether as an independent or within a party is going to shake up the establishment.

- **What will the parliament look like after the election?**

Too little attention is given in voter education to the outcome of an election, not in the balance of power alone but also to the governing implications. In PR systems choices for many small parties can make it difficult to establish stable governments. In FPTP systems, the role of the successful candidate in continuing to represent the constituency in its relations with the state may be key to how a voter chooses. Voters need to know how the parliament will function, what powers it and individual representatives have, and its relationship to any separately elected executive.

5.4.2 The Election calendar and timetable

Every election obviously has a timetable. While voter education may be an ongoing activity, there will be a moment when an election is declared and a date set. Educators should have a calendar of election milestones and tailor their programme to accommodate these dates. With this in mind, a detailed implementation plan for the voter education programme should be

developed and attached to the election calendar. Ideally, the election calendar should be fixed prior to the initiation of the voter education programme. In some developing countries and transitional societies, this will not always be possible. In this case, educators outside the election authority will want to maintain open and routine communication with election officials to stay on top of new deadlines or changes to previously set timetables.

The election calendar should include all dates that are stipulated in law or through regulations. Educators will then need to consider these milestones to determine which directly affect voters and to assess necessary educational demands and implications.

The educational programme has to prepare people to participate in the electoral process. Different people participate at different times and, in some cases, in different ways. In theory, the educational programme may address all these preparations. While voter education and information are typically aimed at the general electorate (see [The General Electorate](#)), it is important that it also be aimed at high impact groups (see [High Impact Groups](#)) and at assisting smaller target groups in their participation (see [Marginalized Voters and Groups with Special Needs](#)).

Educational Demands

Amongst the occasions that may be of particular interest to voters and that may require their participation will be:

- the formation or registration of political parties
- the nomination of candidates and party lists, which may require public activities such as primaries or signature collection
- the demarcation of electoral boundaries
- the registration of voters and inspection and ratification of voters lists
- the establishment of voting stations
- application periods for special voting services such as absentee or mobile voting
- the voting period, which may include opportunities for early voting as well as on Election Day
- the complaints process, either through election commissions or the courts

It is possible for educators to make use of public moments in the election to increase the effectiveness of their programme. By enhancing these moments they obtain news coverage, public debate, and also prompt voters to identify their own educational needs. This may encourage them to take part in voter education programmes.

Educational Implications

The first of these is obviously the announcement of the election date. This inevitably triggers frenetic activity by parties, raises public consciousness of the election, and starts discussion in the media and in social settings of the contest. Such an announcement, especially in situations



where it is anticipated that a substantial voter education programme will be needed, could be combined with display and broadcast materials setting out the requirements for eligibility to vote, including registration processes.

From that moment onward, there will be similar, if slightly less significant, moments. If these are factored into the calendar, it will be possible for the education team to develop programmatic interventions suitable to obtain publicity, to multiply the impact of the programme, and to develop the synergy which is necessary in order to increase impact, reduce effort and limit costs.

5.4.3 Political Parties in Voter Education

Political parties compete. Voter education is assumed to be a neutral or nonpartisan activity. So there is often a general operating assumption that voter education has nothing to do with political parties. This is incorrect on two counts. First, individuals and groups of individuals learn a great deal about elections and about democracy from their interactions with government and their political experiences. Second, parties have a selfish interest in getting to voters and, therefore, can be a cost-effective conduit for ensuring that voters get the necessary information they require in order to exercise their vote. So political parties, their supporters, campaign offices, and general staff are, in fact, potential educators. The voter educator's task is to manage this inevitable and important resource in ways that benefit citizens.

Ensure Parties Have Accurate Information

Political parties have an interest in making sure that their supporters get to the right voting site at the right time and cast their ballot so that it is counted. They may not be interested in giving this information to people who do not support them, but those people may be approached by other political parties. So educators will want to develop strategies to make sure that all political parties have accurate information about the election process at their disposal.

This is not the only information that parties have an interest in conveying accurately. All parties will want their supporters to know:

- rules that other parties may violate
- how to check and assess the voters list
- what could cause disqualification as a candidate and/ or as a voter
- where and how to lodge a complaint or file an appeal and
- what needs to be monitored during the campaign period, on Election Day, and in the immediate post-election period

In order to do this, political parties will want to develop an in-depth understanding of all laws and regulations governing campaign and election processes. They will want to pass this knowledge to their members and supporters.

There may be some political parties that have an interest in keeping people ignorant of their constitutional and legal rights, about the electoral process, and about democratic practices. Nonetheless, broad-based voter education that is both accurate and empowering will be in the interests of some if not all political parties.

Do not Entirely Leave Voter Education to the Parties

There are some who consider getting voters out to vote (i.e., basic voter information and motivation) to be an activity that is entirely the responsibility of political parties. Indeed, this is the tradition in many developed democracies. The election management authority may have no role in getting out the vote. Their responsibilities stop with the provision of information about where, when, and how to vote.

There are, however some very good reasons, why voter education should not be entirely left up to political parties and why neutral, nonpartisan programmes are essential. Parties may have limited capacity. Or, especially in transitional societies, the resources and abilities of political parties will be unbalanced. This is typically referred to as an "uneven playing field". Under such circumstances, parties in power or those that inherited the spoils of a one-party system may have a better grassroots network through which to disseminate information. There may be no party formation amongst significant parts of the population. Or, the situation may be so polarised that the collaborative nature of election politics has not been understood either by parties or by citizens. In this case, some trustworthy source may be necessary against which to judge the information being received from the parties. As election campaigns become more expensive and targeting more sophisticated, many potential voters are simply ignored by political parties. Beyond the fact that certain people will not be reached by the contestants, there will likely be information that parties do not want to convey. So nonpartisan programmes have to supply this information.

Ensuring that Parties Provide Positive Lessons

Monitoring of party conduct and the development of good behaviour through legislation, regulation, rewards and punishments may not seem to be an educational task. But it is. It can be done either by the election authority itself (and certainly some aspects will be the responsibility of election monitors, tribunals, and courts), or it can be done by citizen groups with adequate training. Or it can be done by party agents, again with adequate training. It may also be possible to include it in general public voter education information about the roles of parties during elections and the mechanisms by which they can be held accountable for their actions. Equipped with such information, even individual citizens can assist in keeping parties honest. This honesty then supports the voter education programme, and any broader civic education programmes, by developing voter trust in democracy and increasing commitment to electoral politics.

5.4.4 Election officials in voter education

Specific Information and Education Functions

Election officials will appoint staff to manage and run voter education and information programmes on behalf of the election authority. The organisation of these offices will likely depend on the nature of the election authority, ie. is it a permanent or temporary body, the extent of election management authority's legal mandate to conduct voter education and/or the parameters of a given programme. Staff organisation will also be determined by whether or not the programme is being developed for a specific election or as part of an on-going voter and/or



civic education programme and whether or not it is directed only at eligible voters or also includes outreach to children.

Whatever the case, there will be staff tasked with the specific function of voter information and education. There will also be staff, who are responsible for media relations, election official and poll worker training, and who handle human relations management. Finally, there will be the commissioners and executive officers of the authority who will also have a public communications role.

Coordination of communications and the development of an education programme will be an important task within such an election authority. Educators should have a role in this and not be seen as merely functionaries. Everything that the election authority communicates has an impact on the perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of voters. Close management of this enables the authority to limit duplication of effort and waste of resources.

The national election authority is only one part of the election administrative hierarchy. Depending upon how well developed and resourced the hierarchy is, there may be educators, public relations officials, and trainers at lower level election commissions. Managing their interaction and communication will also be important.

Impact of Organisational and Public Behaviour

The education programme, has to be considered within a larger context. Every official associated with the election authority has a role to play in educating the public. In fact, they do this whether or not they intend to. Their behaviour in dealing with the public during voter registration, handling of complaints and managing of voting sites can be educational or can undermine voters' motivations. It will be necessary for election authorities to ensure that their behaviour is at all times nonpartisan and professional, and that it conforms with public messages being communicated about the elections and about the election management authority itself.

Apart from this general proviso - what one might consider the hidden curriculum of the election authority - there is also an important educational function in which all officials can participate. And they need to receive sufficient training and information in order to adequately fulfill this role. For this to be effective, training and information needs to be prepared in a timely fashion.

In addition to timely information, the early appointment of poll workers, in particular, and presiding officers will ensure that there are people in local communities who are identified with the election process and are therefore able to serve as a resource for the voters who live near them.

Election Officials as Educators

There are always two ways in which officials can treat clients. they can behave as though the client must know or find out the information they need in order to obtain the service. Secondly, they can provide them, either verbally or through good information and signage, based on the knowledge requirements of their clients.

It is possible that this can be done at any stage in the election process, even down to interactions with voters in the voting station. Certainly, if election officials can greatly assist the voter education programme if they are not only trained to do their job but are equally familiarised with voter education packages or a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

5.4.5 Election Sites

5.4.5.1 Use of Election Sites for Voter Education

There are two reasons why election sites should be used as primary opportunities for voter information and education.

- *Information and education can be made available cheaply.*

Distribution of materials can be incorporated with other election materials. Advertising can be displayed without cost. Existing staff can distribute giveaway materials. And the same staff can fulfill an information function at the same time as they are engaged for other purposes.

- *Voter information and education materials on display at election sites identify the site and make it more visible.*

Voters are drawn to the site. Thus one of the primary purposes of voter information - to ensure that people know where to go - and one of the primary purposes of voter education - to ensure trust in the process and the administration - are served while other objectives are also being achieved.

It is perhaps obvious that voting sites can be locations for information and education (see [Voter Education at Voting Sites](#)). Perhaps it is less obvious that government administrative offices, registration centres, or counting and tabulation centres can serve similar purposes (see [Election authority offices](#) and [Voter Education at Counting stations](#)). It may also be less obvious that they will do so whether or not election authorities intend it. The locations of offices and centres, their accessibility to the public, the service which is rendered, and the pride with which an office is either prepared or merely thrown together all convey lessons for the voting public. To the extent that they are visible and seek to make themselves understandable to non-voters, they also serve to increase awareness and, therefore, the number of possible voters in future elections.

5.4.5.2 Election management authority offices

Election authorities need to consider ways in which their own offices can be used to promote elections and contribute to voter education and public confidence.

The headquarters of the election authority are likely to be seen as a symbol of the electoral process. The outward appearance and internal decor of the building can communicate the serious, nonpartisan and professional approach that is appropriate to elections. Spaces that appear disorganised, poorly maintained, intimidating or extremely grand can all create negative perceptions of the election management authority and the electoral process.

Message of the Building and Staff

While election authorities in many developing and transitional settings may have little or no control over the buildings that they are assigned and may have few resources to devote to



making the space more workable, public accessibility and a professional and helpful staff can go a long way to create positive impressions.

In addition to these implicit messages, authorities may also want to consider more explicit ways in which they can assist in the educational programme. Such explicit ways may range from displaying posters and banners outside offices to notice boards, to material distribution centres, or resource/information centres in public places within the building and visitor programmes where educational programmes are conducted on site.

A Place for Education

Where the latter is possible, these programmes may vary from simple workshops requiring only public advertising and a seminar room to exhibitions and outreach programmes. Such programmes provide a regular and ongoing locus for educational programmes in support of elections. Those election authorities that are able to raise budgets for these programmes are extremely fortunate.

Even the smallest office, can display a poster, house a small exhibition of voter education and elections materials, or can have an information desk where the public can obtain leaflets or other information products. It is important that the approach to such displays be educational rather than bureaucratic. The purpose is to inform and educate the public, not to overwhelm them with the importance or minutiae of election administration. Election management authorities will need to consider ways in which they can train their staff to establish such public information programmes. And they will want to reward them for initiative in ensuring, at relatively low cost, that their offices are providing a service to the public.

5.4.5.3 Voter Education at Voting Sites

Voting sites provide a last minute opportunity to get information for those who did not get it in any other way. While the amount of information that can be provided may be limited, every care should be taken to make use of this low-cost opportunity.

Voters may have had limited contact with a voter education programme during the run up to the election. From this, they may have only taken away the message that they should register to vote and go to the voting site on Election Day. A decision will have to be made as to whether the voting site itself, either before or on Election Day, will provide last minute voter information. As it is likely to do this anyway, if only in the form of staff members managing queues and ensuring that people have the correct documentation ready, it is worth considering ways in which this can be done effectively.

The following information is normally given to voters arriving at a voting station:

Basic Information

- the location of the entrance to the voting site
- the location of publicly posted voters lists to help voter's determine to which voting site they are assigned (particularly when there are multiple voting sites in one location)
- where to queue
- whether there are any security requirements with which they will have to comply
- where to find refreshment and toilet facilities if there is a significant queue
- how long they are likely to wait
- what documents they will be required to show to establish their qualification to vote
- what service levels they can expect from electoral staff and

- where to exit the voting site

It may also be necessary to provide signs relating to parking in the vicinity of the station.

Basic information may be supplemented by additional information such as:

Additional Information

- the layout of the voting site
- the names and roles of the voting site commission
- a listing of persons permitted to be in the voting site such as election observers, party or candidate representatives, journalists, election commissioners, or security personnel
- a listing of parties and/or candidates contesting the election
- the design of the ballot paper(s) and instructions on how to properly mark one's choice and
- the procedure for requesting assistance or dealing with a spoilt ballot paper

This information could be supplemented by more general information about the governing structures for which voting is taking place, the services being rendered by that level of government, and the manner in which the results of the election will affect the formation of that government. These more general matters may make a difference to the ability of the voter to make a reasonable and rational choice and reduce uncertainty and insecurity about the election.

Apart from information, voting stations will also want to present an ambience that supports the voter education messages that have characterised any education programme. Appropriate slogans or other messages may be displayed.

Voting Climate

The manner in which all this information will be provided should be considered very carefully in order to make sure that it is accessible, clear, meaningful and absolutely non-partisan. Merely pasting up a series of posters along a wall because there is a surplus of these particular posters is not sufficient and may indeed be counterproductive.

Once a voting site has been set up in the appropriate form, election workers will want to provide basic components for voter information.

Planning

While all election workers should conduct their business in the voting site in a way that is conscious of the public, there may be those who have a particular role in providing information, either to all voters or to those who seek assistance.

- *The role of election workers.*



Ushers and queue controllers are election personnel who give information to all voters. Such personnel will assist in directing voters to queues and from queues to voting site entrances. Where the queues are long, they may make arrangements to deal with elderly or disabled voters. They may also help prepare people for voting by checking that they have the correct documents, by answering queries about the voting process, and by seeking out and reassuring voters who appear diffident.

Such staff should be given additional voter education training beyond that normally given to the rest of the voting site commission. This training should include very close examination of questions of privacy, secrecy of the vote, and non-partisanship. All of these need to be managed particularly carefully at voting sites not only to ensure a good voting experience for the individual but also to place the voting site commission and the voting process above suspicion.

Inside the voting site, those who seek assistance with voting or who have queries in regard to one or other aspect of the voting procedure may be assisted only if prior arrangements have been made for such assistance in the electoral legislation and regulations. A decision will be made as to who should provide this assistance and in what way their assistance will be monitored in order that it be clearly understood as assistance and information regarding procedures rather than determining for whom a person might vote or influencing them in that regard.

Voter education programmes will work with offices or departments responsible for voting site arrangements to ensure that the signs available for a voting site provide the information stipulated by the regulations. Because of this, discussions should start at the earliest possible opportunity in the election preparation process. Once agreement has been reached as to what is preferable and what is permissible, those planning the design and layout of voting sites and providing information to presiding officers on how to set up voting sites should also take into account the need for information and the possibilities of the site providing an educational experience.

- *Signs.*

Posters illustrating voting procedures may either be prepared for display outside the voting site, or they may even be affixed to voting booths. Signs on desks may mention not only the name of the particular desk (e.g., voters' lists) but may also illustrate or explain precisely what the voter is required to do at that desk.

Once again, signs should have a cumulative effect, and care should be taken to display them in appropriate places and to make them in appropriate sizes (see Posters and Banners). Too much information can be confusing, especially if it is going to be viewed by a broad range of voters with different levels of literacy.

In situations where it is not possible to mail information to voters that assists them in preparing to vote, or where additional information is required at the last minute, it may be possible to prepare and distribute leaflets to people as they enter the queue to vote. Such information may replicate that which is displayed, providing basic information about voting procedures and about the voting site layout. It may list the rights of voters, and it, , may thank people for turning out in a similar leaflet handed out after voting.

- *Handout materials before and after voting.*

As voters leave, materials that provide additional information such as the time when the results will be made available, how votes translate into seats or information on government may be

given. This is one of the few opportunities for government or the election authority to guarantee contact with the majority of voters, if not all of them, especially in developing countries.

Contact with voters is always likely to be limited no matter how intensive an educational programme. As a result, it may be that people arrive at voting sites with questions still unanswered. It is possible to use the time while people queue to conclude voter information and to provide services such as checking voters' lists.

- *Information desks.*

Such services can be offered by information desks outside voting sites. These might be on the perimeter or they may be allowed in the general election area. They are likely to include copies of voters' lists and lists of adjacent voting sites so that people who are in the wrong place can be redirected. They may also be staffed with people who can conduct impromptu workshops and demonstrations for individuals and groups of individuals.

If the logistical arrangements and the participation of local civil society volunteers allow for such a service, last minute voter education messages can encourage people to get to the voting sites where they will find assistance. In this way a great deal of time and energy on the part of voters and of educators can be saved. This is the one place where voters will want to be, where they will be motivated to learn, and where they may know what it is they want to learn. A very brief input can become a most effective one, directing people to more information.

5.4.5.4 Voter Education at Counting stations

Depending upon how the election process is structured in a given country, ballots may be counted either at voting sites and then tabulated at successively higher levels of election commissions, or, the vote count may be conducted after voting has been closed, delivered to centralised locations. For the purposes of this discussion, counting stations will be used to refer to any location where ballots are being counted or tabulated and results determined.

Counting stations are restricted to specific categories of people. But they can also become gathering places for the public, especially if results are going to be announced from these locations. So educators need to consider what information is required and how to maximise the opportunities that this very important election moment provides.

While there are fewer members of the general public at a counting station, there are likely to be relatively heavy demands for good and accurate information by certain groups of people who will be having access. These may include the candidates and their agents, accredited election observers and journalists. Although it is likely that such people will have received a briefing from their respective organisations and can receive additional information directly from the counting officials, their need for information that is straightforward and which describes their roles, responsibilities, and rights should not be underestimated.

Information for Those Inside the Counting Site



While posters and handouts may be used to help inform those with access to the counting stations, there are also likely to be members of the public present if there are to be any election announcements at counting stations. Counting officers and returning officers should be briefed to enable them to make the opportunity a memorable one for voters.

Information for Those Outside the Counting Site

Counting votes and declaring results provide an opportunity to enhance the importance of elections in ensuring peaceful transitions of power and in encouraging the acceptance of results and reconciliation among winners and losers. While the majority of people are likely to experience this moment through the radio or television where these are available, many will be present in the streets.

Arrangements should be made for amplification of announcements, their subsequent display, and for the display of any final results. Some countries post official protocols of results, whether for the voting site or aggregated totals at higher level election commissions or counting stations, on their premises for review by the public. Certified copies may also be made for distribution to candidate representatives, party agents, election observers, and journalists. The details of publicising results and the limitations thereon are discussed in Progress Reports; Cumulative Statement of Votes and Publicising Election Results

5.4.6 Role of Voter Education in Registration Process

Making sure that people understand the voters' list (voting rolls, voter registry), decide to register, are able to register and can register correctly poses significant challenges for educators. Voter registration has become an essential prerequisite to the act of voting.

With a few transitional exceptions where it was perceived that voter registration could not be achieved, or where a decision was made to err on the side of inclusion, voters have to be registered in order to vote. Establishing a voters' list and then maintaining it in an accurate way provides a number of challenges for voters, contestants, and administrators. [1]

As a result, educators will take a keen interest in the regulations and systems being instituted to manage the voter registration process. In many instances, registration has come with qualifications. In the past, these were often used to disenfranchise some eligible voters. But in countries where the onus for registration is on the individual, rather than the state, even administrative arrangements can create hurdles that can ultimately have the effect of disqualifying voters. These can require considerable motivation to overcome.

Motivation can be to some extent encouraged through education, through political organising, when the electoral system and government are perceived to be efficient, and where representation makes a difference. Without the incentive to register, mechanisms to register, and the possibility of having one's registration properly recorded, education programmes that encourage individual voters to register may have little impact. Indeed, political lobbying as well as education for registrars and other responsible officials may be as important as the voter education programme itself.

Once the systems for voter registration have been determined, educators can establish a programme. The programme should deal with:

- the reasons for registration
- the benefits of registration

- the manner in which registration is conducted
- how to check the details of that registration
- how to correct one's registration if it is wrong and
- the timetable for registering or correcting one's registration
- Individuals also belong to political parties, and to citizen groups. Thus they will therefore want to understand:
 - ways in which the voters list protects them against electoral abuse
 - how to challenge the lists
 - how the lists will be used on Election Day
 - where the list will be displayed
 - how to read and interpret the lists and
 - the timetable for challenging the lists or requesting modifications

In situations where registration is continuous, voter education may have to be done through existing systems of education and governance. Because voters' lists are closed to changes at some point prior to an election, citizens need to be regularly reminded that they need to register or check their registration details. This should also be a component of any voter education directed at young people who will be registering and voting for the first time.

Where registration is seasonal or the register is subject to a major revision before an election, there might be a proposal to conduct a national voter education programme to support the registration process. Such a programme should be considered in all aspects as an educational intervention. Educators should therefore go through a full educational design cycle (see [Design Cycle](#))

Pre-Election Educational Campaign

There are special considerations because of the very specific nature of a voter registration programme and the urgency of a likely educational campaign. Examples of registration campaigns can be seen at [Budapest, Hungary - Local Government Election Registration](#). (These are manuals that may take some time to download.)

In particular, educators will have to try to ensure that potential voters get to the registration points at the right time. In addition, voters will have to understand the importance of voter registration. And this is not an obvious matter when the primary beneficiaries of voter registration apparently are the administrators rather than the voters themselves.

Motivation, therefore, becomes an important aspect of the educational programme. Unlike elections where there is a contest that serves to energise voters, registration to vote may be met with an apathetic response causing voters to miss the necessary deadlines.

Notes:

[1] Details of how to establish and maintain a voters register are reviewed in [Voter Registration](#).



5.5 Basic Civic Education

This topic area deals with voter information, voter education and the related concept of civic education. In many instances, voter education forms a component of a civic education curriculum. The existence of an on-going civic education programme can certainly lay the groundwork for - and enhance the impact of - voter education initiatives.

Civic education, however, can be broadly defined in ways that clearly take it outside the realm of electoral politics and the election administrator. It is possible that a person responsible for voter education may also be involved in a broader civic education enterprise. Indeed, there is something to suggest that voter education is really an amalgam of voter information and certain aspects of a civic education programme, that is, those dealing with elections. Civic education is largely conducted in informal adult education settings, although there are aspects of formal education in schools. This section of the topic area considers "Alternative Approaches and Terminology" and some of the "Standard Civic Education Messages" which civic educators consider important.

Continuing Uncertainty

There are two temptations in this enterprise. One is to consider everything to be civic education, and for it to be established as the integrating principle and *sine qua non* of all educational endeavours. The other is to restrict it to a small corner isolated from the rest of life's learning processes. Both are being tried in practice, if not considered in theory. Neither are particularly helpful. The balance that is required for citizens to both feel empowered and actually be empowered to participate in founding, building, and sustaining democracies appropriate to their own context is the next challenge for democracy activists and educators.

Terminology

Practitioners of civic education have chosen a range of different terms to describe their work. They choose names for the educational approach that they believe conveys most appropriately the aims of such education. Each of the names, or terms, selected has its own dilemmas and its own operating assumptions. But an analysis of the concept through consideration of the terms does provide some insight into the concerns of the civic educator.

Education for Democracy

Programmes defining themselves as education for democracy concern themselves with preparing people for democracy on the assumption that it must be established and then maintained. Amongst the content of such an educational programme will be the skills and understanding necessary for this establishment and maintenance.

Educators may conduct education for democracy programmes in undemocratic societies and see this as a social intervention in ensuring that they become more democratic. The definition of democracy, therefore, becomes very important both in determining what should be taught and also in the actual educational programme. Such a definition might be a classical one: but it might also be a more radical one, including aspects of industrial democracy, consumer rights, and social justice.

Citizenship Education

Once a society has established a code by which citizenship is established, educators may consider that people require education in which they become more like the ideal citizen. The rights, roles and responsibilities of citizenship will be emphasised. This educational

intervention may actually be linked with the naturalisation process by which immigrants become citizens. As such, it is likely to invoke serious discussion of the legal position of citizens and the manner in which their identity and relationship to the state is defined. The general approach may well be assimilationist, but there will also be those programmes that consider matters such as those expressed in the next paragraph and maintained separately only for the purpose of this discussion.

Education for Citizenship

Citizenship can be defined not solely or narrowly in legal terms but rather in terms of the manner in which people exercise their responsibilities towards other people and the state, or where a state does not exist, to the construction of communal life. Education in support of citizenship, expressed as a set of relationships and responsibilities incumbent on each person and the responsiveness of the state towards this person and the members of his or her community, will consider the skills of active citizenship. Such skills, when expressed, make a person a citizen. Before that they are only a subject.

Such skills may include those necessary to take part in an election, or to make communal decisions, or to participate in public debate. They are likely to include those necessary for ensuring a responsive state or for participating in its construction. These skills may include advocacy, organising, and lobbying for public policy. Education programmes dealing with citizenship are based on the assumption that citizenship is possible. In other words, they are more likely to take place in societies where the concept of citizen has been established and where the practice of citizenship is possible. Such societies have, whether explicitly or implicitly, constitutional arrangements that recognise individuals and their contribution to governance and their relationship as an independent actor within the country and in relation to the state.

Political Education

Those who consider the conduct of public life in the *polis* or *polity*, however established, to be important may describe their work as political education. Where politics exists, individuals need to develop literacy (the ability to read and understand the political life around them). They need to learn ways to participate in that political life.

Social analysis, the investigation of public discourse and communication, the understanding of the ways in which political and social systems interact and the manner in which they negotiate and divide power will all be a part of such an educational programme.

Leadership Training

A final form of civic education is best described as leadership training. Such training presupposes that leadership can and should be learned and then exercised by humans. The programme will consider a wide range of leadership skills and relationships. They are likely to consider questions of personal and political power with a strong ethical and value-driven approach to power. There are two strands of leadership education. While they have some



things in common, and historically appear to have been driven by similar concerns, they manifest themselves in different societies or different strata within societies.

The responsible exercise of power:

Within their organisational framework many churches, clubs, youth clubs (the Scouting movement is one example), and philanthropic societies such as Rotary provide leadership training that focuses on skills development, ethics, social virtues, and so on..

Achieving leadership:

Organisations with less access to power in the society tend to use leadership training programmes that are highly experiential in methodology, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, conducted with those who are denied leadership in society.

At the heart of the discussion about appropriate terminology is the debate about the purpose of such education. Is it merely to inculcate behaviour and skills that fit a person for a predetermined society, or does it have a vital role to play in equipping people to act on and change their environment? The practice varies widely. Fortunately, in societies that are not wracked by war, the ready flow of information and the general international consensus in favour of democracy has meant that the majority of people have the opportunity denied many of their forebears. They can become rulers of their own destinies if only they have the will, the skills and some measure of freedom from want and fear.

Standard Civic Education Messages

Here are at least five standard messages (or themes) that should be covered in a civic education programme.

1. the meaning of democracy
2. the role, responsibility and rights of citizens
3. good governance
4. democratic principles and procedures and
5. democratic institutions and laws

Background

The purpose of civic education is to encourage citizens to participate fully in the political life of a community and country committed to the fundamental values and principles of democracy. With this as a working purpose, those planning and conducting civic education programmes have developed considerable variety in their syllabi or curricula.

At school level, institutions in Australia and the United States of America have established standards or benchmarks setting out precisely what should be covered in an educational programme. Such precision does not seem to be similarly available in other countries, nor is it available for informal interventions with adults. Yet civic education, if conducted only at schools, has the potential to reduce itself to the same level as other subjects which become irrelevant either after school or even during the school period because of the limited opportunities for children to participate in political life.

There is some consensus about the types of messages that have to be developed into theoretical statements that form the backbone of a standard civic education curriculum for adults. These messages will be supplemented by additional materials that take seriously the history of each society and the way it deals with the concepts of contingent consent and bounded uncertainty, and the rules and practices of their particular democracy. These standard messages will revolve around the following topics:

The meaning of democracy - definitions, types, and challenges.

As an example of what educators might prepare to guide learners in their discussion of this subject area and to make available in educational materials, a document that deals with the definition of democracy has been prepared, see Meaning of democracy. The same document also suggests ways in which the subject matter could be used in educational events and conveyed to groups of learners.

The role, responsibilities and rights of citizens.

See Basic Voter Education for discussion of this subject and the importance of dealing with both rights and responsibilities. Individual citizens have limited power in relation to a state unless that state respects and protects the rights of that citizen. Without that protection, it is difficult to speak of responsibilities. Indeed, the responsibility of the person is likely to be to force that state to recognise human rights and democracy.

Good governance

A citizen is empowered to the extent that he or she understands how government operates and has criteria for judging its performance. As government has increasingly come to be seen as a process in which the state, elected officials and individuals acting in concert govern collaboratively, it has been called governance. Good governance not only requires citizen participation, it educates those citizens about democracy and participation.

But good governance must fulfill certain criteria, such as *transparency, legitimacy, accountability, responsiveness, and effectiveness*. It must do this under conditions where participation may force trade-offs between efficiency and democracy. These are amongst the most important and most difficult concepts to consider in a civic education programme.

Democratic principles and procedures

Democracy has values. More importantly, democracy relates to practices, rituals, and procedures that allow citizens to make choices, to ensure the presence of a representative government, and periodically to provide an opportunity to judge the effectiveness of that government.

These values or principles are expressed in action. As such, citizens must understand these principles, which may be universal, and how different societies have been built to ensure that



these principles are expressed. Citizens will also want to explore the manner in which their own country's practices enhance or inhibit democratic principles.

It is useful to make a distinction between democratic principles and practices, as doing so can prevent a country from importing practices that may be taken for granted as being essential to democracy. Instead, countries can examine the suitability of such practices and whether the same principles can be expressed in more culturally appropriate forms.

Democratic institutions and laws

Each country is likely to have its own set, however new, of democratic institutions and laws. These have to be acknowledged and understood if people are going to be able to make use of them, assist in refining or altering them, and change or disestablish them.

Educators have to work out ways to ensure that materials appropriate to their own country are prepared to cover these topics. It is possible to obtain general and comparative information. While this is important in and of itself, it is only as this general and comparative information speaks directly to the needs of the learner group that it really comes to life. Indeed, educators have to constantly make themselves open to finding new examples from different places and different times to relate to their own circumstances.

5.6 Direct Democracy

There has always been a tension between the processes of representative democracy and its periodic elections - producing legislatures which then take on the decision making processes in interaction with citizens - and more direct forms of decision making. So, while most countries have procedures for referenda and plebiscites, these are often limited to moments of extreme importance.

However there are some countries where direct democracy – usually defined as a decision making process, – is more often used. Switzerland is one such country. Certain states in the USA allow citizen propositions to find space on ballot papers under certain conditions.

Civic education can easily be partisan during national referenda or plebiscites. It is very difficult to conduct any form of education which does not require a weighing of options, and it is a very short distance from that to weighting choices – especially as referendum questions are often phrased to force simple choices on complex issues.

There are certain procedural matters which can form part of an educational programme – what is a referendum?, how do you take part?, what is the question?, why is it being asked?, and, particularly importantly, what will the consequences of the various choices be?. And in some cases, it will be possible and necessary to develop educational material which offers arguments for each side of the issue. Where the institution providing the educational material has a non-partisan reputation it may be possible to develop such material. Alternatively educators can merely ensure that voters are not blocked from receiving and understanding the more partisan material being provided by the various camps.

Because referenda are seen as answering big questions which affect the future, and in the process have the potential to disappoint significant portions of the society if they lose, these are often tense moments in even the most stable of democracies. In fragile states they can be the precursors to crisis. Educators will take responsibility for preparing people for winning or losing, will focus on alternative ways forward and will conduct programmes which encourage political tolerance.

Once a referendum is settled, educators will want to develop programmes which consider the consequences and meaning of the decision taken – always difficult to determine. Recent referenda in France and the Netherlands have demonstrated that outcomes can be uncertain and that there is often no plan B.

In British Columbia an innovative experiment in a different sort of direct democracy (to consider the complex and highly emotional matter of electoral system reform) saw the calling up of a citizen assembly to represent the citizens at large. This jury type approach to public decision making provides a very different, more process oriented decision making and consultative process, and because of this allows educational process both for the participants and those who wait outside the assembly room.

6. Civic Education

Civic education can be broadly defined in ways that clearly take it outside the realm of electoral politics and the election administrator. It is possible that a person responsible for voter education may also be involved in a broader civic education enterprise. Indeed, there is something to suggest that voter education is really an amalgam of voter information and certain aspects of a civic education programme, that is, those dealing with elections.

Civic education is largely conducted in informal education settings, although there are aspects of formal education in schools. This section suggests that civic education in a democracy is best learned and taught in the heat of the struggle to establish and sustain that democracy.

6.1 Introduction to civic education

For the purpose of this topic area, the term *civic education* is used to cover the larger job of educating citizens to take responsibility for their roles and responsibilities within democratic states and exercise their rights.

'**Civic education**' has gained favour as a description of this empowering and freeing process, but it retains some tinges of a socialising mission with which astute educators operating in varied contexts will want to grapple.

These varied contexts form the basis of the following sections of the topic area. While there are core themes involved in civic education, the contexts within which these are explored and developed have become more diverse. As the role of education in re-shaping these contexts to make them fit for citizens - and citizens fit for them - has become more important, it is important that for educators pay attention to their differences and trajectories.

These themes are those of vision, virtue, habit and practice.

Explorations of civic education invariably start with explorations of democracy and the related terms of citizenship and civil society. Those engaged in civic education have a vision of empowered citizens voluntarily organizing themselves for self-reliance and political impact in societies where representative and participatory democracy produces peace, prosperity and



personal liberation. All of these are contested concepts. Although the 1990's with their belief in the triumph of democracy as a regime of government, when civic education received renewed impetus, have given way to the more cautious years in which war, terror and revolution have re-emerged as tools of state building and power projection, there is need for civic education programmes to place a vision before educators and learners.

Vision

Civic virtue has become a stock theme in a number of curriculum innovations and projects designed to shift the focus of education from merely a knowledge and information activity – learning about the politics of particular countries, or the history of the development of a constitution and the manner in which that constitution has been used or abused – to a consideration of the personal responsibility of the individual learner to behave well in relation to the democratic society in which he or she lives. Lists of virtues have been created which are assumed to be particularly appropriate to this form of living. They include respect for others, tolerance, co-responsibility for the community, commitment to constitutionalism and human rights, peaceful co-existence and friendship in local and national affairs.

Virtue

In some educator typologies virtues and habits intersect with one another and with the separately defined *civic skills*. But all agree that civic education must inculcate behaviours which enable people to construct a democratic way of life, irrespective of the particular regime under which they find themselves. Amongst these habits are the simple ones of non-violent conflict management; shaping, expressing and promoting interests and needs so that competing interests and needs can be identified and resolved; voting; being a public as well as private person and so on.

Habit

Societies are always complex – and democratic societies have to establish, on the basis of their particular histories and balance of forces, practices which enable them to meet the bare minima (see Meaning of Democracy) which form the bedrock of such a society. Having constructed these practices and procedures – and in the process of renewing and reforming them to meet contemporary demands – societies seek to educate their citizens in making use of and participating in them.

Practice

At its heart then, civic education seeks to make people powerful and capable of creating a democratic society and participating to the fullest in a democratic society. However contexts differ, so do the challenges facing educators in these contexts.

It is important that decisions taken in developing programmes, looking for models and materials, seeking support from other practitioners and empowering people take account of these differences. Is the civic educator involved in preserving and renewing a democratic state (see Civic Education in Established Democracies), building or re-building after war or civil

conflict (see [Post war reconstruction](#)), tending the emergence of democracy (see [Civic Education in Emerging Democracies](#)), or transforming societies (see [Authoritarian](#)) Or is the educator part of a team addressing a much more unstable crisis in which the concept of state is irrelevant to the immediate emergency (see [Civic Education During Emergencies](#))?

6.1.1 Authoritarian Regimes and Fragile States

Education for democracy does not require a democratic state. Indeed some of the most innovative non-formal educational initiatives have taken place in authoritarian states. As noted in the introduction, civic education is often a feature of authoritarian states seeking to build social consensus amongst their subjects. Certain societies are indeed guided by the belief that an authoritarian regime, whether established through traditional leadership, in response to crises of war or failed development, or through generally accepted ideological or religious views, is an appropriate way to govern the state. This is not the place for that discussion, but the topic area does not speak to this form of civic education, although many of the programme elements can be used in such static situations.

Fragile or failing and failed states do present particular problems because they introduce levels of personal insecurity and sometimes terror and war which make it difficult to attend to educational programmes. Nevertheless, people living in these circumstances deserve every assistance in managing their lives and in rebuilding their countries. In some cases this effort must wait until there is a level of security stabilization, but if educators are excluded from the planning during this period, institutions and processes could be established which undermine their later attempts.

Civic educators committed to building democratic states will find opportunities for education within those organisations which are allowed to exist or which carve out space for themselves. Such institutions may be faith based, voluntary relief associations, self-helps and cooperatives, or even house bound discussion groups. In some cases, such groups may be present outside the country concerned.

Such educational programmes inevitably co-exist with political action, even if constrained by the context, and this makes them particularly powerful.

Youth programmes are particularly important under these conditions. In some cases, they provide a safe space for youth who would otherwise be prey to the state. But even where youth are involved in some form of direct action against the state, or other civil conflict, education can inform the quality of their life and action and make it more likely that there will be a democratic outcome to these conflictual situations.



6.1.2 Post war reconstruction

In Afghanistan traditional assemblies have been recreated with young people in order to encourage citizenship and motivate people to participate in local government elections as candidates.

In Iraq, tremendous work was being done with women's groups in exposing them to constitutional debates and enabling them to visit other countries in the run up to their postwar constitution, referenda and elections.

In Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the focus was largely on elections, but some constitutional education was also undertaken.

In Bosnia Civitas established a school based civic education programme using local co-ordinators.

In Sierra Leone, key institutions of democracy such as the National Commission for Democracy and the National Electoral Commission have undertaken programmes focused on peace education and elections with the youth as the key target.

Postwar societies which have been able to develop an international or domestically supported reconstruction programme are able to introduce a range of educational programmes.

These are often linked, as in Angola, with civil society strengthening programmes – where domestic organisations start to take up the space that has been created by a peace agreement or ceasefire. In some, they are linked with the creation of new election management bodies or statutory institutions. And of course it is essential that civic education programmes are a part of any demobilization activities, especially but not only for child soldiers.

All these programmes battle against the conditions in the country after the war – damaged people and infrastructure, embryonic institutions, and inevitably unresolved fighting in certain regions. These conditions were no different after the World War II, and there are lessons to be gained by looking at Europe and Japan in the early days after this particular war – whether for educational interventions, constitutional debates and processes, or for developing visions of hope in societies which are perhaps closer to their immediate conflicts.

Education will often focus on the peace arrangements and peace treaties, on building tolerance between previously warring factions, and on the proposed transitional arrangements. Often these include waves of elections and referenda – on timetables necessary to keep a treaty alive but invariably under strain which adds to citizen confusion and insecurity.

6.1.3 Civic Education in Emerging Democracies

After many years in which the established democracies have relied entirely on entrenched habits and institutions to sustain democratic citizenship, more recent fears about emerging anti-democratic tendencies, alienated groups and apathetic voters have caused a much more concerted debate about additional efforts, some of them educational and some of them through experimentation with electoral reform, party re-invigoration and direct democracy.

It is sometimes forgotten that established democracies do have their own histories of conflict and stress. A number of the institutions, practices and procedures which do exist emerged from those moments of stress and come into their own at future times when similar problems arise. Other problems faced by these societies may indeed be new and require new institutions.

In the United States of America, civic education curricula have been developed for use in public schools, and such a programme has also been underway in the United Kingdom. Both emerged outside the official state system and relied on lobbying, advocacy and work with individual schools and teachers to motivate for their more universal adoption.

In Germany, the foundations and lay academies that emerged in the early 1950's after the war to revive citizenship and ensure that there was reconciliation and rehabilitation continue to operate within a political formation framework supported by both federal and provincial government agencies.

As Europe has expanded and integrated, European Union educational programmes, both of a more informative nature and with a deeper educational purpose have been established – the network under the Grundtvig/Socrates project provides information and best practice. The emergence of some incipient transnational citizenship roles suggests a new challenge for educators.

Of course in such highly complex societies as emerge with development and long established democratic practice, it is hard for educators to contemplate universal programmes, and few of these exist. Those seeking to develop such programmes for particular democratic moments will find assistance in the sections on alignment and strategy. Instead educators are working with new migrants, excluded groups, strengthening political parties, promoting human rights campaigns and development education.

Some countries, especially those with missionary or colonial pasts, have used development education to arouse their own citizens to domestic action and international solidarity and compassion. The techniques used in these campaigns need to be finely judged to ensure that they do not just create social mobilization of a short term nature without a concomitant long term commitment to democracy and active citizenship.

6.1.4 Civic Education in Established Democracies

After many years in which the established democracies have relied entirely on entrenched habits and institutions to sustain democratic citizenship, more recent fears about emerging anti-democratic tendencies, alienated groups and apathetic voters have caused a much more concerted debate about additional efforts, some of them educational and some of them through experimentation with electoral reform, party re-invigoration and direct democracy.

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6.1.5 Civic Education During Emergencies

International action in times of emergencies is now well established. The lessons of the post-tsunami relief in the first six months of 2005 are now recorded.

Unsurprisingly the demands of these relief efforts, whether protecting refugees, distributing food or medical attention, or rebuilding damaged property and societies, have obscured the various educational needs which arise and the attempts by organisations to meet these needs.

As displaced communities are forced to settle for more extended periods in makeshift communities and makeshift premises, their social and educational needs grow. New political arrangements (at a community level and in relations with local authorities and any emergency organisations), gaps in community leadership, coping with disrupted socialization processes, especially amongst young people and children, will all need to be attended to by communities and matters can be made much easier by educational programmes.

In some cases, where displaced communities are in a state of limbo, education can provide some purpose to otherwise long periods of apparent dependency.

In such emergency situations, there is need for educators seeking to be of assistance to consider questions of entrance and access and relevance. Curricula may initially focus on simple adjustments such as obtaining paper work, on grief and trauma work, and on rebuilding community. If communities are forced to remain for extended periods in temporary circumstances, more long term concerns of personal development, civic skills, and vocational training or skill honing may be possible. Given the importance of community building, educators may choose to use peer education techniques and self-governance processes.

However, education programmes of any depth require time in planning, premises, and personnel – and a too heavy investment in these may solidify the circumstances of people who

would rather return to previous homes, or may have their own opinions about how best reconstruction and reinvestment should be done.

6.2 Relationship Between General and Civic Education

There is a relationship between general and civic education, but it is not a simple relationship.

Universal Education as a Necessity for Democracy

One of the great twentieth century educational theorists, John Dewey, produced a treatise on education entitled *Democracy and Education*. This book, and others like it, argued for universal state-supported education in order to ensure that democracy was sustained. The vital nature of general education would ensure the survival of the democratic experiment, which would otherwise be overcome by alternative forms of social government.

As the twentieth century progressed, it became apparent however that, while universal education may be conducted on a liberal and pluralist basis, with a respect for personal experience and for the development of knowledge, it does not automatically ensure that people can participate actively in the democracies which now exist. Indeed, there is some nostalgia for the civic spirit and virtue of earlier ages and the idealism of those who first argued for and promoted democracy and, over time, universal franchise.

Civic Education as a Supplement

As a result of this, education has come to be seen as a general activity which must be supplemented by some form of innovative curriculum or additional syllabus known as "civic education." This can be done either across a curriculum - typically the discussion revolves around the formal educational institutions at primary and secondary level - or by adding a subject to a curriculum. The latter results in the isolation of civic education from other life concerns, and in crowded curricula it also has to compete with other demands. Even this says nothing about the comparative value placed on various subjects by the demands of higher education and external examinations.

On the other hand, cross-curricula interventions fail because of their complexity, requiring an educational flexibility not always present in schools and an educational facility not always available on the faculty. So, because such interventions are the province of all, they become the province of none.

Experiments are Continuing

Civic education in schools is, therefore, an enterprise in the making. Informal approaches linked to community life and social organising seem to be making more progress, as are those linked to elections when democracy is alive in people's minds. As informal education deals with matters that are either ignored, segregated, or beyond the province of a school, civic education becomes an integral form of education that draws together the general life skills



provided by general education and places them at the disposal of adults trying to participate fully in society.

Universal Education Lays a Foundation of Necessary Skills

In this sense, it may be possible to consider ways in which general education can form the basis of civic education, and how the skills of the citizen can draw their sustenance from formal education where this is available.

6.3 Institutionalising Civic Education

If it is true that people learn from experience, and if large numbers of people participate in political life - both in democracies and, despite the personal cost, undemocratic societies - without having had the benefit of "civic education", then there must be other ways in which people are being educated. And indeed there are. The primary educational medium for civic education has been and remains the social process. Where this process is a vital one, and where those engaged in it are reflective of the philosophy behind their struggles and the practice in it, leaders are developed, citizens become active, and organisations increase in strength.

Educators may not be able to replicate the social conditions that lead to union organising, community civic organisation, and politics conducted in democratic ways. But they can engage these social processes in ways that make it more likely that people will learn and develop. This can only be done if educators are connected in some way to the hurly-burly of political life. Organisations that combine political activism with educational services, or educational organisations that have a relationship with those involved in social affairs, or even educators employed primarily as trainers within organisations, have more chance of ensuring that civic education takes place within and through the engagement with public affairs and social change that are the best of all possible schools for democracy.

It is possible that such schools can be created through the judicious development of public for a, associational life, and communal activity. While these may emerge apparently spontaneously, those in the business of civic education can also stimulate these as part of their own programme. Public debates about issues, for example, can provide an opportunity for people to learn about freedom of opinion, rules of debate, management of controversy, and rituals for decision making despite the fact that no educational purpose is perceived by those who attend.

Participation as Education

In the first place, educators will rejoice in the fact that citizens participate in public and communal life, no matter what the issue that motivates them. Participation alone can hone people's understanding of political life, but without a reflective and educational component to their activism, these understandings can be limited and can even be inaccurate. The role of the educator vis-a-vis participation in political or civic activities is twofold:

- to increase people's ability to engage in that political or civic activity
- to develop ways in which these same people can reflect on and learn from the experience of the political or civic activity

Of course, there is no guarantee that the outcome of citizens' participation will be a constructive one. There seem to be a number of cases in which people have become disillusioned and have taken to violent and undemocratic ways of obtaining their political ends. In other cases, people have merely capitulated. Yet the evidence does suggest that it is possible for people to commit

themselves to the principles of democracy and, even in circumstances where there is no societal support for this commitment, engage in activity that increases their effectiveness over time.

This has certainly been the case in many countries where social movements have, through a confluence of forces not entirely of their own making, established cultures of democracy and public participation that are generally admired. These cultures, however, are not necessarily transportable, and the lessons learned in one society about how to achieve democracy may not always sit comfortably in a country in which there is a democratic constitution but good governance is more the issue.

The principle of encouraging people to work together, to build support for their cause amongst a disparate group of potential partners, with this inclusive group to develop codes of decision making and behaviour that are fundamentally democratic, and then to engage those who may support or inhibit the achievement of their intended social goals, continues to develop both civic virtue and civic activism.

Public Education Campaigns

Most countries conduct public education campaigns that deal with health or gender issues, water safety and use, environmental matters, city cleanliness, smoking, and so forth. These campaigns sometimes use the principles outlined in Public Education Principles. But they do not intend at the outset to promote civic education per se.

It is difficult to see, however, how a public education campaign cannot support civic education. When it is involved in coordinating and aligning large groups of citizens, civil society organisations, or educators, it is in the business of developing civic skills. When it is preparing its messages, it cannot avoid dealing with questions of civic virtue and citizen responsibility. When it is establishing its case, it cannot but deal with social questions and with social organizing.

Educators committed to programmes in support of democracy will make use of public education campaigns to carry civic messages and to ensure that these campaigns do adopt a broader view of their work. At the very least, they will engage them to ensure that the budgets of those programmes can be geared in such a way as to reduce the load on a purely civic education budget.

So educators will want to identify such campaigns and negotiate with them ways in which they can do the work of civic education. In order to do this, the insights of the civic educator regarding the importance of public participation for the success of public education, and the importance of political understanding and political skills for developing an environment within which the campaign can succeed, will be useful.

Transitional Moments

There are moments in the history of a country when change is apparent. At such times, people are more receptive to discussions of public life and political participation. They are likely to be



involved, or at least to be concerned, and they are likely to express needs for education, awareness or information. Such moments are rare, but when they occur, they provide the educator with a real opportunity.

Perhaps the most regular transitional moment in any democracy is the election, especially the election in which it appears likely that there will be a change in government. Such moments are perhaps the main reason why voter education as opposed to civic education appears to have the lion's share of international and domestic attention and support. But actually, what is happening is that the election is providing an excuse (albeit a good one) for civic education. The issues of the election and the choices that have to be made are more stark, the public discourse is greater, and the opportunities for education, especially at an informal level, more patent.

There are other moments, however, and educators will want to acknowledge and make use of these. In large countries, where the national question of constitutional democracy has been solved, these moments may more readily be sought in local circumstances. And it is no surprise that civic education is being increasingly tied to questions of local democracy and local government. On the other hand, it may be that, in addition to local government, regional government or economic associations provide the next frontier of transition for many countries.

Public Work

There is an increasing number of experiments, particularly in universities but also in some schooling systems and individual schools, to develop service learning programmes. These are normally designed as a combination of class room teaching and voluntary activity in existing service and welfare organisations. Because those involved are full time students and are driven by the needs of the educational year, the service offered and from which it is intended that lessons will be learnt tends to be sporadic and periodic, organized not by the students but by the educational institution and the receiving institution.

With the increasing mobility of young people, especially in the north, voluntarism during vacations has become a large scale activity, and these intern, volunteer and fellowship programmes go further in plunging young people into development and service work, often but not always in a developing country.

The value of this is limited in scope – very few people can participate – and the level of learning is limited by the commitment of the individual and the sending and receiving institutions.

But a movement has begun which recruits groups of young people with an adult guarantor to engage in public work – the co-operative effort to improve their own society by focusing on real problems through designing and implementing real solutions. This is done by structuring social analysis, transferring organisational and political skills during the problem solving process, and encouraging young people to take constructive action over a fixed period of time.

Typically such public work groups, now operational in the USA, South Africa and Ireland, will meet during leisure time, select problems in their own communities, engage with those such as local governments who have resources and power, and build alliances with other groups in the community who have a common interest in solving the particular problem. It is not just an action group, because while in action, young people are learning how the world works and how to change it; and in the process developing a civic understanding which can be transferred to other parts of their life and society.

6.3.1 National Curricula for Civic Education

There are a number of attempts to create a national curriculum or syllabus for civic education. These are developed within the prevailing education philosophy and terminology of particular education systems – establishing standards, specified outcomes, content based syllabi and text books, and, in some more limited cases, examination standards.

Those choosing to institutionalize civic education through determination of curriculum by the educational authority must consider the issues related to introduction of curriculum: the intended outcomes, the material to be taught, the teachers, the sites in which it is to be delivered, support materials and teacher and learner support, and evaluation.

They have to consider whether this curriculum is an incorporation into existing subject areas or whether it will stand alone, and if the latter, how it will relate to the various existing subject areas given the possible overlaps and duplications.

The major hindrances to the development of a national curriculum are not related to the subject, although there are a number of challenges in this regard outlined in other sections. They are rather to be found in finding time and space, in training and supporting educators, and in evaluation of learners.

Formal Education

There is a direct link between the extension of universal basic education and democratization. Some have argued that numerate, literate and generally educated people are drivers for increased democracy. Others have looked at the sustainability of democracy and have insisted that this can only happen if those who have achieved universal suffrage also receive a standardized basic education.

Historically, it has been assumed that, with the exception of a variety of optional subjects designed to induct pupils into the existing social and political structures, the very act of education is by definition civic education. In some highly publicized experimental schools, micro-societies were created to ensure that people learnt both from the classroom and the self-governing institution itself.

But in general as schools became more institutionalized, as the syllabus became fuller and more specialized and as society was perceived to be more complex, civic education or a variation on this term became a subject competing for space in the school day.

Most of these subjects have become degraded and discredited, not necessarily because of their content, although an increasing mismatch between this content and the student experience of life has an impact, but rather because such subjects are perceived by teachers and students alike as less important than the hard subjects at the centre of the curriculum – languages, mathematics and science, and other core subjects.



To counter this, civic education has been mainstreamed into the life of the school through extra-curricular activities such as student elections, self-management of extra-mural societies, and parent-teacher-student boards. Subject specialists have been encouraged to introduce civic education concepts into their subjects, identifying and introducing these through history, languages, arts and drama, sociology and economics, business management and life skills.

There is some controversy about the role of the school in civic education. It can be seen as too political and therefore likely to lead to conflict and partisanship. Alternatively communities may not want schools run by the state to interfere in the political formation of their children, fearing it will be a form of propaganda or socialization at odds with the values and commitments of that community.

In this regard civic education does have some parallels with the ongoing debates about the role of religion or religious education in schools. However, in democratic societies where citizens have established and fund through their taxes a national school system, there is an expectation that, as was originally envisioned when universal education was being promoted, schools develop responsible and responsive citizens.

Considerable work has been done in the United States of America recently in developing a standardized curriculum and in attempting to get it taught – sometimes as an alternative module to more general political science. In summary they have focused on three components and one methodological imperative:

- Essential civic knowledge, including the development of constitutional democracy and its principles
- Essential civic skills, including intellectual and participatory skills and their practice, and
- Essential civic virtues, such as the traits of responsibility and respect for others.

An imperative for this is the democratic teacher, imbued with a commitment to a classroom environment compatible with the theory and practice of democracy and freedom.

In South Africa, an extensive Values and Education Programme has been developed and institutionalized in the national department of education to preserve, promote and extend the constitutional democracy established in 1994.

In the transition of the Eastern European states to independence, democracy and, in many cases, accession to the European Union, civic education through the existing schooling system or through parallel non-formal processes and institutions was one of the early forms of democratic support by the international community.

Non-formal education

A number of countries have introduced national curricula for civic education which are delivered nationally using non-formal educational methods. Through a process of consultation or direction by an election management board or similar institution, a wide range of existing organisations and institutions have agreed to deliver a common curriculum.

Kenya is a particularly good example of this. Its published curriculum was prepared and delivered in the period prior to the national elections of 2002.

The curriculum was prepared after a national baseline study of citizen attitudes and educational needs. It was delivered by a coalition of some 70 non-governmental organisations co-ordinated

by a small project management office, and funded by international development funds through a form of joint funding. Evaluations of this programme have encouraged its funders and participants to plan for a second round. Delays in the finalization of the reform constitution, whose drafting provided impetus to round one, has had an impact on this – and is a good example of how national civic education programmes can be trapped by exigencies outside their control.

Malawi has also operated a national curriculum driven, appropriately for Malawi, by a programme with the acronym, NICE – National Initiative for Civic Education. This programme has relied on community educators and community libraries organized by NICE itself rather than a coalition as in Kenya.

In both cases, the curriculum has received national and statutory support although it was established by a combined effort of the international donor community and the non-governmental community. It is hard to know whether a different curriculum would have been created, or whether the initiative would have been attempted at all, if money had merely been made available to the national education system.

Those developing such a non-formal nationally delivered curriculum face a number of problems in regard to programme development and programme ownership.

In Kenya these were overcome by the baseline study and the development of formally printed and published materials in advance of the roll out of the programme. In addition, the programme was delivered as a time bound campaign in a particularly propitious political climate, rather than being developed as a standardized curriculum which would stand over a period of time.

In Uganda such a curriculum was developed by the election management board in the early 1990's and it was intended that any wanting to do civic education would follow this curriculum.

Some countries accredit agencies, making available materials. Others accredit agencies and allow them thereafter to develop their own materials merely following certain guidelines.

In Germany, the development of theoretical material and curriculum support materials, while not mandatory, acts as an informal regulator by encouraging others to make use of what already exists rather than do their own costly development.

Non-formal education is by its nature conducted in a range of settings (raising problems of language, adaptation of materials and audio-visual supports, timing and the levels of entrance and interest of the learners). It is delivered by a range of educators and facilitators, and, despite the possibility of short term cascade based training, it is inevitable that they will approach the programme with their own styles and teaching skills. And finally, non-formal education is often done at short notice, reducing the possibility that already prepared materials will be to hand.



The costs of nationally produced curricula, whether of the limited nature tried in some countries or the comprehensive nature used in Kenya, are high, and wastage can be considerable. The risk that materials will quickly lose their 'fit' and be replaced by locally produced courses adds to the possible wastage.

6.3.2 Responsibility of Civic Education Among National Institutions

The responsibility for civic education has variously been given to departments of education, election management bodies and statutory institutions. Such national institutions may have the mandate as part of a more general mandate in regard to human rights, constitutional affairs, or social development.

There have also been some national multi-sectoral councils or forums established through statutory provision or voluntary association.

And finally, there are domestic manifestations of international organisations and associations.

Each of these has its merits and challenges.

If a country is going to encourage and promote civic education then it is essential that there should be some nodal champion capable of drawing in other stakeholders. This requires that it be able to exert some power and influence – through legislative primacy, budgetary provision, or intellectual leadership. In the absence of this primacy, civic education is going to remain fragmented even if it follows the German model – see below. This may not be seen as a problem, and may even be seen as appropriate to a democratic society encouraging multiple voices and multiple institutions to interact in ways which strengthen the society – but it does introduce a level of institutional inertia which makes innovation during times of crisis difficult.

The German model

Germany has established a federal institution for *politische bildung* which obtains federal funds for its own programmes and disburses the funds through a chain of foundations, regional centres, and non-governmental organisations. By developing educational materials and through the incentives and controls which grant making allows, it has a nationally funded, democratically aligned and effective domestic civic education system in which formal education, non-formal education, state institutions and civil society play a role. This is a system that has become so deeply entrenched over half a century of existence that it is barely remarked upon in the country and is unremarked by those developing civic education models. It deserves more attention than it gets.

Nodal institutions

The choice as to the nodal institution – a department of state, a statutory institution such as an election management body or human rights commission, a university or group of universities or a national forum on civic education – is going to be determined by individual countries. In some cases, such institutions may emerge as a result of a particular set of circumstances. However it happens, that institution needs the resources to at the very least engage other stakeholders and develop some form of national programme.

Election management bodies are not necessarily the appropriate organisations: they have the demands of elections, limited election staff, and the need to be vigorously non-partisan. Human Rights Commissions face some of the same problems, although they are more used to being 'politicized' and to managing this. .

Because of the importance for civic education of not being seen merely as an activity designed to protect a state and benefit an incumbent government but rather to support a democratic system, nodal organisations in the state may be viewed with some suspicion even under the best of circumstances. Some form of state/non-state partnership may be preferable, and so national councils should be considered.

6.3.3 Popular education

Around the world, popular education movements linked to democratization or community life have been established with their own autonomous and indigenous curricula. They have often been run on a master-student basis, where the masters are people of particular standing in the community. They vary from what are called ‘initiation schools’ in parts of Africa, through religious schools now seen most often in Jewish and Islamic communities, and onward to schools associated with the labour unions and particular social or political movements. More recently, civil society organisations have developed ways of consolidating their various short term educational programmes into more extensive residential components believing that there is longer term impact from such investments.

A number of these recent developments look back to a particular movement which its protagonists consider to have had a significant impact on the development of democracy in the Scandinavian countries. There is a continuing promotion of these ideas and the popular institutions which support it in developing countries. It is useful therefore to look at perhaps the longest standing and most institutionalized of all popular education models associated directly with democracy.

The first folk school opened in Denmark in 1844 at the instigation of Nikolaj Grundtvig, and these ‘schools for life’ organized around a single teacher, a home and a small community of live-in learners quickly became part of the democratic life of the Nordic countries.

There are now schools which are firmly based on the Grundtvigian principles in many countries, and others which, while still retaining the name of folk school or folk high school, have evolved largely as vocational institutions with some attention to the political nature of work and to a firm relationship with the government in the town or region where they find themselves.

In their earliest manifestation there was a direct relationship between the democratization of the Nordic societies and the folk school. They were intended to “enliven and to enlighten, but first and foremost to enliven” (Christen Kold, 1866), and they insisted on control of their own curriculum at a time when more general formal education was slowly, and without immediate impact on working and farming classes, extending its reach.

Over time, the folk high school developed a particular societal niche at moments when individuals were finding their feet, exploring a new role in society, wanting to develop a new skill, or entering a new phase of life. There is a special interest in people with special educational needs and in immigrant communities. Different folk schools have different



specialities and interests, but all of them operate according to an ethos described recently by the principal of the Alma Folk High School in Sweden as:

- a free adult and liberal education
- voluntary and non-formal although delivered through a formal institution
- institutions which operate on the belief that all citizens are free and independent and have a right to participate in all aspects of democratic society
- creating the conditions within which people freely pursue knowledge
- stimulating curiosity and critical thinking

Early folk schools encouraged singing, the use of the common language, and an understanding of politics and public life. This education is useful in the greater sense, but not utility focused in the sense of merely focusing on job skills or the passing of examinations. Very soon these principals were adopted by labour movement schools as well, and the folk school movement today still has broad social acceptance and support despite universal formal education.

Linked to this movement is the study circles movement, which makes use of animator organized self-education groups of adults who meet regularly to learn a skill or study an issue or subject. These study circles encourage self- management, life-long learning and particular learning from others in a collaborative and equal relationship. Study circles therefore provide remarkably effective and low cost opportunities for adult education and the development of social capital.

A number of developing countries (amongst them Tanzania and South Africa) are experimenting with study circles and folk schools because of the evident impact these have had on the quality of life and democracy in the Nordic countries.

6.4 Social Processes

If it is true that people learn from experience, and if large numbers of people participate in political life - both in democracies and, despite the personal cost, undemocratic societies - without having had the benefit of "civic education", then there must be other ways in which people are being educated. And indeed there are. The primary educational medium for civic education has been and remains the social process. Where this process is a vital one, and where those engaged in it are reflective of the philosophy behind their struggles and the practice in it, leaders are developed, citizens become active, and organisations increase in strength.

Educators may not be able to replicate the social conditions that lead to union organising, community civic organisation, and politics conducted in democratic ways. But they can engage these social processes in ways that make it more likely that people will learn and develop. This can only be done if educators are connected in some way to the hurly-burly of political life. Organisations that combine political activism with educational services, or educational organisations that have a relationship with those involved in social affairs, or even educators employed primarily as trainers within organisations, have more chance of ensuring that civic education takes place within and through the engagement with public affairs and social change that are the best of all possible schools for democracy.

It is possible that such schools can be created through the judicious development of public for a, associational life, and communal activity. While these may emerge apparently spontaneously, those in the business of civic education can also stimulate these as part of their own programme. Public debates about issues, for example, can provide an opportunity for people to learn about freedom of opinion, rules of debate, management of controversy, and

rituals for decision making despite the fact that no educational purpose is perceived by those who attend.

In the first place, educators will rejoice in the fact that citizens participate in public and communal life, no matter what the issue that motivates them. Participation alone can hone people's understanding of political life, but without a reflective and educational component to their activism, these understandings can be limited and can even be inaccurate. The role of the educator vis-a-vis participation in political or civic activities is twofold:

Participation as Education

- to increase people's ability to engage in that political or civic activity
- to develop ways in which these same people can reflect on and learn from the experience of the political or civic activity

Of course, there is no guarantee that the outcome of citizens' participation will be a constructive one. There seem to be a number of cases in which people have become disillusioned and have taken to violent and undemocratic ways of obtaining their political ends. In other cases, people have merely capitulated. Yet the evidence does suggest that it is possible for people to commit themselves to the principles of democracy and, even in circumstances where there is no societal support for this commitment, engage in activity that increases their effectiveness over time.

This has certainly been the case in many countries where social movements have, through a confluence of forces not entirely of their own making, established cultures of democracy and public participation that are generally admired. These cultures, however, are not necessarily transportable, and the lessons learned in one society about how to achieve democracy may not always sit comfortably in a country in which there is a democratic constitution but good governance is more the issue.

The principle of encouraging people to work together, to build support for their cause amongst a disparate group of potential partners, with this inclusive group to develop codes of decision making and behaviour that are fundamentally democratic, and then to engage those who may support or inhibit the achievement of their intended social goals, continues to develop both civic virtue and civic activism.

Most countries conduct public education campaigns that deal with health or gender issues, water safety and use, environmental matters, city cleanliness, smoking, and so forth. These campaigns sometimes use the principles outlined in Public Education Principles. But they do not intend at the outset to promote civic education per se.

Public Education Campaigns

It is difficult to see, however, how a public education campaign cannot support civic education. When it is involved in coordinating and aligning large groups of citizens, civil society organisations, or educators, it is in the business of developing civic skills. When it is preparing its messages, it cannot avoid dealing with questions of civic virtue and citizen responsibility.



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Transitional Moments

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7. The Educational Mandate

Is Voter Education Necessary?

Elections are contested by political parties and, in some countries, by candidates forwarded by public organisations and by groups of voters. They are administered by election management authorities.

Under what circumstances and with what right do educators involve themselves in this seemingly straight-forward process? Some might assume that it is a process undertaken by adults who know their own minds and have the sophistication necessary to survive in the socio-political context in which elections may be taking place.

Yet, a simple and obvious case may be made for disseminating information to the public about how elections will be conducted. Even in established democracies with a tradition of periodic elections, voters require information.

First time voters, the elders, the illiterate and those with special needs are among the priority groups to be educated. Changes in election technology, for example the introduction of computer touch screens, or in election practices such as voting by mail, will necessitate general voter education efforts. An increase in the number of candidates or political parties contesting an election, as well as the number of public initiatives voters are being asked to decide, may complicate ballot design.

The recent confusion of the "butterfly ballot" used in Palm Springs, Florida, during the 2000 elections illustrates the need to conduct adequate voter education even in what may be considered the most ideal circumstances.



The need for voter education will be even greater in transitional and post-conflict environments undergoing radical systemic, legal, and procedural changes and where the right to vote may be extended.

But what is the mandate for more extensive education, both in the midst of elections and as an on-going effort, about the value of elections? This is a more difficult question.

There are even those who suggest that voter education can be intrusive and open to abuse, and that it should be excluded from the electoral process altogether.

A Growing Commitment to Voter Education

The expanding mandate for voter education stems from a variety of sources. Emerging international principles support the spread of democracy and the extension of universal suffrage to all. Elections, of course, are an integral part of this movement. In this context, then, voter education ensures that citizens understand and are able to exercise their electoral rights.

In addition, legislative mandates establish clearly defined functions for electoral management authorities. There is a growing belief that electoral management authorities should provide not only information but also education to assist voters in exercising their civic responsibility to vote.

Mandates Define Voter Education Activities

Establishing a mandate enables an organisation to focus on objectives and activities appropriate to the particular society and electoral process in which it is operating.

In some cases, the mandate for educating voters may be established through legislation or executive order. Usually, legislative mandates are conferred upon election management authorities or entities receiving public funds for the conduct of voter education. The mandate of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation to engage in broad-based voter education and training activities, for example, was provided for by an executive order which tied such activities to the successful implementation and fulfillment of voting rights legislation enacted in 1994.

With respect to civil society organisations, the mandate to conduct voter education activities is typically established through its incorporation documents, by-laws, and mission statement. The mission statement, in particular, articulates the need that the organisation has been created to address, identifies the constituency it serves, and briefly explains how the organisation goes about doing so.

A public institution or civil society organisation may have a narrow or broad mandate. They may be limited to the conduct of voter education activities. Or, they may conduct voter education activities as part of a broader mandate in civic education or public advocacy.

Once a mandate is created, either as a result of legislation, an executive order, or the adoption of a mission statement, it will be necessary to build public awareness of and support for, as well as establish the legitimacy of, a voter education programme. Taking such steps increases the prospects for a successful voter education effort.

The occurrence of an election will certainly raise a host of issues about which people may want more information or education. Very often, educators use elections as a platform to broaden people's understanding of social, economic and political issues in general. They may even use

this opportunity to try to improve people's organisational skills. These are all important aspects of education for a functioning democracy.

At the same time, however, educators need to be focused. They need to operate in a clearly defined environment. The development of both institutional/ organisational mandates and programme-specific parameters are central to defining this focus.

7.1 International Principles of the Educational Mandate

The civic education mandate, while it may come from legislation or a public mission statement, is also likely to stem from or be influenced by comparative international practice and the instruments and principles established by countries in international forums and treaties.

A full discussion of these principles and their relationship to elections is contained in a publication of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. [1] In its survey of nineteen universal and regional instruments, the publication points out that "countries and peoples across the globe have recognized that free and fair elections are a crucial point on the continuum of democratization and an imperative means of giving voice to the will of the people. [2]

In order to achieve this, the publication draws attention to what it considers common elements of electoral law and procedure that ensure elections are conducted freely and fairly and under the rule of law. In relation to public information and voter education the document reads:

124. Funding and administration should be provided for objective, non-partisan voter education and information campaigns. Such education is especially critical for populations with little or no experience with democratic elections. The public should be well informed as to where, when and how to vote, as well as why voting is important. They must be confident in the integrity of the process and their right to participate in it.

125. Literature should be widely available and should be published in the various national languages to help ensure the meaningful participation of all eligible voters. Multimedia methods should be employed to provide effective civic education to people with various levels of literacy. Voter education campaigns should extend throughout the territory of the country, including to rural and outlying areas. [3]

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been involved in a number of election support programmes throughout the Commonwealth. Between 1993 and 1997 it organised a range of Commonwealth-wide gatherings of Chief Electoral Officers during which they held discussions on best practices. Based on these discussions and draft materials, they produced a document on electoral practice titled *Good Commonwealth Electoral Practice* [4]. Beyond the importance of the document, the discussions themselves were an important basis for information and experience sharing.

The principles outlined in the document apply not only to local and national elections, but are also intended to assist people in strengthening of their own electoral systems. As such, they are presented as tools rather than an overall prescription. Consider the paragraphs dealing with public education:



42. Appropriate and effective, non-partisan public education programmes, though not always the responsibility of an electoral body, are an essential feature both in countries where a voting "culture" is being developed as well as in established democracies. As such, they should be adequately funded and professionally organised [and] target particular groups (e.g. women, minority groups, the disadvantaged, and school children). Where practicable, national election practices can be built in to school election procedures and election education centres can be established in appropriate locations.

43. The encouragement, in particular, of participation by women in all facets of the democratic process warrants special attention.

44. The cost of public education programmes should be minimised by public service broadcasting facilities being made available at little or no charge. [5]

The Commonwealth document goes further than the United Nations statement in identifying the importance of voter education in "established democracies". Between 1994 and 1997 increasing sensitivity about democratic performance and participation - and especially voter turnout and enthusiasm - between established and emerging democracies made it clear that democracy cannot be taken for granted under any circumstances.

As a result, there is a general, international consensus on the importance of voter education and the necessity for establishing professional, cost-effective programmes in support of elections. This also translates into support for the broader democratisation agenda.

International electoral observer groups inevitably comment on the adequacy of voter education programmes and preparation of voters. These statements extend our understanding of what is required in order to ensure not only free, fair and credible elections but the necessary foundation for democratic decision making and governance in complex settings.

7.2 Legislative Framework

National Legislation Impacts Roles of Election Authorities

Elections take place within a legislative context which can either support or inhibit goals of voter education. Election management authorities may consider, not only their own legislative jurisdiction but also legal provisions which may impact their ability to inform and educate voters and achieve popular participation in electoral processes. In this regard, it is important to understand that the election management authority normally will have to rely on the elected government (or in the case of transitional societies, the statutory authority) to prepare and pass appropriate legislation.

Unlike most other legal guidelines, however, legislation relating to electoral systems; the conduct of elections; the freedoms of speech, information, and association; campaign finance; and political activity, can be manipulated to benefit an incumbent party or regime. Not only can this have implications for the general management of elections, it can also impact the effectiveness of efforts to inform and motivate voters.

At the earliest possible opportunity, therefore, election management authorities may want to develop mechanisms to reduce the impact of particular political circumstances on all legislation which has electoral consequences. Such mechanisms may include the placement of certain

electoral procedures within the constitution, requiring special majorities, particular committee approval, or public notification and participation procedures prior to amendment.

Good Election Legislation Facilitates Voter Education

Beyond this, there are other important considerations to be addressed with respect to election legislation.

1) Voter information and education tasks will be easier if legislation and regulations reduce complexity and encourage general participation.

In particular, legal definitions of, and practices relating to, spoiled and invalid ballots can be either restrictive, and as such punitive, or open. Provisions relating to ballot design can either be complicated, and therefore confusing, or straight-forward. The process of voting can be facilitated, both psychologically and physically, by the number, accessibility, and location of voting, voting stations; the quality and training of electoral officers; hours of voting; the provision of special voting services; and the ease of registration.

While there is a general presumption that those drafting electoral legislation favour the widest possible access to the election, history suggests that this has not always been the case. Legislation should be inherently democratic. If it is not, it may be necessary for public advocacy groups to engage in voter information, education, and mobilisation in order to change the system.

Consistency, both within and between legislation, is of significant importance. Are all of the laws and provisions governing elections, for example those pertaining to voting rights, local elections, national elections, referenda, campaign finance, public information and campaign activity, and administrative and criminal penalties consistent? It is not uncommon for national and local election laws to contain inconsistent or conflicting provisions. This will present real problems if national and local elections are held concurrently. If there are conflicting deadlines for voter registration, or differing methods for marking ballots, or varying procedures for filing a complaint, confusion is likely to rule the day and the task of educating voters will be considerably more complicated. To avoid these types of problems, some countries have adopted universal electoral codes.

2) Education is not necessarily a neutral activity.

Fears may arise that giving carte blanche to all sorts of groups in society to go into the field and provide education will lead to anti-government propaganda, biased promotion of particular parties, and incorrect information. Legislation, therefore, can be restrictive in determining who can undertake voter information and education. At present, however, most electoral legislation gives very limited attention to the matter of voter education. This often means that the election management authority has discretion in engaging non-statutory bodies, organisations, or individuals. Newly appointed election management authorities often find it difficult to exercise this discretion in societies where the demand for information and education is great but where resources are limited and awareness, acceptance and trust of alternative educators is nascent.



There are ways resources can be maximised if the legislation either has defined voter education expansively or at least has given the election management authority the power to draw in other national or international organisations and individuals.

7.2.1 National Legislation and Local Ordinances Impact Voter Education Initiatives

Elections normally take place within an existing legislative framework. In transitional societies, this framework may be very complex, with a variety of temporary arrangements and laws from a previous dispensation, or even with transitional provisions or enabling legislation, as can be found in countries formerly comprising the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, that temporarily amend or place a moratorium on previous laws (or provisions of those laws). In such circumstances, presidential decrees affecting the electoral process also are not unheard of.

Within the legislative framework, there may be particular laws or provisions that will impact voter education initiatives. These should be identified and their implications for programme implementation assessed.

Constitutional Imperatives

Constitution defines qualifications and rights of citizenship, eligibility to vote and stand for election, and general electoral arrangements. It defines forms of government, and therefore the outcome of voting, and establish the manner in which the public will be represented and the likely efficacy of that representation. The constitution also addresses general security measures, the service responsibilities of different state agencies and offices toward one another and toward the public, and questions of equality and equity.

Because elections are so fundamentally linked with democratic succession and governance, much of the business of elections is likely to be constitutionally protected. Educators must familiarise themselves with the constitution, the relevant constitutional provisions of their country or state, and the manner in which they govern the content and conduct of their voter education programme.

Where a constitution is in place, there may be a variety of established laws relating to the conduct of the electoral management authority, its jurisdiction and powers, and its fiscal reach and responsibilities (see [Election legislation](#)).

Other Legislation at the National Level

Beyond election specific legislation, different laws at the national level within a country may affect voter education programmes. These may range from the mundane to the convoluted and can lead to frustration. An example of the mundane may be ensuring that publications are registered, identified, and are available to copyright libraries or public archives.

More convoluted legislation may govern whether educators need the permission of the occupant or the owner of a privately owned property, such as a farm, to conduct voter education activities. And frustration may occur if educators are required to have a security clearance in order to conduct education at a military base.

This section merely sensitises educators to the need to monitor legislation which will have an impact on their voter education programme. In situations where there is the likelihood of conflict, judgements will have to be made about how precisely the programme meets all legal requirements even if these have been established to frustrate the free flow of information or the education of citizens. In situations where this type of conflict is less likely, judgements will

have to be made about the costs of compliance with specific legislation and therefore the ability to take on a particular type of programme.

There are some obvious areas of legislation that educators will have to consider, including:

- media and publishing
- security
- fundraising and charities
- freedom of information
- education and training and
- location access

Legislation may impact on the manner in which material is published, for example, the coverage given by the media to the electoral process, the content and size of advertisements, and the ability to obtain free air time. Legislation may have encouraged or discouraged media diversity. Consequently this may affect the number of media outlets available, their relative market-share, their target audience, and the extent to which they are a trusted source of information.

Electoral Management Body and parties have to consider provisions regulating access to free air time. There may be regulations requiring disclosure of sources relating to all, the election-related messages or products, including voter education materials, be identified. It is recommended that there should be a review of the material contents by authorities prior to their publication.

For more information on these types of issues, see the Media and Elections Topic Area, in particular [Legal Principles](#), [Legal Framework for Media](#), [Law or Regulations on Media during Elections](#), and [Voter Information](#)

In some countries, security legislation may have an impact on public gatherings, their organisation, timing, and promotion. Outdoor activities may be restricted by curfews. Security legislation could range from the most restrictive (in either a part or all of a country) to that which provides constructive support for the elections. In such cases, education planners will have to understand the roles that police and army units could play in such areas as crowd control, logistical support, and access to their own staff for voter education.

Funding educational programmes requires support from the state, foundations, or other philanthropic, solidarity, or individual sources. Many countries have legislation regarding fundraising, financial reporting, registration of financial officers or fundraising staff, and the manner in which these funds either are taxed or become exempt from taxation.

Education programmers operating in countries with freedom of information legislation will themselves have to comply with the provisions of that legislation. Where freedom of information legislation does exist, it will also enable them to promote the transparency of government, normally a fundamental component of effective public information and education



programmes. Where no legislation regarding freedom of information exists, or where it is restricted, such activities are likely to become more difficult but not impossible.

Because voter and civic education are primarily informal educational activities - unless a curriculum has been applied in the formal schooling system - educators may not have to contend with general educational legislation. But they may have to comply with legislation regarding recruitment and employment of educators and with any national training standards. In addition they may want to make use of any national training qualification guidelines.

Local Laws and Ordinances

Within a country, there are also likely to be a set of local laws and/or ordinances that will affect voter education activities whether conducted by indigenous groups or international organisations. Very often, local officials will adopt ordinances governing such activities as public rallies (special permission, in the form of a permit, for example, may be required) and regulating where campaign and election materials, such as posters, may be hung and who is responsible for their removal. Ordinances addressing noise levels and public disturbances may also come into play. Failure by those conducting voter education to familiarise themselves and comply with such local ordinances may lead to fines and other penalties at the local level.

This review of legislation is by no means comprehensive and does not take into account the basic common law of countries and their standard labour, commercial, and civil rights legislation. Neither voter nor civic education programmes fall outside of national legislation merely because they are concerned with elections or broader political, social, or economic issues. Educators will have to understand and be able to comply with the country's legislation where it applies. This can make the roles of international organisations assisting in the provision of voter education quite difficult. For this reason, the development of partnerships with indigenous organisations or under the aegis of the election management authority itself is often essential.

7.2.2 Election legislation

Election legislation may exist as a set of separate laws or as a single electoral code. Legislation in this area is likely to address the electoral system, voting rights, the establishment and functioning of the election management authority, voter registration, election preparations, and campaign financing. While voter educators may not participate in the drafting of this legislation, it will have a significant impact on the voter education undertaking.

Electoral Systems

Different electoral systems place different demands on voters and election authorities. The choice of a system normally reflects the social circumstances within which voters find themselves. If legislation cannot be easily amended, there may be times when social change precedes changes to election law. This can result in a misalignment between voters and the system. Recently a number of countries have been engaged in discussions about potential reforms of their electoral systems. The nature and timing of changes to the electoral system will have a major impact on voter education. Where a system has been in place for some time, there may be some assumption that this is the only, and most appropriate system, and therefore there will be some resistance to change.

Generally, however, voter educators will want to lobby for systems that limit complexity both at the voting level and in determining results. **Election Legislation and Voter Education**

A legislative mandate for voter education is often a prerequisite to mobilize the necessary budget and staff to support the programme. Depending upon the degree of decentralisation of election administration, a legislative mandate may stem from either national or state laws. There may be countries where legislation excludes broadly defined voter education initiatives on the part of the election authorities: Spain is one example. In such cases, election management authorities have to provide voter information within very restricted guidelines.

On the other hand, increased understanding of the value of education has resulted in more detailed voter education clauses in electoral legislation. In a number of cases, these have been linked to public information and campaign legislation. Legislation often needs to be interpreted carefully, however, and the independence of the electoral management authorities, their security of tenure, and control of their budgets all have an impact on their ability to establish innovative programmes of public information and voter education.

Legislative clauses may range from the simple to the more complex. In some cases, the functions delegated to the electoral management authority may not be clear in mandating voter education. The apparent coincidence of elections with democracy, for instance, may result in the electoral management authorities either receiving a clear mandate to conduct voter education or interpreting it simply from their roles and functions.

In Ethiopia, the election of a constituent assembly requires the establishment of an electoral board. In addition to its other "powers and duties", it was required "to widely provide to the public civic education relating to elections." [1]

A similar brief provision exists in the Australian Commonwealth Electoral Act of 1918. The functions of the Electoral Commission are "to promote public awareness of electoral and Parliamentary matters by means of the conduct of education and information programs and by other means." [2] Brevity, however, has not limited creativity. In Australia, the compulsory nature of voting has led voter educators to a broad interpretation of their mandate. In fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that all voters are able to cast their ballot and understand its importance, the state places the initiative to vote with the voter. The result has been an extensive voter education programme.

In Canada, the educational mandate has been extended in an interesting way to ensure that education is provided on an inclusive basis. "The Chief Electoral Officer may implement public education and information programs to make the electoral process better known to the public, particularly those persons and groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights." [3] This is a good example of how changes in the social context have been followed by legislative directives.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In two transitional situations, provisional authorities have been given equally brief directives. In the referendum over the creation of Eritrea, the proclamation reads that the election authority has as one of its duties "publicizing the referendum and informing the voters." [4] And in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the provision reads in part, "In order to inform the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina about the electoral process and citizen's rights as voters, the Provisional Election Commission has decided that all radio



and television stations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and in both Entities shall broadcast informational voter education material produced by the Provisional Election Commission." [5]

This provides an illustration of the close relationship between voter education and the general role of the media in elections. And juxtaposed as it is with articles relating to party use of the media, it also underscores the close relationship between voter education and political propaganda.

The Mozambican Electoral Law includes a chapter entitled "Election Propaganda and Civic Education". Within that chapter of eleven articles, only one, Article 102 (Civic Education), relates to actual concerns for voter education. But by linking these sections, it appears that voters are going to become not only better informed but more committed to electoral participation if they are exposed both to a well-publicized campaign and to the necessary voter information.

The Mozambican law provides some additional insight into voter information and education messages and methods:

1. Through the media, the National Electoral Commission shall promote the education of citizens on the objectives of the elections, the electoral process, and the manner in which each voter casts his/her vote.

1. The communiques, semiofficial statements, and other acts of the National Electoral Commission shall be published by the public sector media free of charge and as a matter of priority.[6]

Beyond standard legislation on elections, stand-alone legislation on voting rights, such as exists in the United States and Russia, may require that election management authorities at all levels provide information and education to the electorate at large or to certain target groups and make the voting process more accessible, for example to voters with disabilities or to first time voters.

In some cases, often in transitional environment, election legislation is silent on the issue of informing voters. In these instances, election management authorities need to decide whether or not they have the authority to conduct voter education as a part of their broader election preparations. This decision can be affected by the socio-political context in which elections are being held, legal traditions (for example how narrowly legal provisions are interpreted), and sensitivities about mandate. Does the public expect the electoral management authority to provide fundamental information on the elections? Is there money to do so? Would political participants consider this to be beyond the mandate of the election authority and would this perception adversely affect the legitimacy of the institution or the elections? Such concerns, in the absence of a legal mandate, have led the Republic Election Commission of Montenegro, for example, not to engage in voter education activities.

Also in countries undergoing a transition, it is not uncommon to find situations in which an election management authority has a legal mandate to inform, educate or to change attitudes of voters, but has not been provided with the necessary budgetary allocation to fulfil such obligations. This is known as an unfunded mandate. In resource scarce environments, simply pulling off an election on time will consume all available funds. Very often, voter education becomes a relatively low priority or is considered a luxury. Georgia provides one example in which election budgets have been routinely underfunded, with transfers of government funds taking place relatively late in the election process. Under such circumstances, the international community often becomes involved, assuming the costs of voter education efforts.

Election Legislation and the Promotion of Democracy

Because of the importance of elections in maintaining democracy and its institutions, many electoral management authorities have used the powers given to them for informing the public and educating voters to expand their work into schools and other educational institutions. In some cases this type of work may be construed less as civic education in its totality but more as education for or about elections. Russia and Ukraine provide two examples in which the election management authority and educators have joined forces to introduce classroom-based courses on elections.

There are times, however, when the electoral code seems to go beyond this type of electoral education and compels electoral management authorities to intervene at a deeper level. In Mexico, the code requires the Federal Electoral Institute to "assist in the promotion and diffusion of the political culture" and to "contribute to the development of the democratic life." [7] This has resulted in a very extensive educational programme that is not only on-going but extends beyond the scope of a particular election.

In South Africa, the act establishing the electoral commission lists a range of functions to "promote conditions conducive to free and fair elections" and to promote "knowledge of sound and democratic electoral processes". [8] The objectives of the commission are "to strengthen constitutional democracy". [9] This may have educational implications as yet unforeseen by the commission.

The leeway allowed by such provisions, however, places significant responsibility on electoral authorities. On the other hand, this may not be the case in societies where there are many competing institutions, both private and public, or where the authority has an onerous administrative mission. It will also not be feasible in societies where there exists no permanent election management authority. Also the size of an election or constraints caused by the cost of elections may make it difficult for the authorities to engage in anything more than simple voter information. Indeed, operating a general educational programme at the expense of an effective voter information programme for each election may be counterproductive.

Election regulations

Election legislation may, or may not, empower election management authorities, or other entities of the state, to develop regulations governing the election process. Regulations serve to explain or clarify provisions of election law and instruct or guide election administrators and participants in the electoral process. Regulations can cover such issues as campaign or election related deadlines, nomination or campaign finance reporting procedures, allocation of free airtime, voting station arrangements, the processing of voters on Election Day, criteria for determining whether or not a ballot is invalid, and counting procedures. At times, these regulations may resemble forests in which voters and educators can become lost or, in some cases, even entangled by legislative underbrush.

Timing



Regulations often follow legislation. Yet these regulations may contain details that educators need to refine significant parts of their programmes. If educators plan to familiarize voters about what to expect on Election Day, for example, then they will need detailed knowledge of voting station procedures. These details may be addressed through regulation rather than through law. If regulations are adopted relatively late in the election campaign, or are subject to continuous revision, the amount of time available for educators to formulate complete programmes becomes limited. In many transitional environments, where the election law itself may be in a state of flux proximate to, or even in the midst of, an election campaign, the odds that regulations can be adopted in time to provide necessary clarification may be low.

The country of Georgia during the 2000 election campaign provides a case in point. In the final weeks of the election campaign, the Parliament was still debating substantive changes to a number of laws governing elections. As a result, it was ultimately unclear which version of the relevant laws would apply. Under such circumstances, it was virtually impossible to issue regulations for the purpose of clarification. On what would such regulations be based? Among the details to be decided were: what forms of voter identification would be accepted on Election Day? and what was the proper method for marking a ballot? These are the types of details that must be addressed by educators in a timely way.

Even if an election law is firmly in place, such factors as a short election campaign, limited resources to devote to an election and the absence of a permanent election management authority can combine to result in a situation where the election calendar overtakes the issuance of necessary regulations. Under these types of circumstances, there is a very real jeopardy for educators. If regulations are adopted or changed after a voter education programme has been launched, the result can be confusion on Election Day - the very opposite of what was intended by the programme.

Detail

Regulations are not so much designed for voters as they are for those administering and contesting the election. Yet certain details may well impact voter participation in the process. As a result of inadequate legal provisions or limited training of electoral staff, regulations may be quite detailed. Detailed regulations can encumber educators who may have difficulty addressing these in their programmes. A high level of detail can be difficult to accommodate in straightforward and brief messages designed for television, radio or posters.

Decisions will need to be made about which media and formats can best accommodate more detailed information. There will also be concerns about loss or clarity or theme in the face of too much technical information. For some voters who are unfamiliar with or unsure of the voting process, however, there may be a desire for more rather than less information. Identification and targeting of these groups of voters will help in directing more detailed information to those who need it.

Authority

While the adoption of **11th hour** or detailed regulations may make the job of educators more difficult, the absence of regulations can also be problematic. In some transitional environment, the election management authority or other responsible state bodies may not be conferred with the legal authority to adopt regulations. This situation can also be troublesome. If there are gaps in legislation or confusing, or even contradictory, legal provisions, the election management authority may be powerless to bring clarity or uniformity to the election process. Ultimately, both administrators and educators may have some of the same questions as voters about how

the process is supposed to work. If these questions cannot be answered in a timely fashion, the voter education programme will be incomplete and voter confusion is likely to persist.

The Role of the Educator

Educators will want to scrutinise all existing regulations carefully and make sure that they receive the regulations in both draft and final forms (without mistaking one for the other). In draft, educators may want to comment on how the regulations may affect their educational task. With the final version, educators will have to use educational programmes to convey the details of the regulations correctly, and, if necessary, amend educational materials and presentations to ensure ongoing accuracy. If changes warrant, they may even consider ways to re-educate those who have already gone through their initial programme. Perhaps most important, educators may urge the publication of full and final regulations as early as possible and the authorities to stick to them despite any temptations to the contrary.

Legislative vacuums

In some situations, voter education may be launched in a legislative vacuum. Legislative vacuum's can affect voter education in two ways. First of all, the election law may be silent on the role of election management authorities and other entities in conducting voter education activities. This may be the result of an oversight, or an intentional effort to limit the franchise or keep the electorate in a state of ignorance. If the electoral system is being reformed, there is also the possibility that legislation fails to acknowledge the voter education needs that are emerging.

The absence of election law provisions that adequately provide for voter education will likely exacerbate general uncertainty about the electoral process. Educators within election management authorities often face inertia if there is no legal mandate for voter education. And there may be political or financial ramifications if they opt to proceed with voter education in the absence of a legal mandate. Other organisations may be unwilling to commit resources for voter education programmes that may be rendered obsolete by unforeseen discrepancies between the projections of educators and the intentions of legislators.

Secondly, there may be gaps in legislation with respect to fundamental aspects of the election process that need to be communicated to voters. Does the law adequately and clearly address, for example, such issues as: voter registration procedures; necessary forms of identification on Election Day; the process and deadlines for filing complaints; opportunities to vote early, via mobile ballot box, or by absentee ballot; the proper method for marking the ballot; and voting station procedures on Election Day? If not, it will be very difficult for educators to address voters' questions about the process.

While legislative vacuums are not desirable, they do occur. Waiting for them to be filled may be impossible. Education planning takes time and organisation. And the less time that is allowed for this, the higher the costs may be, not to mention the risks of wasting resources and adding to public confusion.



Overcoming Legislative Vacuums

In the event that there is no legislation, or at least legal provisions, pertaining to voter education, measures can be taken to ensure programmes do not dissolve into platitudes, unhelpful generalities, or inaccurate and misleading statements.

First, educators should be clear in their own understanding of their mission, declare it often, and maintain allegiance to it.

It may also be useful to consider the context in which legislation was adopted or amended. Under what kind of time constraints and political pressures was the legislature operating? What was the rationale behind various provisions as well as options that ultimately were not adopted? Will there be opportunities for further reforms in the future? What obstacles might prevent reform? Undertaking such an assessment can help educators better understand what may be possible at a given point in time and to better plan for the future.

While educators may not be able to clarify every single issue in a given election, it will still be possible to communicate important principles and information. It may not be possible, for example, to say whether voters will have to produce identity documents, voting cards, or have their fingers marked with indelible ink. But it is possible to communicate why there should be no duplication of votes and the various ways to prevent this.

Empower and encourage participants early in the programme to seek information for themselves. Contact lists, basic source documents, and networks are all useful resources for this. The uninitiated may also be taught to read and understand basic legislation in order to track it when it becomes available or throughout an amendment process.

There is also an education and advocacy role that can be played by educators, whether in election management authorities or in civil society organisations, relative to public policy makers and legislators. Sometimes it is useful to explain or reinforce how both gaps in legislation and an ill-informed or confused electorate can impact on the efficiency, uniformity and legitimacy of the electoral process. Illustrate how past problems might have been avoided through better legislation combined with adequate voter education.

The Importance of Transparency

The ability of educators, among others, to follow the adoption of new legislation, track the amendment of existing legislation, or to have input to the electoral reform process will depend, in large measure, on their ability to access information and decision-makers. If parliamentary hearings and debates on electoral reform are not open to the public, if there is no public notification and discussion period, if drafts or even final versions of the law are not made widely available, it will be difficult to conduct voter education in an informed and timely manner.

In some transitional and post-conflict environments, where there are **11th hour** changes to election laws, where there are limited resources and networks for printing and distribution, and where there is neither a legal foundation or a political tradition of disclosure, it is not uncommon to find both administrators and educators working without the latest version of the law. Promoting transparency needs to be an integral part of the electoral reform process as countries move toward more democratic systems of governance.

7.3 Constructing a Mandate

The mandate to conduct voter education may come from a variety of sources, for example through legislation or a mission statement. Beyond this mandate, those responsible for voter education will want to negotiate the aims and parameters of a particular voter education programme with participants in the process, including the election management authority, the election contestants and civil society. Each of these has a role to play within the electoral process and, as such, will have an interest in the voter education efforts.

This section discusses each of these stakeholders, reviews their roles in ensuring that an essentially competitive activity - bidding for power conferred by citizens - is also a collaborative exercise, and then suggests ways in which the aims and parameters of a voter education programme can be articulated in a participatory way.

7.3.1 Election Stakeholders

7.3.1.1 Stakeholders in Voter Education Mandate

For an organisation to be successful in fulfilling its voter education mandate and the aims of its programme, it must engage those who have a primary stake in the outcome of that programme. Stakeholders need to be informed about the programme, and their acceptance and support sought. It is likely that all participants in the electoral process will feel that they have a right to comment on, participate in, and assess the effectiveness of the programme. They may choose not to exercise this right. Even so, some people may choose to criticise or even undermine the programme.

Wise educators will go out of their way, therefore, to frame their mission and sense of purpose as well as establish the aims and parameters of the programme with all the primary stakeholders. This interaction can be planned, but often it will also involve unanticipated activities (see [Mechanisms For Partnerships](#)). At times, it may even ignite a measure of public controversy. This is not unwelcome, provided it does not become counterproductive or diminish the credibility or self-esteem of the educators.

Three Constituencies

There are always three stakeholder constituencies involved in an election:

Election management authority.: In many cases, election legislation will establish an Election Management Body or designate a government agency responsible for administering elections. Depending upon the organisational structure of this body, there may be specific departments responsible for such areas as voter education, public relations, training, regulatory drafting, election preparations, and so on. There may be other statutory bodies as well, such as the legislative institutions themselves, security organisations, or local governments, that have some responsibility to support election preparations.

The contestants.: The primary contestants in an election are the candidates who are running independently or being put forward by registered political parties, public organisations or



groups of voters. Within their own campaign organisations and often with the help of political party structures, the contestants may have resources dedicated to such activities as voter information and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities.

The electorate.: The third group of stakeholders is comprised of all those who are eligible to vote. The electorate can be considered at large; segmented into groups, such as women voters, young and first time voters, or military voters; and in terms of more formal organisations and associations described in shorthand as *civil society*. The latter, a large and amorphous grouping, has variously, and in some cases erroneously, been described as the independent, non-governmental, or voluntary sector. Civil society plays an important role in voter education because of its ability to mobilise in favour of public interest activities, its capacity to reach out to a wide range of different audiences, and its potential resources.

Elections are about both competition and collaboration. Voter educators exploit the collaborative behaviour of all three stakeholders to ensure their acceptance of and support for their programmes.

7.3.1.2 Election Management Authority and Other Statutory Bodies as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate

Depending upon the circumstances under which an election is being held, the non-partisan voter education effort may be an official one, undertaken by the election authority, or one conducted independently by civil society organisations, or it may be some combination of the two. To ensure the consistency of the message, accuracy of fact, and reach of information, it will be important for all entities engaged in voter education to develop and maintain constructive relationships.

The Election Authority

The election management authority may be structured in a variety of ways. It may be a permanent Election Management Body with full-time members and a professional staff. It may be a temporary commission established proximate to an election and comprised of part-time members and limited staff. Or it may be an administrative unit within a government agency, perhaps with seconded staff. In any case, the authority responsible for administering the election will have a vested interest in ensuring that accurate and timely voter information is distributed as widely as possible.

Depending upon the resources at its disposal, the election management authority may be in a position to conduct its own voter education programme. Or it may be partially or entirely dependent upon international assistance and/or civil society groups to undertake this task. A division of labour may also develop, with the election authority assuming responsibility for general voter education, for example, while international organisations and civil society groups target special groups, such as ethnic minorities or women voters. In this case, routine interaction, in the form of information-sharing and coordination, will be important. Whatever the arrangements, the election management authority is likely to have a special interest in and ultimate control over the official voter education programme. It is, after all, one of the more public manifestations of the election authority.

Election management authorities will want to ensure that information is accurate and neutral. The quality of the voter education programme, both in terms of its substance and its conduct, will also affect the public's perception of the effectiveness and professionalism of the election management authority.

In addition to a national office, the election management authority may have regional or local commissions charged, as part of their broader responsibilities, with the dissemination of public information including voter education. Ensuring that there is a close relationship between those responsible for administering the election and those responsible for voter education at all levels is essential.

The Need for Good Information

Effective voter education programmes depend on good information. This information can be considered both in terms of the electoral process and the electorate.

First, those responsible for voter education need clear, correct, and timely information about the electoral process. If the legal or regulatory framework is in a state of flux as a programme is being developed, voter educators will want to maintain open lines of communication with those responsible for adopting legislation or drafting regulations so that information can be obtained as quickly as possible.

To ensure the efficacy of the voter education programme, information must also be obtained about the electorate and from voters, themselves. What are the characteristics of the electorate? Are there segments of the electorate, such as young or rural voters for example, who appear to be particularly apathetic or ill-informed? What do voters find confusing or intimidating about the registration or voting processes? Are there important pieces of information unknown to them? Have there been changes to election procedures about which they are unaware? This is the type of information that must be communicated to ensure that the voter education programme actually meets the needs of the electorate. At various stages of the voter education programme, concepts, messages, and media products can be tested through focus groups or other forms of market research to determine the clarity and appropriateness of information. It is also possible to solicit input and feedback more informally from voters.

It seems somewhat obvious to suggest that contact with voters through the voter education programme usually results in good information about how voters perceive the election process and any problems surrounding it. Yet, in the midst of election preparations, administrators may tend to neglect this source of information. There is also a tendency for those who are intimately involved with the details of the election on a daily basis to be somewhat out of touch with what and how much do ordinary voters actually know. A good voter education programme, therefore, will include a mechanism to obtain and process information from voters and make available to the election management authorities for remediation.

Government Departments

Apart from the election management authorities, there are other statutory bodies that may need to be consulted as the voter education programme is being refined. In some countries, departments of information or education may be responsible for on-going civic education programmes. Because civic education has a nation-building component, presidential offices, broadcasting or telecommunications bodies, and departments dealing with development, constitutional planning, or other institutional arrangements may also be involved. Within each



of these entities, there may be specialists who have views on voter education initiatives, how these should be carried out, and the extent to which they complement or compete with their own civic education programmes.

Education departments may be concerned primarily with children, but often they are also involved with adult education and training. And they may be responsible for the licensing and qualifications frameworks for those who do educational work. Or they may have developed, and therefore be one of the stakeholders, in such a national qualifications and training network or council. These are important allies, as well as potential competitors, especially if their own budgets are strained.

Independent Statutory Bodies

Independent statutory bodies may be responsible for overseeing particular aspects of a country's constitution. Human rights commissions, for example, constitutional courts, commissions responsible for gender and racial equity, and councils dealing with special groups all have had increasing advocacy and educational roles. As such, they have a role to play during elections and should be involved in negotiation and coordination of the voter education programme.

7.3.1.3 Organised Civil Society as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate

Voters and citizens do not stand alone as individuals in a vacuum. Nor are political parties the only mediators of their interests in the political realm. This topic area will invoke the term **civil society**. While this section deals with the importance of civil society being involved in the processes of designing, implementing, and evaluating voter education programmes, it will also develop a working definition of civil society.

Civil Society: A Working Definition

This section will take a pluralistic and liberal approach to the concept of **civil society**. Specifically, it adopts the broad definition of civil society developed by Larry Diamond:

the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from **society** in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable...it excludes...political efforts to take control of the state.[1]

In other words, civil society consists of a range of associations and membership organisations that bring citizens together to act in political and policy realms. It cannot be segregated from the private sector, as it sometimes is, because it will inevitably include associations with commercial and business interests. Nor can civil society be discussed as an independent sector, as it can be remarkably partisan in its expression. Rather, it may be considered an amorphous conglomeration of interests and resources that can, at crucial moments in a country's history, be aligned in favour of certain social goals.

For the purposes set forth herein, the authors would caution against any use of the term that would suggest an ideological connotation. In many of its usages, the assumption is made that civil society is progressive, or has a coherent social policy in favour of the poor and disadvantaged, or has a particular view of social and economic relations. When used in this way, however, the term can become controversial, especially when used in an electoral context. In environments where political or electoral authorities are intent upon limiting political

competition, the ideological use of the term civil society may well lead to the exclusion of civil society from campaigns and elections altogether.

Mobilizing Civil Society during an Election

An election is one of those seminal events where civil society - because of its resources, its voluntary nature, its diverse skills, and its ability to reach into all sectors of the society - should be mobilized and, to the extent that it is possible, aligned in favour of non-partisan educational activities.

In an election period, a variety of groups may be involved in voter education and election monitoring, as well as the more politically charged activities of endorsing one political party or candidate over the other and campaigning on their behalf.

These groups may not necessarily have political or electoral or even educational activities as their primary focus. As a result, they will have to negotiate any political activities with their membership. These types of groups include trade unions, community groups, business and professional associations, and possibly religious bodies.

There may be many other organisations and associations that also support a successful election but will remain independent from the candidates and from the election authority. Some of these groups may have a mandate specific to political and electoral processes, such as nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to voter and civic education, public advocacy, election monitoring and parallel vote counts, and human rights. One well known example of such a group in the USA is the League of Women Voters.

In addition, there will probably be a range of special interest groups that will conduct voter education and mobilization directed primarily at their own constituency. Such constituencies may include young and first time voters, women voters, ethnic or linguistic minorities, rural or remote communities, handicapped voters, and internally displaced persons or refugees. Some of these constituencies may be **at risk** in terms of their relative lack of information, apathy, sense of alienation from existing institutions and processes, or vulnerability to manipulation.

NGOs and Civil Society

The use of the term NGO sector in conjunction with civil society, and the tendency amongst some leaders of NGOs to assume the role of spokespersons for civil society, should not confuse educators and election management authorities about the difference between them. However important NGOs may appear, they are, in fact, actually a subset or segment of the broader category designated as civil society.

That wider civil society includes all types of associations already mentioned. But educators may want to look very closely at the full range of groupings in their country. Some, such as sporting and social clubs or savings and cooperative groups may be less visible and less obvious options for conveying voter education. Yet members of these groups may represent all



political persuasions and therefore be a valuable non-partisan resource to a voter education programme.

Organizing Civil Society

It should be relatively easy to contact a national election management authority, or in the case of local elections a municipal election management authority, to attend a meeting to share information about voter education activities and, where possible, to coordinate them. It should also be possible to make similar invitations to political parties, coalitions, or voter initiative groups by making use of such resources as a list of registered parties (either registered with the ministry of justice or the national election management authority, for example) or a list of parties with seats in the national assembly. It may even be possible to encourage the candidates to meet together to coordinate their collaborative efforts during an election.

But when it comes to civil society, it may be relatively more difficult to find a comprehensive listing of all informally or independently organised groups of citizens. Nor will all of them be interested in assisting. And, among the groups that may be interested, they may not be aware of each other or have any prior experience working together. By its very nature, civil society cannot be coordinated through a body. Segments of civil society may be aligned and, by the use of nodal organisations, parts of it can be encouraged to organize themselves more efficiently for the purposes of a particular voter education event or programme.

Steps can be taken to inform and support civil society groups and even coordinate their efforts in support of elections. These include routine meetings to inform groups (for example about on-going developments in the election campaign such as the adoption of new regulations or new election procedures or technologies) and to facilitate cooperation and coordination; training sessions to help prepare those tasked with directly engaging voters; routine briefings from the election management authorities; boiler-plate scripts and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) distributed by fax and e-mail, and similar consensus building activities.

Stakeholders in Voter Education

Treating civil society as a stakeholder in developing the goals, objectives, and parameters of a voter education programme is essential. These organisations have the ability to provide quick and reliable information about the electorate. They may also have staff or volunteers with access to and experience working with local communities. They may also provide a relatively low cost option for reaching the grassroots and personally reinforcing mass mediated messages.

7.3.1.4 Contestants as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate

Nonpartisan Participation

Voter education is designed to be nonpartisan. To be effective in empowering and motivating voters, programmes must be impartial and not promote one contender - whether a candidate or political party - over another. This is an extremely important point that is often missed in transitional societies, where little distinction is made between voter education and campaign propaganda.

If voter education is a neutral activity, why then should election contestants be allowed any voice in developing the aims and parameters of a voter education programme? Ideally, all candidates and political parties should have an interest in making sure that voters understand what the elections are about in both a general and a political sense. Generally, it is in the interests of contestants to make sure that voters listen to all points of view, make up their own

minds, and go out and vote with a sense of freedom and security. While this may not appear to be in the short-term interest of one particular candidate or political party, voters who understand the issues and make thoughtful choices based on them will, in the end, trust the results, confer legitimacy on elected officials and institutions, and allow the victors to govern.

Because elections are inherently competitive, however, candidates may be sensitive to the possible influence by other political parties or special interest groups over the aims and parameters of the voter education programme. This sensitivity may be most intense in highly polarised election environments where there is little or no trust between political parties or where no sense of loyal opposition exists. If a political party believes its opponents have been given undue influence over the voter education programme, it may set out to limit perceived damage to its own cause by undermining the programme, limiting voter access, intimidating educators, and setting up other barriers to a fair and successful outcome.

In many transitional environments, there may also be a strongly held belief among some contestants that an ill-informed electorate and a chaotic electoral process work to their advantage. In this case, efforts to open up and clarify the voting process, as well as make it more efficient, and to educate voters about their rights and how to properly exercise them may meet with hostility. This kind of mindset is also likely to result in the types of barriers noted above.

For this reason, voter educators will want to establish relationships with all candidates and their parties to assist in defining the role of a nonpartisan programme, its ultimate benefits to all contestants, the limits of the information being disseminated, and its relationship to party campaigns.

Beyond Political Parties

It is important not to assume that the candidate pool is limited to the officially registered political parties. First, political parties affiliate themselves with various special interest groups, think tanks, institutions, research groups and others who, because of their particular skills, expertise, or interest may be instructive in discussions about the voter education programme. Depending upon the legal provisions, other groups may also be in a position to nominate candidates. There may be self-nomination based on the collection of a requisite number of signatures, groups of voters may come together to put forward a slate of candidates, or public organisations may also be permitted to nominate candidates, or a coalition of political parties and other groups may be formed to contest a particular election. Because these groups may be more transitory in nature or their participation in elections more sporadic, they may be more difficult to reach. An assessment may have to be made of their relative importance. This will vary according to the particular election circumstances.

The Challenge Presented by Election Boycotts

Broad-based election boycott movements will present particular challenges to voter educators and must be taken into consideration. If a particular 'side' in the election contest, as represented by any number of political parties, special interest groups, and civil society organisations, opts



to boycott - and encourages its support base to boycott - an election which it perceives to be illegitimate, then efforts to inform, motivate, and mobilize voters become less neutral. This is to say that any attempt to get out the vote may be viewed as support for the government and party (or parties) in power. This situation is most likely to affect international organisations and civil society groups, as election authorities may be legally bound to provide voter education despite the circumstances. Society groups may be divided about whether participation or boycott is the best means of affecting social, legal, or political change. As noted above, an assessment may have to be made about the relative scope and importance of the boycott. For those opting to proceed with voter education initiatives despite a broad-base boycott, attempts should be made to meet with both sides and clearly explain to voters the ramifications of their decision to vote or not vote.

7.3.2 Competition and Cooperation in Educating Voters

The framing of a mission for voter education, or the parameters of a particular programme, require all election stakeholders to understand and adhere to the underlying principles of free and fair elections. In order for the voters to accept the outcome and to confer contingent consent on the victors, they must believe that the election was conducted freely and fairly. In order for this to happen, all stakeholders must collaborate in establishing and maintaining a transparent and orderly set of accepted rules and practices and in developing election etiquette and conduct, even when unwritten, that support these rules.

Of course there are stakeholders who may have no interest in the outcome of an election, save that it has expressed the will of the people, or the electorate. But parties, other political factions and individual voters will all have an interest in the competition for power. Amongst these may include civil society educators and organisations. Eligible citizens are expected to fulfill their legal right to vote and to make an informed choice about their political future.

It may be argued that this competition makes it impossible for anyone to behave collaboratively in favour of the process rather than the outcome. In such a circumstance, perhaps the best that can be hoped for is self-interested vigilance. But even such self-interest results in collaborative behaviour, if not collaborative motivations. If even this cannot be obtained, then elections often must be conducted by outside organisations or bodies. And there are ample precedents where national and organisational elections have been conducted on such a basis.

Such an arrangement is not sustainable in the long run, and all countries espousing democracy must develop strategies to motivate collaborative behaviour between citizens and their political parties and representatives. In order to conduct voter education programmes, such behaviour must extend to the development of a voter education mission that is isolated from party propaganda.

Voters Key to the Interests of Candidates

It is in the candidates' interests that voters are well informed and prepared, well motivated and critical in their choices. It is in their interests that there is a large voter turnout and that the election results reflect the will of the people. In this process, and in the acceptance of the outcome, the individual voter is important, and education for all those voters, the electorate, is a major component in achieving it.

7.3.3 Mechanisms for Partnerships in Voter Education

Before proceeding with the design and implementation of a voter education program, election authorities may first turn to election legislation, where it exists, to determine who is entitled to

engage in such activities. Even if the law is relatively explicit about what entities in society can conduct voter education or public information, and most laws are not, it may still be necessary to interpret the law in order to implement it.

Once it has been determined which entities have a legal obligation or the legal right to engage in voter education, the process of developing the goals, objectives, and parameters of a particular voter education programme will create opportunities to build coalitions, or create strategic alliances, within civil society and between civil society and responsible government agencies, such as the national election authority. By building partnerships, election authorities and civil society groups can reduce the overall cost of a voter education programme while increasing its reach.

Agreement about goals, objectives, and parameters of a particular voter education programme may be achieved in one of two ways:

Election management authority can determine these on its own and then try to sell them to those with whom they seek to collaborate. This approach often reveals disadvantages in terms of the time required to sell the programme as well as a lack of a sense of *ownership* among civil society groups, and a difficulty in establishing a consensus and then maintaining it throughout the course of the programme. These disadvantages can ultimately lead either to resistance or resentment by civil society groups, which in turn will adversely affect their perception of the election authority and undermine future attempts at strategic partnering.

Election management authority may choose to utilize a number of mechanisms to ensure early ownership and ongoing support of voter education programme. These may include:

- educator conferences
- consultative meetings
- interviews with civil society leaders
- wide and transparent distribution of draft and final electoral legislation and regulations and
- timely provision of other documents likely to be of interest to educators such as press releases, electoral officers training materials, and public information materials, for example, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Many authorities fear that these activities delay the process or, in the case of the provision of drafts, may lead to confusion. While there may be differences of opinion, however, or even public controversy, these measures often result in better law and better programmes in the end with savings in the time needed to convert people to the cause, to bring them *up to speed* about the electoral process, or to adapt to the standards set by the programme. Time and effort invested early in this process is often rewarded with success in the long run.

For more information or organisational arrangements for conducting voter education programmes, please refer to the section on Election.



8. Context Assessment

As election management authorities and civil society groups go about designing voter education programmes, it will be essential for them to understand the context in which such programmes will be conducted. This assessment should embrace an understanding of the legal framework for elections, the political dynamics, the electorate, both generally and with respect to target groups, and the resources available to implement the programme.

Contextual assessments will be even more important in transitional settings where there are likely to be significant changes in the electoral environment. These may include a new constitution, recently adopted or amended electoral laws, changes to election practice, the introduction of new representational systems or election technologies, the creation of a permanent election authority or representative bodies at the local level, the growth of political parties and civil society groups, the enfranchisement of certain parts of the population, the mass movement of citizens (including persons displaced as a result of war), improvements in or perhaps the decay of the country's infrastructure, a proliferation of media outlets, and so on.

Understanding the context contributes to ensuring that programmes are relevant, efficacious, and significant. It is also essential to ensuring programmes are not only cost effective but diligently evaluated upon completion.

With respect to the electorate, educators will want to know basic background information and will then, using the best techniques available, establish the educational needs of the general electorate as well as target constituencies.

8.1 Voter Background

Time spent understanding the voters who are eligible to participate in an election helps to ensure the voter education programme adequately meets the needs of the electorate, which is the ultimate purpose of the undertaking, and not just conforming with some pre-conceived notion of those charged with educating voters.

Even if there are regular elections, educators cannot assume they know everything there is to know about the particular electorate for the next election. First, there will always be people who will be voting for the first time. This may involve young people who have just reached the age requirement for voting. It may involve those who have recently been granted citizenship and are eligible to vote for the first time. Or it may even involve previously apathetic voters who have been energized by a particular issue, candidate, or political party get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort.

In addition, neither a particular group of voters nor the electoral system itself should be considered static. Even those who vote regularly may have new concerns or may have developed new socioeconomic lifestyles. Such factors can make a difference both to the type of information that needs to be communicated and the method by which it is communicated. Also there may be changes to the electoral system, such as the application of new technologies or changes in ballot design to accommodate an increased number of candidates or public initiatives, that will need to be emphasized and explained through education.

Recent events in the State of Florida, during the 2000 presidential elections in the U.S., demonstrate how even in a relatively developed election system, inadequate voter education with respect to both experienced and first time voters can have significant ramifications relative to the efficiency of election administration, the efficacy of each vote, and the determination of election results.

In transitional societies and developing countries there will be a plethora of reasons to conduct voter education programmes. Due to the youthfulness of the population, expansion of the franchise, or the even the novelty of elections at all or some levels, there will be a significant number of first time voters. And the constitutional and legal framework for elections as well as procedures for registering to vote and voting, may be radically different than in the past.

In addition to the more specific information which will be considered in Assessing Voter Needs, education planners will want to get reliable demographic information that includes:

- where people live
- how many people live there
- cultural and religious norms
- literacy and schooling levels
- levels of voter participation in previous elections

8.1.1 Consideration of Demographics in Shaping Voter Education

Who Lives Where?

This question may be the first and most basic question educators need to ask when developing a universal programme, whether it is national, regional, or local in scope. In fact, the word *demography* is closely related to democracy and might be said to be a basis for discussions about representation and governance.

Census Information

The question of who lives where is usually answered through a national census. Where these are conducted regularly by credible organisations in circumstances where there is no incentive to avoid being counted and where there is no likelihood of administrative error during the count or during the processing of results, there will be reliable data available for educators. In transitional settings, however, when borders have been redrawn or where there has been significant migration of or changes in the population, there may be no timely census data available. This may be the result either of the fluidity of the political environment, limited or non-existent financial resources, or the absence of an experienced and publicly accepted institution to carry out a census.

Ideally, data collected through a census should include information about age groups, such as how many people there are of different age groups, gender and socioeconomic data, and some basic household information. All this will be available according to geographic area, and these geographic areas may include very small areas designed for enumeration. All this valuable information may be available on geographic information systems (GIS) software which enables very close map-based planning. Or it may be presented in charts and graphs, booklets, or tables. In some transitional settings, even if the will and the means exist to collect population data, it may be very difficult to obtain such information from a government agency that does not operate in a transparent manner or does not consider itself accountable to the public.



The manner in which these counts can take place varies according to the type of society and the resources available. In general, a census is a complete count of every single household, and for this reason they are done periodically, usually every five or ten years. A census can be expensive and requires considerable planning. Countries may try to ensure that a census and a national election do not coincide.

They are also controversial. The results of a census are used for national planning and for demarcation of election boundaries (see Population). In many countries the numbers of people in each state or region has a direct bearing on the number of people who can be elected from that state or region. For this reason, the results of a census are likely to be scrutinised very carefully. The questions that are asked determine what information is available to planners and politicians, and can affect national perceptions of an area, especially if it is found to have a large number of people who speak a particular language or describe themselves in certain ways.

Because of these controversies, there is considerable checking of census outcomes. One way in which this is done is by conducting sample surveys to test the data; another is by looking at longitudinal information such as mortality studies and general population movement estimates. But, also because of these controversies, there may be data which has to be checked against other information. In countries with porous borders, where there has been conflict, where the institution collecting population data is suspect, or where the collection of revised household data might result in the loss of benefits provided by the state, people may choose not to make themselves known.

While a census is normally done on a universal basis, countries with large informal urban settlements may find it difficult to manage. In some situations, aerial photography and sample data on the number of people per dwelling may be used to obtain best estimates.

Census Data Used with Caution

Educators will want to treat census data with some caution; and may want to use it in conjunction with data collected during voter registration or with additional information obtained from those working in a particular area. Despite this caution, election authorities without census information are at a distinct disadvantage. In the case of new country or administrative boundaries, for instance, or because a census has not been conducted for many years, election authorities are likely to under plan or over plan. The latter choice, while expensive, may be preferable.

Basic Information Needed

Educators will want to be able to divide the country into electoral districts and have available for each district the following basic information:

- total number of people
- number of men and women
- number of people of voting age
- number of people between 18 and 25, 26 and 40, and above 65
- types of dwellings in which these people live
- income distribution
- primary language used in the household

Having information that identifies, even in very gross terms, the socioeconomic status of people, whether by the type of dwelling or their household income, provides some indication of a range of other likely living patterns. Knowing which people are young, and possibly voting

for the first time and which are old and therefore require some special attention will also be useful. In all of these cases, educators will want to apply other information they have at their disposal to interpret the demographic data.

Interpreting Data

Interpreting the profile of people from their age or income requires an understanding of the culture of the country. Do people go to work at a very young age? What is the average life span? How healthy are people? At what age do people tend to have children? What ranges of income are considered poor or affluent, and how is that expressed in people's life styles and life choices?

Sources of Information

Educators can attempt to obtain demographic information by starting with national census bureaus or the relevant government departments, and then searching for similar information collated internationally through the World Bank, World Health Organisation, or the United Nations and its related bodies. If they are fortunate, this information will be available on computer, and if they are extremely fortunate, they will have access to up-to-date GIS. However the information is available, it will be time-bound and will have to be corrected according to the best possible estimates.

The Role of Election Authorities

Because an election authority has such an urgent need for good demographic information, it will want to discuss with state agencies and offices ways in which existing information can be improved. This is a general function rather than one specific to elections. But obtaining the most timely and accurate data on the population will help with a whole host of election plans ranging from the design of the voter education programme to determining the number of eligible voters. The latter will influence the number of voting areas, the number of ballots to be printed, the amount of election supplies required, and the number of poll workers to be appointed, etc. As such, educators will want access to population data and suggest certain additional information of a socioeconomic and attitudinal nature that might be collected.

8.1.2 Cultural and Religious Norms

Civic and voter education should be culturally sensitive. The manner in which the education programme approaches people, the language/s used, the methods adopted, the communication means employed, and the styles of the educators all have to take into account the constituency's cultural and religious predilections.

These predilections can be a barrier, a trap, or a window. Whichever they are, educators will always have a dialectic relationship with them. Education is, by its very nature, subversive of the status quo. It offers insights into new vistas, and these may encourage individuals and groups of individuals to reflect critically on the norms that they take for granted. Given that voter education programmes are driven not only by the needs of the electorate but also by the



demands of the state, educators will want to be cautious in their interactions with people's culture and religion.

There is no requirement to call these norms into question if they are in conflict with the election message. And yet, civic and voter education will inevitably expose practices that do not conform with increasingly universal values. This is a dilemma with which educators will have to contend. The horns of this dilemma are most stark in countries that do not have a democratic system of government. Even in democratic countries, however, it may arise within minority groups.

The Barrier

Culture and religion may represent a barrier to the educator because they create societies that have their own symbols and language. These societies are not always closed, but when they do recognise outsiders they may be suspicious of them.

They may have established opinions and traditions about the role and accessibility of education and about what democracy is and whether it is acceptable. In turn, different cultures may have strong opinions about who can or cannot educate men, women, or even children. They may have concepts of leadership and authority that are at odds with the general equality proposed as the bedrock of representative democracy.

At the very least, there may be unspoken subtleties about educational methodology. Teaching and learning styles may have been set by their own cultural and religious practices, so that innovations such as small group work, interactive teaching methods, exercises in critical thinking, the use of evaluative questionnaires, and the use of audio-visual aids may result in scepticism, or affable but reluctant tolerance.

The Trap

Of course, these barriers may easily turn into traps that can snare educators. Culture and religion can be used to ensure that ordinary people who may well want good education about the election or their rights as citizens are denied access to this education. In these situations, any lack of cultural or religious sensitivity will not be treated with tolerance but used as an excuse to undermine the educational programme. For this reason, educators will want to weigh these sensitivities carefully in order that they do not become stumbling blocks.

The Window

Most propitious, of course, is when educators understand the context in which they are going to work, or have crafted their programme in such a way that they have created a team that understands this context. Then they are provided with a rich source of idioms, analogies, traditions and anecdotes that can provide learners with new ways of understanding their own reality and the election or civic lessons are being conveyed.

To give just one example, it might be useful to consider those South African educators who had to find a way to help people understand the secret nature of the vote. In discussions with women from traditional societies, they found that pregnancy provided an allegorical insight. Generally, the gender of a baby is not known prior to birth. But they also discovered that this allegory could not be successfully used in the education programme because of a taboo of talking publicly about pregnancy. As a result, another image was chosen for discussion - that of the seed planted by the farmer. No one knows what gender the seed is until it grows. The illustrations that were used to reinforce the verbal discussions did, however, feature a pregnant

women. She votes, but her condition is not discussed. It is noted, however, especially by women, and the concept of the secret vote is communicated - in secret.

8.1.3 Gender

The Afro-barometer, a large scale survey into attitudes towards democracy and governance in 15 African countries, analyses its data against a range of demographic factors – language, geography, age, socio-economic status, and so on. Gender is amongst these. Yet there is consistently very little statistical significance in this analysis – men and women in Africa hold similar values and perceptions, and behave or are inclined to behave in similar ways when confronted with particular situations. By far the greatest differences are found in geography, and therefore history and culture.

Educators trying to understand the context within which they are going to work are not then looking at women as a separate class of people. What they are trying to understand is how to reach women given the particular places to which they are restricted, and considerations of how best to assist women in exercising their own individual and corporate rights and responsibilities in ways which are empowering and safe.

8.1.4 Considerations of Literacy and Schooling for Voter Education

Educators will want to assess carefully what can be learned about the literacy and schooling levels of their voters, in as much detail as possible, and will want to look for national or regional information that will help them to tailor their planning to reach voters that are functionally illiterate.

Literacy

Voter educators cannot presume literacy. Even industrialized and sophisticated societies with universal schooling generally have a percentage of people who are illiterate or semiliterate. In the southern hemisphere, illiteracy levels, which are often reported inaccurately, vary from 10 percent of the population to above 70 percent. These statistics obscure the fact that segments of the society may have different literacy levels.

In Peru "seventy-one percent of women are illiterate - nearly nine times as many as the proportion of men." [1] And this pattern is repeated through most developing countries. This discrimination against women provides the most obvious example of patterns of illiteracy that educators will want to discover. Within the borders of a country, there will be pockets where literacy levels are lower than others, for example in rural or remote areas. Within these pockets, there will also be variations where certain groups of people, such as women or the aged, have even higher levels of illiteracy.

Creating educational programmes that cater to the literate will obviously exclude the illiterate. Creating programmes that include the illiterate need not exclude the literate. And creating programmes in which there is an intentional emphasis on cooperative and oral learning will help ensure that both literate and illiterate people have an opportunity to learn.



Countries with high literacy levels have certain advantages. They can rely on the printed word more readily. But even in these countries, the traditionally disenfranchised - often the young, women, the poor - may not have very high levels of literacy. Educators will need to understand just how much people are willing to read and how much they can comprehend.

Schooling

Apart from literacy levels, educators may need to account for levels of schooling. There is obviously an overlap here. Many people learn to read at school. And those who do not learn to read often have been unable to attend or stay in school for very long.

Levels or years of schooling can also reveal to educators other things about likely levels of literacy. Schooling affects ways in which people are likely to understand other forms of education. It determines, for good or ill, how people value learning and which methods they are most likely to associate with educational programmes.

At the same time, voter education can be conducted independently, removed from the school room, and therefore free itself from the particular patterns of discipline, knowledge construction and dissemination, and competition for information and success associated with formal education.

Voter educators work at an advantage in societies that value education, particularly life-long learning. They benefit in cultures where schooling has encouraged democratic decision making and personal autonomy. They can also build on those schooling systems in which voter or civic education programmes have been incorporated into the formal or informal curriculum.

Understanding the patterns established by schooling systems in a country, therefore, will provide insight into the motivations and skills of the voting population. The recent upsurge in civic education at the school level, even in some long standing democracies, suggests that schooling in both traditional and even innovative or modern settings may not sufficiently prepare citizens for democracy in the absence of curricula specifically designed for this purpose. So educators of adults may not want to take it for granted that a literate and schooled society understands the complexities of modern democracies, even if they can assume that they will be able to read the pamphlets that explain how to register, and when and where to vote. Certainly, they may not assume that schooling inculcates the motivation and skills for civic participation (for more on this see [Relationship Between General and Civic Education](#)).

Notes:

[1] M. Kidron & R. Segal, *The State of the World Atlas* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1995).

8.2 Using Existing Resources for Educational Programmes

Education programmes have to work within the constraints of available resources. This need not be a limitation if educators consider the question of resources carefully prior to setting objectives and establishing their educational strategy and programmes.

In addition to the obvious resources of people and money, educators need to consider what else the country has to offer in terms of infrastructure and social capital.

In many transitional societies, particularly due to war, civil strife, or economic stagnation, the quality of the infrastructure may pose one of the biggest challenges to the implementation of a voter education programme, especially with respect to distribution.

There may also be disagreement about who is responsible for covering the costs of certain activities or commodities. In some instances, for example, election law may require state-owned mass media to air official voter education messages. Unless the provision of free airtime is clearly and unambiguously stated, differing interpretations are likely to arise between the media outlet and the election authority about whose budget covers the costs of broadcasting.

Once an assessment has been made of available resources, it may be found that they are sufficient to conduct the necessary programmes.

However, some serious limitations may emerge. In this case, an election authority can act as the catalyst for resource development. It need not remain passive in the face of disadvantage or scarcity, even though it may need to develop strategies, especially educational ones, that account for scarcity of existing resources. There may be some possibility of obtaining resources from the private sector (see [The Private Sector](#)) as well as [International Support](#)) or of leveraging resources by forming strategic partnerships with civil society (see [Mechanisms for Partnerships in Voter Education](#) and the section on [Existing Social Organisation](#)). Ultimately, the parameters of the voter education programme must reflect a honest accounting of resources. The voter education budget cannot jeopardize other preparations for elections, while overall election administration cannot overreach national resources that are needed for other purposes.

8.2.1 Country Infrastructure

In general, there never seems to be enough money for voter education. An in-depth assessment should be made of all the resources that are already available in a country's infrastructure. And that assessment usually includes the ways in which these resources can assist, or in their absence hinder, the programme. There are a number of specific areas voter educators will want to consider as they gather information about the country in which they are working:

The education system: Understanding of the educational system will include basic information about the number and locations of primary, secondary and university-level institutions in order to identify possible voter education sites and target groups. An analysis of the national curriculum will identify whether there are existing educational materials and learner competencies that can serve as foundations for the voter education programme.

Mass media: A study of available mass media will provide both an analysis of available means of communications, their relative market share, characteristics of their audience, and the nature of their ownership, ie. public media outlets may be obligated under the law to provide free airtime for public service announcements such as voter education messages, while private media may or may not require payment. Power supply may also need to be taken into consideration as this will influence the choice and mix of media.

Delivery and distribution mechanisms: How will voter education messages be communicated, materials be delivered and distributed, trainers be deployed, and management and financial controls applied? Are there nationwide distribution networks? How reliable are these? What is the quality of the transportation infrastructure and what are the transportation options? Must distribution be handled on an ad hoc basis? Are there businesses or NGOs that



could successfully assume distribution responsibilities? Are there specific groups that could help with the distribution of targeted materials?

Space: Since voter education involves both dissemination of information through the media and gathering people to participate in group learning, voter educators may want to assess what public facilities are available for people to meet, which locations are best suited to the types of techniques being employed (such as role playing), and the conditions under which people are accustomed to meeting. Special arrangements may also need to be made to reserve this space or to notify local officials of its use for voter education purposes. Lodging may also need to be found for trainers or those participating in training programs.

Additional Advantages

Knowledge of the country's or region's infrastructure may help identify a range of possible sites for voter education, introduce individuals and organisations to the programme, establish any regional and cultural differentiation which may need to be taken into account, and possibly identify certain marginal or high-risk areas where greater effort is required. It will be essential to document this assessment in a way that is useful to planners. As such, it should be brief, analytical, straight-forward, and easy to communicate. Much of the information may be readily available. If it is not, however, planners will have to weigh the costs of obtaining the information against the benefits of having it. In some cases, illustrative or intuitive overviews may be more useful for the purpose of planning voter education programmes.

How To Find Information

Certain government agencies may routinely need information about a country. They may be responsible for development, planning, or communications. Besides gathering such information, they may also be responsible for distributing it. Nationwide companies such as banks, mining companies, and large manufacturers are also likely to maintain such information. Some countries also publish yearbooks or other annual reports. And a number of NGOs, both domestic and international, and other organisations may also do the same.

Other Uses for Country Information.

An electoral authority can make use of country information in a variety of ways. Because of this, it may already have collected the information. If this is the case, the voter educators' task will be made easier. The interests of the various planners and administrators in the electoral authority may be different, however, than those of civil society organisations. As such, voter educators in the latter cannot abdicate responsibility for preparing a country briefing suitable for their own programme. Such a briefing can be distributed to agencies taking on sections of the voter education programme, to NGOs being encouraged to develop programmes of their own, and, with modifications, to international education agencies and observer groups.

8.2.1.1 Educational System

The educational system of a country is one of the most important resources available to voter educators. Whatever system exists in a country, voter educators will want to consider the resources available to them in terms of curriculum, training opportunities, staff and volunteer recruitment pools, as well as possible learning sites.

National Education System

An educational system includes both formal and informal educational institutions at the primary, secondary, and university level. Formal institutions are those conducting, either privately or on behalf of the state, a graded curriculum that results in a state-recognised certificate, diploma, or degree that might also have international currency. Informal institutions are those conducting shorter vocational, professional developmental and personal enrichment programmes that are not necessarily recognized by the state even though they may issue certificates of successful completion. Such certificates may be recognised by a professional or vocational association. The gap between formal and informal education is often one of scope.

Primary education consists of the basic educational grades normally offered to children in a compulsory system. Secondary education, often called high school, will generally include a more differentiated curriculum in preparation for graduation and perhaps college matriculation. Finally, higher education includes colleges and universities, as well as vocational and technical education. Often these institutions combine a series of formal courses with a range of less formal educational opportunities. In some educational systems, vocational and technical training may be offered at any one of these levels of education. In addition, there may be a variety of continuing education and training opportunities, particularly in countries that have substantial private or civil society sectors.

Some countries have an articulated educational system regulated through a national certification framework. In these countries, education and training throughout the myriad institutions considered above might enable people to move around the system and achieve certificates and integrated educational opportunities. In other countries, the systems are more rigid and the various institutions determine progress and outcomes independently.

Curriculum

There will need to be consideration of whether the educational system provides universal opportunities for people to learn about government, politics, voting behaviour, or general societal rules and standards. If this is the case, educators will have to assess whether this will replace any part of an informal voter education programme for adults or whether the formal curriculum has been designed to reduce or inhibit people's participation in democratic activity.

In many cases, primary and secondary education will have provided skills, attitudes and knowledge that provide a foundation for more detailed education in support of democracy or elections. In some cases, however, national education systems may have been forged to ensure support for a regime that is not democratic and where difference is not welcomed. In such cases, primary and secondary education may have left a heritage that severely compromises people's ability to engage in democratic behaviour: whether resolving differences, making decisions, voting, or participating in democratic institutions. In situations like this, voter and civic education programmes may have to be extensive.

Training Opportunities

Educators operating in election and civic spheres face considerable handicaps in obtaining training for themselves or finding trained colleagues. In fact, the majority of people working in



this field enter it laterally with either a social science, political or a general educational background. Because adult education often includes work with disadvantaged people, and because overcoming disadvantage requires political action at various levels, such people may enter the field more readily.

The education system of a country will provide these informal training paths, and may also provide more formal training paths to a greater or lesser degree, depending not only on the extent that the country has a consolidated democracy, but also on the extent that the system interacts with social movements and evolving learner needs. It is interesting to note that some of the most vital training opportunities, and the most innovative programmes, are available in countries that have marginal democracies and intense social conflicts.

Those responsible for developing educators will want to discover training opportunities within the system and, where necessary, supplement these with short term informal training on the job.

Staff and Volunteer Recruitment Pools

Voter education programmes require large numbers of staff over a very short period of time. At the most, these personnel may receive orientation about the material available in conjunction with limited adult education skills. In large programmes, having a pool of trained teachers from whom to draw at short notice is obviously advantageous. There is a caveat, however. Formal education demands certain types of skills and behaviour. There is often a gap between the classroom and the voter education site that not all teachers are able to comprehend.

So educators will want to look carefully at the educational system in order to identify what levels of the system provide the most likely candidates for their programme. They will also note the dates of formal system terms of matriculation, including examination schedules, so that unrealistic expectations are not created about the extent to which teachers and instructors from formal systems can move into the voter education programme.

Learning Sites

Almost as important as obtaining staff and volunteer recruits will be obtaining cheap and accessible sites for conducting the voter education programme. Apart from those aspects of the programme that capitalize on bringing it to places where there are large groups of people, there will also be aspects of the programme that require seminar and conference room facilities (e.g. training of educators, workshops and briefings, preparation of materials, and running of focus groups). Educational institutions, whether private or state-funded, can often be made available at low cost. In some cases, they may also provide residential facilities for extended programmes.

Once again, as with other aspects of voter education programmes, there may need to be a balancing of the costs and convenience against public perceptions of some or all of these institutions.

8.2.1.2 Venue for Education Events

Voter educators will have to find and secure venues for a wide variety of activities. Doing this introduces a number of issues related to the costs and administration of their programmes.

Cascade training, press conferences, coalition meetings for a voter education consortium, voter education workshops, election briefings, planning sessions, community gatherings, televised debates or discussions, music festivals, drama rehearsals and productions, and mock elections

are just some of the kinds of meetings or events likely to take place as part of a voter education programme. And educators will be competing for meeting space with every other participant in the election, including political parties, election administrators, NGOs, and the press.

It is often surprising how difficult it becomes to obtain public venues - to identify them, book them, obtain them at low cost, and keep them available when the programme is still in development but may require them at some point in the future. It is also likely to be a challenge to find a space appropriate to the needs of a particular activity. A conference, role-playing exercise, televised event, dramatic production, or planning session are likely to require different types of spaces. For some, theatre style seating may be fine. For others, educators may need to move furniture around to encourage participation. Or an interesting backdrop, open floor space, lots of table space for collating materials, or multiple power outlets may be required.

Even those countries that have large tourist and convention industries may have venue problems outside tourist resorts in more isolated or less congenial parts of the country. There may even be competition in resort areas if elections are being conducted at times when conventions are in town. So early access to a reliable team of people who can be creative in their search for suitable venues is essential.

Amongst the less obvious venues, and certainly outside the normal experience of professional travel agents, are church and religious assemblies and retreat centres, camps, educational institutions, fairgrounds, and sports fields. Where venues are needed with overnight accommodation, they are even more difficult to find unless it is possible to arrange hospitality with local people.

Such alternative sites, however, are often difficult to reserve from a distance, and payment, where required, is often on a cash basis. So having local contacts and having to carry large amounts of money may conflict with the centralised and administratively convenient systems that national voter education organisations and election authorities often put in place.

Hotels and commercial conference centres become the preferred educational venues, rather than the public spaces that will ensure the events operate from a community base and with community support. Unless it is possible to persuade the owners of such venues to donate their use, voter education programme costs can balloon and discourage organizers from conducting public events.

8.2.1.3 Communication Mechanisms

Countries are not uniform in their abilities to communicate internally or between one another. During the twentieth century, advances in communication technology went through a number of waves, and while all previous advances remain in place, countries place different degrees of reliance on them and have different needs and limitations.

It is important that educators do understand the communications logistics in a particular country and do not attempt to establish programmes that rely on high technology systems, for instance that cannot be maintained or even implemented. At the same time, because technology



tends to overlap, it results in some strange arrangements. Developing countries, for example, may leapfrog over developed countries, as some have in the use of mobile or cellular telephones or fax machines in recent years. And e-mail may be more reliable and available than traditional postal services.

In addition to communications messages, educators will also have to move people and materials. Unfortunately these do not yet travel down a telephone line, although even this is changing. [1] So educators must also understand the transportation infrastructure.

Moving People

What facilities exist to bring people into the country? In most places this will include international airports. In some, like St Helena, a harbour may be the only port of entry. And, more importantly, what facilities exist for moving people around inside the country? Are there local airlines? And do these connect with other forms of transport? If not airlines, is there a train system? Or are there domestic bus services connecting towns and cities? Within a town or region, is there public transport such as buses, subways or cable cars. Are taxis an option? And what condition are all these systems in? In some countries, there may be two separate transportation systems, private and state (including military forces). Educators will want to know which of these they will have to use or whether both are available. What about remote locations? Will helicopters be required, for example, to take people into mountainous villages?

If primarily reliant on travelling by road, what is the condition of the country's road system and how will this affect the amount of time needed to travel from one place to another? In some countries, travelling 240 kilometres (200 miles) may take two hours on a freeway. In others it may take all day. And how many miles of freeway are there? To what extent will travel need to be undertaken on narrow or poorly paved roads? Are certain roads impassable in bad weather, and what weather is to be expected during the operation? Are there appropriate motor vehicles available for purchase or hire? What condition are they in? How will the availability and price of fuel affect transport?

Moving Goods

Moving goods can be as easy or as problematic as moving people. Virtually all of the considerations outlined above will also need to be taken into account with respect to bulk materials. In many cases, small amounts of material can travel with educators. But larger quantities of material will require freight services, and weight and space requirements will need to be taken into account. Freight services may be provided by sea, river, road, rail, or air. Each has its advantages and disadvantages; and costs will need to be weighed in terms of speed and reliability.

Moving Messages

Educators may consider the following possibilities for conveying messages that assist them in managing their programmes:

Oral transmission:

Very simply, messages can be passed on from person to person. In some circumstances, in fact, this may be essential. Where it is, the skills necessary to craft memorable messages and to recall these will have to be developed. Societies that have shifted away from such oral traditions may have to rely heavily on individuals linked to more traditional societies. Where literacy can be taken for granted, written messages can be conveyed by hand.

Postal services:

Postal services are not uniform. For educators, such services must be reliable. In many countries, but not all, there is a single government-owned or controlled postal service. The service usually includes receiving, transmission, and delivery of letters, bulk post and parcels. All of these may to some extent differ in reliability, service, and cost from country to country. They may also vary in the extent to which they remain part of a single monopoly service.

Educators will have to consider the extent to which recipients can obtain the post that is sent to them. Many rural communities do not have postal deliveries and must collect mail from depots. Often this can mean that a separate message must be sent alerting the recipient to the arrival of the postal item.

Where postal services have been degraded, theft, loss and delay can seriously affect critical programmes such as voter education.

In any case, the postal service normally remains one of the most cost-effective systems available.

Radio:

Radio networks can vary from the transmitter/receiver systems typically used by the police, military, rural communities and freight haulers to commercial broadcasting stations capable of conveying messages to large numbers of people with easily available commercial radios. Radio is capable of two-way communication across extensive distances. Because of the importance of this mode of communication in environments where other systems may not be available, it should be considered an essential part of an election management strategy that educators can use. And educators will want to consider ways they can use studio-based radio and television conferencing facilities that are available in some countries.

Telephone:

The telephone may be the most critical tool for communication in managing voter education programmes. It can also provide a potential educational medium itself. So an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the existing telephone system is essential.

In particular, educators will want to know about the availability of "land lines", instruments such as handsets and PABX's, regional exchanges, and alternatives to land lines such as cellular systems or even satellite instruments. With respect to cellular systems, terrain may also be an important consideration that affects range.

In some countries, there is difficulty laying the necessary copper cabling. In others, fibre optic lines are being introduced. In some, manual exchanges and rotary dial telephones are all that exist. Other countries combine these with more advanced systems that may or may not be compatible with the older systems. Separate fax lines may exist, or fax machines may use existing lines.



Computer:

With the arrival of the Internet, and with it Internet service providers, electronic mail (e-mail), and other services have become available at least to those who have access to a computer, telephone and modem. The pervasiveness of the Internet, however, has obscured the fact that electronic mail and file transfer programmes can be used on much smaller and slower telephone and computer systems. E-mail is not synonymous with the World Wide Web. [2] It is entirely possible to set up an e-mail system using slow modems, pulse telephones and DOS-based computers. Obviously, those who have access to fast computers, modems and telephone lines will have access to the Web and to the facilities available there.

Computer-based technology:

As communication technology becomes more integrated, telephone and computer systems are providing managers with a range of additional facilities that enhance productivity and, where the basic infrastructure and maintenance skills exist, reduce costs. Amongst these are the ability to fax directly from the computer to one recipient or to broadcast to a group of people, the ability to use the Internet for chat sessions or telephone services, and the ability to use video conferencing for a small group of people in different locations.

On the telephone side, automated calling and voice mail systems capable of providing callers with touch tone options to obtain messages or fax documents are providing ways of making telephones more like the World Wide Web. At its most basic, the Web provides a way to deposit information and have the user collect it when required rather than have to have a real-time communication.

All these options are available to educators in societies with advanced communication systems. Each country will have to investigate just what is available to them when they begin to plan their programmes.

Technology and Tradition

While modern telecommunications and computer technologies may be increasing the range of communication options open to educators, cultural considerations about their use will still come into play. The population at large or some groups in particular, may be suspicious of or uncomfortable with certain modern technologies. There may be some that they consider, for whatever reason, inappropriate for educational purposes or elections.

Notes:

[1] Countries with good telecommunications systems and reliable electricity can make use of video conferencing facilities to get people in touch with one another without having to move them around. Originally this required access to a television studio and broadcast system: but the Internet is increasingly establishing possibilities which are low cost and desktop bound. As far as documents go, e-mail and desktop publishing options make it possible for documents to be sent electronically and then reproduced rather than freighted.

[2] The World Wide Web with its high resolution graphics and home pages is most often thought of when people speak of the Internet - but other smaller and older software packages are available for electronic communication across the net.

8.2.1.4 Importance of Mass Media in Education Programmes

Without good access to national and community media all public education programmes may be disadvantaged. It is possible to consider programmes that rely entirely on face-to-face education, but even these can be hindered if there is not a supplementary programme of advertising for events and news coverage to increase motivation as well as printed material to "leave behind." As such, assessment of available media options should be conducted.

Media Directories

In some countries, media registration may have resulted in a publicly-available directory. In others, NGOs and government media agencies may have collected such information. Or advertising agencies may keep books that give details on media outlets, including their market share and target audiences.

Early on, educators may want to develop a "brainstorm" list and subsequently their own directory, that analyzes available media outlets in terms appropriate to voter education programming. Criteria they may want to use include:

- Is the media owned or controlled by the government?
- If controlled by the government, is it obligated under election law to provide free space or airtime for voter education messages?
- If privately owned, is the management amenable to running public service announcements, such as voter education messages either free of charge or at a discounted rate?
- What are the published advertising rates of the outlet?
- Is the media national or community-based?
- Is the particular medium capable of preparing its own copy or producing its own spots?
- What is the policy and the protocol of the particular medium for taking spots or copy prepared by the education programme?
- In what format must spots or copy prepared by the education programme be presented to the media outlet in question?
- What is the outlet's market share, i.e. What is the size of its viewing or listening audience or readership?
- What are the characteristics of its audience?
- How are the sizes or characteristics of the audience affected by date and time and by programming, i.e. What are the most popular shows or are papers read more during the week or at week-ends?
- How many hours does the outlet broadcast per day?
- What is the print schedule, i.e. Twice daily, daily, several times per week, weekly, monthly, per quarter?
- Does the outlet's editorial board have a particular political orientation, or is the outlet associated in any way with a specific political party?
- In what languages does the outlet broadcast/print?



- Who are the contacts for the particular media and what is the street address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address.

An adequate database will need to be prepared for this information. Because of its importance, educators will also want to cultivate expertise within their own teams in this field and, in addition, develop appropriate contacts amongst outside practitioners.

Power Supply and Other Commodities

Particularly in transitional settings, educators will want to take note of any shortages or disruptions in the supply of valuable commodities such as electricity, gas, paper or ink. If power is in short supply, it may not make much sense to invest in pricey television commercials. Radio may still be an option, however, as radios can be operated on battery power. In such circumstances, print and direct contact may take on an increasingly important role. Educators will also need to take into consideration how power shortages or interruptions may affect production processes: if service providers do not have an independent and reliable power source very often this will extend the amount of time required for production. If paper or ink are difficult to obtain, then print activities may need to be de-emphasized. Even where these supplies exist, fuel shortages might hinder the ability to deliver and distribute print materials. Thus, educators must assess the availability of key commodities and the impact that these will have on the types and mix of media used.

Careful Planning and Assessment

Countries with vibrant media infrastructures are essential to the development of democracy. To the extent that voter education can enhance this by careful selection and promotion of media, it will have long-term impact for future programmes.

8.2.2 Political Parties in Voter Education

Political parties remain an essential component of a democratic political system in a 21st century state.

There has been an unfortunate tendency to ignore the contribution that political parties can make to voter education and should make to a more general civic education. Voter apathy is directly related to the efficacy of political parties in developing and communicating policy positions which invigorate citizen interest in public affairs and government, and which, because of their responsiveness to individual and societal needs, place choices before people which they consider sufficiently compelling to get out and vote.

This tendency has been driven by a belief that those with a particular party interest are not to be trusted to inform voters of their rights or to assist them in making choices, and are generally going to attempt to seduce and dupe them by providing one-sided information or even misinformation. Strange that one can trust such parties to govern but not to have the public interest in mind at other times.

However, even if individual parties do behave in this way, the free flow of information and the standards under which modern elections can and should be conducted allow competing messages and information to reach voters. There are thus some systems in which it is assumed that the combined effort of campaigning parties and an efficient decentralized election management body provide sufficient voter information and education for any particular election.

Hence the apparent paucity of voter education in democracies of long standing, and the emphasis on voter education only at transitional moments. This is obviously an increasingly short sighted approach, and overlooks the numerous institutions in such long-standing democracies that conduct educational programmes at election times without referring to them as voter education.

Educators responsible for voter or civic education programmes should therefore consider carefully how best to involve political parties in contributing to their programmes, whether through a direct provision of the jointly determined curriculum, through encouraging their supporters to participate in programmes, through establishing and conducting their own educational programmes as is done by many party foundations or merely by taking seriously, between and at elections, the need to communicate ably and vigorously with the public about their own programmes and about the constitutional context that both binds them to particular forms of organisation and behaviour and gives them the freedom to exist and compete.

In countries where political parties are very poor, educators may even consider non-partisan ways in which these campaigns can be strengthened. Amongst possible options are:

- Joint candidate and party training in campaign management and conduct
- Independent publishing and distribution of collections of party manifestos
- Lobbying for free access to state-run media
- Providing parties with nonpartisan voter information pamphlets to which they can add limited information of their own, reducing their own printing costs
- Holding public education events at which candidates and parties can introduce themselves to the public

An assessment of the role that could be played by political parties' educators will want to consider the extent to which the parties presently represented in various legislatures represent the citizens at large, and whether, through anomalies in the electoral system or as a result of socio-economic cleavages and exclusions, there are formally constituted parties, whether registered or not, or informal political groupings and alliances, which should also be drawn into their educational venture. Interacting with such parties will depend on the institutional place of the educator. If part of a statutory body they may not be allowed to interact with any but registered parties: but if this is the case, they should consider other ways to make sure that the educational programme is not systematically excluding people who because of their political allegiances may not be accessible even by some more non-partisan but official educational programmes.

8.2.3 Time and Money

It is important during the assessment of the context to ensure that those tasked with planning for the voter education programme have full knowledge of the financial and time constraints. These are not always obvious or fully enunciated. There may also be significant changes to the environment in which the voter education programme is being conducted or the audience to which it is being directed. These changes are likely to affect the time and money needed for the current undertaking relative to past allocations. So educators will want to enquire into the



details as early as possible. Seasoned educators will advise you that there is never enough time and always too little money.

Saving Time and Money

Education programmes will have to consider ways to reduce costs and save time. Mainly, this is done by increasing voluntary support and the number of organisations contributing to the undertaking. As noted elsewhere, forming strategic partnerships between election authorities, civil society, and the private sector helps to leverage costs, while financial support can be sought from international organisations. Tasks can also be simplified through appropriate planning and regulatory mechanisms. This can also be done by doubling up on resources and staff. One training event or manual can fill more than one need or reach more than one audience.

Cutting to Suit the Cloth

Unfortunately, election-related tasks cannot be slowed down or given a new deadline because an educator feels that the time available is not sufficient. Rather, the objectives of the programme have to be streamlined and the consequences of this explained to the client, whether a sponsor, an election authority, a government department, or a group of learners. Their expectations will also have to be managed throughout the course of the project. This is, in fact, one of the most difficult areas for non-educators to grasp - that learning is time-related. Materials development, production, and distribution as well as orientation and training of educators, and the actual education time itself are all time-intensive and often difficult tasks to perform within established deadlines. Those who conduct programmes which are cyclical in nature will obviously find it easier to meet deadlines than those constantly preparing from scratch each time a campaign or election is held.

8.2.4 Existing Social Organisations

The concept "social capital" provides a shorthand way of thinking about the human resources that may be available to a voter education programme. Unfortunately, it is a term that has become a buzzword in political circles so it requires some further discussion. Once understood, it can be used to provide additional information about a country.

This section looks at what constitutes social capital and how social capital could be used in voter education programmes in order to improve democratic practices within countries and communities. It will also briefly examine the shortcomings of social capital as a tool with which to approach a community in order to bring about higher levels of democracy.

Its advent into modern day politics comes at a time when all aspects of our existence are often judged in economic terms. Are we being "productive" as employees? Is the government "delivering"? Are we making enough "input" into social practices?

Democracies all over the world have been evaluating themselves in the 1990's. Despite optimism early in the decade, there is some scepticism about the longevity of newly emerging democracies.

The big question in politics these days revolves around how we can strengthen or consolidate democracy. How can the success of democracy in one area be transferred to an area of the world where it has not been successful, or even in existence, for decades?

One of the factors raised in this quest is the role of civil society in democratic countries. As Robert Putnam emphasises in most of his writings and especially in *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, the levels of interaction between civil society and government determine the levels of democracy within a country. [1] This implies that the higher the levels of interaction, the stronger the democracy will be and vice versa. *Civic Traditions* traced twenty years of political and associational life in Italy, comparing the results of the northern regions to those in the south. Putnam concluded that the southern regions were less democratic than those in the north because of the existence of patron-client relationships with the mafia. The north supported more civic-minded organisations and groupings.

Definition of Social Capital

The concept of social capital was initiated by James Coleman and further developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Coleman used the term to describe a resource of individuals that emerges from their "social ties", and Bourdieu used it to refer to the advantages and opportunities accruing to people through membership in certain "communities". [2]

The definition of social capital is quite simple. It is the currency that enables a society to operate more effectively. This includes intangible factors such as values, norms, attitudes, trust, networks, and the like. Putnam says social capital is comprised of those factors found within a community that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. [3] This means that if one works in a community that has trust, values, networks and the like, the outcome will be more effective than work done within a community without those variables. This has great impact on non-governmental organisations' interactions with communities with regard to voter education.

Francis Fukuyama, the author of *The End of History and The Last Man*, *Trust, the Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, and a large number of articles, believes "the vitality of [social capital] is essential to the functioning of both the market and democracy." [4] This means that both government and communities should make sure that high levels of existing trust, norms, and values should be maintained and nurtured within that society in order for their work to be easier and more successful.

Voter education is designed in order to get a message about voting and elections out to the majority of eligible voters prior to election day. It is an expensive endeavour. Consequently, ways that would minimise costs are sought by those who are in the business of conducting voter education programmes. If social capital facilitates community cooperation then surely those factors should be used to make voter education easier and more effective in its outreach.

Norms and Values

Norms and values within a community refer to the attitudes among citizens that make their interactions easier with each other. If all citizens in a community, for example, believe that each person should be treated with respect and valued as a participant, the community will involve everyone in discussions about issues that affect all citizens. These attitudes will be evident in the norms of that society. People will respect each other's property, views, and rights.



We could also say that these citizens will know and understand that they have to pay their taxes, pay for services, and participate in democratic discussions.

When an organisation conducts voter education programmes within that society, their work will be that much easier because of those existing norms and values. The educators will not have to go into great detail about allowing for differences, creating a safe space for discussion, and calling for people to do their civic duty by voting. The community already has those values and norms.

This community's social capital can be used to facilitate the transfer of information about voting. Educators should use the existing norms and values within that community to make learning easier. Those norms and values should be reinforced by examples of the duties of citizens in the voting process.

Norms also refer to common practices within communities and organizations. People may have certain practices which are culturally determined. In traditional African communities, for example, the *chief* is the most powerful person. If the chief has not been consulted, the community may not be open to that programme, either physically or psychologically. The programme staff may be barred from entering the area, citizens may feel that the programme staff do not respect their culture and practices and therefore not listen to the information being provided. It is important for educators to find out about the practices of a community, to respect those practices, and to conform to them while working in that area.

Some areas may also have informal leaders. Those people should be consulted in order to facilitate work within that community. Sometimes religious leaders have that status, as do teachers, or healthcare providers. It is important for educators to know who those people are and to respect those norms and values within each community.

Networks

A second factor in social capital is the system of networks. Every society has networks. These could be around work, church, sport, and any club or group found in that society. Networks could be used to make voter education programmes more cost-effective and reach a larger number of people with a minimum amount of input from the educators. Networks involve a large number of people who identify with a common cause, goal or interest. The network also allows for people to spread their expertise within a sector and to transfer skills.

Networks may be widespread and reach a large number of people from different sectors of the community and with different interests. Voter educators could use those networks to disseminate their information. A single point of entry into the society is all that is needed. A soccer club may have a meeting once a week. Voter educators might meet with that group of people once. Information from that meeting may then be relayed socially by those members through the networks to which they belong. One member may be part of a reading group while another may be part of a volunteer group. This information gets spread through the community via such networks.

Voter educators should use these networks strategically and supply enough information (printed and verbal) at the point that would make the most impact on the community. Information leaflets should be given out at that entry point in sufficient quantities for people to take home. Information should also be placed at venues like shopping centres, churches, schools and gyms to support the verbal relay. In rural communities where the tradition of

storytelling still exists and illiteracy is high, networks may be used very effectively. Voter educators who may not be able to stay in an area for an extended period of time, therefore, should inform those people who have the most contact with the majority of the community, such as teachers, religious leaders, health workers, and even shop owners.

Trust

Trust is a major factor in the success of democracy. Francis Fukuyama believes people who do not trust one another will end up cooperating only under a system of formal rules and regulations, which have to be negotiated, agreed to, litigated, and enforced, sometimes by coercive means. [5] Trust can only be obtained through longstanding practices. People trust each other after they have had a relationship over a period of time. Trust needs to be established through experience and repetition. If you tell someone a secret and that person keeps the secret, for example, more trust will be forged between them. And the next time, a higher level of trust may be placed in that person.

The flow of information will be more effective in societies where there is a high level of trust. People will trust the teller or educator not to mislead them and, therefore, will be more likely to believe the information. Trust is inherent in networks and, therefore, both factors become complementary. Within a network it is in the group's interest to keep trust levels high. Voter educators can harness those high levels of trust for their programme. Educators should contact and work with the people who are most likely to be trusted by the majority of the community. The community trusts these people and would listen to them without doubt or mistrust.

Voter educators should make use of the social capital that is found in communities. It could assist them with the important but difficult task of informing people about elections.

Even though social capital does have many positive aspects, there are negative issues that may arise.

Problems

Norms and values assume that people know what they are and follow them. If a new person comes into a community, however, these norms and values have to be learned and assimilated before that person is accepted. This means that, at any given time, there may be people in the community who may be excluded due to their lack or limited knowledge of accepted norms. Sometimes those norms are not obvious, and educators may accidentally ignore or neglect a norm and upset the community. While cultural values can be very specific, they can also be very complicated.

Networks also may imply exclusion. If one belongs to a group with a network, it means that there are other people outside that group who don't belong to the network. These structures also tend to assist only the people who belong to that network. Not being a member, therefore, could put other sectors of the community at a disadvantage. Tightly knit communities are more difficult to penetrate, obviously, than those that are open to outside influences. Educators



should examine a community carefully to learn which are the most constructive and effective networks. Those may be the ones with the most contact with the people.

Trust also may be difficult to establish for outsiders, such as an educator from an organisation like a statutory body that is not represented within the community. In this case, training programmes should be developed for trainers in the community. These local trainers should be people who are accepted and trusted by the community and, therefore, facilitate communicating information to that group of people.

Social capital is a concept with great potential to enable educators to think through effective ways to communicate. Those involved in civic education will also want to consider ways in which they can exploit the benefits of social capital.

Assessing social networks

Every country has social capital, just as it has other resources. The purpose of conducting an assessment or survey of social networks is to render the invisible visible. This allows those planning and implementing voter education programmes to gain access to the cultural associations that may enhance democracy and to better plan ways of coping with those forces that may hinder it.

While there are a number of ways to conduct such an assessment, the simplest may be to place one or more teams into the field in order to conduct interviews and enter information into a simple contact database or index card system. These teams will begin by selecting an obvious range of nodal organisations in a geographic area and requesting information from them. A second set of interviews will be conducted with individuals and organisations referred to in the first set of contacts.

Once a full set of contacts has been collected - inclusive to the extent possible within the time and financial constraints set by the educational programmers - teams from the field may find it helpful to develop a graphical representation of the social networks in debriefing sessions. This is done by using large sheets of paper, writing down an initial contact and then using a logical connector to place other contacts on the network or map. This may entail simple references such as "Referred to by [someone]" or "Referred to [someone]" or "Works closely with [someone]", or whatever may be appropriate. Such a network can assist educators in understanding the "social fabric" of a geographic region.

This contact information will then be supplemented by survey data regarding political and social culture and norms. Those who have conducted the assessment may then want to prepare a narrative report for those tasked with planning the voter education programme, that includes qualitative information including anecdotes, typical stories, photographs of those interviewed and descriptions that give a good sense of place. Such reports provide a deeper view of the area into which a programme is being inserted and can be of help even to those who reside in the area concerned.

Places to Survey

An assessment of social networks can start just about anywhere, provided that the right questions are asked of those being interviewed. There are certain individuals and organisations, however, that are more likely to be connected to the social networks than others. Amongst these will be religious or cultural organisations, clubs with large and significant memberships, and associations of residents, workers, businessmen and other professionals. It will be

important to ensure that the field teams penetrate behind the most obvious organisations to those that even local people may take for granted.

Nodal organisations are those which, in addition to their own work or in order to conduct their own work, hold together one or more networks by providing coordinating, secretarial, and home services for these networks. Such organisations may be mentioned often by interviewees. Nodal organisations should not, however, be assumed to be spokespersons for the community or to replace the networks that they support.

Questions to Ask

Field teams will want to get basic contact information from each person they interview. This information should include:

- an accurate rendition of the name, acronym and all common naming conventions of the organisation that the person represents. In many societies, organisations will be referred to by a variety of appellations, and field workers may end up believing that different organisations are being discussed.
- all contact information including the actual postal addresses as well as phone numbers and fax coordinates and e-mail addresses where applicable. In the case of informal organisations, additional information may be required such as the name of the location where a telephone message can be left or a postal address where a second letter is required in order to ask the recipient to pass on the primary letter, and so on.
- details (to the extent known) of the key individuals and organisations with whom the interviewee works or associates on a regular basis. This information should include the names of organisations in which the individual and his or her organisation is a member.

Redundancy

It is possible that the assessment of social networks will be conducted at the same time as other aspects of the programme. These other endeavours may include focus group research, pilot studies, and registration drives. Because of the importance of understanding the social fabric in advance of programmatic interventions, however, it may be wise to consider this as an initial step prior to additional programme assessment activities.

Notes:

[1] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[2] A. Portes and Landolt, "Downside of Social Capital" in *The American Prospect*, no. 26 (May/June 1996), 18 -21.

[3] Robert D. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life" in *The American Prospect*, no. 13 (Spring 1993).



[4] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992) or Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

[5] Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

8.2.5 Statutory Authorities

While the national election authority may have a legal mandate to undertake voter education programmes, they also represent one of the most obvious resources available to unofficial voter education initiatives. There may also be opportunities to pursue joint voter education activities through the formation of a strategic partnership between the election authority and civil society, among others. The role of election officials is described in some detail in [Election Officials in Voter Education](#). Apart from those election authority officials designated for the task, however, there are likely other government agencies that are often overlooked, for example ministries of information and education, bodies responsible for the registration of voters, special executive or legislative committees responsible for civic education, or government support services, to name a few.

Other branches of the state should be considered as additional resources. They may provide skilled educators and communicators, large pools of volunteers or at least seconded workers, and perhaps access to information and experience that may be essential during the planning and implementation of the voter education programme.

Government directories may provide the background information necessary for the assessment, but obtaining access to the staff and resources of government departments requires personal contact and support from cabinet ministers or ministers of state and, more importantly, from senior state officials or civil servants.

Election planners will want to work with election authorities in ensuring that government departments and their senior staff are kept informed of and feel able to contribute to the programme from the outset. This is especially important if, for some reason, the civil servants previously responsible for elections, voter education, or broader civic education programmes have been excluded in the present programme or dispersed to other departments between one election and the next.

It may be that there is some hesitation about making use of civil servants in transitional situations where there has been too close an association of the civil service with one regime. If this is the case, more care will have to be taken in evaluating the advice given and the staff recruited. Nevertheless, state experience is not easily gained, and in many cases it is not written down in a form that can be used by the inexperienced.

As with all programme assessments, there will have to be a balancing of the usefulness of the resource in relation to the purpose of the programme, as well as with the impact that the use of the resource will make on cost, efficiency, and public legitimacy.

8.2.6 The Private Sector

The primary aim of business is to make profit. In order to make profit, however, commercial interests have to concern themselves with the stability and prosperity of markets and their reputation in the eyes of present and future consumers. Those with a long term outlook will also be concerned with the cultivation of educated and responsible citizens.

Elections are also substantial commercial ventures, in their own way, so there are redoubled reasons for businesses to become a rich resource for educators. Private businesses can be considered as a source of financial donations for the voter education programme. At the same time, they should also be viewed as partners in the venture and may be approached for support in the areas of secondary and senior staff, facilities, personnel, materials and so on. In some cases, larger business enterprises may even be encouraged to run education programmes of their own.

The private sector may be a rich and diverse resource. Economic activity may include street vendors, multinational representatives, and peasant farmers selling their surplus. At the start of the twenty first century, the variety of economic activity is expanding even though each individual company would no doubt prefer (as would each politician) to be the only player in the field.

Because of this, it is not possible to consider the private sector as a monolith. Any assessment of the sector as a resource will have to consider the texture of the country rather than take a predetermined view of what can be achieved. The assessment will also have to take into consideration the extent to which the private sector has partisan interests, and if and how these can be overcome to assist a nonpartisan programme. In a similar vein, the assessment will have to consider the public image of the business community and the extent to which that might affect the credibility and legitimacy of the programme.

Educators will also want to look beyond the private sector as there may be some non-profit organisations in civil society with commercial, business, and professional interests. For more on these types of associations, see Organised Civil Society as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate.

Ultimately, it is difficult to imagine any country in which it is possible to operate a national education campaign without some support from the private sector, even if it is only financial support.

8.2.7 International Support

There is an increasing number of international agencies and individual consultants ready, willing and able to provide election administration assistance and, in particular, civic and voter education. Obtaining international assistance requires a knowledge of these resources as well as the specific tasks for which international support is required.

International Government Organisations

Electoral support has become a core activity of the United Nations (UN) family, which has established a number of specialist units capable of responding to a wide range of necessary activities – from election observation and administration to civic and voter education. With the publication of the seminal UNDP Human Development Index “Human Development Report: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World”, the UN recognized a growing trend by its members to support democracy and governance activities in parallel or as foundations to



development. With the establishment of the Democracy Support Fund in 2006, a global consensus emerged in which countries act in solidarity with one another to promote democracy.

These global initiatives have been stimulated by or tracked by regional and sub-regional initiatives. The African Union and the Organisation of African States both established mechanisms by which countries could be held accountable for deepening democracy.

All of these initiatives have encouraged a partnership for electoral support and civic education.

Obtaining support

Despite the increasingly joined up architecture of institutions at a global level, international governmental organisations (IGOs) do still operate within different spheres of influence and with different frames of reference. Further information can be obtained about each of these IGOs from local or regional offices or from their web sites.

Regional bodies such as the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of American States (OAS), and the African Union, and international organisations, such as the Commonwealth and the United Nations, all provide different levels of election support to their members and, on occasion, to donor countries and those requesting assistance. The United Nations family provides an online note at <http://portal/undp/org/server/nis/4649027220113235>. A number of individual countries also provide assistance through government development agencies, for example the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the British Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and their embassies abroad. On occasion, individual countries may be asked by IGOs to act on their behalf. In general, support from governments will have to be sought by the government or someone representing an inclusive community of interests within a country.

International Nongovernmental Organisations

Apart from governments there are a number of NGOs or consortia of NGOs that provide assistance in support of democracy. These include the partners in the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project. Many of these in addition to providing small grants, maintain websites providing information on donor organisations, technical assistance provided (organized by assistance area, such as voter education), and regional information resources.

Unlike government funding agencies, international nongovernmental organisations may opt to fund only those projects being undertaken by fellow nongovernment, thereby supporting the development of the nongovernmental sector as a whole. For this reason, it will be important for those seeking grants to adequately understand the orientation, goals, and priorities of the organisation from which funding is being sought.

Preparing for Support

Resources can be obtained only if the organisation has specifically identified the type of support that may be required and matched this to a donor with complementary programmatic goals and funding priorities. Support might take the form of technical assistance, for example

advice in developing, implementing, or evaluating a voter education programme, via training of trainers (TOT), through the provision of necessary equipment, in the form of a grant, or by covering the costs of a specific activity such as the printing or delivery of materials. Once a proposal has been prepared, any of the ACE partners will be willing to refer people to potential areas of support.

8.2.7.1 South-South Cooperation

The global enterprise of civic education and voter education has reached a stage where, as a result of waves of effort by international foundations, it is difficult to separate the collaboration of organisations in the traditional South from that of those in the North.

Indeed much of the experimentation and innovation in civic education and voter education is being done in the South by domestic institutions. In parts of the world, this work is being financed by national budgets and local solidarity funds, but much of it is still being financed by international development aid.

There is, however, an increasing number of regional democracy and election funds, some in private hands and some established by regional inter-government organisations. But apart from attempts to create indigenous sources of funds, the flow of intellectual capacity through election observation missions, sharing of best practice, and the mobility of academics, NGO staff, civil servants and election administrators has meant that the international partnership for civic education and electoral support is not a simple flow of resources from the North to the South.

8.3 Educational Needs

This section provides ways in which the information necessary to discover educational needs can be collected. These include:

- understanding target groups
- conducting surveys
- finding existing information
- learning from interlocutors and intermediaries

Citizens and voters have many needs that, in an election, translate into themes, issues, concepts, concerns or problems, and that contestants in the election will respond to through their campaign materials. Educators, on the other hand, are interested in only those needs that have the possibility of being met through learning or other educational interventions.

There may well be some needs that can only be satisfied by changes in power relations or the electoral environment. An example of this would be the voters' need for safety at the voting station. Educators may be able to explain the arrangements being made, but only the arrangements themselves will meet the need.

In the above example, educators from a human rights organisation may indeed choose to conduct programmes that go beyond explanation of the arrangements being made to steps that



voters can take to better ensure their own safety. Establishing a set of needs, however, will not reduce the strategic and ideological choices that educators must make in determining appropriate programme goals or outcomes.

Nevertheless, it is essential to move beyond a simple description of voter background or an understanding of the political issues of the day, and toward the identification and understanding of a full list of needs to be met by one or more voter education programme. This can be done through the establishment of target groups or learner constituencies. And, while educators will want to prepare programmes that are inclusive, there will be certain cases when the very constituency for whom the programme is prepared have needs that require particular approaches and messages. Many of the programme elements that are described in this topic area have general relevance, but for certain groups there are additional considerations.

A separate section of the topic area (see Educational Objectives) reviews the manner in which such a list of needs can be transmuted into an appropriate set of learning or educational objectives.

8.3.1 Target Groups, Audiences, and Constituencies

Different people have different educational needs. While there may be some needs that are general to all potential voters, it is likely that even these will be expressed differently by different individuals or groups.

Who Will Benefit from the Educational Programme?

Assessment of need has to consider the recipients or beneficiaries of the educational endeavour. There are various words that can be used to describe these recipients. Each of the words has its advantages and disadvantages, and educators working together can be unnecessarily confused by the differing terminology.

Communicators will often talk of "the public", or "publics", meaning a subset of people with particularly common characteristics. Advertisers may speak of an "audience", such as a "youth audience". Those conducting campaigns or with a particular public information message may consider "target groups" or "target audiences", such as rural women. And activists or some educators may talk of "constituencies" with whom they work.

Each of these words is being used to indicate the importance of defining carefully, and segmenting in as real a way as possible, the particular set of individuals with whom the educator plans to work. Even if the voter education mandate is universal and educators responsible for informing the general electorate (see High Impact Groups), a programme will have to consider different methods and messages for different segments of the population. Some groups may be marginalized, while others have special needs with respect to the voting process (see Marginalized Voters and Groups with Special Needs). Beyond the information needs of each target group, it will also be the case that some groups learn differently than others.

Constraints on Segmentation

There are constraints on the choices available to educators. Some of these constraints are linked to information and resources. It is not always possible to know or predict everything about individuals or groups of individuals, and aggregating people always leads to simplification.

Other constraints are introduced by political, constitutional, and legislative considerations. The voter educator may be obliged by law or by political imperative to give attention to particular audiences or constituencies. Yet there may be financial and logistical considerations. The resources needed to reach a small nomadic or exiled group, for example, may not be available no matter how important that group may consider itself, or be considered by others. Or the voter education programme may have to be generalised - through language choice, medium, or methodology - which might exclude some particular segment of society.

Voter educators have also have certain "values" that need to be made explicit in evaluating which constituencies will be targeted and to what extent. Educators may feel that, all things being equal, poor people require more attention than the affluent, even though both may require education. Or they may believe women's participation is of more importance than that of men.

In many of these choices, it may be possible to establish an educational programme that does not discriminate but rather builds on the strengths of particular educators to work in particular constituencies. There are also "high impact groups" that educators will want to reach out to because of the ripple effects that can be achieved by concentrating on such groups. Educators who are committed to the widening and deepening of democracy may also opt to focus their attention on the "marginalized" groups, noted above, for whom specialized (and often more costly) programmes have to be developed.

The Individual Voter

These terms - target, audience and constituency - are all inclusive terms. They aggregate individuals into manageable categories. Yet educators typically prefer not to aggregate people but rather to consider them as students, pupils, participants, or learners. Voter educators will be developing plans and curricula. And it is they who will be contemplating their task in terms of campaigns, public information and lessons. There will be times when they will be forced to use the inclusive terminology. But good educators will always be recalling the individual learner at the base of the planning.

8.3.1.1 The General Electorate

Educators, particularly those working on official voter education programmes, either through the election authority or some other statutory body, will have some responsibility to provide voter information to the general electorate. Eligible voters will be defined in the constitution and the election law. Typically, citizenship, age, and competency requirements will be established. Some prisoners may retain their voting rights, while others may not. And, in some elections, for example municipal elections or the election of representatives according to districts, residency requirements may also come into play.

The election authority may have some obligation, then, to inform all eligible voters about the date and type of elections, hours of voting, the location of relevant voting sites, registration requirements and locations, the type of identification required to establish one's qualification to vote, the proper manner in which to indicate one's choice on the ballot, and so on.



These general voter information messages may then be supplemented, either by the election authority's own programmes or those of civil society groups, by targeted information and education messages aimed at special cases, either marginalized groups or those with special needs.

8.3.1.2 High Impact Groups

Educators can reduce the effort required to conduct a programme by identifying groups of people who will themselves have an impact on others without a major investment of attention by the education programme. There is a strategic planning model that says all activities can be measured on two scales - effort and impact. If voter educators use this scale they will find they can define four types of work:

- programmes that take a lot of effort and have a high impact
- programmes that take a lot of effort and have a low impact
- programmes that require less effort for a high impact
- programmes that take little effort but also have little impact

"Effort" can be defined as the use of resources (people, money, equipment) and programme complexity. "Impact" can be defined as the achievement of the stated objectives where these have resulted in changes in attitude, behaviour, skill, or knowledge of the target audience. So, wise educators will obviously want to run programmes that reduce effort while increasing impact.

There has to be some humility in selecting high impact groups. Selection of such groups is an art rather than a science. And it is also possible for educators to convince themselves that they have chosen such groups when actually the target has been chosen primarily because of the reduction in effort rather than because the educator knows that there will be an increase in impact.

What Are Educators Seeking?

As a general rule, educators will be looking for people (or groups of people) who have ready access to others and already enjoy trust and respect within that constituency. When they speak, people take what they say seriously. Just as important, they have groups of people who want to listen to them.

Educators may also look for people who have the power to replicate messages to particular constituencies. By profession, they may be teachers, trainers, or communicators. Or they may be able to mobilize such people through their positions in a company or institution.

The advantages of spending time identifying such groups of people and then giving them special attention is obvious. But surprisingly, educators continue to prepare generalized programmes using "scatter shot" approaches despite the fact that this may be more expensive, although apparently cheaper per voter reached. Costs seldom take into account the free multiplier effects that can be achieved through specialized programmes for high impact groups.

8.3.1.3 Marginalized Voters and Groups with Special Needs

In every election, and indeed in every possible voter education programme, there are special groups who require particular attention. There are certain groups that have emerged with some frequency. These groups include:

- election staff
- voters abroad
- absentee voters
- refugees and internally displaced persons
- nomads and migrants
- voters in remote areas
- minorities
- disabled people
- home and hospital bound voters
- traditional prisoners
- political prisoners
- security forces
- women
- young and first time voters

Their listing here should not blind educators to the possibility that there might be other groups that require special attention. These groups will vary from country to country. As societies become more atomised by progress, and more conscious of the special needs and human rights of groups as opposed to individuals, it is likely that more groups will be identified.

In transitional circumstances, the interests of certain groups will be identified more closely, and these groups will merit special attention during elections. The rule of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, for example, resulted in large numbers of "emigre" Cambodians who had to be accommodated in elections supervised by the United Nations. In the case of Bosnia, the Dayton Accords required that refugees and internally displaced persons be accommodated in elections organized by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The founding democratic elections in South Africa were deemed to be fully inclusive, and arrangements had to be made for a *diaspora* of South Africans throughout the world. In long-standing democracies, declining voter turn-out by young people merits special educational and motivational programmes aimed at youth.

Educators will not want to take for granted the traditional and visible ways in which societies function if they wish to extend democratic rights to all citizens. Apart from the hegemonies established by particular groups of citizens through language, culture, and the manipulation of power, adequate education usually requires special nuances and a sophisticated approach to individuals. The more of these nuances that are discovered and made visible the better.

Election Officials

Poll worker and election commission staffs can be a real asset to any voter education programme. This group has the advantage of being clearly identifiable, willing to attend training events, available prior to and, if records are kept, subsequent to an election, and highly motivated, even if in some cases the motivation may be pecuniary. By providing poll worker



and election official training that incorporates a component dealing with voter education, poll workers and election commissioners can become a potential informal education pool (see Role of Election Officials). At the same time, poll workers and election officials in many developing and transitional societies may be overburdened and underappreciated. As such, educators may need to guard against unrealistic expectations.

Because of the duties that poll workers and election officials perform, however, some attention also has to be given to special information about when and how they can vote that may be different from that given to the general electorate. While a small task, it should not be overlooked as it will impact on the confidence with which they speak about the election. It will also reduce their own insecurities which can be magnified as pressures on them increase.

Voters Abroad

The number of voters who will be out of the country on Election Day will vary depending on the particular country and election. Also, there is likely to be legislation that defines who is eligible to vote abroad, under what circumstances, and how and where they can cast ballots. This group may include those who are outside of the country as a result of diplomatic service, vacation or business. It may also include those who temporarily live abroad but who retain a citizenship and permanent residency in their home country. It may even include those who have never lived in the home country but have citizenship by some historic right. In the majority of these cases, those who want to vote will need to communicate their intention to the national election authority or some other statutory body. Plans can be made to deliver information or educational materials to them. This information will clearly need to be distinct from that provided to resident voters, as voting site locations, hours of voting, and methods of casting ballots may all be necessary. Voting early or by mail may also be an option.

Absentee and Early Voting

For persons who will be in the country proximate to the election, but not on Election Day, other arrangements may be available. This often affects persons who may be on the road or abroad due to business or vacation. For some elections, such as presidential elections, it may include persons who will not be in the area where they are registered to vote on Election Day.

Two of the most common options for dealing with such groups are absentee voting and early voting. Absentee voting occurs on the basis of a request to the appropriate election authority. Ballots are subsequently sent to the voter by mail, marked, and then returned by mail. In the case of early voting, voters may go to their voting site or a higher level election office to cast their ballot(s). A few countries have also allowed voters who will not be in their area on Election Day for presidential elections to obtain a certificate that would allow them to vote in another area. Clearly, all of these special voting services have their own unique procedures and requirements that will need to be communicated to voters in question.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

By far the largest and most difficult groups of voters out of the country or their voting precinct or district are likely to be refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Refugees and IDPs are often displaced by war, civil strife, or environmental turmoil. This raises such problems as loss of identity and voter registration documents and records, the inability to vote where registered, and access to alternative voting stations. For legislative and local elections, the application of general rather than universal suffrage may also present problems of representation. The countries of former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus provide just a few

examples where special voting arrangements needed to be made and where targeted voter education programmes were required for refugees in neighbouring countries and for IDPs.

Where displacement has also resulted in the crossing of national borders, the problems increase exponentially. Where elections are the result of political settlements, there may be a programme for the repatriation of refugees prior to the elections, as there was in Mozambique. If repatriation can take place in advance of the election date, it may be possible to prepare voter education programmes in country. But those who have been refugees for some time, or as the result of substantial upheaval and war, may still require special attention. Programme information is contained in Communicating with Exiles, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons.

Nomads and Migrants

National, regional, and municipal elections are generally assumed to be about selection of representatives for a particular geographic area. Yet there are still people who travel, and as a result of this travel, have interests in more than one locality, or who cannot be assigned to a particular voting district or area. These nomadic and migrant people - whether their lifestyle is considered to be forced upon them by economic, political or climatic reasons, or simply chosen - pose a serious challenge (though idealistically by no means a threat) to concepts of democracy.

And they also pose a serious challenge to educators. For the most part, the societies they create and within which they establish their own leadership patterns, are relatively closed to outsiders. In addition, their interests may be such that they have excluded themselves or have been excluded from the general political discourse. Programme information for this group and voters in remote areas can be found in Reaching Nomads and Isolated Groups.

Voters in Remote Areas

In some countries, there are also likely to be voters in remote areas. These areas may be nearly impossible to reach by most forms of transportation, may have extremely limited access to mass media, and virtually no interaction with other communities. In the United States, such communities can be found in Alaska, while in the country of Georgia, they can be found along the Caucasus mountain chain. Despite their remoteness, there will be opportunities, however limited, to reach these communities. Advance planning and coordination will be required. Election materials will need to be delivered to these communities at some point and, in all likelihood, there will be government sponsored flights in and out of the area to transport food and other provisions and to move people. If helicopter flights are scheduled, arrangements can be made to ensure that voter education materials are delivered. Reaching Nomads and Isolated Groups provides programme information.

Minorities

Societies usually are not homogenous. Most countries have self-defined ethnic, linguistic, or cultural minorities. Because these groups are minorities, there have likely been past mindsets



and practices aimed at marginalising them, often leading to distinctive and oppressive treatment. With disempowerment comes introspection and apparent apathy. And with isolation from the dominant culture comes a set of cultural and linguistic norms that make it hard to prepare educational programmes unless due account is taken of these as well as the power relations that apply in their interactions with the majority.

There may even be resistance to educational programmes that appear designed to assimilate groups or undermine the cohesion of these groups. And some minorities may even find democracy itself to be a threat. Managing these alienations from the democratic process is not a task for voter educators alone. It is often a major challenge for those involved in civic education and those engaged in developing democratic and human rights institutions.

The Disabled

In an increasing number of countries specially challenged people and those with disabilities are organising themselves. This is particularly true in democratic societies where it is possible to mobilize for the purposes of gaining access to state and private sector resources. With an imperative to enable all people to participate in elections, election officials and voter educators need to undertake efforts to ensure that disabled people are neither disenfranchised nor ill-informed.

It may well be that the most important interventions in this regard are not primarily about education for the disabled. Structural and infra-structural sensitivity, the development of voting methods and access to voting stations, and the training and education of officials and able-bodied citizens are all essential.

But if there are voter education programmes for the able-bodied, then these need to be replicated for those who are not. There are a range of special methods and techniques required that are discussed in Participation of Shutins and the Disabled. Most important may be demographic information and the cooperation of institutions and associations working with the disabled are required.

Home and Hospital Bound Voters

Inevitably, there will be voters who are too frail or ill to come to the polls on Election Day. Depending upon election law and practice, arrangements may be made for the homebound or for patients in hospitals, nursing homes, or rehabilitation centres to vote. Special voting places may be established or they may be permitted to vote absentee or by use of a mobile ballot box. To accommodate their needs, there are likely to be some modifications to the voting process as well as specific procedures to request special voting services. These will need to be addressed through the voter education programme.

Traditional Prisoners

Prisoners lose their liberty once they are convicted by a court of law to a custodial sentence. They do not, however, always lose their citizenship. In some countries, sentencing may even include a determination of whether civic rights are withdrawn or not for the duration of the custodial sentence. In other countries, it is assumed that with the loss of liberty goes the loss of those things that require freedom of movement. Voting may be one of them.

The increasing use of detention for people awaiting trial, and not yet convicted of any crime, the extensive use of non-custodial sentences, through which one person convicted may be able to vote and another in custody for a similar offence not, suggests that more attention should be given to this segment of the population.

This is particularly the case in societies that believe that prison is intended to both punish and rehabilitate. Prisoners leave prison all the time and return to normal society. Whether they do this after short or long sentences, they require information and education that will enable them to participate more constructively in society. This includes taking part in elections. Consequently, some thought has to be given to civic and voter education of prisoners whether or not decisions are made to allow them to vote. Such a programme imposes special challenges that are discussed in Education of Prisoners and Education in Closed Institutions.

Political Prisoners

In some developing countries and transitional societies, there may be another use for prisons, i.e. To detain political opponents and social dissidents. Whether still in prison, or released as the result of some sort of negotiated or imposed settlement, amnesty or pardon, this group will have special needs and face special challenges re-integrating into society and political life, including constructive participation in politics by voting and other means. If political prisoners do not engage in the process, the legitimacy of the election or the resulting government could well be undermined. These issues will need to be addressed with special care and sensitivity through voter and civic education programmes.

Security Forces

In societies that have been involved in civil strife or internal repression, citizens who comprise the military and/or police forces are often compromised and isolated. In situations such as these, special efforts have to be made at demobilization and rehabilitation. Once again, education will have to be directed both at those in the security forces and those outside.

But there are other demands that occur even in consolidated democracies. Soldiers are posted to foreign or isolated bases, these bases are closed to general civic influences for security and control reasons, and soldiers in particular can be susceptible to threat and intimidation. In some societies with militarized police forces similar concerns apply.

Uniformed services that involve the use of force, whether for rebellion and resistance or for the legitimate or illegitimate exercise of state authority quickly develop a language, pace of life, and culture of their own. These concerns need to be taken into account when developing educational programmes (see Approaching Military and Police Forces and Education In Closed Institutions). Such educational programmes are important because these forces can either be a guarantor of election security and successful transition of power, or a major stumbling block to it.

Women



It is no longer acceptable for a country to establish democratic systems and elections without enfranchising women. Enfranchisement, however, did not come without a struggle. And legal enfranchisement is one thing, but being able to participate fully in civic affairs and to vote in elections is entirely another. While women form the majority in many countries, they are often under-represented in political life.

Education alone will not change this. But it is possible and often necessary to develop educational programmes that take particular account of the cultural and economic barriers to participation and advancement that affect women. There are examples of materials that have been designed to meet the educational and information needs of women throughout the world.

Where these barriers coincide with minority membership, poverty and geographic dispersal, they form a high wall that must be climbed or broken down.

Young and First Time Voters

At every election there are new voters amongst those who reach voting age. Programmes in schools that encourage civic participation and electoral competence ultimately go some way towards motivating young people to vote. But supplementary voter education programmes need to be developed that reflect the youth culture. This is particularly true in developing countries and transitional societies where the youth cohort is substantial and where young people are often mobilized in support of one or another political party which may not necessarily have the best interests of those young people in mind.

While young people reaching the legally mandated voting age may constitute a significant percentage of first time voters, there are other groups that need to be taken into account. These may include newly enfranchised voters (who may constitute some of the groups such as minorities or women), new citizens, or even some other segment of the population that has been traditionally apathetic but that has been mobilized and energized by a particular registration drive, social issue, or political party, campaign, or candidate.

Any citizen voting for the first time in elections will likely have less information about his or her rights and about how the process works. First time voters may even find some aspects of the registration and voting process particularly bureaucratic and perhaps even intimidating. Educators must identify the information needs and possibly the fears of this group to ensure that these can be overcome and that this group does not opt out of the process.

8.3.2 Other Considerations

8.3.2.1 Background Considerations

In addition to the educational needs of the general electorate and any variety of target groups, there will be a number of other considerations that educators will need to take into account:

Political, Constitutional, and Legislative Considerations:

The constitutional and legislative framework may place certain requirements on educators, particularly from election authorities or other statutory bodies, when it comes to voter information and education. They may be required to provide information to the electorate at large and/or to particular groups within society. Political pressures may also affect the parameters of the voter education programme.

Logistical Considerations:

Certain logistical considerations may also come into play. Are there particular groups, for example in remote areas, that may be particularly difficult to reach? Does the country's transportation and communications infrastructure present certain problems? Are the logistical obstacles real or are they being artificially created to keep certain groups uninformed and inactive? Can logistical obstacles be overcome and what resources will be required to do so? The answers to these questions will impact the parameters of the voter education program.

Educator Values:

Finally, educators do bring to the voter education exercise their own values, assumptions, and biases. These need to be identified so that educators can be confident that the programme actually addresses the real needs of voters rather than merely fulfilling the preconceived notions of an elite group.

8.3.2.2 Political, Constitutional, and Legislative Considerations

The determination of the most appropriate audiences for voter education is not entirely in the hands of the voter educator. Politics, constitutions and laws constrain or direct the programme.

Role of Politics

Voter education empowers voters. It encourages them to register and, if registered, to vote. It instructs them how to correctly mark their ballots to ensure that they are not invalidated during the counting process. It encourages them to make up their own minds about who to vote for, and it gives them the skills necessary to weigh the options open to them. These are activities that have political consequences. So it is not surprising if there are attempts made by political interests either to expand the mandate of voter educators or alternatively reduce it through formal and informal means.

In situations where elections have begun to take on a regular tempo, and where there is general social consensus about the benefit of elections and the potential for regular alteration in government, election authorities may be able to establish an educational programme that is comprehensive and inclusive. In societies where there are still high stakes and where elections are being driven by international coercion or an inclination to establish public legitimacy without extending political power, however, there will be attempts to reduce the opportunities for broad-based voter education.

Under such circumstances, it will be necessary to manage forms of interference in voter education that range from intimidation and violence targeted at both educators and participants, and attempts to limit voter access, to discrediting educators and their programmes and decisions about budget, legislation, the timing of elections, and other matters in the hands of government.

Constitutions Make Judgements and Confer Rights



Where there are constitutions, and in particular in societies that operate under bills of rights, there are likely to be questions of equity. In some societies it may be possible to focus voter education on particular groups. But statutory authorities are likely to be faced with a requirement that all voters should receive equal treatment and equal service. This can act as a motivator for voter educators. But it may also inhibit them from offering more than very basic information on a universal basis.

Anything more than a basic and general voter education programme would require some differentiation. And this would have to be handled carefully so as to avoid any controversy that could undermine the programme. This may be the case, for example, in a legal challenge about a programme only being provided to one sector of society or being offered at different cost levels in different parts of the country.

There are settings where there is no constitution. This may stem from a society that operates on a set of historical documents and precedents such as Great Britain. Or, it may be because a country is revising its constitutional framework or its previous constitution has been undermined by conflict. In such cases, voter educators may in fact have the advantage of being able to draw on other mandates to focus their education on target groups such as previously disenfranchised people, or combatants, or ethnic or linguistic minorities, and so on. Whatever the case, educators will not want to take for granted that a universal and limited service is the most appropriate and most effective form of voter education.

Legislation Establishes Responsibilities and Limitations

Election authorities are given a particular mandate by legislation or, in some cases, by executive order. This mandate may include the responsibility to provide voter information or education. Election authorities in some countries, for example in Russia, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, Mexico, and Paraguay, have a substantial mandate to conduct voter and/or civic education.

In others, particularly in developing or transitional settings, the election authority may have no clear mandate to conduct voter education. While the need for some form of official voter education may seem obvious, election authorities, particularly those in highly politically polarized environment, may be hesitant to overstep their legal mandate, or will at least be particularly sensitive to such perceptions. In cases where legislation constrains official voter educators, it may be possible for them to make use of their relationships with educators in the civil society sector either to extend their own programme or to ensure that the responsibility for voter education is being assumed by some qualified and appropriate entity. It is the legislation, however, that will determine whether this extended or alternative work receives any funding from official sources.

8.3.2.3 Logistical Considerations

While it may be possible to use creative and innovative means to provide voter education solutions that address all voters, finding the right solution often means finding balance between the ideal and the practical. But it may also be impossible. And choices will have to be made on the basis of simple logistical constraints. Among these constraints will be:

- the size of particular groups
- the isolation of particular groups
- the time available
- the ability to have materials produced or translated
- the ability to deliver and distribute materials

- the number of educators available

With limited budgets and an election to run, it is likely that voter education programmes could feel the pinch. But it will be important for educators to make arrangements to reduce, if not eliminate, the constraints on their programmes.

Because there will always have to be voting sites, even in the most remote areas, and because these will need to be supplied with materials and with staff, voter educators always have access, even if limited, to those same voters. More importantly, careful planning can reduce logistical problems and potential costs of the election. Voters who can show up at the right place and time, come equipped with the proper identification, know how to properly mark their ballots, and are capable of passing efficiently through the voting site can lead to a reduction in the number of poll workers and the number of hours voting sites need to stay open, while limiting the security needs on election day.

These arguments in favour of voter education despite logistical constraints suggest that those posing severe logistical constraints should at least have their motives examined to ensure that they are not trying to limit the access of particular groups of voters to the polls. Nevertheless, there may still come a time when educators have to evaluate costs and benefits, and accept that there may be some voters who have to be excluded from more general programmes. Where this does happen, some form of supplementary programme may be necessary.

8.3.2.4 Educator Values

The values that educators espouse and their own experience and background will have an impact on where education is made available, who receives the programme, and what the programme covers. In resource-rich situations, this may not be a problem, but in countries with limited resources, special care will have to be given to making sure that certain voters are not ignored.

Voter educators employed by the election authorities may not be able to shrug off particular groups of learners because they do not like them or consider them to be irrelevant. But even they are not immune from personal bias. Non-statutory educators, on the other hand, make decisions all the time about which groups of people they intend to work with and which they intend to ignore. In most cases these decisions are made on the basis of a set of operating values that may be explicit, and hence transparent and predictable. But this is not always the case. Sometimes, NGOs and community organisations can be blind to their own biases.

As a result of these values and biases, it may happen that particular targets and constituencies get a great deal of attention and others none at all. Where there is transparency on the part of educators, official voter programmes can choose to "fill the gaps." Or they may identify particular sets of voters on the basis of the value system espoused by the electoral authorities, or simply undertake a general voter education program and require that non-statutory groups either "fill the gaps" or target groups with special needs. The crucial issue here is to make the values and biases upon which decisions are made visible, if only to the education planners themselves.



In addition to choices about particular target groups, educator values can also determine in advance certain choices about educational needs. Often, election authorities may be chosen for their legal background or even seconded from the judicial branch. They may have vast experience in the government bureaucracy and be familiar with all pertinent laws, regulations, and procedures. At the same time, they may be quite far removed from the administrative concerns of poll workers and the information and awareness levels of ordinary voters. Ideally, there should be a dialogue between the educator (who has something) and the learner (who wants something) - especially when the learners are adults - in order to identify educational needs. The decisions about what the educator will offer and how, the educational needs deemed to be appropriate, and which of these will be addressed are all value decisions.

Where there are a large number of educational initiatives, and unlimited resources, it may not be necessary to worry too much about these questions. Planning can make use of the various interests being expressed by voter educators to ensure general coverage. But this may not always be the case, particularly in developing countries and transitional settings, so care will have to be taken to ensure that there are not system breakdowns (i.e., unanticipated gaps that lead to failure of the programme) because educators decided not to provide education in a particular language, or to a certain target group, or to a particular village, or even a particular radio station or newspaper.

Care also has to be taken to make sure that choices do not devour resources in favour of one group at the expense of another because they know how to vote or they never vote or even, in the worst of all possible scenarios, because "they will vote for them rather than us."

8.4 Assessing Voter Needs

Educators have to anticipate and understand the needs of those for whom they are designing programmes. There are a number of different ways of assessing needs, and those planning an education programme will want to consider these on the basis of:

- available time;
- complexity of the programme and its geographic spread;
- whether the programme is being implemented for the first time or whether there is some institutional knowledge with respect to reaching the target constituency; and
- available finances.

Mainly, educators will want to secure professional assistance. This section provides the overview that they might need to determine what professional assistance will be required and how to manage that assistance. "Surveys" describes the most complex and most likely activities that an education team will commission out. But it is possible to use "Existing Data", and to make use of the education team itself to obtain information through "Interlocutors and Intermediaries".

8.4.1 Surveys

In order to develop effective programmes, voter educators have to know about voters or potential voters. They need to know what people know (or think they know). They also need to know how people feel about elections and voting. And finally, they need to know what is likely to encourage them or inhibit them from voting.

How can this information be obtained? One could look into a crystal ball. One could guess. It could be useful to look at past experiences. Talking to others involved in the field would be a good idea. What about simply asking voters, or potential voters, themselves? But it would be

impossible to speak to everyone. So how can one be assured that the information obtained from a limited number of people will be worth anything? Will they be representative of all potential voters?

Using Surveys

Surveys are useful when it is necessary to learn about the attitudes, values, motivations, predispositions, and likely behaviours of large numbers of people. Surveys are also useful when the results need to be generalized to some larger population.

Focus Groups

With very small numbers of people - say, a few dozen - it is often better to use more qualitative, in-depth forms of research such as focus groups that allow people to speak at length about their feelings. Then, one can simply review the transcripts of the group discussions to learn their thoughts and attitudes. Focus groups often provide great insight into a topic. The richness of such transcripts is very difficult to quantify, but with a small number of cases, quantification is often pointless.

It is important to realize, however, that focus groups are not simply any meeting or unstructured conversation. Focus groups employ a specific methodology with respect to the selection of people to be in the groups. Groups should be as homogenous as possible, and the groups should be structured to reflect the key differences of potential interest. One group might include all young male first-time voters, for example, and another might include all young female first-time voters. Insight comes from both the carefully facilitated conversations in each group, as well as the differences between the groups. The insights generated from focus groups are often useful in order to identify key issues to be addressed in a larger quantitative survey, or to investigate questions unearthed by such surveys in more depth.

Designing Surveys

This discussion is intended to aid two types of people. First, many people might want to undertake a survey on their own and thus might find this a useful guide, or blueprint to all the key steps that they will have to work through. It would not, however, provide a sufficient "user's manual" to take you through each step in depth.

Some detail has been included in these sections so that a person interested in the subject will have a complete guide to what may be one of the most expensive parts of a national voter education programme. Other readers may wish to ignore the technical information that follows.

The various dimensions associated with a survey are often beyond the capabilities and resources of any given individual or -organisation. Thus, many -organisations would more likely want to hire a professional research firm experienced with surveys to do this work for



them. At no point, however, should control of the process be relinquished. This description is intended to enable election authorities to maintain critical control in monitoring the project.

- Thinking your way through a successful survey consists of a series of steps:
- Survey Design
- Question Framing
- Survey Preparation
- Sampling
- Selecting Participants
- Getting Into the Field

8.4.1.1 Survey Design

Deciding What Information is needed

First a decision will need to be made about what information needs to be collected and why. This process can be initiated by asking a few simple questions: "What opinions or likely behaviours do you want to know about?" In social science jargon this is called the dependent variable. "What do you think are the causes?" These are the independent variables. The answers will provide some important foundations for the survey's content.

Suppose one wanted to know about the causes of voter turnout, or the dependent variable. A decision is made to test the varying impacts of potential causal factors such as:

- information
- motivation
- interest
- efficacy
- perceptions of the degree of electoral competition among parties in a given election

These will be the independent variables. Basically, then, five key factors have been identified that are important and need to be measured. All that is left is to define each of these concepts, or factors, so that there is agreement about what is meant by such terms as "electoral competition" or "motivation."

A "conceptual framework", therefore, is created that should act as the blueprint for the entire project. At any point in the project, one should be able to gauge whether what is being done is helping to measure an element identified in this framework. If it is not, one may discover that he or she has gone off track (which is easy to do), and is working on something peripheral to his or her real interests.

At the same time, while writing survey questions, it may become apparent that there are some really important things that one needs to know about, but that have not been included in the blueprint. At that point, one should not simply write a new question in an ad hoc fashion, but should go back and put the new concept into the blueprint.

Conceptualization is usually based on:

- your knowledge of the local context;
- reviewing what is known and published about the subject, e.g. voter turnout;
- consultation with experts in the field.

Before Idasa's Public Opinion Service (POS) conducted a survey on the Cape Flats about public views toward crime, policing and collective action, for example, it called in a range of criminologists, sociologists, social workers, and journalists with extensive experience on the ground as well as with the relevant academic literature. This helped in the identification of the key conceptual areas, and thus, the parameters of the questionnaire.

Operationalisation

At this stage, the goal is to begin formulating a structured questionnaire by designing specific questions to measure the "real world" existence of the phenomena or attitude in the conceptual framework. In other words, the conceptual framework is being converted into an actual questionnaire.

Ideally, several questions should be designed to measure each key concept. One single question can often be an unreliable indicator of people's attitudes in that area. The ultimate goal is to be able to average the responses to all the questions about a concept to provide a valid and reliable aggregate measure or index of the concept (such as "interest"). The series of questions should not simply measure the same exact thing, but tap various dimensions or elements of "political interest".

A valid question, or series of questions, is one that actually measures what is meant by efficacy. One form of validity is called "Face Validity". That is, by reading the actual question wording, the question wording appears to be getting at what the intent. Another form is called "Construct Validity". This is when responses to the question, or series of questions, seem to correlate internally with one another, or with other questions that measure things that one would expect to be related to political interest.

"Reliability" refers to the extent that the questions would yield the same responses from one sample to the next, at any given point in time. Various types of statistical tests exist to help assess the extent of construct validity and reliability.

"Operationalisation" is probably the most time consuming aspect of the survey process. Converting concepts into valid, reliable questions that measure exactly what they are intended to measure requires much thought and careful phrasing.

8.4.1.2 Framing Questions to Maximize Survey Data

In general, questions should measure precisely what they are intended to answer. They should be as clear and accessible as possible, especially in places with low levels of education and literacy. Wording and phrasing, therefore, are crucial.

A useful guide is to look at the work of respected analysts in an area, such as voter turnout, and to examine the types of questions they are asking. What do other people internationally ask in order to measure efficacy, or likely voter turnout?

Asking questions that have been asked elsewhere also enables one to compare one's results with what has been found in other places and at other times. This is crucial. Any given result from a



survey - such as that 34% of South Africans are not interested in politics - may mean something on its own. On the other hand, it may mean more if we knew that it was much higher, much lower, or about the same as people in other countries.

At the same time, a particular context might demand a uniquely worded question. Thus, there is a fine line between developing questions that are meaningful in a specific context, and producing results whose comparability helps enhance one's understanding of local dynamics. Beyond these general comments, there are a number of potential pitfalls the question designer should understand.

Open-ended Questions

These questions allow the respondent to answer spontaneously, on their own terms. Rather than asking people to rate the importance of several possible reasons for voting on a scale of "very important" to "not important at all" for example, one might ask them: "What are the most important reasons to vote?" Then, they have the advantage of not presuming what needs to be proven.

Open-ended questions, however, are very expensive. Most survey companies will allow for only three to four in their normal quotations. A typical question, such as "What are the most important problems facing the country?", may get dozens of unique responses. All of them have to be examined and categorized or "coded" into broader categories that are considered useful. This is a very time consuming process and drives up labour costs considerably.

Closed-ended questions, those that have a closed set of responses from which people may choose, also present a range of potential problems that are discussed in greater detail below.

Framing

Framing refers to how important issues are presented or "framed" in a survey question. Which aspects of a larger issue should be tapped? Which set of policy alternatives should be offered to respondents? Should a question on the location of a parliament tap costs and efficiency? Should South Africa have one administrative capital in Pretoria, for example, and one legislative one in Cape Town? Or should they be put together in one city? Or, should the question ask about changing the status quo? Again, as an example, should parliament be kept in Cape Town, where it presently is, or should it be moved to Pretoria or somewhere else? These questions may yield quite different results, with very different political implications.

While different frames can yield significantly different results, decisions about which frames to use are almost impossible to resolve and will almost always invite criticism from some part of the political spectrum.

Question Order

Question order can shape responses by altering the larger context in which respondents think about an issue. Because answers to one question can be shaped by answers to previous ones, questions that are themselves fairly unbiased may create a very different effect when asked in combination. Questions on likely voter turnout, for example, may be biased in favour of higher potential participation if those questions were preceded by items asking people about people's duty to vote, thus reminding them of that duty.

Response Order

The order in which possible responses are listed may also have important effects on results. When extreme response items are placed before a more moderate response - the "contrast" effect - the preceding extreme responses increase the likelihood of choosing the following, more moderate response.

Order effects also differ according to interview method. With phone surveys or personal interviews that are read out, there is a "regency effect" where respondents tend to choose latter options from a list because they have more time to think about them. In contrast, visual presentations like show cards or mail questionnaires may have a "priming effect" where earlier alternatives tend to be chosen because people are more likely to think about the first alternative.

One-sided vs. Forced-choice Questions

"One-sided" questions ask people to agree or disagree with a statement, to favour or oppose some position, or to state some degree of an opinion. With "forced-choice" questions, the researcher attempts to provide balanced alternatives, such as, "Do you favour the government doing X policy, or should it pursue Y policy?"

"Agree" or "disagree" response sets tend to bias results in favour of the "agree" response, especially when knowledge is low. Less educated respondents with little political experience may be especially susceptible to these effects. When people have given little thought to a topic, they are less likely to develop counter arguments against one-sided statements and are more likely to acquiesce.

The typical solution is to offer respondents a second, or even a third, substantive alternative - a forced choice. This provides respondents with a counter argument. This generally decreases the number of people favouring the first alternative in a single-sided format and also changes the distribution of opinion. Yet the strength of the arguments and alternatives presented is important - not all are equally effective. Creating a second substantive alternative also places researchers in the awkward position of shaping public opinion by deciding which alternatives to include as well as the substance of those alternatives.

Double-barrelled Questions

One pitfall typically to be avoided is the "double-barrelled" question. Here a proposed alternative is coupled with a solution. An example would be, "Do you approve of a tax increase to end the budget deficit?" Respondents may not be clear about what their response will mean.

Does a "yes" mean they approve of the tax increase, for example, or getting rid of the deficit, or both?

A "one-and-a-half-barrelled question" contains qualifications that lead respondents toward choosing a specific alternative.



Key Words

Another potential area of difficulty is the actual wording used to describe the object or referent of a given proposition. Is government funding designed to deal with "drug addiction" or "drug rehabilitation", "assistance to the poor" or "welfare," "assistance to the poor" or "improving conditions of the poor"? Are respondents being asked to approve of the "president's policy" or his "handling of the policy"?

What words describe the actual choice respondents are asked to make? Are they asked to "approve," "support," or "favour" something, or rate it on a scale of "excellent," "quite good," "only fair" or "poor"?

A special form of this problem is the association of "buzzwords", or words used to evoke emotional responses from respondents, with response alternatives. These words may inject partisan or ideological calculations into responses, as well as allow less-educated responses. In the United States, the word "communist" was well known for its effects on responses to foreign policy questions. The mention of the president almost always has a large impact on the results, usually in favour of whatever the White House has done. In South Africa, one might well obtain significantly different results if people are asked to compare their lives now to twenty years ago, that is, if they were asked to compare to "life under apartheid."

"Don't Knows"

Question format also affects the number of people who offer an opinion. Increased levels of "don't know" (DK) are obtained by agree/disagree questions, questions on remote and abstract issues, and ones with greater task difficulty (e.g., ones that require long explanations or require respondents to make future-oriented projections).

The level of DK can also be affected by the use of a "filter", such as, "Or haven't you had a chance to think about this?" Filters usually increase the absolute number of DK responses by legitimizing non-response. But filters can also affect the actual substantive distribution of opinion. Those who are likely to give an opinion when they really don't have one do not come from the various response options in a random way. The problem is made more difficult because "floaters" (those who give differing responses to different types and forms of questions) are difficult to predict and don't seem to be characterized by any single trait.

All of the potential difficulties reviewed in this section arise because of the way human beings think. The way in which humans process information is greatly affected by how that information is presented. This is no less true of the survey environment. People do not conduct exhaustive searches for representative instances of an opinion or an attitude in long-term memory. Rather, they look for the most accessible information from either the environmental context of recent history or experience, or from the immediate context of the questionnaire and interview.

There are no easy answers. A question's meaning is always partially dependant on where it is placed in the questionnaire. The way we consider our response is always partially dependent on what the response alternatives are and how they are presented to us.

Besides a few well-worn "rules of thumb," therefore, there appear to be no obvious solutions to many wording problems. While we may try to avoid "contaminating" questions, "clean"

questions stripped of political context may be unrealistic and irrelevant. Buzzwords and double-barrelled associations are often what give a survey questions political realism.

8.4.1.3 Survey Preparation

Before going into the field with the interviewers, every questionnaire should be tested on respondents similar to those who will be interviewed in the actual survey. On the basis of this trial run, flaws in the questionnaire can be identified and necessary adjustments made.

While it might sound Orwellian in the extreme, most pilot studies are done in a small room with a one way mirror so that one can watch the actual interview, as well as see and hear exactly what goes on with regard to the questions, answers and body language.

This provide an excellent opportunity to check whether:

- instructions are clear to the interviewer;
- questions are clear to both the interviewer and respondent;
- questions read well;
- questions make the person uncomfortable or anxious;
- respondents tire and give less thought to their answers, and at what point this occurs;
- questions gather the types of answers in which we are really interested.

In testing questions on social identity, for example, Idasa found that the wording: "What do you call yourself?" was generating some very personal labels, such as "nice person" and "open minded", which was not the information being sought. So it was necessary to provide some sort of context in which the person was to answer the question. So the question was changed to: "Thinking of all the groups in South Africa..." (a listing of various types of groups was provided) "Which group would you consider yourself belonging to first and foremost?"

Pilot testing usually leads one back to the drawing board to rewrite at least some questions, or to delete some questions. If it appears from the pilot test that the questionnaire is too long, the conceptual framework will need to be revisited. In the final analysis, some decision will need to be made as to whether to drop whole concept areas from the survey that may be interesting but not vital or to drop one or two questions from each concept area.

Translation

In a multilingual society, it is imperative that every respondent is able to answer questions in the language with which they feel most comfortable.

While it is extremely time consuming, the best way to ensure that questionnaires mean what they are intended to mean after translation is by using the "double blind" method. One set of linguists takes the original questionnaire and translates it into the desired languages. Then, a separate set of linguists take those versions and translate them back into English (or the original language).



At that point, the re-translated version needs to be checked against the original language. Any differences need to be reconciled by finding another word in either the original or the translated language that better expresses the key concept. Note, however, that if the original language is changed, all the other translations need to be revised accordingly.

Yet good translators do not simply translate every word. They must know when respondents may be used to hearing key words in another language, such as "parliament", so that the proper term can be used.

Interview Method

The method of interview is key. Responses to survey questions are not necessarily independent of the way in which they are obtained.

Telephone

An increasingly popular method is to contact respondents by telephone. Telephone surveys are often cheaper, because they do not require interviewers to travel all over the country or region to people's houses, and they may be quicker.

A major problem is presented, however, by actual rates of telephone ownership. Even in the United States, it has been estimated as late as the early 1990's that five percent of the national population (and ten percent in some states) still did not have a telephone.

The big problem is that telephone ownership is not random. It is highly associated with household income. Those who do not have telephones are extremely likely to have social and political views that differ sharply from those who do have telephones. In developing countries, the low and highly uneven incidence of telephone ownership makes nationally representative surveys impossible, significantly under-representing lower income households.

In the U.S., the Gallup organisation once estimated that pre-electoral telephone surveys were five to six points more favourable to Republican candidates than to Democrats. A striking example in South Africa occurred in 1992, when the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) used a telephone survey to project that F.W. de Klerk had more support than Nelson Mandela in a hypothetical presidential race. The HSRC observed that they had correctly weighted the final responses according to the correct racial proportions of the country. What they forgot, however, is that those Africans with telephones were not very typical of Africans in general.

Telephone surveys also make it easier for people to opt out of the survey and, therefore, out of the sample. As noted below, it is important not to allow people to self-select themselves out of the sample. Moreover, telephone interviews rarely establish the rapport possible in personal interviews, which is necessary to allow interviewers to lead respondents into controversial topics.

People are simply more reluctant to express negative attitudes with unseen strangers. Because telephone samples are also likely to include alienated people, they are generally biased toward less negative data. In some situations, however, the lack of direct contact may render telephone surveys preferable.

Post/Mail

In a survey by mail, a questionnaire is simply sent to the respondent through the post. The questionnaire is then self-administered. Because they involve relatively minor labour and postage costs, they tend to be relatively cost effective.

On the other hand, mail surveys tend to get a very low response rate. To get a one-third to one-fourth return rate is considered a major success, and even these rates require a good deal of work contacting recipients a second or third time to coax them to fill it out and return it. Other incentives may be offered, such as prizes or chances to win prizes.

In some places, the effectiveness of postal surveys is also greatly hampered by both the quality of the postal service and high levels of illiteracy. For these and other reasons, postal surveys are usually only carried out on specific targeted populations, most often very educated audiences, top-level managers, or "elite decision makers."

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews can establish a relationship of trust with the respondent, allowing more sensitive questions and more in-depth answers. Because respondents can actually see their interviewer in face-to-face interviews, interviewer characteristics such as race and gender may influence the willingness of respondents to offer socially undesirable responses on issues of race and gender. Thus, in a place like South Africa, survey companies usually try to make sure that interviewers are of the same race as their respondent. If the survey was on sex, or gender issues, an effort would be made to ensure that interviewers were the same sex as respondents.

Personal interviews tend to be expensive, however, because of labour and travel costs. In addition, personal interviews face many logistical hurdles not encountered in the other methods. Most simply, there is the prospect of getting past someone's front gate, let alone through their door. Especially in South Africa, "bad" neighbourhoods, apartment building security systems and other minor problems, such as Rottweiler or Doberman Pinscher dogs, often prevent surveyors from contacting everyone in the sample.

Again, if unchecked, "non-response" (those who cannot be reached at home or who refuse to be interviewed) can play havoc with a sample because these people almost always differ from the general population in attributes and attitudes.

8.4.1.4 Sampling

Surveys are useful when we want to know about large numbers of people. The goal is to speak to some smaller number of people (sample) and to generalize to some larger group of people (population). Sampling is generally complex and usually requires lots of statistics and computers. But it is important to understand the basic logic so as to intelligently communicate to a fieldwork company what is desired and to adequately check on what they actually do.

For what population is information being sought and generalized? Is it all voters? Only likely voters? Only men or only women? Only young or old? Only black or white voters?



Drawing a sample of some larger population can be likened to making soup. When mixing up a big bowl of soup, any good cook will tell you that you only need two or three spoonfuls to get a reasonably reliable idea of what the entire bowl tastes like. Of course, this assumes that the soup has been mixed well and that, as a result, all the salt is not clumped in one corner, or that all the potatoes are not lying at the bottom of the bowl, or that all the garlic has not moved to the side of the bowl. Any of these possibilities would mean that the spoonfuls were likely to be unrepresentative of the whole bowl.

Again, assuming a well-mixed bowl, about the same number of randomly drawn spoonfuls will give a good idea of the taste regardless of whether the soup comes from an ordinary black pot on a home stove or one of those industrial-sized pots in a restaurant. The same number of spoonfuls should do if the bowl is well mixed. The number of desired spoonfuls may increase slightly, but not nearly as fast as the increase in the size of the bowl.

But few populations are "well mixed": there are often groups (or strata of people) whose attitudes differ significantly from other people (just as there are different vegetables and seasonings that taste differently) who are not randomly scattered throughout the population but tend to be clustered together in certain regions, cities or neighbourhoods.

Any possibility that a sample would miss, or under-represent, any of these groups or strata in a purely randomly drawn sample should be reduced to the greatest extent possible. In effect, while attempting to draw a sample that is representative of the whole population (or bowl of soup), one will probably also want to "stratify" the sample so as to draw mini, subsamples of each desired subgroup (thus ensuring adequate subsamples of potatoes, rice, and tomatoes).

This means paying attention to representing people of all race and language groups, all regions, or rich and poor, or urban and rural. Usually, these strata should be constructed so that their size is proportionate to the size of the stratum in the actual population. Thus, if the rural component of some desired population is 52 percent, the rural component of the sample should be the same.

Once a decision is made to stratify along more than two dimensions, however, deciding upon the actual composition of the sample can get quite complicated. A national sample in South Africa, for instance, might dictate that a given number of mixed-race and rural people living in the Western Cape is needed as well as a given number of African and white rural people from that province. This would also mean getting numbers of metropolitan people from each group from that province as well. Since this can become quite difficult, a trained demographer or mathematician can help work this out.

In some instances, however, it may be desirable to have a disproportionate random stratified sample. This usually occurs when some desired subgroup comprises a very small proportion of the desired population. A proportionate sample in South Africa, for instance, would consist of only 9 percent mixed-race respondents and around 2 percent Indian-background respondents. But if, for reasons of cost, the national sample is only 2,000 people, this would result in less than two hundred actual mixed-race respondents and around forty Indian-background respondents.

It may not be possible, however, to base any reliable statistical estimates on a subsample of forty people. Even with two hundred people, the statistical margin of error may be so large that projections about mixed-race voters would not be very helpful to guide a voter education programme targeted to these communities. This would become even more important if one wanted to examine the differences between men and women, or urban and rural people, or

party supporters, within mixed-race and Indian-background subsamples. The numbers of respondents within these subgroups would start to become unhelpfully small.

Thus, an "over sample" of small groups such as these might be considered. In this case, while some small group might merit only forty interviews on a strictly proportionate basis, a decision could be made to conduct a hundred interviews in order to have a more reliable base of information. Once all the data is selected, this disproportionate sampling is corrected by "weighting" the hundred interviews downward by the appropriate ratio so that they represent the correct proportion of the entire sample.

Weighting is also useful with regard to other important demographic attributes for which information exists, but will not be known until respondents open the door. The number of men and women in the desired population as well as the number of people in various educational strata may be known, for example. But it may not be possible to stratify the sample according to these traits *a priori*, because the interviewer will not learn until someone answers the door or the telephone, whether the respondent is male or female or how much education they have.

Once the sample is done, it can be compared to the actual population along demographic lines for which information is available. The people in the sample can be weighted upward or downward in the appropriate direction. Imagine, for instance, twice as many women being contacted in the sample than actually exist in the overall population. In this case, each woman in the sample would ultimately be weighted downward by half to bring the proportion of women in the sample to its proper proportion.

Constructing samples is a key determinant of the cost for a given survey. Samples that require a high proportion of rural respondents will tend to be relatively expensive given the costs of getting interviewers deep into rural areas.

To be able to survey representative samples on a national basis usually requires a considerable amount of infrastructure and personnel. Thus, most nongovernment organisations, even if they are able to design the project and are capable of analysing the results, will still contract a professional organisation to conduct the actual interviews.

8.4.1.5 Selecting Participants

Getting To a Household

Once the desired construction of the overall sample, e.g. total sample size, plus the number of interviews to be conducted in each sub-stratum has been decided upon, the next step is to translate that desired sample into actual interviews.

There are at least two very different ways of proceeding at this point. The key distinction is to decide between a random probability sample or a quota sample.

Random Probability Sample



Here, every person in the population has an equal and known chance of being selected in the final sample. This presumes that the size of the overall population is definitely known. If that size is "n", then the person's probability of selection = $1 / n$.

If there is a list of all the people living in a given population, pure random probability sampling means randomly drawing out the total number of names from that list until the desired number is reached. Or, if the sample has been stratified into subsamples (e.g. urban and rural people), X number of names from the list of urban people, and Y number of names from the list of rural people would then be drawn. Once the sample is drawn, these persons would simply be visited, contacted by telephone, or mailed the questionnaire.

Even where there is a complete list of every person in the population, personal interviews using pure random sampling tends to be inordinately expensive. Getting interviewers out to each spot randomly selected by the random sampling procedure regardless of how remote it is from the other interview sites is costly. Thus, most personal interview strategies use *clustered random sampling*. That is, travel costs are minimized by sending a group of interviewers to some randomly selected location and then conducting a series of interviews at that location.

Clustered sampling is widely used because it reduces costs, but also because, very often, a list of names is not available. Many countries, or provinces, or municipalities, have no such list, or if they do, will not share them with a researcher.

Thus, although the size of overall population and the number of people living in various regions or in various subgroups might be known, there may not actually be a list of individual names. Clustered sampling around sampling points helps researchers get to individual households in a way that maintains randomness and an equal probability of selection.

This involves the selection of a series of what are called "primary sampling units" (PSUs). PSUs are the smallest units from which final sampling points will be randomly drawn. PSUs consist of the smallest geographical units for which there is reliable population data (and for most surveys, this means the population 18 years and older). In some counties with good census data, these may be called "Enumerator Areas."

Final sampling points cannot be randomly pulled from these PSUs because the PSUs will almost always have different population sizes. Even where there are census determined Enumerator Areas consisting of a set number of households each (for example, in Zimbabwe, EAs have 100 households each), the number of people in each household will differ. Thus, each potential PSU must be weighted by the actual number of people living in it. That is, the chance of selecting a final sampling point from a PSU must be proportionate to the actual population size of the PSU.

Once each PSU has been weighted by its population size, final sampling points can then be randomly selected from the list of PSUs. The actual number of final sampling points is determined by the number of interviews to be conducted at each point and the total sample size. Most surveys conduct between five and seven interviews at each point. Thus, if five interviews will be done at each point, and the overall sample size is 2500, a list of 500 final sampling points must be randomly selected.

Now we know where we want to go. For instance, a generated list might reveal 350 suburbs, some populous ones might be selected more than once, and 150 rural magisterial districts. Survey researchers will then find maps for each of those areas, and then randomly select a point in a suburb. This can get quite elaborate, as some researchers will lay over a transparency of

randomly numbered points, then select a number at random, and then look for the street on the map it overlays. That is where they finally will send the interviewers.

In many areas, no good maps exist. Or, rural maps might be so large that they only show the locations of towns, but not streets within the towns. In this case, one might resort to a rule such as starting at some common point, such as a church, school, municipal building, or water tap.

Once interviewers know what point they have to go, then they should follow a set of rules that allows them to start picking houses, again at random. For instance, they might go to the agreed upon point, face the sun, or face east, and then proceed ten houses, and then interview at every fifth house. The rule should be random, but all your interviews should follow the same rule. The whole point is that the interviewer should play no role in the selection of the household.

The very last step involves selecting an actual, real live respondent. Again, giving every person an equal chance of selection demands that interviewers do not only speak to people who answer the door, or the telephone. If interviewers are working from a sample chosen from some grand population register, then they need to speak to the specific person whose name appears on the list.

If there isn't such a list, once interviewers are inside the door, or have someone on the phone, they will need to "enumerate" the household, or make a list of people who live in the household (and, normally, are citizens above the age of eighteen). Then they need to choose one name at random and interview *that* and *only that* person. A common way to select that person randomly is to ask which person in the household had the most recent birthday. In rural areas, people may often be irritated at not getting the chance to express themselves (especially if the head of household is not selected, particularly if it is a man), and they may not understand the birthday method. One visible way to display the logic of random selection is to distribute a series of colour coded cards to everyone who is eligible, then gather them and ask someone in the house to randomly pull a card from the stack: the person who had held that card is the one to interview.

However, not every door we knock upon nor every telephone call placed will result in a successfully completed interview. Many people will not be at home, many will be at home but remain inaccessible for a variety of reasons, and many people will simply refuse to speak to interviewers. As mentioned above, it is important that interviewers, to the greatest extent possible, not allow people to self-select themselves out of a sample. This is because those who are not at home or are unwilling to participate are likely to be different from the overall sample in important ways. The people more likely to be at home, especially if interviews are conducted during weekdays, are disproportionately likely to be young people, unemployed, housewives and the elderly. Those unwilling to talk to interviewers tend to be more alienated. Those types of people need to be represented in any sample. This is especially true if alienation is likely to be related to the topic of interest, like voting.

"Non-response" can play havoc with the representativeness of a sample. In the U.S., "non-response" rates have doubled since the 1950's, going from between 12% to 22% to anywhere from 30% to 55% for personal interviews and 25% to 35% for telephone samples. In South



Africa, non-response rose well over 100% in some conservative white communities for surveys conducted in 1993 and 1994.

One method often used is to correct for non-response by "weighting" the obtained responses according to known census statistics. So, if not enough middle-aged men were actually interviewed, the responses of those middle-aged men may be "weighted upwardly" by some fraction. So, for example, if there are only half as many of this group as we need in the realized sample, we simply multiply each case by 1.5.

This is problematic, however, because it assumes that those who were not included in the sample or refused to be contacted are similar to those questioned across the entire range of attitudes tapped by the survey. However, by the very fact that the person was out of the home (probably working or shopping), or the very fact that they refuse to speak to the interviewer, probably makes them different from those people who are at home, or want to speak with the interviewer.

There are a few things that can be done to minimise the incidence of those who refuse to speak. Interviewers need to be extensively trained so that they are courteous as possible. The questionnaire should also feature an introduction that makes the survey as interesting as possible to the potential respondent, as well as convey to them the importance attached to their views. Finally, interviewers should ask if they have come at a convenient time, and if not, offer to make an appointment at a better time when the respondent is not busy and can spend some time concentrating on the questions.

Interviewers can try to minimize the effect of people not being at home in several ways. First of all, they should try and do a large share of interviews in the evening and at weekends. Weekdays are difficult because workers are out of the home, but housewives may have more time to speak to you. The absolutely worst time seems to be supper time, when people are busy either making dinner, or eating, and are most irritated at being disturbed.

Secondly, interviewers can devote a lot of attention to what are called "call-backs." If the person on the list or the person randomly selected with, for example, the birthday method is not available, interviewers should ask when that person is likely to return and then come back at that point in order to get the interview. Most survey companies require interviewers to make at least two, if not three "call backs" to get the originally selected person. Some large surveys providing marketing information on media and product usage actually require four call backs.

Only once the interviewer has made the required number of call-backs and still had no luck, should they be allowed to "substitute" another person for the original respondent. Furthermore, they should not substitute with someone else from that house. Rather, they need to follow some rule, such as going two or three houses to the right or to the left, or dialling a new number below or above the original number in the telephone listing, and go through the whole process again.

The whole point is to make an extra effort to ensure that those likely to be out of the home are not easily allowed to slip out of the sample, and that they are not easily substituted with the types of people that are more likely to be found at home.

The advantage of a random probability sample is that it allows researchers to take advantage of the mathematical laws of sampling for the purpose of generalizing sample results to the larger population. These laws tell us that the average (mean) of any randomly drawn sample will tend to equal the mean of the overall population from which it is drawn. More specifically, for any given sample size, these laws provide the formulae to calculate the exact margin of error

around any sample. That is, for a given sample size, a sample estimate will be within plus or minus the true mean of the overall population 95 per cent of the time. This is because, if a large number of samples are drawn, the laws of probability indicate that about five percent would fall outside the normal margin of error. However, 95% of the samples would fall within a calculable range, or band, around the true population mean. The larger the sample, the more narrow that band.

Quotas

An alternative method is the quota sample. Here, the overall sample is constructed to represent the overall population along all the important lines of distinction. For instance, a decision is made that the sample should have certain percentages from each province and from each city, certain percentages of men and women, of each language group, and of each race group. However, the final selection of respondent is left up to the interviewer.

Each interviewer is given a quota to fill in their area: that is, a list of the number of people they must find and interview who fit different demographic categories. So an interviewer may be told that they must find five African men and six African women who live in urban areas, and seven African men and eight African women who live in rural areas. However, they are not told which houses to go to, or streets to go to, or given any random process to follow. They must simply find people that fit the desired categories.

Because interviewers are relieved of the duty to go through all the random processes described above, they are able to obtain the desired number of interviewers much more quickly and with far less travel costs. This makes a quota sample considerably cheaper than a random probability sample.

However the major drawback is that, because the equal and known probability of inclusion that characterizes a probability sample has been dispensed with, mathematical theories of probability cannot be applied to make any inferences from a quota sample to the overall population. The frequency of responses from a quota sample can be calculated, but strictly speaking, the degree to which those results are representative of the true values in the overall population cannot be determined.

8.4.1.6 *Getting Into the Field*

Getting into the field requires the selection and training of interviewers as well as their deployment and management.

Interviewers

Whenever possible, only trained and experienced interviewers should be used. In any case, training is extremely important. The process of selecting household respondents must be thoroughly reviewed if professional interviewers will not be used. The questionnaire should also be covered extensively, including how questions should be read and certain words emphasized. The importance of not prompting respondents inappropriately should be stressed



and interviewers should be cautioned against giving their own opinion either explicitly or implicitly through clothing, facial expressions, or body language. Even experienced interviewers must be trained extensively with a new questionnaire.

Because they often work cheaply, university students are often hired to conduct interviews. A word of caution about this option is in order, however. Students who are interested in socio-political surveys often are politically active and may be more prone to communicate their own preferences to respondents in implicit and even explicit ways.

As mentioned above, one should make sure that interviewers are from the same background as their respondents, especially if the survey touches on related matters. On some occasions, however, it might be desirable to follow a different procedure.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork should be done under the strict supervision of field supervisors. Most respected companies will conduct call backs to at least 10 to 15 percent of the households interviewed, find the person interviewed to confirm they were actually interviewed, and also go through some of the questions to verify that the answers recorded were actually their answers.

Probably even more important than doing this is that the interviewers know that it will be done and that their payment will depend on getting satisfactory results from the call backs. As a cross section of society, fieldwork interviewers are no different from an ordinary cross section of society. And, unfortunately, many a story has been told by exasperated researchers of finding their field workers sitting under a tree and filling in questionnaires with fictitious names, addresses, and answers. Call backs can be done by phone if such service is widespread in a population. If not, they need to be done in person and probably before an interview team leaves an area.

Field supervisors should also check all questionnaires before the team leaves an area to make sure everything has been filled in completely and correctly, and if not, send the interviewer back to that person and obtain the necessary information.

Receiving Data

Actual responses will then need to be entered into a computer readable format. There are several statistical software packages that provide accessible data entry features and can also read and manipulate that data once it is entered. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is one widely-used programme.

Fieldwork companies typically will enter the data and even provide a technical report. Even so, the organisation paying for the survey should obtain its own data set on computer disk, preferably compatible with SPSS format. The organisation may also want to do its own analysis, or if it is inexperienced in statistics, contract another individual or entity to do this. The organisation should, however retain the freedom to monitor and evaluate what is provided. Just as important, there are probably much larger sets of data manipulations, cross tabulations, or correlations that could be run, but that a survey company will not present in its technical report.

Time

To do a proper job, the length of time from conceptualization to actual data analysis and report writing can be unexpectedly long. Even when it is absolutely imperative to go into the field

quickly to capture public reactions to some fast-breaking event, it is hard to imagine doing a good job in less than six weeks.

Personal interviews of a national sample could often take the most experienced company several weeks to complete. Larger projects, such as attempting to test some model of voter participation, will usually take at least several months or even up to a year if fastidious academics become involved.

Costs

Project costs will include administration costs, data entry, and general overheads. The largest portion of these costs usually is for fieldwork and includes costs of transport, lodging, and the actual labour of interviewers and field supervisors. The latter are determined by the number of interviews to be done, the number of telephone calls or household visits required to realize the number of actual interviews, the number of hard-to-reach areas to be visited, and the length of each interview. Thus sample size, stratification, interview clustering, and whether a probability or a quota sample is used are important both methodologically as well as financially.

Given the costs associated with conducting independent surveys, however, it is possible to buy space for one or two, or sometimes even a dozen or so, questions in on-going market research surveys. Market research organisations tend to conduct surveys on a regular basis, and, because a number of their clients may include questions, the costs of the survey are shared. Costs often can be calculated on a "per question" basis, sometimes with an initial "buy-in" charge. Many organisations decide to "piggy-back" their questions onto ongoing omnibus surveys. This is very efficient when one only wants to put a few questions to a representative sample, such as checking on current levels of interest in the next election, or current levels of registration. Also, the frequency of such omnibus surveys allows one to check these issues on a more regular basis and to monitor trends over time.

Some questions, like "Why are people uninterested?" or "Why are they not yet registered?", lead to many other questions. The more questions to be used, the higher the costs will be. In addition, it may be desirable to get respondents focused on issues of voting, elections, and democracy in order to obtain more thoughtful and considered responses. With an omnibus survey, there may be no control over whether respondents are answering a question about the competitiveness of elections immediately after being asked about their monthly consumption of motor oil. Finally, due to reasons of cost and client interest, ongoing market research surveys may not be done in remote rural areas or poorer areas.

8.4.2 Using Existing Data

Educators trying to establish educational needs and to identify target constituencies and country infrastructures may, at first glance, assume that they have to do this from scratch. Perhaps they will, but a little time spent investigating existing data sources will have a number of benefits:

- less time needed for conducting an investigation
- lower overall costs



- gaps identified that allow more focused research
- general data gaps discovered to consider for more general developmental purposes

There are very few places where nothing is known. And there are very few places where there is no existing source of information. The trick in some closed or authoritarian societies, however, may be getting access to existing information.

International organisations will want to work closely with indigenous ones to access existing data. Often they are unaware of existing repositories of knowledge, particularly if it is of an oral and traditional nature, and they are often amongst the first to assume that something new and impressive must be done. But those working on election programmes need to understand their work within the larger democratization framework. Good information is needed by those who govern and by civil society. And elections should stimulate the gathering and availability of that information.

Paper, People, or Bytes

Information available in computer databases has the advantage of being easily updated and maintained as well as moved from one place to another. When carefully collected and where software and hardware planning has been done, databases can be remarkable. They can also be frustrating, however, especially in developing countries. Information may be stored in incompatible formats, or it may be out of date, incomplete, and often locked away. Computers can be a curse as well as a champion of open democracy.

Information on paper does not suffer from compatibility problems. Here the problems are ease of handling, whether the documents and publications are available, preservation, and the cost for revisions.

People See Only As Far As Their Horizon.

Those looking for data will want to look at questions of reliability, accessibility, and cost. In some settings, for example where there have been authoritarian systems, there may be no official culture of "freedom of information." Government bureaucrats may be irresponsible to requests for information. They may consider it privileged or even a state secret. There is also a danger that data collected by the government has been manipulated for political reasons. So even if it is made publicly available, it may be of little use to educators.

But even accurate data presents educators with a variety of usability issues. This is because there is a virtual sea of information that requires careful selection. Educators will want to establish precisely what information they require and how they intend to use it prior to even beginning the search. There will be iterations on these questions, because once some information is available it leads to further questions. Nevertheless focus is essential.

Look in the Obvious Places

Voter rolls and related data provide an immediate starting point if these rolls have been collected nationally or regionally. They will provide basic information about numbers of voters and geographic dispersal. In developing countries and transitional societies, however, voting rolls may be of poor quality. Educators in these types of situations will need to assess how accurate and current the voting rolls are in making a determination about their usability.

In order to establish the rolls, information should also exist about registration officials, places where registration has taken place, and possibly even places that were evaluated and then not

used. Amongst these places will be many public venues, such as libraries, schools, community halls, clinics, and government offices, as well as more temporary structures linked to community gathering places, such as sports fields, markets, and so on.

Other basic *information will be available in forms* that can vary from the rudimentary to the highly computerized. Telephone directories can be useful as well as government directories, income tax mailings and address list (where these are public documents), television and radio licence lists, and market research.

Beyond this basic address and geographic information, there will be *government yearbooks and reports* on a wide variety of subjects. In poor countries, these reports may have been done by international agencies or international companies interested in development plans and opportunities.

In addition to reports with a developmental focus, many countries have *tourist bureaus and tourist publications* that contain basic country and travel information. Bus and train timetables, hotel listings, contact offices for local information bureaus, all increase the amount of information about the country infrastructure and basic governance.

With the *burgeoning of the Internet*, it has become possible to do worldwide searches for information about countries. While not all of it may be held inside a country, it is surprising what information may be held in an academic institution. At present, access to such institutions in the western and northern hemispheres is greater on the web. but these institutions often host information servers that link organisations and networks in the southern hemisphere.

Beyond these basic sources of information, there may be *libraries, government departments, research units* linked to national, regional, and local governments, and national and regional statutory research institutes. All of these collect information, some of them will release it upon request and perhaps for a fee. International and domestic NGOs have vast amounts of personal experience. Have collated information about countries and are often willing to make this available more freely than government departments.

Perhaps most useful of all, but not always accessible, is the *data collected in political and marketing polls*. The reason it is useful is its direct bearing on individual and group attitudes and insights into issues that relate to elections. If it is possible to develop a relationship with collectors of such survey information, it is possible to request them to reanalyse existing data to address particular questions voter educators may have.

All the sources and organisations listed above have been collecting information not for electoral purposes but for a variety of other reasons over an extended period of time. The information, therefore, has breadth and depth that officials preparing for a specific election period cannot hope to replicate.

At the same time, it suffers from the fact that it has to be reorganized in forms that are useful to educators. This may be difficult, time consuming, and costly. Data mismatches, information collected from different periods and with varying degrees of reliability, patchy information



with biases towards cities and men, revenue producing activity, and old political debates all conspires against the compiler.

There may even be occasions when the task of assembling this information is larger, more time consuming, and more costly than going out and getting it anew. But this is unlikely in the sphere where educators are working. Focusing on developing an understanding of the voting population, the country infrastructure available to support the educational programme, and getting a grip on educational needs faced by various groups and audiences will all help to ensure that the data available can be more cost effective than anticipated.

8.4.3 Interlocutors and Intermediaries

While some educators are preparing focus groups and surveys, others prefer to go into the field and talk to people who are working with the target audience or constituency. This has the advantage of being quick, if adequate care is taken in establishing with whom conversations should be conducted. It also helps give educators access to a range of nuances and undercurrents that are difficult to achieve in any other way. Another benefit is that such people provide a fund of local knowledge about educational conditions, the political environment, and the identification of educational issues.

This consultation or conversation is conducted at a practitioner level, educator to educator; or at the level of educator and community leader. So it also ensures that ownership of the programme is developed from the very outset. There are disadvantages to this approach, particularly if it is relied on to the exclusion of additional data collection. But for educational purposes, where local knowledge and local ownership are so important, it is a potent and relatively cost-effective way to get the programme into the field.

It can be extended in effectiveness at limited additional cost by adding two related techniques. The first is the consultative conference where a range of people come together and discuss educational needs and educational conditions in a structured programme. The structured programme can either be very formal in nature, with different speakers addressing different topics, or more informal and dialogue oriented, with brief introductions to issues followed by facilitated round table discussions.

The specialised focus group selection of membership is based on practitioner competence and local knowledge.

Two Different Types of People

Going into the field and talking to people at random is not adequate. Care must be taken in the selection of people. Understanding the use of the two terms "interlocutor" and "intermediary" gives some insight into the selection that needs to be made. The terms also indicate some of the difficulties and limitations that can be encountered and allude to the care that must be taken. Interlocutors speak in the place of the target constituency or on behalf of them. Intermediaries stand between the educator and the audience and act as a bridge between them.

Educators will develop a list of people with whom to converse on the basis of their assessment of effective community education and nongovernmental organisations operating within the sphere of investigation. The sphere of investigation may be national, regional, or local. In addition, they will identify community leaders based on their legitimacy within the particular community.

Finally, they can engage in fruitful conversation with individuals who interface with the community and the world of the educator, such as students, academics and members of diplomatic bodies. The latter can be a particularly helpful group where there is a wide gap between the educator group and the community: as for example when an international programme is being planned or when the educator group has to work in a part of the country where they have no previous experience. Indeed it will be essential to identify such people who can join the educator team on an extended basis if possible, even as interpreters and drivers if not as educators themselves.

Identify People

Once a tentative list has been gathered, it can be assessed in cooperation with individuals who have already been identified. In other words the collection of the list of people is an interactive process. Educators identify a first round of people, perhaps based on advice from a trusted NGO, or even as a directive from the election authorities. This group of people then suggests others whom the educator should contact.

The second list will grow and also contain people nominated on a regular basis. A second round of conversations will take place and the list will grow. At some point in this exercise, the list will become circular. In other words, new references will be made to people with whom the educators have already spoken.

Educators will want to take care to maintain good records of the conversations they have had and the details about those they have interviewed.

Confidentiality

In situations where these discussions are undertaken in contexts of conflict, and where those involved are discussing the needs of members of their own constituencies, there will need to be an understanding that the information being collected will be handled confidentially. Especially when conversations are being conducted between practitioners, there will be critical and reflective comment on organisations operating within the community and with the given constituency. The assumption of these conversations is that programmes are being developed to assist target audiences. Any other use of the information can have an impact on the relationships that exist between those being interviewed and the communities within which they operate.

Limitations

The techniques being proposed here are based on a methodology used in evaluation studies and described as "triangulation". This term is used in establishing the position of a place or person on a map. In other words, information is obtained which establishes a particular direction. Knowing where the direction is taken from enables one to draw a line across the map. Then a similar direction is taken from another position. If this is done three times from different points, a small triangle will be formed on the map. That is where the person or place will be found.



In the case of conversations and interviews that take place with a variety of interlocutors and intermediaries about the same community, the educator will be taking notes both about the information being given and the source of that information. In other words, they will judge the information relative to the interests and position of the person giving the information.

If this is done with care and if the same conversation is conducted with a range of people, the data about the community will become more and more reliable. It will be possible to place the community within a map of data, some of which confirms and expands while some of which establishes scepticism and negative implications.

As mentioned, there can be problems. These can be overcome, however, if this particular technique is coupled with the gathering of information from other means, such as surveys, existing data and focus groups. It is also possible to test the data being gathered with a reference group.

Reference Groups

Educators can establish a small reference group of trusted organisations and individuals with whom they can review the information they are obtaining in the field. Such groups meet regularly but do not have a direct interest in the proposed direction of the programme or its intended outcome.

Collusion and Unreliability

There are times when it is in the interests of some people and organisations that educators have a particular view of the community. There may be a perception that the educator team has access to money that will be spent in the community, or that the educator team should develop programmes in a specific way that benefits the community or even a particular political party. If the educator team is comprised of outsiders, they may not even be aware that those they are interviewing are meeting one another and discussing implications of the programme amongst themselves.

Such collusion need not be undertaken in order to diminish the reliability of the information being provided. People have an interest in being considered intermediaries or maintaining their prestige within a community. They may not be willing to admit to areas of ignorance and may overplay their level of influence in order to impress the educator team.

Groupthink

There may also be a dominant view amongst those selected about local issues that doesn't entirely match the present reality. During transitions and crises, there are substantial shifts in conditions of reality, and organisations in particular cannot always keep up with these shifts.

Or there may be dominant political organisations and ideas that are taken for granted. These may be real. A single party may well have the support of all members of a local community. But in such positions of dominance, often it is easy for dissent to be suppressed and to become invisible. Of course, this raises the interesting proposition that members of minority support parties can also make claims that cannot be tested.

Gate-keeping

Finally, there are those who act as "gate-keepers" rather than guides. They control access to community information. Some are admitted to the community, others are not. And the reasons

for this gate-keeping may be political, ideological, or personal. Educator teams will develop internal diversity in order to ensure that they are not kept out because they are all men, or all from a particular country, or of a particular cultural and ethnic background.

This alone will not prevent gate-keeping. But the development of an iterative approach can assist in overcoming it. In traditional societies, educators may have to be patient if they want to get through the gate. There is a range of strategies for dealing with this, but perhaps the most effective is the development of a relationship of trust with an intermediary who can introduce the educator to the traditional leadership.

Testing Information

Educators moving into situations where they suspect the information may be coloured by any of the above will be looking for reflective individuals who are willing to be fair to all political points of view and who can demonstrate the reliability of their opinions by pointing to supporting evidence. Or they may choose to conduct interviews that include members of the target audience directly on the basis of a small sample, just for verification purposes, rather than conducting a full survey.

9. Strategy Development

Educators who have obtained sufficient information about the context within which they intend to operate must develop a general approach to their programmes. This general approach, or strategy, provides an operating framework within which educational objectives can be established and operating paradigms determined.

While there are theoretical commonalities, whether the educator is responsible for Voter Information, Voter Education or Civic Education, there are also differences among them. These nuances are discussed in the section on Basic Ideas and Definitions of Voter Information, Voter Education and Civic Education. This section of the topic area outlines matters educators have to address in a general strategy.

Because the word "education" has become loaded with many meanings and nuances, it appears more neutral to think of voter education as primarily a communication problem - a. A message is created and then it is communicated to willing recipients. Irrespective of the problematic nature of this concept itself, voter and civic education are indeed educational enterprises. Both involve people, knowledge, experience and power. They result in learning, understanding, and changes in the world and personal behaviour.

It is essential that educators consider, therefore, the educational strategy they intend to adopt for the whole programme. A clear strategy enables them to bring together the necessary resources in a cost-effective way. It equally enables educators to communicate to the broad audience of learners, stakeholders, partners, individual practitioners and producers.

This section looks primarily at informal and adult educational strategies. While some of these have classroom implications, they are more suited to the national education programmes that



are required in countries that are engaged in building and sustaining democracy. The topic area leaves open the possibility that all countries may consider this a necessary prerequisite for democracy.

In order to provide some information to assist in developing the educational strategy, this section considers Educational Theory, ways of organising (see Organisation), different general methodological options (see Methodology Selection), and the question of the relationship between message development and educational needs (see Message Development) and curriculum development.

9.1 Educational Theory

Those planning a voter education programme will want to make use of good theory and the best practice of general education for children and adults.

This section deals with aspects of educational theory for those who have been given the voter education portfolio without previous adult education experience:

- Adult Learning provides insights into working with adults.
- Ideological Considerations discusses the need to make explicit the values underlying the educational programme.
- Cultural and Social Considerations looks at differing stakeholder interests in what the programme should achieve.
- Legitimacy and Credibility suggests opportunities and constraints educators face in any particular context.
- Educating Leaders and Citizens provides an educational direction seldom used yet crucial for democracy.
- Language offers a range of methods for dealing with multilingual contexts. and;
- Public Education Principles considers best practices and lessons learned in the realm of public information campaigns

While it is true that there are important programmes for children in schools and in more formal settings (see Institutionalising Civic Education), the primary concern of this topic area is for developing good practice with adults who are eligible to vote.

There is some evidence to suggest that adult education theory, with its emphasis on the autonomy of the learner, the presumption that adults already have life experience, knowledge of their own, and critical faculties that enable them to interpret the world around them, and that they should be treated with respect by the educator, is an approach that is necessary at any level. But the discussion that follows will focus primarily on individuals who can be approached and should be approached as adults.

9.1.1 Adult Learning

There is a rich tradition of adult education throughout the world. The history of this educational endeavour is different from place to place but inevitably reflects a variety of strands.

Amongst these strands are vocational or on-the-job training at a technical or managerial level, personal growth and enrichment, social mobilisation, literacy and numeracy, and professional career development. Out of this heritage have come certain insights:

- adult characteristics
- where and when adult education takes place

- who is likely to get involved
- how adults learn and
- how best they should be taught or, according to some, helped to learn

While there are some suggestions that these insights apply more generally to how humans learn, the dominance of school as the central site and methodology of educational instruction for children has left adult educators with postgraduate and informal education as their primary areas of study.

Adult Characteristics

Adults do have some attributes that are almost universally recognised. In fact, these attributes are used to define when a person becomes adult rather than their chronological age. The legal age of adulthood may vary from one society to another. There are indeed some societies that have extended both childhood and adolescence - and in this way separated out even large sections of postgraduate education from the study of adult education.

Adults are assumed to be aware of their educational needs, mature enough to select whether and in what form to obtain education, experienced through life and work to be able to reason and apply any particular learning to this range of experience, to be able to choose when and where to study and learn, and to be willing to bear the cost of that learning (whether this is a cost in terms of time, money or lost opportunities). Adults are assumed to have limited time and to have to balance the demands of family, job and education. They may also be assumed to have already acquired knowledge of themselves and the world, sufficient to survive on a daily basis if not to control their environment to their own satisfaction. In other words, adults are not *tabula rasa*, or empty slates, on which someone else can write.

Where Does Adult Education Occur?

Adults choose the place where they wish to engage in educational activities. Mainly, they prefer places that are oriented to their needs. A large proportion of adult education takes place in the workplace or the home or at sites where adults have a positive association. These may include community halls, churches, or other gathering places and, in some countries at least, in postgraduate institutions.

While some of the venues may be prepared for specialist instruction, adults often use venues that are used for some other purpose. Primarily, adult education takes place in small groups, although there is an increasing trend toward the mass convention both in commercial and religious educational opportunities. Where social movements engage in educational activity, they may also do this in large group settings.

When Do Adults Engage in Educational Activities?

Where education is programmed, as opposed to informal, it is likely to occur outside normal working hours. As a result, many programmes are scheduled for the evening or the weekend.



Adults must therefore make choices about attendance at such events and carry other activities during their personal time, unless they are able to arrange education during working hours.

When working hours are used, adults may be forced to forego earnings in order to attend. Otherwise they may have to put in additional hours to make up time spent on education. In these cases, as in the decisions about use of personal time, there are significant costs and, therefore, those adults who do attend educational activities are both highly motivated and highly demanding of the outcome.

Education programmes that are able to make attendance easy, or at least reduce any possible conflicts with attendance, are likely to have a better chance of attracting a wider group of people.

Who Gets Involved in Adult Education Activities?

There is some evidence to suggest that adults undertake self-chosen educational programmes at particular times in their lives. In addition to this, those who have positive experiences of education, especially at primary and secondary levels, are more likely to choose a formal programme of education.

In particular, those who are facing career choices or personal choices, who have personal time, or who understand that their ambitions will not be fulfilled without additional qualification will participate in formal programmes. People in institutions with their own educational programmes linked to career advancement may be directed towards these programmes, but not all adults have this privilege.

As a result of this self interest, adults cannot be expected to select an educational programme merely because it is available. There must be a clear advantage, but this advantage need not always be further certified qualification. Those who believe that the education will make a difference to their lives or those closest to them, either by meeting a particular need to solving a specific problem, are likely to choose to attend. Based on certain limitations, they may also choose to engage in the learning activity if it does not involve attendance but rather reading, viewing, or listening.

Adults will choose how best to spend their limited resources of time and money. Educational programmes that entertain as well as educate, that reach out to people where they are rather than expecting them to attend, and those which most obviously relate to their day to day existence are likely to meet with more success. But educators should not underestimate the commitment that most people have to community and to personal enrichment.

How Do Adults Learn?

People do not need to attend an educational programme in order to learn. Many people will continue to learn from experience - from doing things themselves, from watching others and imitating or improving on what they do, from trying something and, when all else fails, "reading the manual" or following sets of procedures drawn up by those who have gone before them.

Those who learn best, as opposed to merely repeating themselves, are those who reflect on what they have done and how they have done it. The insights of these reflections determine the manner in which they behave in the future, and this in turn leads to experience and to change.

Over time, adults become better at what they do if they are able to make sense of and reflect on their experience.

This disciplined reflection is not always easy, particularly if the experience is complex or if it comes laden with emotions that cloud what is happening. It may also be the case that people do not have all the knowledge available to make sense of what is happening. Certainly generations of people looked at and navigated by the stars without changing their view that the earth was at the centre of the universe.

Educators, therefore, play a role in providing this knowledge to assist adults in reflection, framing their experiences by listening carefully to and providing educated insights into this experience, and by creating opportunities for adults to "unpack" or differentiate experience through limited, safe, and constrained exercises and assignments, and through guided reading and study.

The Lecture

If adult learning is about disciplined reflection upon experience, and if educators are charged with assisting adults to learn rather than to teach, why are the majority of educational activities so similar? Most consist of lectures or presentations by someone presumed to have experience or knowledge desired by those listening.

Lectures are not necessarily an efficient way of transmitting knowledge. Nor are they an effective way of assisting people to learn. Yet they continue to dominate educational programmes. Adults are not necessarily reliant on others for their learning. Even when they have chosen to attend the lecture, they are likely to come to it with a range of skills, knowledge, prejudices, and reflective ability that they use to assess and evaluate the information they are being given. Where they want knowledge or information, a good lecture can provide this in a setting that enables the adult to draw conclusions about the reliability of the information - by assessing the reactions of others, by asking questions, and even by monitoring and assessing the demeanour of the lecturer. These cues make a lecture or talk quite different from watching a film of the same lecture in private. They are potent additives to the learning experience.

Given access to resources, and the time to experiment, an adult may even discover that a lecture makes an impact on substantially behavioural skills. But educators will not want to rely on inefficient forms of information transmission if they have the ability to extend the learning experience to include rehearsal, practice, and reflection.

Learning Styles

Adults do appear to have different learning styles. Some find it easier to learn in community or small group settings, others from individualised or more anonymous learning activities, some from doing things and experimenting (with concomitant failure), Still others require coaching and small successful increments.



Given that education for adults, especially voter and civic education, is voluntary and multifaceted, those who find a particular approach most congenial are likely to select a programme that fits. Where this does not happen, adults are quite likely to drop out of the programme. Programmes that have an element of the compulsory about them will need to come to terms with the styles of those who are participating.

In a programme attempting to reach a large number of adults, variety will need to be incorporated to allow people to select facets that enable them to learn most effectively.

9.1.2 Ideological Considerations

Voter education is as dependent as any other form of education on underlying ideological considerations. Educators will need to manage differences between stakeholders and the impact of the dominant ideology on the programme that is developed.

Dealing with Differences

It is better if these ideological considerations are understood and made explicit by educators. But there are constraints. And there is often quiet collusion among the various stakeholders who want a voter education programme but have different interests in what it should achieve.

This collusion is not necessarily a bad thing. Just because there are some educators using the opportunity to stimulate organisations to become more democratic, others merely wanting the voting process to run smoothly on election day, and yet others seeking to build trust with voters so that in the future they can use this trust to conduct other educational, advocacy, or development programmes, should not mean they cannot cooperate. Nor does it mean that voters will receive disinformation.

There is a limit, however, to the divergences that are possible between educators. Indeed, if the divergences are too great, this will lead to competition, and in some cases, conflict. Judgements will have to be made about what is possible and what is not possible when there is such ideological distance between educators and, in turn, between them and contestants and election authorities.

In its crudest form, ideological distinctions are drawn between education that socializes and education that empowers. In the voter education arena, this crude distinction can provide some insight into the aims of voter education and the potential points of conflict.

Socialisation and Empowerment

Voter education can inculcate acceptance of a particular election system, motivate people to register and turn out to vote, give them the skills to cast their vote and to accept the outcome of the election.

At the same time, it may have the effect of promoting the status quo, by encouraging passive acceptance of a particular form of government or downplaying injustices in the social system. Civic education, likewise, can be primarily a means of socialising people to accept the dominant political and economic culture. This culture may be democratic, But a definition of civic education could be made that entirely precludes investigation into the underlying assumptions of this culture.

On the other hand, education could encourage critical questioning of the political and economic system. Voter education may seek to give participants an insight into the manner in which

electoral results confer consent on a particular set of contestants and the implications of that consent for the manner in which they will subsequently be governed. Questions may be asked about the nature of the election, and the meaning of the terms "free and fair", in relation to a particular set of circumstances. Voters may be given the skills necessary to make choices amongst contestants.

Within these broader questions of socialisation and empowerment, educators may also select programmes that result in citizens requiring the educator's continued presence, or they may select programmes that make it possible for people subsequently to learn for themselves and to become independent of the educator.

Thus educators will want to examine their own motives and those of the programme that they are preparing. They will want to consider not only the specified programme outcomes but also the methodologies that they intend to use in order to ensure that these are consistent with their values.

9.1.3 Cultural and Social Considerations

Educators working with adults will have to come to terms with the culture and social mores of the individuals and groups of individuals with whom they work. In most cases, they will have to come to terms not only with the individuals but also with the society from which each person emerges and to which they return.

It might be true that education changes the relationship that people have with their society. As voter education moves into the realms of civic education and public advocacy, it may even be intended that people should act on and change that society. Such potency on the part of education increases the likelihood that educators will have to consider and manage the impact of culture and society in the planning and execution of their educational programme. Such considerations will include the determination of how the educator will deal with mores and meanings taken for granted in regard to certain groups of people and certain belief structures.

Examples

There may be particular taboos. Women may not speak in the presence of men. Some men may be leaders by birth right and, therefore, are assumed to have greater knowledge and wisdom and must speak first. Such conventions will impact the structuring of educational events, the choice of participants, and the sites at which these events take place.

There may even be gender or clan language differentiation, or particular views on modesty, or what can properly be discussed in public. And there may be views of educators and their role and expected behaviour. In some groups direct eye contact may be considered impolite or may be linked to status considerations. Educators may misinterpret this behaviour as lack of interest or deceit.

These are only a few examples of the variety of life choices made and being made by people as they attempt to come to terms with life as they experience and perceive it. Some of these



choices may have become frozen so that they appear to outsiders to be inappropriate. But they may have larger significance to those who adopt them, and they cannot and should not be dismissed. These same outsiders may be responding to cues that are meaningful to them from their own background but that have no bearing on the social interactions that are taking place inside and outside the educational events.

So educators will be attempting to draw up their plans with people who understand the likely impact of the educational intervention. Such people may well choose to fly in the face of local custom, but they are likely to do so with full knowledge of the consequences and the extent to which they can do this without sacrificing the effectiveness of the programme. Educational programmes may challenge these mores or may make a compromise with them, but the balance will be a fine one. Inevitably, there will be those who benefit from existing power relations in the society and may be using cultural explanations to maintain that power.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the uneasy relationship that exists in many societies between traditional leadership and democratic institutions, and in the role of women and the upheaval that accompanies their enfranchisement and subsequent empowerment. Yet the voter educator will be aware of the need to ensure that democracy is integrated into the culture of the country that is establishing electoral democracy, while at the same time understanding that it may be causing a sea change in that same country or society.

9.1.4 Legitimacy and Credibility

Educators have to develop strategies to overcome any scepticism that learners may have about the voter programme and about the individuals delivering it.

Scepticism is Appropriate

Educators in situations of conflict, transition, and intense political polarization are invariably going to be asked who they are, where they come from, and how their message can be trusted. In situations where hospitality is an important value, these questions may be mute or moot, but they will be asked. And if it is not possible to obtain a satisfactory answer, whether or not the educational programme is a well conceived one or not, it will invariably have less effect. In some situations, it may even result in controversy that overwhelms the programme and makes it impossible to complete.

These questions are perfectly legitimate. Adults expect that learning is something to be entered into freely and they want to be able to choose for themselves. Where relationships are developed directly between the educator and the group of learners, it may be possible to overcome any scepticism with relative ease. Very often, however, voter education programmes are either self chosen social interventions on the part of organisations or institutions or they are conducted on behalf of a client who may or may not represent the views of the learner group or audience. This is perhaps most explicitly seen in educational interventions commissioned by employers for their employees - especially those who are unionised - but a dynamic of scepticism can emerge in other circumstances as well.

Developing Trust

Trust can be developed at close quarters by ensuring that all educational events include a suitable introduction of the educators and of the organisation from which they come. In some cases this is best done by the sponsor of the event. Educators will want to offer participants an opportunity to ask questions about the programme, and explore their expectations and the extent to which these are to be met. Having concluded a programme they will extend an

invitation to participants to evaluate its success and to make recommendations for its improvement. Where education programmes do not have direct contact with learners, educators will have to initiate other strategies, and these more general strategies will enhance the direct contact.

Non-partisanship

Those contesting political power have every right to develop voter education and motivation programmes. An increasing number of voter education programmes in the United States of America, for example, seem primarily to be issue oriented and designed to influence voters (as a target audience) rather than education strictly in support of elections or the democratic process. But those who do intend to provide nonpartisan education and allow people to make up their own minds about contestants for power and about the manner in which they intend to deal with social, political, and economic issues will have to work out ways to differentiate themselves from partisan programmes. In order to do this they may resort to publicly stated nonpartisan aims and codes of conduct. They may also demand certain standards of their staff and make these public.

Sometimes an educator is being paid to deliver the programme not by the recipients but by someone else, such as an employer or a government department. Sponsorship of any voter education programme or a specific information product or educational activity should be made publicly available. In some cases, this may be required by law.

As importantly, they will make use of materials and methodologies that are democratic and that support the values that are being promoted as part of the content of the educational programme. Amongst these will be the inclusion of a variety of voices, the encouragement of debate, and a balance of power between learners and educators.

Organisational Credibility

Educators who represent an organisation, or are presumed to represent an organisation, will want to ensure that the credibility of that organisation is beyond reproach. This requires adherence to standards of professionalism in dealing with members of the public, in managing finances, and in dealing with its staff. It will require that the organisation remain true to its publicly stated mandate and the objectives of the voter education programme. In addition, educators will pay attention to the manner in which they manages their relationships with other organisations, suppliers, and clients. Organisations will pay attention to their public utterances and in particular to comments on the educational programme. Finally, because of the importance of publications in shaping public perceptions, educators will want to ensure that these are accurate, fair, and well produced.

Legitimacy

Elections provide governments with legitimacy. Educational programmes must ensure that they have obtained this legitimacy by a combination of careful negotiation over the establishment of



the programme and ongoing coordination with respect to the implementation of the programme with participants.

Ensuring that the mandate has been confirmed and that any contracts have been carefully considered begins this process (see Educational), but unfortunately there are likely to be ongoing controversies over whether the education programme should be instituted by the particular organisation or set of organisations. This can apply even to an election management authority.

9.1.5 Educating Leaders and Citizens

When an election defeat results not in a peaceful transition of power, but rather in riots, a coup, or the refusal of an incumbent to step down, and when a political party uses smear tactics, personal intimidation, or other dirty tricks as its prevailing campaign tactics, the issue is not whether ordinary citizens understand democracy but whether their leaders do. Voter education, as well as civic education, is almost always aimed at ordinary people. The assumption is that they have to learn to be democratic, to vote, to elect leaders, to understand how political processes work, about their civic responsibility and about governance.

Far less is said about whether those who wield political power understand the tenets of democracy and are willing to abide by them. Little is said about what these leaders might need to learn once they are elected and what they may take for granted but still not know about how to represent their constituencies, about how to govern, about democratic decision-making, and about their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

Leaders are a High Impact Force

In addition to the importance of leadership education in support of democracy, there is the added advantage that leaders are a high impact group. Changing their behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge level can have profound effects on their followers and on the messages they communicate to them.

A variety of leadership groups can be identified and programmes developed both during elections and between elections. In countries where leadership is imbued with mythical overtones and is considered hereditary, such programmes may be particularly important and also highly politicized.

Community leaders, whether appointed, elected, ordained, or born, are an obvious starting point. In addition to their own educational needs, they also provide access to the communities they represent. Traditional leaders have a relationship of allegiance with their communities that makes it very difficult to do any educational activity without obtaining at least tacit support from them.

In short, providing leadership training to political, traditional, or community leaders, developing relationships of trust, providing them with information useful to their constituents, and providing them with opportunities for input, will only increase their sense of ownership in voter education programmes, thereby increasing the likelihood of success.

Finding Educational Opportunities

Within the political life of the country, elected officials at local, regional, or national levels often get onto a treadmill that makes it extremely difficult for them to educate themselves or to initiate educational programmes for themselves, their colleagues, party caucuses or

parliamentary committees. Nevertheless, there is an increasing trend toward orientation and training programmes endorsed or organised by political parties and the institutions to which they are elected.

Areas of Training

Political party leadership training will always have a dual component. Educators may find it difficult to separate these two. The first is the need to compete successfully in elections and to ensure that they have a comparative advantage over other parties. The second is a concept which is often referred to as loyal opposition, ie. both parties in power and out of power should have an incentive to ensure the legitimacy of the electoral outcome and of governing institutions and will need to work collaboratively toward this end.

Programmes of training for party election agents, for example, have been successfully conducted across party lines. Information programmes, that ensure that all party officials have the same understanding of election regulations and voting procedures and understand their obligation to comply with the law or be subject to fines and other penalties, have also been successful. These activities do more than pass on information about elections: they develop collaboration and trust between competitors and establish relationships between leaders that are necessary when conflicts arise. Finally, such programs ensure that there is a large group of well-informed leaders who are able to communicate information about the elections at the same time as they are involved in competing for power.

Election authorities should ensure that briefings cover:

- the electoral code or all pieces of legislation governing the election
- pertinent election regulations
- codes of conduct
- roles, rights, and responsibilities of contestants and their agents
- arrangements being made for voting, counting, tabulation and determination of results, and security
- complaint and adjudication procedures and;
- role of the election authority

They may also encourage the development of more general democratic education for political leaders dealing with matters of democratic culture, the role of opposition, and the particular transfer of power arrangements that will follow an election, especially a founding election. Such courses may be offered by agencies other than the election authority, but the authority may initiate them and remain involved.

9.1.6 Language

There are very few countries that embrace only one language. Even those countries that have an official language of government, for commercial and formal educational purposes, and for public discourse, may have citizens who conduct their personal affairs in a different language. There may be a large immigrant community. Or the multi-ethnic nature of the state may



encompass a range of different languages. Whatever the case, educators will have to consider the extent to which education is provided in people's mother tongue, as opposed (if this be the case) to the official language of the state.

There are a number of considerations for educators. In general, adults learn best in the languages with which they feel most comfortable. Where such learning involves reading, texts in the language that people read in other works (newspapers and books) are most effective. There may be constraints, however, that have to be overcome.

Legal Restrictions

Statutory education authorities may be restricted to offering material and education in the official language only. Such a policy may be established in order to encourage national unity in a diverse society or for some other equally valued policy rationale. Unless there is a national language teaching policy and general consensus about this approach, however, those who do not speak the dominant language may find that voter education offered in the official language is ineffective and exclusionary, both counter-productive to the nation building exercise. In other countries, however, the law may specifically enumerate a number of languages in which voter education must be provided.

Even countries that are relatively homogeneous and enable immigrants and temporary residents to learn the official language provide public information in a range of languages or provide parallel texts. Once there is agreement to provide educational material in a variety of languages and possibly even in a number of oral or written dialects, complications quickly arise for educators.

Terminology

Many of the terms used in voter education, as well as in civic education, are coined in the dominant international languages. They may have become current in a country in the dominant language of commerce and government, or this language may in fact be an international one. Other languages, however, may not easily embrace democratic concepts. In some cases these may translate only clumsily, very often through cumbersome and lengthy phrases rather than succinct words or concepts, or may not translate at all. One of the unfortunate consequences of this is the possibility that people may feel the concepts are not their own or have been imposed upon them.

The onus then is on educators to ensure that there is assimilation of concepts. This may be achieved by direct translation or by indirect translation through idiom and metaphor, by the discovery of words and phrases in the target language that have similar meaning, or by the invention of new words and phrases. In some cases, educators may have to use terms that appear in law. To avoid creating greater confusion, it may be necessary for all organisations and institutions engaged in voter education, both international and domestic, to use the same words, phrases, and concepts. To facilitate this process, some educators have taken the lead in developing glossaries, as standalone documents, that define, translate, and that may offer synonyms and acronyms (see, for example [Multi-use Package - Australia](#)).

Beyond coming up with the terminology to discuss voting rights and the electoral process, one illustrative challenge faced early on by every educator in a multi-lingual situation is how to come up with a catchy slogan. Very often a slogan may work very well in one language, but sound or look bad or be devoid of meaning in other languages.

Publishing

Publishing poses a special problem in multilingual societies. Preparing parallel publications raises costs, increases the preparation and production time, and does not always deal effectively with the terminology dilemma. In many cases, those who read technical language may choose to use the dominant language. And there are many examples of well-meaning publications that are not read.

Parallel language publications often are first published in one language and then translated into others. This leads to delays, uneven quality and sequencing of the different languages, and continuing sensitivity on the part of learners.

There have been attempts to overcome these problems by initiating separate publications in different languages, by starting in a marginal language and then translating into the dominant language, or by convening a group of writers to prepare parallel texts in a collaborative way. The most successful approach seems to be to prepare a single publication in a range of languages. This has the advantage of demonstrating the importance of these languages.

Cost-Effective Publishing Alternative

An alternative approach is to select a language that is understood by a majority and then prepare a basic text in a simple version of that language combined together with a glossary in which key terms are translated into one or more other languages. This layout serves to make it easier for people to cope with a second or third language.

Training of Educators

Educators may well cope in a number of different languages. As a result, and because of the difficulty of conducting technical courses in multiple languages or developing specialist texts in multiple languages, it may be possible to find a *lingua franca*. These same educators, however, will need to conduct their programmes in their home language. For this reason, training programmes should include exercises in which a range of languages are used, and materials prepared for distribution should be translated either at the course or prior to the course, so these can be communicated and then handed out in the appropriate language.

Face to Face Education

In some multilingual societies, it may be possible to match the educator to the participant group. This is no doubt the best way, but it is not always possible. A number of strategies may have to be introduced to ensure that people can understand one another.

One way, but perhaps the most costly, is to provide simultaneous translation. If it is not possible to provide the equipment and translators to provide everybody with their own receiver, it may be possible to group people according to language and have someone assist them from a nearby seat. It may also be possible to provide phrase-by-phrase translation intercut with a



speaker. Beyond that, an interpreter may provide a synopsis. All of these require skilled translators; and where booths and high tech equipment are used, these translators may need additional training.

However, trained interpreters may not always understand the nuances of political language, and local community interpreters can often serve a programme better. If the problem is facility with the language of instruction rather than lack of knowledge, it may be possible to give instructions in one language and have exercises conducted in another, with people grouped according to language. Questions may be posed in one language but distributed on prepared handouts that have all the languages. Discussion may take place on a multilingual basis with people speaking their own language and then either giving a synopsis themselves or having another participant translate.

Where the educator alone is an outsider, it may be preferable that this person has an interpreter other than one of the participants to accommodate the educator. Surprisingly, not having access to everything that people say can make other processes more apparent to an educator, such as group interactions and questions that, because of the need for translation, lead to conceptual debate.

9.1.7 Public Education Principles

As a result of increasing national public education, especially around health issues but also, in some countries, around constitutional, developmental, political, economic, and human rights issues, there are now sufficient examples to make tentative proposals about best practices. National voter education programmes are just one example. Other programmes now include AIDS awareness and anti-smoking, anti-drug and anti-pollution campaigns. A number of educational campaigns have taken on global proportions. This is especially true of environmental campaigns, but in recent times one can also look at the anti-land mine programmes and various other peace initiatives.

Public education programmes are interesting by-products, in their present form, of increasing democratisation and globalisation of information. Governments and private institutions have to rely on educational programmes rather than coercion or disinformation to persuade citizens to change their behaviour. Rapid change makes the possibility of doing this slowly through the formal schooling system, where it exists, less likely; and that same change in knowledge and information also reduces the possibility of forms of general socialisation being fully adequate. Despite the obvious need in some contexts, however, limited financial resources, political will, and practical experience may limit the extent and quality of public information programmes, if they exist at all.

The set of best practices present below is narrow in scope. It remains tentative and open to evaluation and testing. Nevertheless, there seem to be certain standardised components and methodologies that are more effective than others. These are:

- Networking and building organisations to ensure an appropriate environment for establishing and delivering the programme
- Ensuring ownership and feedback mechanisms
- Identifying, understanding and using organisations and institutions to communicate to their constituencies, ensuring that
- Access to special target groups is through already trusted intermediaries
- Communication is done by those who understand and already use the appropriate language and media, including oral approaches where needed

- The public education message is distributed rapidly to a wide range of target groups within a short period of time
- Shaping the learning objectives and messages in conjunction with individuals and organisations that are representative of the target groups on the basis of real needs and not just programmatic imperatives
- Creating an appropriate context so the legal, cultural, and organisational environment promotes rather than hinders the behaviours proposed by the learning objectives
- Providing the necessary educational and organisational support by preparing any necessary educational materials for one to one and small group education
- Providing training of trainers, orientation to materials, and user support events
- Providing national and regional reference groups and campaign backup
- Developing national media support, especially through radio advertising and supplementary materials suitable to the available broadcast and press media and;
- Building institutional partnerships to ensure financial, administrative and implementation viability, and public accountability

Each of these principles is elaborated on more fully throughout the Voter Education topic area.

9.2 Organisation

Formal education programmes conducted in educational institutions and integrated into the standard curriculum may appear to run without much additional organizing or administration. Informal programmes, whether conducted as extra-curricular activities in institutions or more regularly in a variety of venues, require a considerable amount of organisation in order to succeed. Voter educators working with the adult voting population, therefore, will require considerable organisational experience, since organisational development is a major tool in their work.

Apart from the administrative load that educators must carry, everything from managing budgets, undertaking competitive bids for products, and handling contracts to making payments, maintaining files, and writing reports, they also have to organise national or regional programmes as well as the full range of educational and special events that will comprise a part of that programme. Without giving appropriate attention to these matters, educational programmes can fail despite high quality educational design and materials.

Educators have to be able to organise venues, staff, and training teams; undertake the development of the educational programme, including its curriculum, media products, and training, educational, and informational materials; arrange production and printing processes; organise deployments of personnel and delivery and distribution of materials; arrange access to learners; and prepare a host of schedules, timelines, and implementation plans to keep everything on track. These administrative requirements present their own demands (see [Administration and Management](#)). But a strategic national programme must also confront more general organisational issues:



- the manner in which planning for the programme will take place, and the way in which the coordinating education team will align resources to achieve the objectives of the programme (see [Planning and Alignment](#))
- the use of existing institutions, and the manner in which this will be negotiated, agreed, and financed (see [Existing Institutions](#)) and
- the establishment of specific organisational structures for any particular programme, and especially for election periods (see [Election](#))

9.2.1 Planning and Alignment

A complex voter education programme requires considerable planning. And once the plan has been developed, the numbers of different components that are necessary for success have to be aligned and realigned on a regular basis. The reason for discussing these two matters together is because of the close relationship between participation in planning and willingness to contribute fully to a programme and to align oneself and the resources at one's disposal to the direction of the programme.

It is possible to prepare a plan and then execute it through a series of commands and contracts, when those preparing it are able to plan in minute detail and have thought of all eventualities; when they have both the power and influence of position, knowledge, and money; and when it is possible to control training and implementation activities on a macro and micro scale. Perhaps armies can do this. The majority of educators cannot.

Rather they must seek the collaboration and cooperation of others, both in making information available and in making adaptations to the programme in the light of changing local circumstances. With time at a premium, programme elements often have to be developed "on the fly". And when the voter education programme is spread over a wide front, and communication is not possible on a reliable and routine basis, educators have to rely on the quality of their staff and their materials to ensure that the programme continues.

Planning

Planning can be considered to have two components: the development of a strategic plan or logical framework, and the establishment of working schedules, outlines, and other details. In a national education programme, with the importance of overall commitment and participation by a range of stakeholders and potential partners, strategic planning needs to precede operational and short-term planning. Whether educators describe this activity in strategic terms, talking of vision or mission, strategic objectives, and assessment of resources, opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses, or in terms of a logical framework of purposes, objectives, results, tasks, indicators, and assumptions (see [Preparation](#)), it is appropriate to ensure that the broadest possible selection of people are involved in the policy areas. Detailed planning can then be delegated to specialists, rather than having a small number of people consider the policy and then expect educational partners to "fill in the dots."

Alignment and ownership require an understanding of and commitment to the big picture. This is best done by convening planning workshops with a range of people, including representatives of all organisations that are expected to contribute to the voter education programme. A planning workshop should be preceded by consultations with partner organisations to establish commitment. Then, by the time the group meets the groundwork has been laid and they are ready to proceed. The workshop itself should be facilitated by those skilled in educational design. Enough time should be allotted to make sure that those attending conclude their agreements on the overall policy.

In other words, there should be agreement on:

- the context within which the voter education programme is to be conducted,
- the overall purpose of the voter education programme (which should be in an agreed form of words),
- key objectives (again, these should be written down),
- the roles of the various people present,
- commitment to future tasks,
- consideration of a planning deadline, and;
- the general paradigm within which the programme intends to operate.

At this point, the convening team can develop a planning document that outlines these policy issues and then enables various people to consider the operational details programme. The establishment of a set of key objectives will normally enable detailed planning to be delegated to a range of different individuals and organisations. Those individuals and organisations can then turn their attention to such details as operational budgets; training, deployment and broadcasting schedules; printing and packaging specifications; and production, delivery, and distribution plans - to name a few. It will be necessary to appoint an individual or organisation to continue to coordinate the planning activity. This, in turn, will create the necessity for establishing what the partners may understand by coordination.

Before moving on to the issue of coordination, it bears mentioning that such workshops should not be confused with conferences, where information might be given to participants and where their participation in the voter education programme might be canvassed. Such events may be considered educational and they may even identify potential partners in the programme. But if the plan is presented in the closing session as a product of such a conference when, in fact, it has been developed only by a small appointed committee or by those organisations convening the conference, then it is not going to reduce the future need for more significant planning or consultation. Ultimately, such events have to be followed by so many additional meetings and communications, to ensure commitment and overcome misunderstanding and resistance that they are actually much more expensive than might have been thought when the decision to get people together was originally made.

Coordination

Individuals and organisations operating within a public interest paradigm, where there is fierce and justifiable commitment to independence and autonomy, and where there may be equally fierce commitment to participation and equality, tends to be suspicious of management and control. Since it is essential that organisations do have management systems, there has been a tendency to find a range of soft words to describe these. One of these words is "coordination". There are too many who take on the job of coordination when they really intend to lead and control. Yet the word has a service component, and it is necessary, even in a collegial arrangement, to establish ways in which partners' activities can be aligned to one another.

For this reason, there is often suspicion of the word, which prompts the regular invention of new terms and structures. Some of these may be "convenors," "secretariats," "steering



committees," "engine rooms," "task forces," and "service units." The human capacity for invention is enormous. But the human capacity for seizing or assuming power seems equally enormous. And it is this problem that needs to be addressed when considering coordination efforts rather arguing over terminology.

In order to ensure that the coordinators do that, rather than take over a programme, there should be regular meetings of the partners, an insistence on good written records and minutes of meetings, a clear understanding of accountability, a policy on who acts as spokesperson for the programme, and training of all coordinating staff. Much of the confusion comes from ill-prepared staff unable to complete the tasks set for them by the programme.

Alignment

Once planning has been conducted in a collaborative way, and coordination of that plan has been established, it remains for the team leading the programme to consider ways in which a range of resources can be aligned in support of the objectives of the programme.

For the most part, such alignment requires regular articulation of the vision of the programme and an openness to the participation of a range of individuals and organisations, whether or not their ideological or historical antecedents are politically correct. National educational programmes are attempting to ensure that a wide range of individuals and groups accept and work towards a common goal, and that goal should be articulated and defended.

The programme team may, if the programme has a long term existence, regularly assess their achievements and the position of the programme in relation to the goals. And as a result of that, they may require changes in what they communicate to those they want to associate with and contribute to the programme. But, wherever they are in the programme, they will want to ensure that there are regular opportunities to speak to organisations and convey their vision through the press, that a newsletter or web page is established that consistently encourages people to contribute to the set goals, and that they have regular staff development and training opportunities at which they can assess the programme and re-establish commitment to it.

Such social activities build consensus and ownership if they are conducted as forums for people to listen to one another and confirm they understand and can believe in the programme and its goals. There is a danger, however, that such alignment activities encourage blind faith. There have been occasions when programmes have become "sacred cows" in which the social relations between partners have become more important than the programme outcomes. For this reason, independent assessment and honesty on the part of the educators or leadership team are both essential.

9.2.2 Existing Institutions

Education programmes being established from scratch, and particularly voter education programmes in transitional societies, may lead to the creation of new organisations and institutions because existing ones may not have the necessary experience or resources or even the appropriate mandate for this type of work. So there may be situations where it is necessary to create new organisations and institutions to meet educational needs.

The mushrooming of new civic education organisations in Eastern Europe and Latin America may suggest that it is the appropriate direction. The difficulty of setting up new institutions is often underestimated, however, as is the time required to ensure that they are sustainable and can establish a place in the country's political and social culture. Educators will want to consider, therefore, whether or not existing organisations can take on voter education tasks that

are complementary to their current activities or educational institutions can assume specific curriculum interests of the voter education programme.

Good Reasons for Using Existing Organisations or Institutions

Existing organisations and institutions already have an infrastructure, a reputation, contacts, and a constituency. Their staff know the context in which they have to operate. If they have been engaged in voter education programming in the past, they will also have the benefit of an institutional memory. With respect to national election authorities or other statutory bodies, they may even have a legal mandate and state funds to conduct voter education.

At the same time, such institutions may be weak or limited in their programme or outlook. They may have resource constraints that limit their ability to implement all their programmes or to increase their staff. They may have legal constraints: both over their areas of activity and over their access to resources. Yet, some constraints can be overcome through training, by using international pressure to increase access, and by investing in the organisation. There may also be opportunities to build strategic partnerships between organisations in order to leverage resources, establish a division of labour, and increase access both at the top and the grass-roots.

Good Reasons for Creating New Organisations or Institutions

There may be situations, however, in which there are no suitable existing institutions or organisations. There may be no permanent election management authority or it may have no legal mandate to conduct voter education. Its integrity might be in question or its resources and capacity severely limited. Depending upon the country's political history, there may be virtually no civil society groups. Or, perhaps those organisations that were permitted are absolutely compromised and ineffectual. All of these would constitute good reasons for starting a new organisation. Another instance in which it may be appropriate to found a new organisation is when that decision is made by a representative and well-informed group of stakeholders that includes those institutions that might otherwise spearhead a programme. This evaluation of the capacity and potential of existing institutions and the possibility of forming a new organisation should be made cautiously.

Poor Reasons for Creating New Organisations or Institutions

There are, however, moments when those who want to run an educational programme overlook existing institutions for the wrong reasons. In the first place, they may not do their homework and may be unaware that there are institutions that could be reformed, transformed, or informed in ways that make them suitable. There have been occasions when organisations are founded despite the existence of entities that have appropriate goals and suitable infrastructure. There are also those who found organisations because they do not have the energy or confidence to negotiate with existing ones. Or there may be a prejudice against existing organisations that is unsubstantiated or untested by actual interaction with them. There are also those who form new voter education programmes because they want to own them, and feel that they may not be able to control existing organisations to the same extent. The decision may also be motivated purely by a desire to access government or private funding within the country or internationally.



None of these are reasons that can stand up in situations where there are limited resources and where a programme has to be implemented with general national acceptance. They result in competition over resources and over programme participants, leaving a legacy of redundant efforts and weakened and more complex organisational arrangements either in the public sector or in civil society.

9.2.3 Election Specific Organisation

There are a number of situations in which elections are conducted in the absence of existing voter education organisations. As a result, it may be necessary to establish, either within the electoral authority or in parallel to it, an organisation that has the specific purpose of conducting educational programmes for the election. Such an organisation may have a short life span and, like many election specific organisations, may be established for one election only. Certainly many election authorities do operate on a "balloon" system, maintaining a small headquarters and expanding only as appropriate. There is also the possibility that the election management authority itself is a temporary body comprised of seconded and short term personnel that will be disbanded once election results have been announced and the winners certified.

At the same time, there are many on-going educational programmes in existence and some election authorities and NGOs may have a mandate, either legal or pronounced through incorporation documents and mission statements, to conduct both voter education and broader civic education activities between elections. In those contexts elections have become institutionalised and, where civil society organisations have become as much mediating institutions in the political realm as political parties, it may be possible to conduct a continuous voter education programme in support of registration and elections. At the same time, there will likely be situations where some sort of new organisational arrangement needs to be created for a specific election and the effort required to create it should not be underestimated.

Forms of Organisation

This effort will vary in magnitude and type depending on the organisational form that is adopted. And this form will inevitably be chosen in part because of objective conditions (the context, available resources and the programme purpose) and subjective experience (the background of the individuals concerned, their organisational experience, the advice they are able to get, and so forth).

In a perfect world, organisational form may be chosen solely due to objective conditions and it may be tailored specifically and efficiently to meet these. It is more likely, however, to result from the exposure that people have had to similar forms in other countries and to their own history of organising. If it were otherwise, there might be less need to manage organisations and less need for organisational, development, or management specialists.

It is possible to list ways in which people have organised themselves and suggest some of the consequences of such forms of organisation:

- *Voter Education Organisations*

The ease with which such organisations can be established will depend upon a country's legal and political culture. In countries where it is relatively easy to create such organisations, they may be established to obtain contracts from an election authority or they may have identified a gap in a market for training events or materials. In a number of cases, international funding for voter education may also have stimulated the creation of organisations explicitly dedicated to

the conduct of voter and civic education programmes. All such organisations will inevitably have to deal with the normal difficulties of establishing themselves, from creating boards of directors, registering, recruiting and employing staff, and finding premises, to establishing a niche in the market. If they are forming themselves on short notice, they may well have more ambitions than capacity at the start. But they may have the financial backing to come up to speed quickly and to buy existing expertise and information.

The main difficulty faced by such organisations is the very narrow band of operation they set themselves and the subsequent difficulties they have sustaining their activities between elections and, possibly, sustaining their organisation in the longer term. A founding election may well provide a ready market and abundant funding. But a second and third election may find the responsibility for voter education shifting to an election authority, or the educational needs of the electorate changing or diminishing. Although there will be a need for some sort of voter information and education even if on varying scales.

The need to be able to deliver a national programme at short notice makes the expansion and diminution between elections a major challenge that requires an organisation with a professional core and a large pool of volunteers. An alternative model is an organisation that has a broader information, education and training, advocacy, or watch-dog function to sustain it. This usually allows an organisation to set up a special voter education unit at the time of elections or to transform itself into such an enterprise for the occasion.

- *Organisations Working Together*

It is unlikely that a single organisation can handle all the educational tasks that need to be undertaken during a voter education campaign. For their part, election management authorities will want to develop civil society capacity in order to increase the reach of their programme and also to enhance the general democratic atmosphere in which the elections take place.

Within civil society there may be both large and small organisations intent upon providing voter education. Larger organisations may run their own educational programmes and will likely have the capacity to interact directly with the electoral management authorities. Through this interaction, they can ensure that the activities of their organisation are complementary to those of any official programme. There will be many smaller organizations, organisations. However, for one reason or another, the need to work together in a more organised fashion will be to maximise resources and coverage. There are a number of reasons for working together. One can:

- achieve economies of resources,
- overcome prejudice by one or other of the candidates or the statutory authorities, and;
- utilize a variety of skills needed from different organisations.

In any of these cases, there are two organisational options open to organisations that do not want to operate through a single entity and subcontracting relationship.

- *Consortia*



The first option for working together is the stronger: the development of a consortium of organisations in which an exclusive group develops organisational protocols and a common identity for the purposes of the programme.

Organisational style: Typically such consortia will establish internal organisational principles and management tools that enable them to share resources and manage internal administration and external relationships including contractors. They may consider that the consortium has a life span beyond a simple programme, or they may have established the consortium for a set of agreed programme objectives.

Outside influence: In many cases, consortia form because of external influences, such as a request for competitive bids (tender advertisement) or a donor announcement of possible funding. The prospect of programme funding can be used by election authorities or donor agencies to encourage the creation of consortia in situations where it seems obvious that such forms of organisation are more suitable. It may be that there has been competition, for example, between organisations in a region or local area that is resulting in confusion amongst voters. Or there may be a limited amount of money available for a programme, and the donor wants to stimulate civil society development.

Disadvantages: There are disadvantages to consortia. Usually they take a long time to establish, . If formation is rushed, it is likely that they will have organisational dilemmas that could take energy and time to solve. Unless the protocols and working agreements are carefully crafted and the organisations in the consortium bring different skills to the table, there can be conflict among the partners. This same conflict can emerge if organisations have entered the consortium out of a sense of panic over their survival, rather than out of a strategic sense that the consortium will increase their effectiveness. In transitional situations where there is a remarkable upsurge in civil society organisations followed by competition for apparently limited resources, this last disadvantage can be a particular problem.

**Coalitions*

Coalitions are the second option: they tend to be larger and more amorphous. Coalitions will normally have a very clear set of goals, but these may be social rather than programmatic goals. The organisations in the coalition will retain a substantial amount of autonomy and may consider the coalition only as an opportunity to share knowledge and information and to coordinate separate activities.

Organisational issues: Because of the social nature of such organisations, there is likely to be a firm protocol about managing public statements and about negotiating with external bodies. There is also likely to be a secretariat that convenes regular meetings of all the members or various subgroups of the membership. For these reasons, it is possible to develop a strong relationship between election management authorities and such coalitions as far as information sharing goes, but it is much more difficult to develop detailed programmatic collaboration. Indeed, it is likely that such detailed programmatic collaboration will be done with individual organisations or subsets of the coalition.

Advantages: Because of their social goals, however, coalitions can provide very useful civil society or independent activities in support of the election. Election management authorities and voter educators can exploit these features. Coalitions can provide independent monitoring, distribution of materials and messages to very large networks of supporters and members, recruitment of volunteers for various election tasks, and identification of skills and resources. They also provide a sounding board when developing messages and programmes. They may well provide early warning of conflicts or generalised complaints from voters.

9.2.3.1 Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are tools used to promote the nonpartisan nature of voter education when it is done by organisations other than an election management authority. There are times when this is necessary, and the codes that are created invariably follow certain forms.

Why are Codes of Conduct Necessary?

Nongovernment organisations and community-based organisations are often involved in promoting democracy. In countries where this has meant mobilising support against a government in power, or even in situations where there has been civil strife, every organisation is coloured by its association with one or another party.

Those organisations that have tried to remain above the fray or to be nonpartisan often come to be associated with one or the other side in a conflict. Parties often remain suspicious of civil society organisations even when these conflicts are resolved and replaced by an electoral process. It is assumed that each civil society organisation has a particular party interest.

Over time, the general conduct and reputation of organisations may overcome these transitional prejudices. But when elections are close and there is a need for voter education, it is difficult to establish a nonpartisan presence. Yet it is essential to be able to make use of civil society organisations to promote voter education.

Because of the difficulty in establishing a credible and nonpartisan civil society network of educators, some electoral management authorities avoid working with them. Codes of conduct organisation provide one way out of this dilemma for voter education organisations or coalitions.

Effective Codes of Conduct

A code is most effective if it is self-imposed and then published widely. In this way, voters and political parties can judge the performance of the organisation against what it professes to be. Sometimes the election management authorities may have to prepare a code of conduct and ask civil society organisations to assent to it. This can happen if organisations cannot agree among themselves, or if the election management authority has been able to get acceptance from the candidates themselves to such a code. It is seldom that the civil society organisations can themselves negotiate such a nonpartisan role after being locked into various sides in a conflict. But it can be done if organisations perceived to be on opposite sides of the fence come together.

Unfortunately, in a national struggle for democracy, most civil society organisations end up on the same side. But this is counter-productive once the election period begins, because the previous regime often retains some support and takes part in the election. And in negotiated settlements, the election management authorities themselves have people from the old and new orders.



Content of a Code of Conduct

A code will normally contain clauses relating to the professional conduct of the organisation and its staff and a commitment to nonpartisanship in training, the production of materials, and the recruitment and deployment of staff. The code may also list the services being offered by the organisation in order to limit its sphere of activity in the election.

Policing the Code

Where a code is self-imposed, the only way it can be policed is on the basis of social sanction. Where an electoral authority establishes a code, it is possible to withdraw registration privileges such as access to the information and briefings of the electoral authority, access to funding sources, and possibly more restrictive measures, especially against published materials. It is more difficult to act against behaviour unless it is clearly documented and partisanship can be proved.

9.2.3.2 Access to Information

Consortia and coalitions dedicated to voter education have to manage information in order to make their programmes effective, and those that do not are likely to become frustrated and experience ongoing conflict.

Information Essential for Voter Educators

Those who are conducting programmes in support of an election authority need information that only the election authority may have. And they need it in time in order to produce accurate and reliable educational or informational resources. They may also need information from other statutory authorities. And they need it from one another.

Unfortunately, information is a commodity that can confer power and economic benefit. As a result, the voter education enterprise may be beset with restrictions on access to information. Consortia and coalitions have to develop ways of overcoming these restrictions.

Disclosure Clauses

In the first place, they can guard the proprietary information that they obtain from one another so that this does not result in competitive advantages, or impact any of the members' future earning ability. Those who team up will want to develop clauses preventing their partners from disclosing the proprietary information they obtain about or from one another.

While such clauses may seem self-serving and secretive, they do provide the confidence that partners need in a competitive environment. And they act as a protocol for determining the manner in which general information about their programme will be shared with the public at large.

Transparency

In personal relationships, self-disclosure sets the tone for disclosure and deepening of trust by the other party. Similar transparency between consortia or coalitions and the outside world is likely to improve the chances for reciprocity of information. A willingness to make information

available to donors, international visitors, election management authorities and the press in a simple and reliable form does produce benefits that outweigh the trouble to which one must go to make it available and the risks that can result.

Election Management Authorities

Releasing information:

The election management authority will have to consider ways in which it can make its information generally available. As elections draw near, the pressure on election staff, and the number of decisions they have to make, increases. It is easy to ignore small decisions that could have a serious impact on voter education programmes, such as changes in regulations regarding the role of certain electoral officials, judgements in electoral courts that impact on the conduct of contestants, and so on. Most of these will result in small changes. But in a transitional election there can be significant changes that are not communicated, such as the decision to move from one ballot box to two, or to change the ballot design. Such changes can severely discredit voter education programmes that are prepared in advance and are not capable of changing at the last minute. They can affect the election performance of those who have already been through voter education or party training events. In some cases, conflict in voting stations has been heightened by inaccuracies caused by withholding information.

Listening to information from outside:

Apart from the responsibility for disseminating information, election management authorities become more and more closed to information coming from outside that may require changes in, for example, officially placed advertising, or decisions about training of election staff. The reasons for becoming closed may be good ones. After all, the pressures on election authorities can increase and be driven by political considerations, or they can come from people with a limited perspective on the election. There will be a need to establish a mechanism that can be responsive and able to check information given by voter education and similar electoral support programmes. Where this information can be verified, it can provide relatively cheap and widely spread early warning systems of potential problems.

General State and Government Information

Those conducting voter education need access to general information about the country and its citizens. Where this is publicly available, problems are reduced. But there are countries where, either for policy or infrastructural reasons, information is restricted. In some places, state structures may actively resist making information available to particular organisations.

So coalitions and consortia will need to develop relationships with individuals and with state institutions in which they use the reputation of one or other member for nonpartisan and professional behaviour to free up the information that is required.



In some cases, such negotiations can only be conducted by the election authority itself. This is a service that can be offered by those authorities that have understood the importance of ensuring participation in the voter education enterprise by a wide range of individuals and institutions.

9.2.3.3 Non-Partisanship

Non-partisanship is essential but difficult during such a partisan endeavour as an election. Those who choose the route of non-partisanship impose constraints on their behaviour.

The Importance of the Contest

In an election, there is a contest for power. And there are many -organisations that provide both active and passive support for the candidates. They may do this through endorsements, donations and active campaigning. This is a natural part of the election campaign,. -Such involvement of a large number of people stimulates interest in an election and increases its visibility. This in turn creates voter motivation and increases the possibility of each voter receiving good information about the candidates.

In fact, a vital contest is a prerequisite for elections,. -It cannot be replaced by a neutral voter education or information programme. Those supporting elections and democracy need to increase their commitment to ensuring a fair, open, and free contest.

As a result of the hurly-burly aspects of some elections, candidates are likely to want to limit the information that any one voter receives, and where information is given, to slant it in ways that benefit the particular candidate. In situations where voters are shielded from all the candidates as a result of inequities in resources, or class, or geographic segregation, such information can remain biased and therefore not wholly accurate.

In situations where there is general access to information, it is difficult for candidates to develop a monopoly over communication with voters. Nevertheless, there is a role for a nonpartisan approach to voter education and information. This is clearly the position of an election authority that is interested in the election process and disinterested in the outcome. But it can also be the position of civil society -organisations. Such -non-partisanship enables these -organisations to provide a service to all voters irrespective of their political persuasion.

Consequences of Nonpartisan Behaviour

Nonpartisanship during an election may well imply the need to remain silent on certain political issues that divide candidates and where taking a position may appear to favour one candidate over another. But it is unlikely to be accompanied by total neutrality on public issues during the election period. Nonpartisan -organisations will take positions on matters that impact the election, such as the conduct of parties. But they will do that without fear or favour.

Non-partisanship can be Difficult.

In some instances, -organisations are forced to make political choices. So some decide to monitor elections rather than provide voter education. Others choose to educate and to attempt to stimulate those who have less constraint in making judgements on the elections. In coalitions, different members may in fact adopt different strategies. In a consortium, the likelihood is that there will be congruence among members. Those who choose to adopt a nonpartisan approach will ensure that they remain this way by:

- selecting and training staff who do not have a high political profile in their communities and who are able to project a nonpartisan approach no matter their personal inclinations,
- expressing themselves publicly only on matters of election process and not on matters that affect people's perception of one or other candidate,
- ensuring that their material does not favour one or another candidate by checking it out with them where possible, and;
- communicating regularly with decision makers in all the contesting parties about their programme and seeking feedback.

Additional Strategies

In some cases, voter education or special training programmes may create advisory boards comprising representatives of all the major contesting parties. Such bodies ensure that no one of them is favoured, and keep one another and the programme honest. Other programmes may affiliate directly to an election authority or seek registration. But finally, it is the integrity of the -organisation in establishing nonpartisan and independent goals in support of the election, and their ability to remain true to these and to articulate them loudly and often, that ensure that the most important people - the voters - trust the voter education message.

9.2.3.4 *Liaison with Election Authorities*

Election management authorities will have a number of motivations in establishing contact and cultivating relationships with -organisations active in voter education. These include accessing the resources that civil society -organisations can provide, expanding the reach of the official voter education programme, and fostering a democratic atmosphere in which elections take place.

For their part, educators working outside the ambit of the election authority to conduct voter education programmes, whatever their approach may be, will have to establish a liaison with the election authority.

Approaches to Voter Education

In the first place, -organisations may be operating on the basis of a contractual obligation to the election management authority. In such cases, the authority pays the -organisation for its services. In the second, the election authority may make an arrangement that recognises and/or registers the -organisation to conduct all or part of an agreed programme at its own expense. Finally, organisations may conduct an independent programme with or without recognition from the election management authority.

Each of these different arrangements requires some form of liaison with the election authority on a regular basis. While there is the possibility that the terms of this liaison will be established by the election authority itself, it may be necessary for the organisation to make some proposals and also offer their services in maintaining the liaison, as the election authority may have a lack of educational programme management capacity.



Purpose of Liaison

In the first place, liaison is necessary for the giving and receiving of information that will have an impact on the programme design and implementation, and on the progress of the election. Where the programme is entirely independent, this may be the only task of a liaison process. But it is also necessary to enable clarification of roles, assessment of effectiveness, and access to officials and information required for the successful completion of an agreed programme.

It is particularly important where the organisation has its own funding, but is attempting to work on behalf of, or in support of, an election management authority. While a contractual obligation is likely to have outlined explicitly the reporting and accountability relationships, the ownership of products, the use of official logos and other materials, the sharing of costs and use of resources, and so on, the more voluntary relationships that are entered into may not be enumerated. Yet all the same questions arise, and there needs to be a simple and regular mechanism for discussing these.

Absence of a Liaison Mechanism

In the absence of a liaison mechanism, meetings get called only when things go wrong, and everybody knows this, making such meetings invariably tense and formal. Information goes awry, with organisations sitting on a great deal of feedback about the election, and election management authorities sitting on information that is required to ensure that the voter education is accurate.

Possible Liaison Mechanisms

Regularity and continuity are the prerequisites for a liaison mechanism. These are best achieved by identifying, at an early stage, a small group of people within the organisation and in the election management authority who will be responsible for the liaison. By identifying not one person but a group, it is possible to avoid some of the pitfalls of personal contact and communication. Amongst these pitfalls are the possible breakdown of communication as a result of illness or absence, leaving the organisation, or interpersonal conflict. There have been cases when those conducting the liaison processes have either impressed the election management authority, on one hand, or the organisation, on the other, so much they have been enticed away or have chosen to change sides of their own accord. While this may improve relationships over time, it usually results in some dysfunction and time delays as new people have to be put in place.

Once a team of people is responsible for the liaison, they will set up a variety of different mechanisms, ranging from routine joint meetings, de-briefings and attendance at meetings of the governing bodies of the two organisations, to occasional planning conferences and retreats.

Such meetings will invariably have two agendas, and those responsible for liaison outside of the election management authority will want to ensure that they continue to have two agendas - the items of both bodies. If one or the other side feels that the meetings have no purpose or benefit for them, they are likely to become disillusioned and to beg off in favour of other demands on their time.

As the organisation outside the election authority is likely to be the one that most needs information and contact in order to do its job properly, and is the one likely to have most questions and be wanting to make most demands and inputs, it tends to be the election management authority that takes the meetings for granted and limits its participation to more junior staff.

While this is understandable from their viewpoint, it is not helpful from the point of view of those providing a service. As a result, it may be necessary to establish a routine for establishing a range of different-level meetings - the more regular and procedural as opposed to the less regular for policy review.

It may also be possible to establish other forms of communication such as the circulation of minutes, fact and briefing sheets, and lists of contacts that can be approached on specific matters.

Contact Lists

A contact list is a very useful liaison tool, especially if it is accurate and includes brief information about the areas of competence of each person. It is best if it is specially prepared for the task rather than a general list that just happens to be available, or a circulation list of all committees. Where a list of contacts is provided, both bodies will want to brief these people and ensure that they know who is likely to contact them and about what they may be expected to give information. There are examples of lists being given on the assumption that those listed will be of assistance: organisations subsequently find that the person has no knowledge of them and is not inclined to give out information without referring to a more senior person - something that results in all queries being centralised. This is exactly what a contact list is designed to avoid.

Liaison activities should not be overly complicated. Often regular "corridor" contact is all that is required. At the same time, liaison that relies entirely on such contact is likely to result in the two bodies drifting apart when they actually need to be working closely. Scheduled meetings can ensure that this is avoided.

Election Day

Liaison often falls apart on Election Day or in the last few days before elections. By this time an election management authority is concentrating on the job at hand, and voter education programmes are over. Those who do voter education, however, develop a relationship with voters, and they are still involved, and may even be more involved than ever. As a result, such organisations end up dealing with complaints, observations, requests for assistance, and so on. In some cases, voters find it hard to see the difference between the organisation and the authority. And because getting through to the authority at the last minute can be difficult for voters but relatively easy for the educator, education organisations are assumed to be conduits for citizen reactions to the elections.

Sometimes little can or needs to be done other than to listen to the complaint. At other times, the information can be crucial. As a result, there should be some way in which information can be telephoned in to the election authority, and some way in which the election management authority can call out. This may best be done by placing an educator who understands this process, and is not involved in other operational issues, in the election management authority control centre, and having that person take calls from education organisations outside. At other times, it might be done by providing these organisations with contact lists for the range of



responsive services that the electoral management authority is fielding, such as security, logistics, task groups, monitors, and so forth.

9.3 Methodology Selection

Educators will make use of a range of methods based on their best estimation of how to achieve the objectives established as a result of the analysis of educational needs. There are, however, three overarching methodologies or paradigms: advertising, public information and education, and group learning.

Combined Methods

Broad-based educational programmes may make use of all three paradigms. This can lead to interesting dynamics as the practitioners of each bring their own language, planning assumptions and educational approaches to the meeting room and to the programme.

Voter education tends to be an eclectic enterprise because of the range of audiences and learning outcomes. This topic area is also eclectic because it has to address a range of country and electoral contexts. There may well be those who believe these paradigms to be mutually exclusive and who consider that they bring with them particular unintended outcomes that can undermine the voter education undertaking.

It is becoming increasingly difficult, to maintain a purist approach to adult education activities such as voter education. Certainly in the political realm, the art of the possible has been dominant. In addition to this pragmatic approach, the group learning paradigm - appearing to conform most closely to the democratic ideal of dialogue and debate - leaves something to be desired in terms of scale. As a result, it tends to move the education programme into the formal schooling setting. And this has its own problems. So it may be better to consider the paradigms of advertising, public information, and group learning as resources from which an educator draws the necessary methods and techniques to meet their objectives in the most effective way.

Advertising

Advertising establishes a brand identity, differentiates a product from others in the marketplace, and makes consumers aware of the availability of a service or product. Its techniques can be used to convey a message very effectively.

One of the techniques used, particularly in societies that value education or self-improvement, is to invoke the classroom metaphor to enhance the message. For this reason, the advertising paradigm is often chosen for voter information and education programmes.

Advertising agencies have an additional advantage in their apparent knowledge of the audience, and their ability to package messages on short notice to the standards required by national impact media and to determine the appropriate media mix for the targeted audience.

The basic nature of this paradigm is that it begins with a message that must be conveyed and that has been constructed at the centre of the programme. In some cases, the message is related directly to an investigation of the educational needs of the target audience. In most it is a construction based in part on knowledge of the audience and in part on objectives of the programme. This decision will be based on certain assumptions about what people need in order to participate in an election. For further details see Commercial.

Public Information and Education

The second paradigm is the multimedia national campaign based on public information principles. It relies on mass communication techniques, some of which come from the same advertising quiver. But it also makes certain assumptions about the importance of institutions and organisations in the development of people's attitudes and behaviours.

This concern for the individual in the group, rather than for the individual *per se*, characterises the underlying practice in a public education programme. It is this reliance on corporate identity, and the importance of environmental factors, that makes the public education paradigm particularly appropriate in developing societies and in societies where communal values remain in existence.

Group Learning

The third paradigm, and the one that is predominant in formal education institutions, is that which places group learning at the centre of the programme. Whether this is in the formal classroom, where individual achievement and group support and performance operate in an ambiguous fashion, or the informal community learning group, those who select group learning methods have to consider its potency against its relatively slow cumulative effect.

While face-to-face educational activities (see [Face To Face Interaction](#)) conform to the experience of most people, and while there is a broad range of educational technologies that have been developed for the small group, significant educational impact tends to be achieved only when there is regular interaction between an educator and a group. And establishing regular meetings of learners and educators is costly except where formal educational institutions are already in place and voter education programmes can be integrated into the curriculum of those formal institutions.

So those who work within this paradigm are constantly have to offset the quality of the educational experience for small groups of learners with the demand for universal education. As a result, group learning is often used for specialised groups and specialised skill development, while more general public education and advertising techniques are used for the majority.

9.4 Message Development

Educators will use different words and phrases to describe the central messages that must be communicated during voter education. They may discuss the "central theme" of the programme, for example, or the "slogans" of the voter education campaign. Mainly, these are part of a set of educational messages that must be communicated to and absorbed by the target constituency.

These messages may be encapsulations of the general knowledge that citizens must have in order to participate fully in a democracy, whether in elections or in other civic or political activities, or in the general ebb and flow of a pluralist society in which they are required to assist in decision making and to construct their own future.



As messages, they may make people aware of deficiencies in skills that they have to overcome. As a result of this awareness they may then appear to provide an indication of the likely direction of an educational programme that takes into account behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge. But educators who rely too heavily on the creation of educational messages to the detriment of a set of educational objectives are likely to overlook the affective and skill components of an educational programme in favour of the cognitive.

Because educational messages are important in guiding the programme, and because they are also available as explicit and more easily understandable descriptions of what is intended than objective statements for non-educators, it is essential that care be taken in the drafting and development:

- Ensure that there is a direct relationship between the educational needs that have been described and the message that is prepared. If this is not done, it is highly likely that time and energy will be wasted constructing programmes to meet needs that have no significance for the majority of the target audience, no matter how much significance they may have for the educator.
- Construct these messages in such a way that they will have the support of stakeholder groups. and;
- Test them in order to ensure that they do indeed meet the needs of the educational programme and of the citizens that the education programme intends to serve.

From Needs Statement to Message

Needs statements tend to be expressed in terms of the gap between the ideal and the actual. As a result, there are likely to be a whole range of statements. Educators may, in the first place, have to separate out those statements that relate to needs that cannot be met by educational interventions, or they may have to rephrase these so they are capable of educational intervention.

Having done this, educators will then be in a position to group and categorise the list of needs and, through a process of sifting and sorting, to establish the possibility of characterising the educational needs into a series of conceptual requirements. This series of conceptual requirements may enable the educator to write down a set of statements relating to messages that the target audience could assimilate. This is a task that is more art than science, and it is for this reason that educators will want to consider the development of messages in collaboration with others experienced in these matters.

The Role of Statutory Bodies

The election authority and other statutory bodies are likely to have an opinion about the messages that must be communicated by the educational programme. Beyond the content of these messages, they are also likely to be concerned with the accuracy and consistency and the mutually-reinforcing nature of the messages, so as to ensure that voters are truly informed and not misinformed or confused. Their opinions may find their way into any Terms of Reference or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that is distributed to all organisations engaged in voter education activities, either independently or through some sort of strategic partnership, for example between the election authority and the civil society sector. These opinions are also likely to be reflected in requests for competitive bids, or tenders, through which service providers will be selected and contracted.

Where general civic education is intended, the messages may be linked to particular national slogans or to particular social issues or the constitution. Where voter education is intended, the

messages are likely to be linked again to particular concepts, such as the secrecy of the vote, or to a particular assumption about the voting population.

Having an initial opinion - which is unlikely to change unless educators are able to marshal good information in favour of changes - is perhaps as important as the fact that these same statutory bodies will have an opinion of the final set of messages. Their perception of the programme and of its success will be coloured by the professionalism with which the message statements are crafted, and whether these reflect their own opinions.

Because statutory authorities often have to provide resources – especially money – and access to citizens, their belief in the programme is essential. There are circumstances in non-democratic societies, however, in which the statutory authorities are not considered a primary locus of authority and support for voter education programmes. There may even be circumstances in which there are competitive programmes in the field. In such circumstances, messages will obviously be developed apart from the authorities. They may even be developed as an antithesis to government messages.

In other instances, the national election management authority may have a legal mandate to conduct voter education and may take a leading role in the formation of strategic partnerships. They may also have a role in assessing, accepting, and supporting the messages of the voter education programme. In support of these messages, they may also give consideration to the alignment of other social programmes to ensure congruence between these and the educational intervention.

The Role of Target Groups

It is impossible to bring every learner into contact with the educator team while developing a set of messages. It is essential, however, to consider ways in which educators could understand the impact of these messages on learners. Because message statements are regularly used as slogans in advertising, or as statements to mobilise support for the programme from potential organisational participants, and because they will form the basis of materials development, educators will want to discuss them with groups from the target audience. Such groups may be randomly selected, in the same manner as focus groups, and the potential messages could be discussed with them. Contact may also be made with organisations that are likely to deliver groups of learners during the programme. For more on the educational needs of target audiences see Target Groups, Audiences, and Constituencies.

These organisations will have a relationship with learners that they will want to protect and the discussion of messages will be of utmost importance to them. Indeed, it may be that they will want to ensure that the programme deals with messages that have not yet been considered, or they may want to exclude certain messages altogether. For example, commercial interests that have opted to provide voter education to their employees may have a concern about possible discussions linking the topic of voting and democracy in the workplace or industrial decision making. Or they may prefer that messages place a greater emphasis on the responsibility of citizens rather than about rights.



It may not be possible to meet all the expectations of those through whom the programme will go to reach learners. But in a national programme, it may be possible to develop a set of messages that has general currency, leaving more specialised messages, such as they are, to the organisations themselves.

The Role of Educator Groups

Advocating a facilitating approach in which others take some responsibility for messages does not presuppose an abdication on the part of educators. Indeed, the technical assistance that such groups or individuals will provide is essential. They are the ones who will be able to consider the relationship between programme objectives, messages, and "educability." They will be the ones who investigate the relationship between expressed needs and the creation of message statements.

In particular, they will have to take responsibility for these messages once the programme is initiated, and in this regard they will have to be able to explain them to others and communicate them to those who deliver services and materials.

Testing

Once a set of messages has been developed, it will be important to test them. Testing messages is designed to establish:

- to what extent they are clear and unambiguous,
- to what extent they are engaging, and;
- to what extent they can be understood by learners and communicated by educators.

Where the messages have been developed in one language, which is likely in most cases, it will be essential to determine whether the concepts described translate. This translation will be required if materials are to be produced. But it will also happen spontaneously when learners of a different native language are exposed to the message. It will be necessary to test to determine whether this spontaneous translation results in a similar concept or in something quite different.

Finally, testing will ensure that the message statements are stripped to their bare essentials, both in the simple communication of the message itself (e.g., "Your Vote Counts") and in the standard description of this message.

Testing can be done in a number of ways. In the first place, discussions with statutory authorities, educators, and target groups will provide the first round of testing. Focus groups will provide another. But educators will want to test the messages through a series of limited pilot educational events. Such events will have to be strictly controlled. In some cases, it is impossible to conduct pilot events in educational interventions because "the cat is out of the bag", so to speak, from the first event and because it is unlikely that the educator will get a chance to correct any errors that may occur.

So testing often takes place with a group that is not naive (i.e., they have been asked to be part of the test and are, therefore, self-conscious about their participation) and, therefore, not entirely representative of the actual target. Nevertheless, gross errors are likely to be spotted.

Message Document

Once the messages have been accepted and tested, a document needs to be developed that will confirm them and make them available to all interested parties in the same form and with the

same content. Variations in draft documents can have an impact on sceptical parties, and the reissue of a draft instead of the agreed form can be quite problematic.

9.5 Special Cases

As noted in Marginalized Voters and Groups with Special Needs, there will be certain segments of the electorate that will need special consideration. Some of these groups present very real logistical challenges, require specialized approaches, and in some cases require additional security precautions. These considerations are discussed in greater detail in:

- Approaching Military and Police Forces
- Education of Prisoners
- Engaging Apathetic and Disempowered Groups
- Reaching Nomads and Isolated Groups
- Communicating with Exiles, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons
- Participation of Shutins and the Disabled

Additional information on working with the military, police forces, and prisoners can be found under Education In Closed Institutions. Working in politically charged areas prone to violence is discussed in Education in Unsafe Areas.

9.5.1 Approaching Military and Police Forces

It is essential that the security forces of a country obtain voter education. Even if they are composed of citizens in uniform, who therefore have the ability to obtain good information about the election during their off-duty life, members of the security forces have an institutional relationship with elections that is best discussed and considered specifically.

Societies in Change

This is particularly important in societies that have been highly militarised. In such societies, there may well be programmes under way for the demobilisation of soldiers, the demilitarisation of the police, the establishment of civilian authority over the security forces, and the training and retraining of members of security forces. On Election Day there may be special legislation regarding the confinement to barracks of soldiers and the exclusion of the police from voting stations. Or a new police service may have been created and deployed especially to guard the electoral process.

In this rapidly changing, and occasionally quite confusing and delicate situation, an understanding of security forces, of their role, and of the manner in which they will participate in the elections can be a major contributing factor in ensuring the success of the election. At the same time, educators may face a number of challenges in educating security personnel under such circumstances, not the least of which is gaining access to military facilities to conduct leadership briefings and information and education programmes (see Education In Closed Institutions).

Face-to-Face Methods are Essential



Because the situation is so delicate, face-to-face methods should be considered paramount. Educational workshops can be reduced in cost because of the close proximity of large numbers of military personnel. And these workshops can be conducted by independent educators with the imprimatur of the election authority and, by extension, the state. Without this imprimatur, an educational programme is destined to fail due to suspicion and lack of access. With it, the natural tendency of such institutions to inculcate acceptance of authority serves to enhance the message.

Leadership Briefings

While voter education workshops and other lessons can be arranged with soldiers and members of the security forces, it is the acceptance of the officer corps that will make or break a programme. They have the ability to undermine the programme after an educator leaves, to make it difficult for people to attend a workshop, and to intimidate those who do. Special leadership briefings should where possible be arranged for them.

Such briefings should not, however, be communicated as voter education. Officers believe they know what is going on and do not usually take kindly to being told they do not. Instead, such programmes should be considered briefings to inform the officer corps of the programme that is being conducted for their other ranks, and a socio-political assessment of the elections and the role that the security forces will be expected to play during the election period. Apart from the fact that the officer corps needs this information, and may not be getting it from their superiors who have other concerns, this context also provides an opportunity for them to ask more mundane questions about basic voter information either during the briefing or with the educator immediately after its conclusion.

Where it is possible, a team of educators may visit a security force base and conduct a briefing followed by a set of general workshops so that they use the time as effectively as possible, especially if travel to the base has been extensive.

Training of Trainers

This is one context where it seems less suitable to train existing trainers to conduct the programme. Such trainers have a power relationship to ordinary soldiers or police that makes it difficult for them to convey, or the soldiers to receive, information about democracy and elections.

Stable Democracies use Standard Training Opportunities

There will come a time, when the general training curriculum of the security forces will have to include information about human rights, civil military relations, the soldier as citizen, and international law on combat and military behaviour. Introducing such programmes has been done in a number of post-war western armies, and the materials and technologies from these are readily available and regularly shared between countries.

Even in these societies, special material for the armed forces may be prepared. And those societies that provide soldiers for peacekeeping operations where elections are a likely adjunct need special election and civic education programmes.

9.5.2 Education of Prisoners

This section is about the large number of prisoners held in some countries as common law offenders who may be released prior to an election, or who may have been given the right to vote by electoral law. And within this group, some will not be able to obtain voter education, because the conditions of their imprisonment may not allow regular if restricted access to the outside of a prison.

Discussion of some of the complexities of managing such education are discussed in [Education In Closed Institutions](#).

This section takes for granted that education is to be made available and suggests ways in which this could be done.

Methods

Obvious programme elements that transcend the barriers of the prison walls may be radio, assuming prisoners have access to this, or distance education techniques, again assuming that prisoners have access to correspondence, television, or the internet (depending upon the nature of the programme).

More likely are the availability of public address systems, for example internal radio programmes, and the use of internal messaging and communication systems for distributing pamphlets and other printed information. In these cases, care has to be taken to ensure that the message is not undermined by its association with the medium of communication.

Where prisons have a functioning education system, it may be possible to provide instructors - often a combination of outside experts, prison staff, and trusted inmates - with voter educator training, and then to negotiate some opportunity within the standard educational programme. The major danger of such an approach is that the programme will reach not only those who have a chance to vote but also those who may not. And it may reach only those who have entered an educational programme. Where there is no fear of upheaval if voting expectations are raised amongst those who will be excluded from the vote, this strategy may be suitable and it will have the added general value of civic education.

Alternatively, special voter education programmes using trained staff with groups of prisoners selected on the basis of their intention and ability to participate in the election may be conducted. Face-to-face programmes may have the greatest chance of success and be the most suitable in prisons where education and, therefore, the segregation of prisoners and the availability of venues is a matter of standard operating procedure.

There may be no way to make these arrangements, and so it may be necessary to consider surrogate approaches through contact with prison visitors and family members. Even in closed prisons, or prisons with poor conditions, usually there are provisions for visitors. It is possible to set up displays and simple interviews for those waiting to visit. This can ensure that at some time the prisoner is briefed on the election, either during a visit or immediately upon release.



9.5.3 Engaging Apathetic and Disempowered Groups

Understanding what leads to apathy can provide pointers to a more effective programme. But the reasons for voter apathy are not always educational.

Understanding Voter Apathy

When elections are scheduled, there is much talk of low voter turnout due to apathy. Between elections, those who are trying to debate issues with citizens or mobilize citizens in support of their programmes talk about apathy. Where the word is being used in a neutral and purely descriptive sense, this may be true. But discussions of voter or citizen apathy tend towards the pejorative. People may have abdicated their responsibility, and must be motivated to participate - through a judicious mix of reward, retribution, and appeals to altruism and guilt. The cause for the absence of enthusiasm is laid at the door of the voter.

There may be alternative explanations, however, and uncovering these may make for more effective interventions. Unfortunately, these explanations are not always suitable for an educational intervention, so they tend not to be sought until the educational programme has failed, and in some cases not even then.

Educators who seriously intend to address questions of voter turnout and voter apathy will have to consider programmes that reach beyond the motivational to consider a range of educational interventions that fall more comfortably within the area of civic education. They will also want to consider ways in which their society fails to establish sufficient motivation for electoral participation - whether it is the result of perceived foregone conclusions, lack of choice amongst candidates, or even the impotence of winners to affect necessary changes to the system of government.

Possible Programmes

These are the malaise of democracy, and they cannot be addressed solely by increasing expenditure on voter education. They may, over time, be dealt with by educational programmes that develop a new group of young leaders capable of reconstructing democracy in their own country in a way suitable for the future; or of a generation of young people who are committed to democratic values and practices in government as well as private life. But these interventions may be a touch utopian, and those countries that have reconstructed their systems of governance to ensure a far greater interaction with citizens over a wide variety of issues and in a wide variety of contexts may be on the right track, using these schools of democracy to demonstrate that participation does bear personal and communal fruits.

9.5.4 Discrimination and Exclusion

Dealing with individuals and groups who have been excluded, or who face particular types of discrimination, is an important but difficult task for the educator.

In some cases these groups are invisible to any other than themselves and some advocates or interest groups which have emerged from the group or have a particular political, rights, or welfare interest in the group. In other cases, the society has been constructed in such a way that seeking to work with such groups directly puts in question, and hence raises resistance from, the powerful in that society.

Those working in societies with a normative framework which disallows exclusion or discrimination find themselves at an advantage. These norms may be entrenched in a

constitution or in cultural and religious institutions. Where this framework does not exist, educators will look for, and educate people about, possible frameworks which could find legitimacy or acceptance, by the discriminated or excluded groups or by a broader section of the society.

For example, educators will look to the international human rights treaties and statements, to regional guidelines and charters, or to hidden traditions and to the re-interpretation of significant texts. In some countries, individuals who demonstrate the values of inclusiveness and non-discrimination, whether mythic, historic or contemporary may be invoked.

Educators may thus find ways to create a mandate for reaching out to such groups, and they may find that this mandate – and the values underpinning it – has to form the primary part of the educational programme. This topic area makes the point that education has to be an empowering activity if it is to enable growth and change – and therefore the excluded and discriminated against will be the first constituency. But to support their emergence, especially if they begin to exercise political power or seek a public role, education will also have to be directed to those who are opposed to their empowerment.

There are costs of exclusion and discrimination, and these costs are often described and analysed in such education. For example, exclusion creates poverty and instability – which must subsequently have implications for the broader society; discrimination raises conflict in societies and excludes many people with great potential from participating fully in the development of that country. But these cognitive approaches on their own are often insufficient.

As a result, a broad range of educational methodologies and programmes have been developed, especially by human rights institutions, faith based advocacy groups and women's movements.

9.5.5 Reaching Nomads and Isolated Groups

The challenge facing educators with isolated or nomadic people is to get the message to these them in language and by communications means that they understand and accept.

Isolation

Isolation may pose less severe challenges once contact has been established. Such contact may require radio, including amateur or ham radio, or the shipping of materials to nearby distribution or broadcast centres. In some cases, systems for delivering general government services - health or commercial services such as food supplies - may have to be used. In this regard, food packaging that has been adapted to convey voter education messages may be useful.

As isolated groups may be small, costs will have to be commensurate with their size and perceived political importance. But the doubling up strategy may well save money and enable a professional service to be provided.



Nomads

Nomadic groups may pose a greater challenge because of the relationship they have to a particular state. If the relationship is strong, such groups may well travel into an area where elections are to take place and where voter information or voter education is available. If the relationship is weak, strategies that come to terms with that may have to be developed. Materials that can be carried away, and that are in the appropriate language, may be used. Training of members of the nomadic community and educators who travel themselves may be necessary.

While people in nomadic communities may choose not to participate in electoral politics, it is easy to assume this choice rather than implicate the dominant society in the politics of exclusion. Judgements will need to be made about which is playing a greater part in their social isolation. But educators will want to test this carefully and examine their own bias and assumptions before deciding that an educational intervention is not necessary.

9.5.6 Communicating with Exiles, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons

Voters outside the country and those displaced within the country, through no choice of their own, pose a particular challenge for voter education programmes. In some cases, there might be only a few people in this category. But in a number of states that have undergone internal strife, for example in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus and some parts of Africa, there are large numbers of people who have either chosen exile or who have become refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs).

While some of these may have the resources to return of their own accord to the country or to their homes prior to elections, large numbers are likely to require assistance with repatriation, and this repatriation may happen only after the election, necessitating electoral arrangements outside of the country, or shortly before election day. Indeed, information about the election, as well as the governing systems and arrangements that will follow, might be needed to reassure these groups that return is in fact an option worth pursuing.

Voter education programmes, therefore, have to be developed for such groups. They are likely to be made easier in situations where groups of refugees and IDPs can be identified. may in fact not be possible for a small number of exiles who may have to identify themselves and make their own arrangements for obtaining information.

With all groups, it will be important to understand the conditions that led to their leaving the country or their internal displacement, the manner in which they are presently being cared for outside the country or away from their homes (including their legal status), and the organisations that may be working with them.

Fortunately, the movement of large groups of refugees across borders or IDPs into new communities does bring relief efforts, even if those involved in this relief feel powerless and under-resourced. Political solutions that provide a realistic chance of repatriation are likely to be welcomed, and organisations are likely, therefore, to be receptive to obtaining and distributing voter education materials.

Refugee Support Services and Networks

For the same reason, and despite the fact that the individual refugee or IDP voter is unlikely to make use of these services, electronic communications through the World Wide Web or

computer bulletin boards can be useful ways of enabling organisations in far flung places to get information. Other tactics may include radio broadcasting or mass pamphlet distribution.

Another method will be to train those field staff responsible for general communication and welfare services so that they can answer election-related questions. This and other similar tactics will mean that educators will want to be involved in the general organisational effort to bring back exiles and repatriate refugees so that they can assist in these programmes and integrate their materials and messages with any others that have to be communicated. They will also use their skills to evaluate whether the communication methods that are being proposed by the larger programme will have the intended effect.

9.5.7 Ensuring the Participation of Shut-Ins and the Physical Challenged

While physically challenged people and those who are "shut-in" (by illness or age) have different needs, educational programmes will, in both cases, only succeed if there have been adequate arrangements made for them.

Overcoming Discrimination

A society's treatment of the vulnerable and disabled provides a good judge of its commitment to democracy and human rights. But the manner in which voter education will be conducted will depend heavily on the arrangements that a country is willing to make to encourage such people to participate in the society. There are those who work with physically challenged individuals who consider the primary educational task to be not amongst this segment of the society but amongst the able-bodied.

Awareness of ways in which society discriminates against the physically challenged individuals through its architectural, infrastructural, and legal arrangements has to be the first priority of any education programme. And election arrangements have to be in place that enable and encourage participation before there can be any confidence that a voter education programme for the physically challenged individuals should be undertaken.

Once this confidence is there, strategies have to be developed that deal with different categories of disability. In some cases, it may be enough to communicate in standard voter education programmes that are accessible to the physically challenged person that the elections themselves will be accessible.

All other information may not change nor may the educational approach.

Reaching Out

In other cases, educators will have to reach out to those who are shut in by identifying the institutions where they are under care and preparing materials and contact with such institutions. There are societies that have been structured in such a way that the shut-in and that physically challenged are invisible. In such societies, educators must make the invisible apparent, at least to the planners and implementers of the voter education programme. This can



be done by making contact with organisations of care-givers, relatives, and the physically challenged themselves. It can also be done in a dramatic way, and a way that ensures that the programme takes account of special needs, by enlarging the education team to include physically challenged people. Certainly, face-to-face programmes are likely to be considerably enhanced if physically challenged people are trained as educators and communicators.

Deafness

Certain afflictions cut people off from the world in special ways. Deafness is one of these. Educators will want to work with those who use sign language. They will also want to ensure that television broadcasts and large scale events have subtitles or other visual signs, or that special television programmes for the hearing impaired deal with preparation for elections. In general, societies that have alternative educational opportunities for physically challenged people are more conducive to voter education. Those with reduced facilities are always going to be at a disadvantage unless their society has an ethic of care and incorporation.

Blindness

With the development of improved technology for the production of braille materials, it is possible to replicate many of the materials for sighted people. And where an election authority has prepared for blind people to use their own braille ballots, such materials will need only to be adapted to provide good information on how to make use of this system. Where braille materials are not available, and voting has to take place with assistance, legislation should make sure that the normal concerns for secrecy are not overlooked for the blind.

Those who are physically challenged do not thereby become unable. The blind can hear, the deaf can see. Voter educators will use methods that take this into account. For the blind this means radio, audio tape, oral communication; for the deaf, illustration and demonstration.

Accessibility

All physically challenged people need one additional message. And this message needs to be communicated universally through choice of images in posters, television and displays. This message is that the physically challenged can vote. A climate of acceptance and accessibility should follow the arrangements for this in the election management authority. While there will be those physically challenged people who will vote despite the constraints imposed upon them, election management authorities and educators who take the care to remove these constraints are needed.

Where the necessary arrangements have been made, whether for special voting services, such as use of a mobile ballot box, or special voting stations in institutions, or for wheelchair access or voter assistance programmes, this specific information has to be publicised widely. Here the networks and institutions that work with the shut-in and physically challenged should be alerted in good time, as they need both to communicate this information and to make any special arrangements.

9.5.8 First Time voters

The term "first time voter" can be defined in different ways. It is often taken to mean those young people who are reaching voting age and therefore are facing their first opportunity to vote, but it could also be defined to include those who are not allowed to vote (for example because of lack of citizenship or conviction) in previous elections and subsequently are allowed to vote. An even broader definition would include older people who, having not voted

previously despite being allowed to vote, choose to vote. The below text mainly refers to people included in the first definition, i.e. people reaching the voting age.

There is some evidence that those who do not vote when first they have an opportunity to do so, fall out of the voting pool. Irrespective of whether this is always the case or whether people subsequently re-connect with political processes and voting at a later age, there is a concern that high levels of young people who are disconnected will destabilise the society or skew political life in ways which create a marginalised group of young people. This is a particular problem for developing countries which still have demographic patterns in which young people are by far the majority, but older democracies also worry about the youth vote.

There have been many different programmes to educate young people about their role as citizens, their rights and responsibilities, the importance of voting, and how best to make voter choices and hold those they vote for accountable between elections. These are often campaigns with a mix of popular media, above the line advertising, cultural events in a youth idiom, social events, peer education and the use of celebrities and political exemplars.

Educators who are concerned about getting out the first time voter should therefore consider making use of various techniques from this topic area based on their best assessment of the needs and aspirations of the particular group being targeted. They should also make use of methods and materials which are particular appropriate to this target group.

In a recent national campaign aimed at such a group in South Africa, who also happened to be the first set of 'first time voters' reaching the age of 18 since political freedom, the chosen medium was a national newspaper chain, and materials written specially for that chain, designed with youth in mind, were circulated separately to chosen schools whose teachers had agreed to take part in suggested in school activities and competitions. The weekly supplement covered not only specific voter education but, more importantly, focused on ways in which young people could become politically active and take control of their lives outside of formal party politics.

It did this on the basis of an increasing body of research showing that young people are not necessarily apathetic, but find that formal party politics do not connect with their own lives. Making that connection requires a broader understanding of political life in which young people are actors and not only voters.

There are other hurdles to voter participation by young people related to the registration process. Attempts to obtain identity documents, drivers' licences, voter cards, job benefits, and educational support often leave young people sceptical of the state, and that scepticism then extends to elections. This is a particular problem for young people making their own way in the world because their parents or their community are unable to give them access or support. The poor are thus particularly susceptible to being shut out early on.

It is therefore critical that schools play a role not only in civic education but in the support young people need to become self reliant and active in public life. At the very least, schools can and should be places where some of the state bureaucracy is mediated in ways which empower



school leavers. It is ironic that such support seems most freely given in developed countries where it may be least needed.

10. Potential Programme Elements

Educators have a remarkable range of options open to them once they have determined the programme objectives and the general strategy that they intend to adopt.

As information technology develops, there is a temptation to concentrate only on approaches that use electricity, computers, and television. But advances have also been made with respect to the application of low-tech options suitable for developing countries. The wind-up radio, for example, is only one of the more recent options available. The job of the educator is to use the most appropriate technologies to achieve the objectives in the most cost-effective and efficient way.

This section of the topic area provides a range of programme elements and suggests ways in which these can be used, some of their limitations, and ways in which they can complement one another.

The sections include the following:

- [The Media](#)
- [Printed Materials](#)
- [Arts and Culture](#)
- [Face To Face Interaction](#) (deals with workshops and related activities)
- [Other Strategies for Education Programmes](#) (covers information centres, direct mail, telephone canvassing, and street campaigns)
- [Commercial Advertising](#)
- [Distance Learning Techniques](#)

There are programmes that start with the most obviously available materials or media, however, it is important that educators are cautious in reaching to conclusions. It is essential that the initial programme assessment be done before selecting from amongst the programme elements that are available.

Educators around the world are designing voter education programmes with increasing creativity, both with respect to the range of media being used and the manner in which they are being used, from paper balloons in Japan to large national civic education coalitions in Central and South America.

10.1 The Media

It is possible to use traditional and emerging media to convey advertizing and educational messages to large audiences. These media are primarily one-way communications, but changing technology, coupled with increasingly sophisticated survey techniques, is improving the ability to engage in two-way communication, where audience response has an impact on succeeding messages.

While an argument can be made to consider all mechanisms of communication as media, this topic area uses the word in the generally accepted way. It is used to describe television, radio, and print media. These are covered in [Government Media](#), which deals with ownership questions, [National Impact Media](#), and [Community Impact Media](#). The section also considers

some similar techniques in the computer and Alternative Methods of Communicating Voter Education fields, as well as Use of Radio Advertising.

10.1.1 State-owned Media

State ownership of the media imposes particular challenges on voter educators, especially those working in transitional situations. This section examines these challenges. Media ownership issues are also discussed in Structure of Media Ownership.

State regulation of media is a two-edged sword: it can enhance or limit educational programmes.

Ownership

In some countries, some or all of the mass media are owned or controlled by the state.

State ownership, and hence state control over the policy and content of the particular medium, is diminishing as the tendency toward privatization or at least commercialization or joint ownership increases. Nevertheless, there are many countries where television, radio, and/or national newspapers are state owned.

Control of the media can, of course, go much further. Legislation can prohibit or inhibit media diversity through a number of measures, from limiting access to resources, including broadcast channels, and heavy penalties for coverage of particular stories, to direct and gross censorship.

Public Perception of the State

For the voter educator, the problem is not necessarily state ownership or control of a particular medium that is required to spread the voter education message, unless educators find they cannot get access to these media at all. Rather, the problem lies in the perception that citizens have toward the media when it is perceived as the state's mouthpiece because it is owned or largely controlled by the state.

Regimes have an interest in remaining in power and the media provides them with an opportunity to communicate and manage the messages that might undermine their support amongst voters. All contestants in an election will make use of the media if they can, and when the election playing field is particularly uneven, there will be attempts to create fairness in media coverage. The state can even control this negotiated access if it has the ability to set the fees for access.

If voter educators are faced with a situation in which the majority of voters distrust messages received from state-owned or controlled media, or one where the state does not allow the election management body to prepare messages that are perceived to weaken support for the existing regime, they have a problem.

This was the situation in South Africa before the 1994 elections. In this situation, voter educators proposed and had accepted a consortium that prepared and ran all voter education



messages on the national state-owned television and radio stations. Voters saw or heard a statement from this consortium that differentiated it from the various news and current affairs programmes prepared by the broadcaster itself.

In other situations the election management bodies develop communication identities, so that the level of trust in their messages can increase as voters understand the difference between these messages and those they might have come to distrust.

Advantages of State-Owned Media

At the same time, if negative public perceptions and censorship are not a concern, state-owned media may have certain advantages relative to commercial stations that the educator may want to consider. First, state-owned media may be required by law to provide free-airtime to the election management body and perhaps even civil society organisations to air voter education messages and related public service announcements. Depending upon the development of the country's media infrastructure, state-owned media may also have far greater reach, both in terms of population and geography, than private broadcasters. And, they may be more likely to broadcast in areas where poorer strata of the population reside than commercially oriented media outlets.

Working Outside an Election Period

Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to establish this same differentiation in messages when conducting general civic education programmes. Given that these are designed to increase commitment to democracy and civic participation, messages have to be created and broadcast in an open environment. This does not always exist. When it does not exist, there is some evidence to suggest the messages will be tainted with the same brush as messages that are putting out the state's point of view.

Regulation

States can develop regulations that enhance election campaigns. They can limit private media monopolies, which can leave some political persuasions without a voice.

States also can provide free airtime under controlled conditions in the private media or in state-owned media. This may be particularly important if election management bodies or civil society organisations are not in a position to pay for broadcasting.

In general, media regulation and the role of the state is a complicated and increasingly important area for those involved in elections. For more on this topic see [Law or Regulations on Media During Elections](#)

10.1.2 National Impact Media

The primary and most expensive media available for educational and information purposes are those that have a national impact. With changes in information technology and ownership, different media have to be considered in different ways by people placing information or developing strategies to communicate specialized messages.

This section covers the following:

- television

- radio
- segmentation of audiences
- newspapers
- magazines
- media synergy

Television

Television should be considered as a medium capable of conveying complex messages and emotions to large audiences. In the majority of countries, ownership of television sets has resulted in the individualization of audiences: at best, a family and friends may be together when a broadcast is made. Often people will be on their own. In some societies, there may be a culture of communal viewing, but this seems to diminish as personal incomes increase.

As a result, producers and broadcasters have to make use of techniques to keep viewers watching, particularly if advertisements rather than programme content is being used. These techniques are taken on the whole from the experience of general television programming. Educators make use of advertisements, documentaries (especially personal stories and celebrity recommendations), soap operas or running serials, game shows, and so on.

All of these are costly to produce and take a high degree of planning to maintain at the necessary standard. Because television is a hungry medium, there is also a substantial demand for new material on a regular basis.

Finally, in relation to programme material, it is important to understand that the material will have to compete with commercially produced, and often international quality (of production, if not content) programmes. Television is unforgiving, and television watchers will turn off or may not even turn on the socially important but boring or amateurish.

Educators also have to prepare material that, while authoritative, does not look lavish or extravagant because it is produced with taxpayers' money.

Television viewership is regularly monitored by advertisers and by broadcasters. Ratings (or indices establishing viewership patterns and numbers) are used to determine when to place advertisements and the cost of these. In general, the cheapest time is that when smaller audiences or audiences with lower buying power are watching. These audiences can be important for education planners, who should analyse viewer patterns in more detail to discover whether, for example, women or the aged are watching.

In some cases, broadcasters may provide free time for voter or civic education messages; in other cases, this may have to be purchased directly or sponsored by companies. When sponsorship is sought, care has to be taken that the relationship between the message and the sponsor is a congenial one. Company credibility over its treatment of workers, consumers or the environment can undermine the message. Moreover, political activity or endorsements by the sponsor can also undermine the nonpartisan nature of the message and the educator.



Educators therefore need to discuss their own commitment to non-partisanship and the neutrality of the sponsor in advance.

It is not only the reputation of a company sponsor that can undermine a message. The reliance on celebrity endorsements by pop performers, professional sports stars, and so on, can be undermined at considerable cost because of indiscreet behaviour by a single individual. Such behaviour may only be a sudden affiliation with one or other political parties; or that a stand on some issue is co-opted by a party platform. Whatever the case, the impact on a nonpartisan programme can be destructive.

Amongst the most watched of all programmes are news broadcasts. Educators are extremely fortunate if they can create news or have the advantage of a large budget, free airtime, or a sponsor that enables them to place advertisements next to news broadcasts.

Before making a large investment in television production in transitional societies, educators and even donors will want to consider how local resources and infrastructure, or the lack thereof, may affect the impact of televised messages. In countries experiencing routine power failures due to inadequate energy supply, educators would be better advised to invest in radio (which can be battery operated) and print advertising

Radio

Next to television, radio provides the largest audience. In the majority of countries, and amongst poorer people in most countries, radio has a greater reach than television.

Radio has an advantage because it is considerably cheaper to produce and broadcast programmes and it is possible to replicate programmes in a variety of languages at low cost.

Of the options open to educators, radio poses some constraints. Serials, documentaries and magazine programmes similar to those on television are possible, and these often develop loyal audiences. But many radio stations have adopted programme schedules that are highly specialized and these have to be taken into consideration. The most frequently used formats are *talk radio* and *music and news*.

Talk radio makes use of a host and telephone-in audience participation format. In this format, all programming provided by educators must either be through advertisement or by the provision of guests for interview and answering of listener calls. This is a vital and educational format, but guests have to be well briefed and may be called upon to give information and make comment on a broad range of topics. Fortunately, radio is an ephemeral medium and the occasional slipup by an ill-prepared educator or election management staff member may be tolerated, but it is not advisable.

Music and news programmes are much harder to deal with. There is almost no way to break into this formula other than through the airing of advertisements, or good use of news releases.

Segmentation of Audiences

Both radio and television are becoming segmented. They may have a national or international reach through cable and satellite broadcast systems. Even broadcasters without access to satellite may have a footprint or reach that falls across national borders.

However, with specialized programming, and with changes in media ownership, it is increasingly possible to send different programmes to different audiences (typically through

regional breakaways from national programmes or vice versa) or to ensure that the programming attracts only particular audiences.

As a result of this segmentation of audiences, television and radio need to be considered within a general portfolio of media, and each channel or station needs to be assessed according to its audience profile. Getting a message broadcast on a national television or radio channel may seem a major achievement for a voter educator, but the actual impact of that message may not be as great as it would be if different strategies were adopted. This is particularly important when the cost of the educational programme is considered. National prime time (the highest viewership period) television will certainly produce a tremendous impact, but unless the coverage has been obtained cheaply (through news coverage or by supplying a guest on a highly rated programme for example) the cost can also be high.

Education can be spread through a large range of people, making them resources for their own communities. But educators also need to weigh the impact of a highly centralised strategy (television and radio programmes and advertising spots can be organized by a small professional team) against a more complex but decentralized face-to-face strategy.

Should the choice be made in favour of a centralized strategy, it would be important for educators to obtain good advice from media agencies about the best mix. There is also a need for educators to focus on ensuring good news coverage of the election itself, and they may use their advertising budget to encourage attention to their programme.

Newspapers

National newspapers fall into two categories: *dailies*, which have very tight production schedules and deadlines; and *weeklies or monthlies*, which tend to carry more in-depth articles and background to the news. Both will also carry special supplements of an educational nature or will run ongoing stories and coverage.

During election periods, newspapers often devote large amounts of space to coverage of candidates and contestants, and to the election process itself. In some cases, newspapers may have a track record of support for a particular party or faction, or they may choose to endorse a particular party or person in an election.

The advantage of using newspapers as a major part of an educational strategy is the durability of the product. Not only is a newspaper read by the purchaser, there will inevitably be adequate statistics on the number of other readers for that particular purchase. And, while most people recycle or discard newspapers daily, educational supplements and special features are often kept longer.

Indeed, because of the low cost of printing an overrun (additional copies of a newspaper or section of a newspaper) it is possible to negotiate to use a newspaper to produce and distribute the necessary educational materials for a widely dispersed team of local educators.



There are disadvantages to newspapers as well. Newspaper readership, especially of national general publications, appears to be falling even in highly literate societies. In many transitional settings, newspaper readership may be limited to more urban, educated and financially secure strata of society. Also, in societies with high levels of illiteracy, newspaper readership is associated with literacy; and, although a number of newspapers may publish special supplements for non-literate or semi-literate readers, they rely on mediators to ensure these are passed on.

Also, in transitional settings and closed societies, actual or artificial shortages of paper and ink, confiscation of newspapers, revocation of printing licenses, and even seizure of printing facilities and equipment can present real problems. It is important to assess the risk factors in such settings before proceeding with advertisements or articles in newspapers.

There is a need to consider national readership patterns before decisions are made on how national newspapers can contribute, whether through advertisement, opinion and interest pieces, interviews with journalists, press releases, or special supplements. When the intention is to make newspapers a major part of the strategy, the use of journalists who understand the demands of newsrooms is essential, as these are quite peculiar and often impenetrable and mystifying to the general educator.

It is also important for educators to concentrate on briefing reporters and editors about their plans, and continue to provide good information that will enhance the coverage they give the elections.

Personal and regular contact is essential, and can go a long way to ensuring the media report accurately about the work of election management bodies and the issues that educators consider important.

Magazines

There are a tremendous number and variety of magazines. They are produced quarterly, monthly, weekly, in regional and international editions, in syndicated titles, and for highly specialized audiences. Some magazines aspire to the quality of technical and specialized journals. As the technology of layout and production becomes more widely dispersed and more acceptable, some technical and specialized journals aspire to the accessibility of magazines. With the continued developments in technology and the increased access to the internet across the world, there has also been a significant increase in the number of newspapers and magazines published online.

Each magazine, has a different editorial policy and a specialized audience. When educators can gain access to these magazines there are many payoffs: popular readerships, longevity of access to the material, and attractive layout. On the other side, the audience may be too specialized and the article may become outdated quickly (most monthly magazines have a three-month production schedule).

Educators who can produce standard articles and have them placed in general and well-read magazines over the period of their campaign have a substantial aid in their general programme strategy. At the very least, magazines can be used to encourage voters to contact the election management body and get information. Because of the slow lead times and high costs of magazine advertising, there are few examples of these been used.

Media Synergy

Media ownership patterns in the market economy that influences almost all countries have resulted in an increasing attempt to create synergy between different media. This same synergy has often been sought by educational campaigns. So, radio programmes are supplemented by magazine-like publications; newspaper reports on television debates; and television anchors reading and commenting on the day's newspaper headlines and interviewing journalists, rather than the primary sources for news coverage.

This increasing combination of media can produce some deadening public effects in civil and political life. But when factored into an educational programme, these combinations can also produce remarkable cost savings and increase coverage and impact of a particular learning programme.

10.1.3 Community Impact Media

In Mali, there is a radio station that regularly broadcasts a musical party. What makes it different is that the party-goers are not dispersed throughout the country. They are dancing outside the studio, and can even come in to talk on the radio.

Outside Johannesburg, a studio guest can look out the window of the radio station and, with luck, catch sight of the person telephoning in to ask a question.

In Washington, DC, cable television provides the daily schedule of the mayor, and also lists civic events, only one flick of the tuning button away from a CNN broadcast from the Middle East.

In Australia, both commercial and community radio stations regularly take outside broadcast vans to shopping centres and community events, where they broadcast from the middle of a crowd, making radio more accessible to people both as listeners and participants.

High-technology communication options have become cheaper, more accessible, and more able to reach into niche markets than ever before. Educators often set their sights on national impact: but it is possible to use community impact to reach precisely those special groups, high-impact individuals and groups that lead to a successful programme.

When the merit of such media has been recognised by commercial interests, it is possible to work through agencies or directories to gain access to them. But even these agencies and directories cannot always keep up with the pace of change in the marketplace. In societies where there are attempts at centralized control of media, or where particular groups of people distrust the mainstream, it is more difficult to identify what is available.

What follows is a set of clues and places to look rather than a full listing:

- cable and community television
- community radio stations
- community newspapers
- religious or denominational newspapers



- self-published magazines ('zines)
- information kiosks
- community bulletin boards

Cable and Community Television

Cable television starts from a presumption that people will pay for a service either on a regular basis, or increasingly on a pay-per-view basis. In order to achieve that, companies must install the necessary cable. Once this is in place, it may be a condition of the licence of those using the cable that they have a certain amount of public service broadcasting, or they may choose to allow small operations, or cheaper options, to fill air time that they would otherwise not use. So, there often is spare capacity on these channels that can be used to send even static images or text into houses that subscribe.

Such access allows very cheap productions to take up odd times of the day and night. But the ready availability of television and the voracious appetite for material means that, in addition to the specialized channels, there are increasing numbers of regional stations that broadcast community (or citywide) programming in between prime time programming provided by the larger national stations.

Even in countries with a very limited number of broadcast channels using the airwaves as opposed to cable or satellite, there is an increasing tendency to establish regional breakaway magazine programmes that might broadcast in a different language for a certain period of the day.

Such programmes might not appear to have the same reach as a national prime time advertisement, but they are likely to be cheaper and therefore possible to air for longer periods. It is also likely that it is possible to prepare a much more focussed message because the likely viewers are better known.

Community Radio

Small radio stations are always looking for programming material and are willing and able to place advertising spots at low cost. What is more, they have loyal although small audiences with well-known characteristics. In some countries, such stations may be trusted more and may be able to provide more detailed political information and debate.

These factors should be considered when preparing material. The correct language and dialect should be used when possible, the issues should be those of the listeners, and the style should match that expected. Material that is well prepared according to the appropriate specifications is likely to be used as is.

Community radio stations may broadcast on a specific frequency throughout a country, so that a listener who is travelling can leapfrog from one station to another without touching the dial. When this is possible, national advertising can enable people to keep posted on the elections or some other campaign while they are moving around, an ideal situation for educators and administrators.

Other stations may be willing to give up time during an election, an ideal situation for distance education programmes.

An education programme can give prominence to a local spokesperson, perhaps someone who has undergone training or has been appointed as an information officer. Community stations may be able to interview such people at short notice and without major cost.

There are some constraints. Educators should not rely solely on community stations. Such stations can have very small audiences. They are also often disorganized: placing an advertisement is no guarantee that it will air or that there will be a record of its airing. Programmes are most successful if they make personal contact with the local people.

Community Newspapers

Community newspapers can be large-circulation city papers for which people pay. Access to these is similar to that of those newspapers described in National Impact Media. They are, however, more likely to be free papers supported by local advertising.

These newspapers can be distributed free to households or can be left at community sites such as libraries and shops for people to collect. In the first case, the distribution figure can be more reliable, as is the ability to determine the geographic spread of the information. In the second case, some observation is needed to determine whether the paper does reach its intended audience.

These papers provide important community services: local news, commemoration of civic events, advertising of local events and services, and often a vigorous correspondence page where people fight out local politics. They may not be well laid out or professionally produced - often they are a labour of love and highly idiosyncratic. But they are read, if only for the classified advertisements, and normally for much more than that. And their editors know what is happening in their local communities.

So, they are an ideal means for promoting events, obtaining information, or establishing what might form part of a civic education programme or political campaign. Election educators can use papers for communicating local information such as where to vote, where to register, and so on. Material that is prepared in discussion with editors and is done in a suitable format is more likely to be used as is.

Many community newspapers do not consider themselves part of the free distribution family. They have a mission and come with backing from a community-based organisation or set of associations with a political goal. Such newspapers can have a hard core of readers, and the more successful have broken into the broader community.

Educators should analyse readerships and distribution patterns carefully to prevent them from romanticizing their reach and influence.

Religious or Denominational Newspapers

Many religious organisations have newspapers. These may have substantial readerships across an entire country. Others may have smaller, more specialized readerships.



All religious organisations are not favourably disposed to political activity or to democracy promotion. And some of their publications zealously guard access to their readers. It is however possible to engage the editors and governors of such publications in order to discover whether there are particular messages that might be placed in their publication, and how best to do so.

Some editors may draw a distinction between partisan information and nonpartisan voter education. Or they may wish to have the material written by their own writers: education programmes will merely provide background information and model articles.

It is possible to direct the editors toward personalities involved in the campaign who are significant members of their religious faith or community. And it may be possible to encourage the leaders of these religious faiths and communities to join coalitions in civil society supporting the programme.

Self-Published Magazines ('Zines')

The spread of low-cost printing, reproduction and photocopying facilities, together with access to computers and other home design tools, has resulted in a spread of specialized, self-published magazines ('zines'). Such 'zines (to use a label applied by many of their producers which differentiates them from more formal journals and popular magazines), are designed and distributed to extremely specific niche markets - normally those associated with youth culture, music, and art.

The spread of cheap compact disc (CD) technology has resulted in an increase in the use of the CD to supplement the 'zine, and the Internet also has a number of such journals.

'Zines suffer from, and glory in, the copycat nature of their emergence. They come and go, often have a radical approach to society, if not to their particular group, and display an irreverence and street wisdom that more-restrained and mainline journals often attempt to appropriate.

As a result of their immediacy, such 'zines are ideal for communicating a particular point of view or for advertising specific events that take place within a short time of the appearance of the publication. Because of the targeted readership, they offer an opportunity to reach specific audiences.

Information Kiosks

Many countries have tourist bureaus that provide general information about themselves. Some have citizen information desks that offer access to municipal and state information. In countries with advanced computer networks, these staffed kiosks have been replaced by varying levels of interactive touch screen computers offering access to a range of online information.

In South Africa, these computer kiosks were developed together with support from UNESCO to provide voter information from the election management body and information about all contestants prepared by the contestants.. This information is housed in a national museum, and has been placed in a range of stand-alone computer terminals.

In the United Kingdom, there is a national network system that provides travel and community information. Australia is increasingly using such kiosks to carry information about government services, as are some states in the United States of America.

The availability of these kiosks may increase over time and once in place, access to information is easy to achieve.

Even when computerization is not available, countries with public information kiosks have a system for distributing information and a range of staff who could receive training especially in the provision of election information.

Community Bulletin Boards

Growth in commercial activity and the number and prevalence of shopping malls in place of town squares has meant that community gathering places must now be sought in a range of places. At these gathering places, many community bulletin boards have been placed which can advertise jobs and act as exchange systems for bartering of goods and services.

As a result, there is a section of the population that will consult these and other similar notice boards in government offices, shopping centres, and so on.

While it may be beyond the capacity of a centralized education programme to use such diversified systems of communication, careful preparation of material suitable for display and motivation of local volunteers can result in the spread of information quite rapidly across these community boards.

A number of other communication methods are discussed further in Alternative Methods of Communicating Voter Education.

10.1.4 Use of Radio Advertising

In the Zimbabwean elections of 2005, various international donors distributed solar powered and wind-up radios through domestic organisations, together with radio station information cards. These radio stations were broadcasting into Zimbabwe from other countries, carrying news and educational information, as well as giving voice to opposition parties which could not access the state-owned broadcaster.

After some years of limited take up, widespread availability of digital satellite radio receivers have been given a boost by a consumer market in the United States of America, and programming is starting to emerge. Distributors of satellite television have also been making available radio stations. Broad band Internet access also enables streaming of live and recorded radio material on personal computers.

This ability to make use of relatively cheaply prepared and broadcast audio material, using technology which is highly mobile and unobtrusive has meant that documentary and reality radio, news and talk are all available to the educator under increasingly flexible conditions, even where there is control of state broadcasters or commercially owned and inflexible formats such as *news and music*.

Educators may consider the following opportunities:



Talk radio

Talk radio formats have a bad name in certain societies, where they have become colonized by highly reactionary and eccentric presenters and niche audiences. In other countries, talk radio has provided a service which includes community services, public education and mobilization, and access to political leaders by ordinary citizens with access to a telephone. Educators can assist such stations, whether they are the larger more commercial stations or smaller community stations, by providing them with studio guests, suggesting topics for public debate, and offering briefings for presenters and producers.

Magazine shows

There is some overlap between the talk format and the magazine format stations, but the latter tend to rely on more pre-packaged materials and interviews, short documentaries, and occasionally more extensive public education or public interest shows. Educators can either work with such stations to develop programmes – such as a series introducing the constitution or bill of rights - or to showcase particular issues or political processes; or may develop their own programmes in house and distribute these to the various stations through a web portal or by digital disk.

It is important that such production is based on pre-production conversations with the stations to ensure that they are of the right broadcast quality, of the appropriate format and timing, and that space will be made in the broadcast schedule.

News

Media communications and the development of events and media opportunities to promote educational objectives, or to obtain support for such objectives, require planning and media awareness. This is covered in a separate file [National Impact Media](#).

Advertising

For further information on the use of advertising, including radio, see: [Commercial Advertising](#).

10.1.5 Alternative Methods of Communicating Voter Education

Voter educators often turn to the most obvious forms of communication: radio, television, newspapers, and printed materials. But even in countries where these are readily available, there are other, sometimes more potent opportunities for mass communication.

Educators should consider media that directly reach people, for the following reasons:

- Voter education demands fast, reliable, legitimate, and cheap methods.
- Voter education requires that people hear messages in their own language and idiom.
- Voter educators often only have one shot to achieve their goal.

Some of the means described here have been tested in other public information campaigns but have received more limited use in voter education. Others are means that require further testing. But as they are considerably cheaper and more flexible than others, they are worth using even as a backdrop and complement to more formal public information campaigns.

This section deals with the following communications options:

- outdoor advertising space
- graffiti
- recorded tape
- blackboards

Outdoor Advertising Space

There is a range of outdoor spaces available for advertising and for communicating short, memorable messages. Large billboards adjacent to national freeways or train lines are already used by commercial advertising, and they are likely to fill up with political party advertising during election campaigns. There are also likely to be advertising spaces, some of them enclosed in glass and even lit at night, along shopping and pedestrian streets and at bus and tram stops and metro stations.

But there are other smaller and more diverse places, limited only by the imagination. In India, the national highways are fringed by farms whose barns and houses have been appropriated for commercial advertising. Sports stadiums, the sides of buses and trains, and just about anywhere else where people will gather or the television camera will focus can be used.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous use of outdoor space is the production of stickers for vehicles and walls. More information can be found at [Stickers](#). When these spaces have been identified for commercial use, the best form of access is through an advertising agency, and costs will depend on the prominence of the space.

Graffiti

During election campaigns, political parties make use of billboards and painted signs. With the popularity of graffiti amongst young people, it is possible to make use of the design idiom and the guerrilla tactics of the graffiti writers to spread simple motivational messages quite widely at low cost. In a number of cities in South Africa, local authorities have established graffiti walls and actively encourage artists to paint social messages on these walls. The common use of graffiti during the political uprisings in North Africa (especially in Egypt where the walls and bridges around the Tahrir Square bear political messages to the state and the faces of the martyrs of the revolution) has brought to the fore the importance of this method of alternative communication.

What are some of the characteristics of graffiti?

Messages Appear on Walls Along Commuter Routes.

These are often in relatively inaccessible places where nevertheless large numbers of people can see them. Anyone looking for sites would need to travel the commuter routes, especially



those taken by young and poor people. In addition, the sites chosen by graffiti artists also use surprise or bravado to enhance the message: people will wonder: "How could that have been written there?"

Messages are Ephemeral.

Graffiti artists expect that the signs will not last or will be altered in some way. However, city dwellers will know that many of these signs do last. What enhances their attractiveness is the ability to add messages to the original core message over time.

The same rules apply to any outdoor campaign: if it is left unaltered long enough it will become part of the background and lose its impact.

The Graffiti Artist Uses Street Design.

The messages are raw, the colours bold, the language that of their peers, and the symbols meaningful to the in-group.

Graffiti can be used in two ways: as a gimmick that decorates a wall but actually appeals only to those who put it there, or as a real message aimed at a particular market. To achieve the second, voter educators contact graffiti artists themselves and consider using them to do the productions. In this case, there is the added benefit of establishing another group of people with voter education information.

The caveat, which applies to all of these alternative methods, is that the voter educator will have to negotiate a way to have the messages appear while at the same time not stepping outside the regulatory and legal frameworks. For example, there may be restrictions on "defacing" public property that may involve steep fines if violated. In some societies, this may be more difficult than in others.

Recorded Tape

Freedom of the press once meant that everyone was free to own a printing press. But in many societies involved in freedom struggles, other tools are more important. Amongst these are video cassette recorders (VCRs), tape recorders and fax machines.

Video and audio tapes can be produced relatively cheaply. In the case of audio tape, even quality studio production is inexpensive; and reproduction of tapes is limited to the cost of the tape cassette itself. In the case of video, professional production is more costly, but reproduction is cheap.

Once reproduced, recorded tape can be used in a variety of settings. Audio tapes have been made available to middle class commuters, those taking communal taxis, those congregating outside clinics, indeed anywhere people have to sit still and are willing to be entertained for ten to twenty minutes.

Audio tape can also be used as a teaching tool for an unskilled trainer,; together with a wind-up tape recorder messages can be carried beyond the electricity grid.

Video can also be used as a teaching tool, though the technical requirements for this is greater. In a number of contexts, roving teams have been able to carry the necessary equipment and set up camp at rural localities and informal settlements to offer a show to the local voters. But this requires substantial logistical support and capital investment.

Getting the video through to schools, community halls, companies with training rooms, and even into churches and private homes provides a faster and cheaper distribution network. Video can require in-person narrators to talk through the concepts over visuals. This means that it is a powerful adjunct to attitude change where Face To Face Interaction is required.

There have been some experiments using video face to face, the way audio is used on commuter buses. This raises the question of what is shown or what is heard. So far and there is only limited data available, it appears that what works best is the creation of a typical TV or radio programme, similar to the in-flight entertainment packages offered on international airlines. A little bit of news, a snatch of music and entertainment, a bit of local gossip can be interspersed with voter education messages. People on buses cannot concentrate for long periods of time and there is a lot of disturbance, unlike a more controlled setting at a theatre or workshop.

While video and audio are the most widely used recording methods, there has been some indication that records or compact discs (CDs) might also have their place. Both are cheap to reproduce if there is access to the expensive production process, and, once again, voters and other institutions have the equipment to broadcast the messages. See Digital and Recorded Materials for further information.

Blackboards and Bulletin Boards

Outside the barrios in Mozambique during the 1980s stood painted blackboards. The paint is cheap and it can go on any smooth wall. Local news and announcements were written on these boards in chalk, also cheap.

A similar mechanism for communication was used in the Philippines by the church. Here it was combined with newsboys, children who could read and could take the messages off the boards and into the barrios directly.

During elections, many institutions can provide such temporary news and bulletin boards. All that is required is a system for preparing the messages and getting them written up on a regular basis.

Imagination Applied To Distribution

The assumption behind all these alternative methods is that voter educators must be creative in the production, display, and distribution of messages. Where these can be popularized and decentralized, other dynamics come into play. Suddenly, it is possible for one taxi driver to become excited about a tape and pass it on to his peers. A family with a record of hospitality has a tool that goes into the VCR whenever there are guests. A local church becomes a voter education agent. The local school starts using the board outside, where parents can see it, and want to see it because it has information also about the progress of their children. A gang of youngsters discovers that they can also vote.



There are drawbacks. To do this well, voter educators have to be linked to community networks and they have to plan with people who might not be used to doing this in the way an advertising agency or radio executive might be. But the rewards are considerable, and the ownership of the election and of the voter education enterprise is immediately expanded as these alternative media are used.

10.2 Printed Materials

Voter education programmes rely heavily on printed materials. Printing provides a fast and cheap way of preparing large volumes of material. Most countries have printing facilities and various qualities of paper available, although some transitional settings may find both paper and ink to be in short supply.

This section of the topic area provides information on different ways in which printed material can be prepared and used. It also provides basic information on an aspect of materials production that is ignored too frequently by those who produce it, especially those in civil society, i.e. legal, copyright, and identification issues.

There are legal, copyright, and identification issues that will ensure that materials can be reproduced, stored, researched, and evaluated better. Many of the sample materials available cannot be traced to a particular election and political moment. Because of this, there are three sections dealing with this topic, which can be skipped by those who want to look at specific educational issues covered in the further sections.

Reproduction, storage, research, evaluation, and law are discussed in the following:

- [Legal Considerations](#)
- [How Copyright Affects Voter Education Programmes](#)
- [Indexing and Dating](#)

Environmental issues – which are frequently overlooked when publishing – are discussed in

- [Environmental considerations of Voter Education](#)

Publication is discussed in the following:

- [Traditional Print Items](#)
- [Specialty Print Items](#)

10.2.1 Legal Considerations

There are laws, bylaws, and local ordinances affecting printing and publication.

When this is handled by a publisher who has been in the field and knows what laws apply, the educator's job is made easier. But publishers often do not deal with material conveying political messages. And they may not have a good understanding of local ordinances in places where they do not usually distribute. In transitional settings, legislation may be in flux with national laws and local ordinances sometimes at odds.

It is best to have at least a working knowledge of the current laws and how these may affect printing and distribution. There is nothing more disheartening, costly and time wasting than having to reprint a batch of materials because something was left off, placed incorrectly or worded improperly. It is bad enough if it is an error of substance, most frustrating if it turns out to be merely a small legal requirement making no difference to the substance of the publication.

Laws related to printed materials can affect such concerns as identifying information, content, technical requirements, distribution methods and commercial restrictions.

Content Restrictions

It is possible for an election or a civic education programme to be conducted in a country that has censorship laws. These may be widespread or may come and go during the election process as governments invoke or revoke national and local states of emergency or martial law.

There may be laws that apply during election periods only. For example, newspaper opinion pieces and headlines (and by extension other publications of a newspaper type) may have to have an identifiable author whose name and street address are published during declared election times in order to enforce accountability.

There will inevitably be general laws governing public expression. Some countries have a very free regime for publishing; others have restrictions regarding the use of the national flag, symbols, pictures of political leaders, language and slogan restrictions, and so on.

Technical Restrictions

A second set of restrictions are those revolving around technical issues. Newspapers may be defined in a certain way and require registration, the same may apply to publications looking like comics, journals, magazines or pamphlets. The regulations can include requirements on what information is given on the ownership of the publication, its staff, its place of business, the printing works from which it originates, and so on. There might also be a legal requirement to lodge copies with one or more copyright repositories or libraries before or after publication.

In the case of ephemeral articles such as posters, fliers, and small handouts, there may be requirements that details about the distributor and publisher and possibly the printer, as well as information on the print run be included on the item.

There are good reasons why much of this information should be on a publication in any event (see [How Copyright Affects Voter Education Programmes](#)) and there is always the possibility that the material may have to be recalled or may be confiscated if it does not comply with local laws.

Distribution Restrictions and Opportunities

Often local municipalities have strict laws governing the display of posters, handing out of materials at public places, and leaving materials for the public to pick up. These laws are normally a part of a general environmental control and can make compliance easy.

There may be more general laws governing the distribution of materials in countries that are less open. It is also important to take these into account as they may affect not only the producer of the material but the user as well.



Some countries have made allowance for easy and cost-effective distribution of printed material through the post. There are ways of identifying and packaging newspapers, special mail, low-priority communications, and so on, which then ensures that they obtain cheaper distribution rates. There is a need for educators working on limited budgets to explore such opportunities, which are not always widely publicized.

Commercial Restrictions

There is invariably commercial protection of copyrights, images, and logos, which small printers and publishers often use to create attractive materials. It is not possible to use photographs or images without checking to see that they are available in the public domain. [1]

The restrictions mentioned above come about for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the motivation is entirely constructive. But even environmental bylaws have been used by some regimes to restrict the free flow of information. While some election management bodies may have *carte blanche* in countries that otherwise restrict information, others may have to argue strongly to get their information exempt from restrictions that limit their ability to convey the necessary messages.

These same bodies should be vigilant not only for themselves but also for the non-statutory organisations and associations that are providing electoral support. They may also want, if they intend to develop a strategy of including civil society organisations in the educational programme, to provide guidance for smaller organisations that may have difficulty navigating their way through the shoals of the law.

Notes:

[1] For images which can be used and a discussion of public domain materials, see *Where There Is No Artist*.

10.2.2 How Copyright Affects Voter Education Programmes

Copyright discussions are important in ensuring that people get recognised for their work and that there is a well organized and displayed ownership, partly for recognition and partly to ensure accountability. While much of the information in this section is fairly technical, it is worth remembering the values that underpin voter education and the implications of these as far as copyright issues are concerned. If one of the major aims of electoral and civic education is to build democracy through the development of civic values and citizen responsibility, it seems reasonable to expect that organisations and government agencies involved in this work should promote open and honest dealings with each other's materials by paying due respect to copyright.

The section covers the following:

- what is copyright?
- how do copyright matters affect voter education?
- what are the legal frameworks for copyright?
- how is permission obtained to use copyrighted material?

What is Copyright?

Freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of a democracy. This fundamental human right is generally understood to grant freedom of speech to citizens and, in particular, to the

media. It should also be remembered that it grants creative freedom to writers, musicians, painters, and the like: people who pursue the original expression of ideas through research or art.

Another basic human right is the right to own property, where property is understood not to be limited to land. People are not permitted to rob others of something they own. This can apply as much to a person's original expression of certain ideas as it does to physical property. The product of someone's own intellectual efforts is called intellectual property: it belongs to that person in the same way that physical property does.

Copyright, though traditionally not considered one of the fundamental human rights, can be seen as an extension of the two basic rights mentioned previously. Copyright laws prevent anyone from copying or appropriating the intellectual property of another person. Copyright laws provide protection for anyone who does creative work, on condition that their work fulfils two basic requirements. First, it must be presented in material (or physical) form: in writing, in a sound recording, in a painting or sculpture. There is no copyright on ideas, but only on the material expression of ideas. Second, a work is eligible for copyright only if it is original. This does not mean that it has to be highly innovative and present ideas that have never been mentioned before. It simply means that the work has not been copied, but is the product of its author's own efforts.

How Do Copyright Matters Affect Voter Education?

Voter education materials are produced for a very specific purpose and often under fairly pressurised conditions. There are two types of agencies that generally get involved in producing these materials:

- nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), which are committed to promoting democracy and political literacy amongst citizens
- statutory institutions such as election management bodies or other commissions established for the purpose of civic education, which produce such materials if the implementation of voter education campaigns is part of their official mandate

In both instances, the development of voter education materials is motivated by a desire to see elections succeed. Because such large numbers of people require information and insight into electoral processes at the time of an election, voter education agencies are always interested in the distribution of materials on the widest possible scale. Combining these imperatives with the fact that voter education has to happen under enormous time and financial constraints, it is tempting to use ready-made resources rather than to design new materials from scratch each time.

NGOs, particularly those that define themselves as public-interest organisations, are inclined to be remarkably unpossessive about materials that they produce. Their main concern is to see that the materials are used, and if this means that users end up photocopying the materials in large quantities, this is often a cause for delight rather than dismay. In certain instances, copying is even actively encouraged, as in this caption from the front page of a civic education trainer's



manual: "This material may be freely copied by trainers for use in workshops, with acknowledgement of source."

While the good intentions behind this kind of statement are easy to understand, there are drawbacks to dealing with original materials in this way.

Not only are NGOs often willing to allow their materials to be photocopied liberally in the interests of wider dissemination of information, but they are also inclined to be somewhat careless about even identifying materials as theirs. Many voter education materials are ephemeral in nature: pamphlets, posters, broadsheets, and comic strips. Perhaps because they are produced at great speed or because they pass through many hands during the production process, such materials are often distributed without the name and contact details of the organisation from whence they originated, let alone the names of contributing authors and illustrators.

It is important to remember that all such original work, even in the area of voter education, is protected by copyright law. And this, after all, is not a bad thing. Consider a scenario where an NGO in a country preparing for elections develops an information booklet for voters. The booklet is reproduced in-house in fairly large numbers (through a simple photocopying and stapling process) for distribution in the area of the country where the NGO is based. Close to the time of the elections, the election management body of that country, having seen a copy of the booklet, decides to reproduce it for distribution nationwide. The name of the NGO that produced the booklet does not appear anywhere, and the election management body assumes that the organisation, in the interest of successful elections, would support mass distribution of the booklet anyway. Funds are duly voted to this project and the booklet is printed for distribution with the logo and contact details of the election management body on the front page.

People respectful of copyright will react to this scenario with some alarm. It is but one example of how voter education material produced by one agency can be appropriated by another. Situations also arise where the mass media and newspapers in particular reproduce voter education materials assumed to be in the public domain. And of course, NGOs have been known to copy each other's work too without giving credit where it is due.

Not only is this an internal problem in countries running elections, but it has become increasingly easy for voter education agencies to gain access to materials from beyond their borders. A number of international agencies facilitate voter education across the globe. When copying materials from foreign sources, the same rules should apply.

In the final analysis, it is simply not worth being coy about copyright matters. It does not take much to acknowledge the original work of the writers and illustrators who create voter education materials, and to respect the procedures that copyright laws impose. It should not be forgotten that the development of materials requires fairly considerable financial input. In the case of NGOs, this money often is received from donor agencies. If the materials are then reproduced by others without any acknowledgement of the time, skill, and money invested in the process of origination, this does an injustice to all involved.

In instances where it is possible, some sort of financial agreement should be reached to allow for the copying of materials. In a country like the United States, the right to financial reward for one's intellectual efforts forms the basis of copyright law. Throughout the world, the NGO sector is constantly struggling with financial problems. Buying the right to reproduce voter education materials can make a small contribution toward the sustainability of the NGOs that developed them.

When it is not possible to pay for permission to reproduce voter education materials, or in cases where voter education agencies decide to waive such costs, it is important (at the very least) to apply for permission through the proper channels and formally to acknowledge the source of such materials. The creative skills of people working in NGOs are often not sufficiently appreciated, and they can be as self-effacing as their organisations are in their commitment to the interests of society at large. Nevertheless, NGOs are well known for their capacity to be responsive to community needs, to experiment with innovative methodologies and to be a step ahead of bigger, less-flexible educational institutions, particularly in the state, which by their very nature cannot move as fast.

NGOs and their staff deserve better recognition of their work in the area of voter education, and respecting their copyright is a good place to start.

What are the Legal Frameworks for Copyright?

There are two international copyright conventions, and most countries in the world are signatories to either one or both of these. The Berne Convention stipulates that a work does not need to be formally registered in order to enjoy copyright protection. Copyright is understood to be inherent and automatic, whether a formal notice of copyright appears in a work or not. The Berne Convention also lays down the principle that copyright on a particular work should be respected throughout the life of the authors and for a fixed number of years after their death (in most countries the cut-off point is fifty years). When copyright on a work expires, it falls into the public domain.

The United Copyright Convention (UCC) does not specify the duration of copyright. Its most important provision is that in countries where authors are required to register their work for copyright purposes (although the UCC does not demand this), such formalities can be complied with by simply placing a copyright notice in the work, together with the name of the copyright holder and the date of first publication. The registration procedure is as straightforward as that: it does not involve making formal application to official bodies, filling in lengthy forms, or standing in interminable queues. Authors of published works (as opposed to unique works of art) may be required to deposit a copy (or copies) of their work with an official body, such as their country's state library.

These international conventions do not preclude the need for signatory countries to have copyright legislation of their own. Rather, the conventions provide guidelines for the drafting and application of such laws. Importantly, under the international conventions, countries undertake to provide the same copyright protection to writers and artists from outside their borders as they offer to those within.

Like any legislation, copyright laws can be fairly complex, and it is not possible to cover every aspect of copyright here. It is also difficult to make generalizations that apply in every country of the world. Broadly speaking, however, copyright is owned by the author of a work, that is, the creator of a material expression of an idea. This person may or may not be the person who had the idea originally. When the author is employed (for example in an NGO) and the work is



created as part of that job, then copyright belongs to the employer. When a work is produced in the employ and under the direction of the state, then the state owns copyright.

In the case of commissioned work, copyright rests with the author, unless it is formally signed over. If an organisation develops a voter education manual, for example, and commissions a set of illustrations to form part of the manual, then copyright on the illustrations belongs to the artist, unless this is formally ceded to the organisation. Much depends on the nature of the contract that is signed for commissioned work. A contract with an illustrator could specify, for instance, that the organisation commissioning the work has the right to reuse the illustrations a certain number of times or for certain purposes.

Questions of copyright ownership become more complex in the case of collective works. Often in NGOs, voter education materials are the combined work of several authors. If the contributions of the various authors are indistinguishable from one another, then the authors own copyright jointly. Where the authors are in the employ of the organisation, then in most cases the organisation holds copyright. When a work is composed of separate, identifiable contributions by different authors (for example different chapters of a book), then the authors own copyright in their individual contributions, while the editor owns copyright on the compilation as a whole (known as compilation rights).

Finally, copyright can actually change owners, just as is the case with physical property. However, it cannot simply be given away. In order to change hands, copyright must be formally assigned. In such cases, authors or illustrators come to a formal agreement with publishers, commissioning agencies, or any other parties to assign all copyright in a particular work to them. An assignment of copyright must also guarantee that copyright in a work has not been granted to any other party.

How is Permission obtained to use Copyright Material?

Though copyright is clearly intended to protect the interests of people who produce original work, copyright laws are mindful of the interests of broader society too. For example, copyright legislation generally permits writers to quote from other works, provided the source is acknowledged and the quotation is not excessively long. In educational institutions, photocopying is permitted, with certain limitations, for the individual use of students. In such cases where limited copying is allowed, the exact limits are difficult to define.

Copyright laws require that people apply the principle of "fair use" or "fair dealing" to determine whether something can be copied without obtaining formal permission from the author. It is almost impossible to quantify what this means, and the principle can be qualitative too. In the case of material that is sold on the commercial market, an obvious consideration is that copying should not jeopardise sales.

Out of respect for the creators of original work, and bearing in mind that sufficient respect often is not paid to the work of NGOs, it is recommended that formal permission be obtained to copy any work if the copying is not being done exclusively for personal use. Permission should be applied for in writing, and should clearly specify the intended use of the copyrighted material.

With works published by recognised publishing houses, it is often the case that authors hold copyright while the publishers hold quotation rights. Again, in such cases, the nature of the contract between the publisher and the author is all important. Contracts can specify such things as territorial rights (the territorial extent of copyright), translation rights, and a range of

other restrictions. Generally, this is all linked to the financial interests of the author and the publisher. For this reason, permission to copy is often granted at a price.

In the area of voter education, it is unusual for people to be motivated by the desire to make a profit, although organisations involved in voter education obviously have to cover their costs. If one organisation applies to another for permission to copy voter education material and clearly explains the context in which this will be used, it is reasonable to expect that such permission will be granted for free or at a very low cost. Having obtained permission to copy materials, it is important to be meticulous about acknowledging the source. As a courtesy, it is also recommended that a copy of the new materials be sent to the organisation that granted permission for their work to be copied.

If an organisation is approached for permission to copy voter education materials that they have produced, then as much information as possible should be obtained about the intended use: target audience, proposed print run, area of distribution, and anticipated price (if the material will be offered for sale). Such details will facilitate the decision about whether it is necessary or fair to charge a fee. As far as fees are concerned, there are no hard-and-fast rules and requests generally have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In granting permission, a letter should be written stating any particular terms and conditions that may apply. A copy of the new materials can also be requested.

Finally, the question arises about what should be done if copyright is violated. While the offended party understandably feels outraged when this occurs, unfortunately there is not much to be gained by taking copyright cases to court. In fact, such cases seldom reach the courts, unless there is very big money involved. If an organisation discovers that its voter education materials have been copied without permission, a formal apology could be demanded and, if necessary, a fee imposed retrospectively.

10.2.3 Indexing and Dating

Researchers and librarians will become the custodians of the materials being produced for educators and citizens. These educators and citizens require information about the provenance of a publication.

But often, this is not available, because materials used for educational purposes in this enterprise are ephemeral or grey materials. In addition, little thought is given to the durability of the materials, so packages are prepared in which a manual might have all the suggested information that follows, but its component parts may not.

The following basic information should be provided on all printed material:

- *Name and Address of the Producer or Publisher:* While some material (particularly formal books) may be handed over to registered publishers, the trend is for election management bodies and voter education organisations to self-publish using simple printing and binding techniques combined with specialised and limited printing runs. A number of these publishers are organisations established themselves for specialised and



limited purposes, so good information about them is essential, including an address, and when they are consortia or coalitions, the component members.

This needs to be done for two reasons. First, users must be able to evaluate the material according to a range of criteria (especially if the material is produced during an election when bias is obviously an issue), one of which is the credibility of the publishing organisation. Second, those collecting or assessing the material activities that ensure ongoing use of the experience contained in the material or through its use need the information in order to catalogue and to obtain further copies or further information.

- *Name of Authors and Collaborators on the Project:* Again, this information is necessary for provenance and cataloguing reasons. However, there is a third reason. Those involved in education for democracy have often done this anonymously and have built up considerable expertise and practical experience. When this is not recognised, through false modesty, or notions of collective responsibility and democratic equality, those who have done the primary work are often overlooked in favour of those who specialise in collecting materials and editing them. Neither the practitioners nor the organisations they represent receive the necessary recognition. Much of the material presently in use around the world has entered the public domain. Its origins are obscure; but it would be good to recognise those who have been innovators and leaders in this rapidly professionalising field.
- *Publication Date:* A surprising number of printed materials do not carry a date. At the very least, the year of publication should be used. This provides an indication of the context within which the material has been produced, and it also ensures that any researcher or evaluator is able to track the development of ideas and methods over time.

In election periods, dates may need to be more specific because of information changes. One edition of a pamphlet may be more up to date and authoritative than another; newspaper supplements may have detail that is only current on the day of production. But printed materials hang around, most notably in reception areas of offices but surprisingly also on public shelves and free distribution stands. Inaccurate material cannot be discarded if it is not dated.

In addition to the year, ephemeral material may require the month and even the day of publication.

Specialised publications such as lists of voting stations, amendments to regulations, and frequently asked questions for educators, can even have a time of printing on them to ensure that the most current version is always in use.

- *Indexing and Cataloguing Keywords:* Because the field of civic and voter education is a specialised one making use of materials from a variety of different disciplines, people cataloguing the materials find it difficult to do so. While it is not essential to provide keywords, it can be helpful for those who have produced the material to suggest these or, if they are publishing a large number of works, to establish a key word list for their own use.
- *Copyright Information:* In order to allow for the use of materials published for educational purposes, direction should be given to users about ways in which the material can be reproduced or additional copies obtained. For more information on this, see [How Copyright Affects Voter Education Programmes](#).
- *Package Information:* Most educational materials are published as packages or as sets. Sometimes the material will come with a set of handouts or will be complemented by pamphlets and posters. In some cases, the material may be part of a series.

Because materials get separated from one another, a decision should be made as to how to ensure that there is a full record of the set of materials. It may not be possible to put full information on small pamphlets or artefacts. But these should have some identifying mark or logo and the primary document (often a manual or package cover) should have full and explicit details of the full set of materials. If possible, the primary document should mention not only titles but give some descriptive information particularly about posters and other art work.

- *Statement of Purpose:* Educational materials are produced for a reason. When they are taken out of that particular context, they become dysfunctional. But if they are attractive and available, educators from other contexts may want to use them and adapt them. Poorly trained and resourced educators may even want merely to adopt them.

In addition, researchers attempting to understand how the materials were prepared and used so that lessons can be drawn from their use may be made more generally available will also want information that often is not given.

Publishers should convey, in a preface, forward, introductory statement, or boxed highlight, a brief sense of the context within which the materials were produced and the purpose for which they were produced. This is especially important in electoral education because there are such divergences between various elections. Voter education material suitable for a founding election in which the electorate have never before voted will be very different from those prepared for a highly literate and election habituated community where elections are compulsory.

10.2.4 Environmental Considerations of Voter Education

Educators are no different from the majority of people in assuming that their work has no environmental impact. However, mass campaigns involving large scale productions of printed materials, distribution along road or air networks, on the spot distribution of ephemeral materials including pamphlets, newspapers, plastic carrier bags and other materials all have their environmental consequences.

These impacts can be mitigated through a more conscious consideration at the planning stages.

Production methods which take account of water and waste management; acquisition and replacement of raw materials; and frugal consideration of the size and number of the publications required can all reduce impact.

In a number of cases, those involved in production will want to consider the decentralisation of printing in order to reduce distribution impacts. This has been made much more feasible by the Internet, which enables print ready proofs to be distributed electronically to the point of use.

Of course, good forward planning can allow even more traditional means of distribution such as postal services. During pre-election campaigns, last minute production of materials inevitably results in use of the most wasteful means of distribution – such as large scale air or road courier services - adding costs and driving up environmental impacts.



At the point of contact between educators and the public, more care is likely to be taken to ensure that good citizenship is practiced in relation to litter, noise control and, and crowd management at mass events or interactions with the local authorities and with neighbours.

10.2.5 Traditional Print Items

This file takes a closer look at some traditional print materials that have been used in voter and civic education programmes. These include:

- "Books and Booklets":
- "Leaflets, Brochures, and Fliers":

The educational value of these materials and a variety of substantive, design, production, distribution, and cost and time considerations are discussed. The manner in which these items fit into the broader programme and complement other products and activities is also considered.

There are a variety of other printed items, including posters and banners, bookmarks, coasters, stickers, clothing, product packaging, and calendars that are discussed separately in Specialty Print Items.

This section discusses two separate matters:

- books as an educational medium
- issues that must be considered during the publishing process

This will be of use particularly to educators setting up programmes for the first time.

Educational Advantages of Using Books

The printing and distribution of books in people's home language changed the world. They remain the most powerful medium of communicating complex messages and have the advantage of being relatively easy to produce in quantity, low in unit cost, simple to store, and totally not reliant on electricity, telephone lines or computer terminals once they have been printed. Unlike computers, they are not subject to the dangers of magnetic interference or virus corruption.

Even in situations of illiteracy, it requires only a single literate person willing to read aloud to convey the contained message, and that person requires only the skill of reading rather than mastery of the content of the book.

Surprisingly, there are few simple books containing information about elections and democracy available in many countries. Publishers of religious texts inevitably rely not only on market forces to determine their production and distribution but go out of their way to place such books in the hands of people who they believe will benefit from their ownership. In South Africa, the government made a similar attempt, using low-cost printing methods and the national postal network, to place copies of their new constitution in 7 million hands. In Mexico, the election management body produced a set of books on various aspects of democracy.

Disadvantages of Books

There are disadvantages to the use of books for individual or group education:

- The extended period that it takes to publish a book raises the possibility that the information will become outdated.
- Publication of a book where the intended audience is small makes the unit cost high and possibly unaffordable.
- Publication in book form has become somewhat mystified.

With radio, television, magazines and newspapers being the preferred means for popular communication, books have come to be associated with expert audiences or with particular niche markets. While there is a plethora of popular novels and self-help books being published, there is surprisingly little civic education material being published in book form at the same level. What is there seems directed at formal schooling at secondary or tertiary level in the form of texts which will be interpreted by a teacher or lecturer.

Booklets

Linked to the book, and perhaps more used by educators, is the booklet. A booklet can be written more rapidly, printed in larger quantities, and because it normally has a limited number of pages, it is less likely to receive the unnecessary deification that a book might receive. Yet booklets of this nature can be very influential and can serve a large number of readers per unit.

Complementary Programmes

This section has suggested that books and booklets be considered in their own right as an educational intervention. But they are also a tool to assist other educational interventions and, as such, provide particularly appropriate supplementary materials for face-to-face programmes. For more on comic style booklets, see [Comics and Pictorials](#).

Whether a source of reference to be consulted during a workshop, as material to be handed out for further reading, or as a gift to leave with a single person or family after a house visit, publications ensure that knowledge is not fleeting and that learning continues after the initial interaction.

One of the advantages of making substantial materials available following a face-to-face interaction is that the book becomes a locally available resource. And in situations where such resources are scarce, it is likely to be well used by a range of people.

Such usage goes beyond the individualistic perception of a book and the reason it is considered a relatively high-cost option. Originally, books were used in community settings, and there is no reason why this use should not be exploited educationally.

A further complementary usage is as a supplement to radio, which suffers from its ephemeral nature. Texts are used in distance education programmes, and a cheap booklet may be made available before or after a particular radio broadcast. In the case of the second, radio becomes one option in the book publishing distribution strategy.

Publishing a Book



The preparation of a book, whether small or large, for a limited audience or mass distribution, goes through a similar process.

The Initial Idea: Unless an author has submitted a text to a publisher, it is likely that the publisher will have the initial idea, including a set of explicit or implicit educational goals, about what is required. Publishers who are experienced and know their audience well are likely to have concrete ideas. Or, the concept may be less well formed at this stage.

The Audience: The concept has to firm up rather quickly, especially if there is an entirely commercial means of publishing. When a publisher has the money to underwrite the publication, it remains essential to ask critical questions about the size and context of the audience. These are questions that educators will already have posed.

In addition, educators should consider whether the publication of a book or booklet will be a more effective way of achieving their goals than any other. And they should establish a set of guidelines for the remainder of the project that will establish the audience, the quality of the publication, its level of language, and any other principles necessary to guide the writers and those who will produce the book.

The Text: Production of a text should be considered the responsibility of one or more writers, working either independently of one another or together on an outline established by the publisher.

There are occasions when the production of a text initiates a book. Proceedings of conferences and reports from monitoring teams are often of such quality that there is a temptation to turn these into books. Writers also submit manuscripts that a commercial publisher may venture to publish.

But those involved in civic education should begin with a concept and a set of educational objectives before developing a text.

Editing of the Text: Writers write. Editors edit. There should be a division between these two tasks. Very few manuscripts are published unedited, and the editor's task is considered either the refining of the manuscript, or in some celebrated occasions, the recovery of a book from a thicket of text.

The editing task is one that is likely to be iterative, and it is possible that at the end of this process, the book that was intended may still not be available. Editors need to maintain close contact with writers and in some cases, there may be an ongoing collaborative exercise from the start of the project.

Design of the Book: In addition to the writer and the editor, there will be a person who takes on the responsibility for designing the book. When only text is envisaged, such a person will take responsibility for designing the page layout (including page numbering, margins, headings, and highlights), selecting the type of lettering to be used, working out the best way to separate the book into sections and chapters, and establishing a contents page and all the ancillary pages.

A good designer knows about and can suggest cost-cutting measures to manage paper. There are standard paper sizes that have implications for how the page is made up, how many pages a book should have, how pages are folded and cut, and whether a nonstandard page is required for the particular publication. Designers also understand the quality of paper and the impact of text on the colour and texture of different available papers.

When the book is more elaborate and is intended to have diagrams, pictures, and photographs or decorative text, or where a special paper is to be used, designers will play a hand in preparing this as well. They may also be called upon to make some suggestions about binding.

Many books published today start with a design, and when an elaborate book is planned, writers, designers, and editors may be required to work hand in hand from the start of the project.

On the other hand, simple computer software is available that can assist anyone with basic design skills or experience to develop a book design. The software does not yet take the place of a person with a flair for design but it certainly makes such a person's job easier; and it makes it possible for educators to view and review the design of the book earlier than might otherwise be possible.

The Cover Design: Whatever the inside of a book might look like, it is the cover that counts when it comes to initial impressions. And those designing covers must have a good understanding of what initial impression is required.

The discussion of the outside impression of the book requires not only a decision about the title, the text that will appear (including the introduction to the book) and the manner in which both will be presented with illustration to provide a 'pick-me-up' look. People publishing books and booklets in support of education programmes must also consider more practical matters such as the likely placement of the book when it reaches the first distribution point, the manner in which the book will be stored, and the distribution mechanism.

Such considerations will determine matters such as size and likely binding. Small books can get lost on a shelf, especially if they are staple bound and therefore have no discernible spine. Large coffee table size books may be too heavy to be posted without expensive packing, or they may not fit on a standard shelf in a little community library.

Thus, a decision to produce a good-looking cover can be insufficient to ensure that the book or booklet is friendly to the reader, the distributor, the library and the educator. The cover needs to be considered in conjunction with the weight of the entire publication.

Marketing and Distribution Plan: Whether the education programme has decided to produce a textbook, a booklet, or even a set of popular novels aimed at adolescents covering democratic themes, they need to develop a marketing and distribution plan during the early phases of the project.

Such a plan will develop realism about the size of a print run, the likely income that will be available to offset the costs, the manner in which the publication will get to its intended audience, the date by which this must happen, and the effort that will have to be put into ensuring that the audience receives and reads the book.

Publishing houses involved in regular commercial, academic, and popular publishing, have this expertise. But they may choose not to publish the book that the programme believes is



essential. Often, education programmes make choices using criteria other than those of a publishing house. But it may be possible to obtain the guidance of such a publishing house in developing a plan.

If this cannot be sought, educators should obtain the support and advice of other people in the book publishing world. Obtaining such advice will also publicise the publication, and could have the additional benefit of ensuring that any overlap is spotted early on rather than at the point of no return.

A marketing and distribution plan should include advertising, book launches, book reading events, point of sale or free distribution discussions, sending of preliminary copies for book review and to potential groups of users, and decisions about the style of distribution.

Some books have a long shelf life and after an initial spurt of sales may settle down to a regular order every so often for an extended period. Other books need to get out into the market in one fell swoop. General texts for democracy may not change much and could be considered in the first category. A special pre-election book needs to get out as it will be good only for pulping once the election is over.

Typesetting and Layout: A range of technical options, including improved computer software and printers, sophisticated scanners and photocopiers makes the production of a book relatively simple. Indeed, those who have access to such equipment make the mistake of believing that it is all necessary and that a book cannot be done in any other way.

However, there are countries that must still rely on manual typesetting machines, galley proofs, layout stripping and pasting up of proofs by hand. Such time-honoured methods remain viable, although they do require a different set of skills.

In general, however, educators in countries operating in such a paradigm will work in collaboration with specialized printers or publishers rather than attempt to generate the major part of the publication in-house, as may be possible with computer assistance.

Proofreading: Similarly, proofreading or the checking of text for last-minute corrections, differs depending on whether the printing is done through a computer-based or manual system. In a computer-based system, there is temptation to do proofreading on the screen and to rely on the tools available (especially the `spell` checker). This is not sufficient.

Proofing is essential and should be done on a hard copy in the format in which it will appear on the final version, so all errors can be spotted. Such work should be done by someone other than the writer.

Printing: Because printing appears to be one of the last tasks to be done, there is an inclination to leave its arrangement also to the last minute. However, printers operate under a number of constraints.

Once it has been established that the printer can actually handle the job, the printer must ensure that the machines are available and are prepared for the print run required. Printers must have all the necessary consumables, especially the paper. In many developing countries, paper is in short supply and must be ordered well in advance and stored carefully for the job.

When the job is complete, unless arrangements are made to take delivery immediately, the printer will be faced with a storage problem and may need to make arrangements in this regard as well.

Distribution and Delivery: There are too many books and booklets sitting on floors in government offices, electoral institutions and NGOs to suggest that, having gone through all the obvious tasks of publishing, distribution and delivery will take care of themselves.

A plan should be developed for ensuring that the publication gets from the printer to the reader in time.

Leaflets, Brochures, and Fliers

A well-designed leaflet can contain a great deal of information. This information can supplement messages featured on posters and banners or through television and radio. Leaflets can be distributed by hand or by post.

In general, whether a leaflet, a slightly more bulky brochure or a simple one-page flier, the key element in the design is the creative use of headlines, text design, and paper.

When a country has a standard paper and envelope size, there are likely to be a few standard pamphlet designs. By folding paper, the designer establishes the equivalent of separate or combined pages, each fold providing an imaginary break. In addition, folded paper enables the designer to establish a cover, or to lead the eye to a new piece of information. Complex information can be hidden until it is explained, and the reader can be guided sequentially through the necessary information.

The standard A4 page is often folded in a U or a Z shape. A standard A3 page can be folded in half and then treated like an A4 sheet. These provide remarkable versatility, and other more complex folds can be attempted. The Adobe web site gives a range of folding options for small pamphlets.

While creative folding can produce more interesting leaflets and even facilitate the flow of information, it does complicate the production process, requiring either special machinery or significant numbers of people. It will also increase the amount of time required for production before materials can be packaged and delivered. The educator will want to take these factors into consideration.

The advantage of using a single sheet in this way is obvious: it is light to distribute, relatively cheap and quick to produce, it is also comfortable to hold and read. It does not need binding or collating and can easily be done in an office, on a photocopy machine for small runs.

Fliers tend to be used to advertise events or places and are normally produced in large numbers; an A5 sheet may be appropriate and a simple offset printer can print two fliers on an A4 sheet.

Purpose, Content, and Design: These forms of communication are normally used for mass distribution and a general audience. For this reason they contain simple language, a limited amount of information, and a very clear and logical flow. There is a tendency by educators to short-change the design on a leaflet or flier for a mass audience, and to over-design brochures



that have a more elite public. This is short-sighted, because good design will assist in making the leaflet easy to read and ensure a better impact.

It is therefore important to ensure that is as carefully considered as illustration. Costs of design are offset against the mass production and therefore work out at very little per unit cost.

Distribution and Complementary Elements: A leaflet or brochure is a regular component of direct mail campaigns, but the same product can also be used during networking in support of the programme, in briefing of face to face educators, and in packages of distance education materials.

Because many organisations conduct direct mail campaigns, it may be possible to persuade such organisations to include voter education material at no extra cost to their mailing list. In many cases, leaflets and fliers can also be inserted in newspapers and other publications that are widely read.

Fliers are used to drum up support for an event such as a mock election or rally, or to motivate people to register or vote. In general, bulk quantities are given to individuals and then taken door to door, handed out on street corners, or passed out at large events or community meeting places.

In transitional settings, where nationwide distribution networks may not exist and where the quality of the transportation infrastructure may be relatively poor, educators may need to assemble ad hoc forces of distributors and allow more time for delivery of materials to their final destinations.

Unintended Use: Considering that leaflets are produced in bulk and sent to someone in the post or handed to them at an event or on the street, it may be the only information that the person receives about the election. It may be very likely that it will be stuck on a notice board or wall for others to read.

If the design is a complicated one, this means that it is not read in the form intended. A Z-fold leaflet will be flattened out into a single page/poster. A more complicated fold may result in the leaflet being torn or cut and then flattened out, or covers may appear upside down because the other text is more important. Because the person only has one leaflet, he may photocopy one side, causing red colours to appear black, reverse text to disappear, and so on.

Mailing two leaflets to a community group immediately makes it possible for a better display. Creating leaflets that fold out into a meaningful poster or ensuring that the leaflet has some instructions for its display are obvious options. If it is decided to create a leaflet that doubles as a poster, the poster design also needs to be considered (see Posters and Banners).

Those who produce the leaflets or brochures can either bemoan the ignorance of community groups or they can be motivated by the community spirit displayed by this use of resources and design leaflets that can be posted on community boards.

Sponsors: The bulk distribution of leaflets and fliers makes them ideal vehicles for carrying advertisements.. There are two approaches to this.

The first is to approach a company involved in its own distribution of material and request that it carry voter information or education.

The second is to approach a company, particularly a local company in the vicinity where the leaflet will be distributed, and request that it sponsor the production and receive credit for this.

In other words, the name becomes associated with the product and with the voter education programme.

If this is too close for comfort, a company may agree to place an advertisement on the leaflet. Local small and medium enterprises can find this useful because they tend not to have the budgets to advertise in more expensive media.

It is important for educators to stress the nonpartisan nature of their undertaking and warn prospective sponsors that a high political profile on their part might be incompatible with the voter education programme.

10.2.6 Specialty Print Items

This section takes a look at the increasingly creative application of printing methods to different surfaces, whether paper, fabric, or plastic products, as well as some variations on the more traditional book and booklet. In particular, the files in this section highlight the use in voter and civic education programmes of:

- [Comics and Pictorials](#)
- [Posters and Banners](#)
- [Bookmarks](#)
- [Beverage Coasters](#)
- [Stickers](#)
- [Voter Education Clothing](#)
- [Promoting Voter and Civic Education with Packaging](#)
- [Calendars](#)

10.2.6.1 Comics and Pictorials

Illustrated publications using the formats of the comic, cartoon or picture book can be used with good effect for particular audiences. When used for people with limited literacy, care has to be taken to use very simple formats for the text.

Comics

People who can read and who have some contact with film (through television or cinema) enjoy comic-illustrated stories which combine narrative, dialogue and illustrations.

The format for comics determines that the stories are short, populated with easily recognizable characters with whom the reader can associate, and with concepts that are familiar but can be placed in strange contexts.

There is a growth in popularity of the graphic novel, which is longer and may have an extended cast of characters and a more complex story line. Such a production may be an illustration of a



standard story, but in most cases it is likely to be a combination of words and illustrations entirely of its own genre.

Pictorials

Pictorials, unlike comics, use photographs and words rather than cartoons or illustrations. These are considered very much the second cousin of the comic, but they remain very popular and have something of the feel of the romance and the soap opera to them.

It is possible to use the format of comic, graphic novel or pictorial to convey messages about civic and voter education.

Production

These forms are often chosen because they appear to have limited text and can have diagrams and pictures of voting procedures and ballot papers. Local artists can draw simple cartoons or illustrations and these can then be used to create short books that can be simply and cheaply produced.

Some have used the format to tell stories that have educational consequences and that convey information while the story is being told. Yet others have used the form in the interesting graphic novel genre to raise social questions and to invoke civic activism.

In all these cases, the form has the advantage of also conveying basic public information, as many comics do, through advertising on the outside and inner covers. The publication acts as a keepsake and memento; and as a pass-along for those who decide to take education into their own hands.

Limitations

There are, however, some serious limitations to the use of such publications and these relate primarily to cost and target audience.

Cost

While reproduction of a comic is much the same as that of a book, there are additional reproduction costs linked to the number of illustrations, especially if these are in colour. But the major cost factor is the creation of the work.

Illustrators need not be cheap, and those who are able to work in this medium must either combine with or be writers. In addition, there are considerable costs in developing story lines, which often resemble, and may be used for, scripts for video or film productions. The techniques of the modern comic mimic in many ways (flashback, extreme close up, cutaways, and so on) those of film.

Available Options

Illustrated material can be prepared in a number of different ways. In addition to the graphic novel or comic, it is possible to use the example of the illustrated and narrated postcard used often in children's publications.

Photographic novels or a mix of comic and text are also possible.

Target Audience

It is assumed that comics are relevant to the illiterate because they use few words, but in fact, the combination of words and images in quite complex patterns make considerable demands on the illiterate or the neo-literate. It may be useful for those contemplating the use of comics in such situations to reflect on the age at which comics become popular amongst those who have the privilege of going to school, and hence becoming literate while still young. They are certainly not their first choice of reading matter: this is determined by the need to have pattern and simplicity. In this regard, the picture book (or photo novella), a short story illustrated by a sequence of photographs, seems to be far more useful and accessible.

On the other hand, those who have used comics and graphic novels with their natural audiences, young, urban, schooled or semi-schooled people in a modern working environment have had success.

Evaluation suggests that comics have less impact overall in a national educational programme than one would imagine, and their impact can be outweighed by their cost. The proviso is that comics are useful when the audience is particularly well understood and focussed.

Mixed Media

There are publications with a mix of text, pictorial, illustration and comic. These probably suffer from attempting too much, but they can work in a context where the comic itself is the dominant communication mode.

10.2.6.2 Posters and Banners

Posters can convey information and contribute to the aesthetics of an election. It is not surprising that they are amongst the most regularly collected electoral items.

The poster has always been an art form as well as a communicator, but the two are not always compatible and the purpose and placement of posters has to be considered in advance of any other criterion. When form and function mesh, a poster can be a very effective tool in the hands of the educator.

Where form outweighs function, the message can be lost and posters can be a waste of paper, a public eyesore, and an individual frustration. In short, a proper balance needs to be achieved between art and substance for a voter education poster to achieve its function.

Banners play a similar role as posters, although they are normally produced on fabric. Banners can be used for larger signs and in more outdoor situations. Their design also requires an understanding of purpose and placement, and then an appreciation of the production requirements that will translate suitably on the medium available.



Purpose

- *Creating an Election Environment:* If the purpose of the poster or banner is to decorate the environment and convey a particular feeling in regard to the election, then it is appropriate to make aesthetic considerations dominant. Posters and banners are used to decorate meeting places, streets, voting sites, and other electoral offices. Such displays, if they become ubiquitous, or if one of the posters becomes a collector's item and is therefore displayed widely by individuals, can create an imposing and climate-building backdrop to an election.

Many cities have established a tradition of using banners to fly on lampposts on special occasions or to hang on the outsides of buildings. Banners convey more of a message than flags but have a similar impact. They are colourful, motivational, and energy creating.

- *Identity:* A second purpose might be to develop an identity for the election management body or for the organisation conducting the educational programme. While such an identity may be achieved merely from the organisation's association with its products, a newly formed organisation may have to establish itself and a poster or banner displayed at appropriate places may be the best way to do this. Such posters are designed around the logo, image, or slogan of the organisation, or seek to associate the organisation with a particular historical moment or popular figure.
- *Culture:* A third purpose may be to establish a culture in favour of elections and democracy through its association with popular culture, celebrities, or historical moments. Such designs again may be primarily aesthetic in approach, but as they are beginning to convey a message they will have to come to terms with certain limitations imposed by the positioning of the display.

In a similar vein, an election can have certain key slogans or concepts it wants to convey: "Your Vote Counts," "Vote For Peace and Prosperity," "Heal Your Land," and so on.

These posters may require a simple image or slogan, and can use colour to enhance the emotional rather than the communicative impact of the production.

- *Dates, Times, Places, and Processes:* When the purpose of the poster includes the communication of information that must be read and absorbed, designers should concentrate on that information as the central image.

Such posters can advertise the date of an election, the places where voting or registration takes place, educational events, the recruitment of election staff, key voter education messages beyond the simple election slogan, and so on. Many election management bodies have prepared posters explaining steps in the voting process. Because all parts of an election management body are likely to want to communicate such information, there is some need to coordinate such activity and ensure that those requesting the posters and those designing them attempt to convey more than one bit of information in each production. This can be overdone, though, and there comes a moment when efficiency deals a blow to effectiveness.

- *Audience:* Posters can have common general purposes but be aimed at different audiences. Obviously, a poster aimed at young people is going to differ from one intended for placement in an army base or government office. Some have been specially designed for women. It is however important to note that in most cases posters providing voter education messages are designed for a general audience.

Placement

The positioning of a poster must be determined before its production. When the purpose is clear, designers of posters should consider the intentional placement of a poster as well as the possible unintended placement. Even when precise instructions are given to those who will place posters, it is likely that the posters will also be used in other contexts. The placement instructions may well have to list the contexts within which the poster should not be used. Election laws and local ordinances may also place restrictions on where posters may be hung. With respect to banners, special permission may need to be obtained to hang them from light posts, buildings, or other poles or structures. Educators need to be aware of these restrictions and requirements and pass this information along to those who will be hanging the posters.

- *Bulletin Boards:* If a poster is intended for a bulletin board in an indoor situation such as a post office, where people will be able to look at it with some leisure and where they may even be able to step up close for a further look, it is possible to contemplate a design with a substantial word content, and to consider the design along the lines of a page of a book blown up to about A1 or A2 size. It may even be possible to consider smaller sizes such as A3 or A4 if only a small amount of information is to be conveyed. A similar approach can be taken at other similar venues. Such posters should be designed to convey one message at a distance and then entice the reader to come closer for more information.
- *Outdoor:* If, on the other hand, the poster is to be displayed on a roadside for passing motorists to read, the same poster cannot be used. But often they are. Drivers and passengers in cars can cope with about seven large words in light print on a dark background on an A1 or A2 poster. An indication of what can be used can be obtained from a study of the size and design of those road and freeway signs that now have international currency.

When more detailed messages must be conveyed, and there are other ways to do this apart from distracting drivers, such messages can be sequenced along a roadside.

- *Meeting Places:* In classroom or meeting situations, where people will be able to study a poster but only at a distance, limited information can be given and this may have to be supplemented with talk and interpretation or discussion. Such posters seldom contain words, especially if they are being used in situations of low literacy. In such situations, words become puzzles that do not convey meaning but do distract from other communication and cause insecurity amongst learners. It is in this situation that the flip chart becomes a particularly useful tool.
- *Passing Crowds:* People may not be able to stop and read or browse, nor may they be sitting down in a classroom setting. They may well be the drivers, just passing by. Perhaps they are on a subway escalator, at a bus stop or in a crowd of people. Placement within these contexts requires the same consideration as for those moving faster: the conveying only of sufficient information and the possible repetition or sequencing of posters.

In general, repetition of a complex poster is less successful than sequencing of a variety of simple posters. People are seldom disciplined or skilled enough to be able to start reading or



looking in the middle of a message (as would be required for people to get through a detailed poster while moving past a bunch of repetitions).

Thus, placement determines how much information the poster should contain, and in what format, size and colours, it should be designed. Many posters are designed and then approved in meeting rooms, only to disappoint when seen *in situ*. Where possible, an *in situ* evaluation should be conducted for any poster that must convey critical information.

Production

Effective poster and banner design is based on purpose and placement, and not necessarily on colourfulness or glossy finish. While colour can play an important role in attracting the attention of voters and in creating a mood, some successful designs have made use of very limited colours and less costly paper and printing. These types of posters may not become collector's items, but that presumably is not the primary purpose.

Countries with a culture of poster advertising for newspapers will understand how effective a few words on a white newsprint background can be in enticing one to purchase a newspaper. Such a purchase should be considered a lesson for the design of a poster and the complementary activities that can follow such a design.

But in general, production will be on paper or cloth for posters and banners. Recent innovations in large-scale printing have made it possible to use plastic and other synthetic materials to good effect.

Reproduction of the image, when a large number of copies are required, is likely to be through printing. And the size of the poster is thus limited by the size of the printing press. It is possible to print large posters in sections and then compile these, as is often done with outdoor displays. Whatever size one chooses, there will be ramifications for packaging, storage, delivery and distribution, as well as the available spaces where posters can be hung and the amount of instruction, effort, and supplies required to hang the posters properly.

There are alternative ways to prepare smaller runs, or to do runs where the cost per unit does not come down substantially. The most costly is the preparation of lithographs, usually used for limited edition artistic renditions. A cheaper method and one capable of more copies without degradation, is by silk-screening. Simple posters with limited wording (not necessarily losing impact) can be made by using paint and stencilling or other simple techniques.

Individual banners can be made using standard sign-writing techniques and paints. Otherwise, silk-screen and stencilling techniques, or the use of fabric printing methods, are appropriate. The use of treated paper or plastic may allow new methods of printing or commercial silk-screening.

Each of these has its uses. The ability to produce a poster in very simple circumstances makes it not only a useful tool but also an appropriate educational method.

Complementary Activities

The creation of posters by students provides a method of categorizing and synthesizing learning in a creative way that is a very powerful test of what has been learned, and is also a powerful message to others of what has been learned. Because of this, educators can choose to decorate a place with locally produced posters and banners rather than with those developed at a distance. In some cases, poster and logo design as well as slogan development contests have been held in

schools to generate public relations and media coverage for the voter education programme and to select winning entries for use by the voter education programmes.

In such ways, the poster becomes a teaching tool, and, while some posters are purposely produced for this, others can be appropriated by a skilled group educator.

Notes:

[1] Standard paper sizes are different in the United States of America and in those places which have adopted the European standard. This topic area uses the European standard of measurement. An A4 size is the standard letter page. A5 is that page folded in half; A3 a double size.

10.2.6.3 Bookmarks

Another interesting idea is to print bookmarks with voter education slogans and messages. These can be distributed through public libraries and reading rooms, book stores, schools and universities, non-governmental organisations, and as inserts into a variety of publications, whether books, booklets, or magazines, or through newspapers and the like. They might even be worked into the design of a leaflet or brochure (depending upon the weight and quality of the paper) to be detached along a perforated line and then used. They can also be inserted into multi-media packages that might include other products with the same theme, slogan, and logo such as stickers, games, booklets, posters, and even clothing. These can be particularly popular with young people.

10.2.6.4 Beverage Coasters

Beverage coasters have become increasingly popular in cafe cultures where the population may spend a great deal of time relaxing, people watching, and socializing with friends over a cup of coffee, a glass of water, or a glass of wine. While a great deal of information cannot fit onto a coaster, it is of sufficient size to accommodate a logo, slogan and some vital bits of information such as the date, time and type of elections, and may reflect the design and colour schemes used for other voter education products such as stickers, posters, shopping bags, t-shirts, and more. Once produced, the coasters can be distributed to restaurant, bar and cafe owners, who are usually more than happy to put them to use. Production of coasters requires the use of special materials and expertise from the printer to cut the coasters according to the specified size and shape.

10.2.6.5 Stickers

Stickers are also an increasingly popular voter information item. These can come in any variety of shapes and sizes, from relatively small stickers that might be used to adorn school notebooks and children's items, to larger stickers that might be posted to public transport, utility poles, or information boards, to stickers specifically designed for the bumpers of cars. How much information can be included will depend upon the size of the sticker. Smaller stickers will not be able to accommodate very complex designs or a lot of words, perhaps a logo and a slogan



only. Additional information, such as the date, time, and type of voting might be added to larger stickers.

Stickers tend to be a big hit with younger voters and can be distributed through schools and universities, through civil society organisations, and at special events as well as part of mixed-media packages that might include t-shirts, posters, comic books, and so on. Stickers are also very useful in creating a buzz about an event or election related activity such as voter registration. While a sticker may be too small to contain the full message, it could contain just one word that will draw the attention of the public to other materials in the package such as banners and bill boards. Many countries also use stickers with the proclamation "I Voted" as a means of demonstrating pride among those who have cast their ballots and motivating those who have yet to do so.

If stickers are to be posted in public areas, whether on buses, poles, buildings, bus stops, or in metro stations, educators may want to double check election laws and local ordinances to ensure that this is not a problem. Some companies have exclusive rights to advertising in and on public transport and produce their own, specially sized stickers, for designated locations.

10.2.6.6 Voter Education Clothing

Clothing with election slogans and designs can come in a variety of forms from t-shirts and baseball caps to articles of clothing made with the election message worked directly into the fabric design, as occurs in Africa where women can literally become walking billboards for a cause.

Clothing items can be used to help promote voter education events and programmes, such as "Rock the Vote" style campaigns; to identify participants in those campaigns (or certain groups such as election monitoring or voter education teams); and to build momentum for citizen activism, for example encouraging people to register and to vote.

Cloth can be printed relatively cheaply using block prints, silk screening or more substantial printing methods.

Clothing items can be a self-financing means of spreading voter education messages and tend to be relatively easy to distribute due to popular demand. However, experience in developing countries is that education organizers end up paying for this clothing and do not recoup their initial investments.

Election regulations often restrict the wearing of certain types of clothing on election days. While these regulations are intended to avoid conflict and electioneering around voting stations, slogan and personality based clothing distributed by nonpartisan education groups can become confused with this, or even over time associated with a particular party or group of parties. Therefore local conditions must be taken into account when developing such materials.

In Taiwan, election clothing and related paraphernalia— mascots, head and armbands, water bottles, and all manner of noise making and banner waving artefacts— have become intrinsic to election campaigns. These have the advantage of bringing elections to life, see Political Parties in Voter Education: In other countries, such exuberant partisanship can be intimidating and limit freedom of movement and association. This has certainly been the case in elections conducted under conditions of latent and unresolved conflict or oppression.

10.2.6.7 Promoting Voter and Civic Education with Product Packaging

An increasingly employed means of communicating voter and civic education messages is the use of product packaging. In this way, articles such as boxes of cereal, milk containers, candy wrappers, airtime scratch cards and match box covers can all carry messages to voters.

Another option has been to print shopping bags with voter education slogans, logos, and pertinent information to be distributed to shoppers through vendors at stores and market places. Because plastic bags, in particular, can be used over and over again, these tend to be a highly visible item out on the streets during the course of an election campaign. (In the case of plastic bags, it is important to give consideration to the environmental impact of its use)

Some restaurants will also have paper placemats or tray mats (in the case of many fast-food restaurants) that can be printed with voter education messages and that can accommodate a significant amount of information. In style and theme, this might reinforce other materials such as posters and leaflets that are being made available through other means.

Packaging is printed on a routine basis and companies are often pleased to provide a valuable public service by incorporating certain messages into the overall packaging design. Once cooperation is agreed upon, educators will want to confer with the company printing and assembling the packaging to determine their schedule relative to that of the voter education programme. Print ready designs, in the specified dimensions and format, for the voter education announcement can then be provided to the printer.

10.2.6.8 Calendars

Whether of the pocket or wall-hanging variety, calendars have also become a means of communicating voter and civic education messages. The size of the calendar will determine how much information can be included.

Some calendars will merely have a slogan, logo, and details about the date, time, and type of elections. These may fit easily into a wallet, appointment book or diary for easy reference.

In the case of a wall hanging calendar and where election related milestones are known well in advance, much more detailed information may be provided. This might include information on the voter registration process; the candidate nomination and qualification process; pre-election day events and activities such as early voting or deadlines for applications to vote by absentee ballot or mobile ballot box; election day activities; and the deadlines for the determination of preliminary and final results, certification of candidates, and seating of the elected body. Each month might introduce a new theme with the months of the election period focused on voter information and education messages and the rest of the year dedicated to broader, but mutually reinforcing, civic education messages.

These more substantive calendars might include frequently asked questions (FAQs) or learning exercises. If developed for young people, the calendars might come with specially developed stickers so that students can track electoral events and then identify them on the calendar by affixing the various stickers to the dates with which they correspond. Calendars can also



include contact information for registration and election offices, political party headquarters, civil society organisations active in voter and civic education or election monitoring and public advocacy, and other public offices of note.

Many election management bodies, civil society organisations and political parties may also have special calendars that announce the number of days left to the election, for example: 10 days until Election Day! Each day, a page is ripped off to reveal the shrinking timetable until Election Day. This helps to focus and motivate those working on some aspect of the campaign or election.

10.3 Arts and Culture

Civic and voter education are cultural activities. They are bound up with the expression of people's human rights and social organisation. They require interaction between people, thoughtful passion, and the evocation of feelings and interdependence.

Most education happens, however, in relatively sterile and highly conceptual environments. But human learning and expression is deeply embedded through words, dance, drama and play. The incredible impact and energy that is reported in those relatively few voter education programmes involving drama bears this out.

So it is disappointing to find so few examples of the use of arts and culture to promote democracy, civic responsibility, human rights and voter education. The following sections contain comments on arts programmes and offer suggestions for ways in which the arts can be included in educational programmes:

- Formal and Performance Art deals with performances in formal settings.
- Street Theatre deals with more informal stages.
- Special Events looks at social activities that may or may not include a performance of some kind.
- Art and Handicrafts looks at how artists can be drawn into the educational endeavour.

10.3.1 Formal Performance Art

The title of this section has been chosen to ensure that educators do not limit their potential choices to any particular artistic expression. The only differentiation between this section and that dealing with street theatre lies in the setting and therefore, the resources available for performance.

Rock concerts, plays, poetry readings, dance (traditional and modern expressions), music and other forms of artistic communication can all be used to promote civic participation.

In most cases, they have been used to celebrate or commemorate political events, to mobilize support (personal and financial) for political causes, and to gather people together in order to convey, however briefly, educational messages. It is in this last category that there have been some examples involving voter education and mobilization, especially aimed at a youth culture.

The performance in most cases has been secular, unrelated to the educational message, which then becomes an intrusion into the event. This does not necessarily make it irrelevant: "a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down," as the song says. A performance where medium and message come together to convey a democratic vision, with less frequent and with greater staging demands, provides greater educational benefits.

In schools, historic tableaux and re-enactments of social events can be used to provide information and to educate. At the other end of the scale, political theatre has played a role in mobilizing support for causes, or awareness of injustice. But we look forward to seeing a resurgence of art that speaks to and on behalf of the present condition of people in modern existing or emerging democracies.

In this, educators will have to provide support and freedom to artists working in their communities. There can be tensions between those planning for a very focused and time-bound set of programmes with limited and unambiguous messages and the artist. But collaboration can have its value in establishing a whole new network of allies, in identifying educational themes of special power, and in ensuring that education takes place in a variety of sites and for a wider variety of people.

10.3.2 Street Theatre

Street theatre is an important tool for educators and there are a few simple guidelines that can be followed to make it successful. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

What is Street Theatre?

People are busy. They have lives to lead. Only a select few will give up time to attend an educational event voluntarily. Most will want to be entertained.

If that entertainment can come to them, it will be so much the better. Street theatre is a generic term for all manner of performances conducted where people are - not only on the street or in the marketplace.

Performances can be short and impromptu, feeding off the interaction with the watching crowd, or they can be slightly extended and carefully scripted and rehearsed. But they always operate on the assumption that the audience can leave, and that at least some of the members of the audience may leave during the performance. It is up to the performers to get people's attention and then to keep it long enough to convey their message.

Find an Audience

The first job of the street artist is to find an audience. For this reason, marketplaces, places where people have to queue and social events are most likely choices. Commuter bus and taxi ranks, rural clinics, hospitals, train stations are all places where people are waiting and have time on their hands.

In order to manage a street troupe, it may be necessary to provide them with transport to move around. There are troupes that have developed fixed itineraries. Shopping malls in modern towns and trading stores in villages may even encourage such troupes of players because they hold a crowd if the play is good, which is always good for business, and the people break up satisfied and thirsty or hungry. In some countries and towns, buskers' associations and local bylaws regulate what is allowed: when performances can happen, where, and for how long. In



other places, there may be local norms and standards, and even important people and that organisations who need to be contacted before a performance.

There may also be performance places available at public parks, town squares and so on. These are not always as well frequented as the more commercial areas. Street theatre is designed to meet people where they are, not to have to attract people to a distant venue.

Get Their Attention

Because people are preoccupied, their attention has to be drawn to the performance. This requires theatre singers and dancers, mime artists, small simulations of everyday activity played at a frenetic pace, players dressed in colourful clothes or masks, or wearing stilts. All these are signs that something unusual is about to happen.

It may be possible to set up small stages and carry theatrical properties onto the site of the performance. The troupe of players will have to ensure that this material is portable and robust.

In many places, sound amplification is not possible or may be illegal. In other places, entertainers may have developed their own system for becoming wired for sound, either through the good offices of a local business, or by using a car battery, or even a small petrol generator. Local conditions require local arrangements.

Getting people's attention and keeping it has something to do with what people expect and with what is unexpected. Skilled entertainers who have some experience of street theatre should be drawn into the project rather than sending an inexperienced group of people out onto the streets.

Convey the Message

Street theatre can be used to convey simple messages. It also can be used to demonstrate and practice skills; and at its most skilful can also provoke debate and dialogue between the players and the audience. Scripts can be useful and many voter education packages include short sketches.

The most successful events include humour, some satire, imaginative use of props, and interaction with the audience. Voter education theatre will focus on voting procedures, perhaps with a few people taking part in a mock election. There will be messages about the campaign and the role of political parties and representatives, how to make judgments and select between the offers being made by the contestants and information on when and where to vote.

Generally, street theatre cannot guarantee that there will be a repeat audience, but it is possible, especially in rural or small town settings. For this reason, performers have to develop a repertoire that enables them to change their piece if they discover that people already have particular sets of information.

Leave Something with Them

Theatre comes and goes, so people need to take away something with them. Small pamphlets and fliers, little souvenirs promoting the election such as t-shirts or stickers are all useful. They have the advantage of being easy to carry and quick to distribute to a dissolving crowd.

It is also possible to leave more permanent reminders that the players have been through the town or the market. Posters advertising the show or pasted up as backdrops to the performance

can be left if this is not going to offend the owners of the walls or lampposts. Local merchants may be persuaded to take posters into their shops.

Complementary Activities

Street theatre is live. It is also photogenic. Where crowds gather, news is created. So, apart from the usefulness of handouts in the language of the audience, there is also the possibility that the performance can be used to obtain free coverage on television news programmes, or that performers can be interviewed by local radio stations. Photographs taken by the troupe or local photographers may appear in local newspapers with stories about the event.

In these ways, exposure of the message is multiplied beyond the audience available at a particular time, at a particular place.

Good performances also can be captured on videotape for more general distribution, but this requires a production skill and preparation that should not be taken for granted. The change from street theatre to video production cannot always be made successfully.

Gathering the Performers

If a street troupe is created and travels around, there are educational resources available to local communities whenever the troupe is finished performing. It is possible to include with the group someone who can handle training of voter educator programmes and use the performance to recruit people for more in-depth training in a later event. Thus, the team leaves behind a small cadre of educators able to talk with their own organisations and individual contacts after the players have moved on.

However, keeping a troupe on the move is not easy. It requires substantial logistical support. Transport, accommodation, staff management and public relations can be costly, not to mention the salaries of performers.

But using such a troupe can still be a worthwhile activity because of the high visibility it gets and the opportunity to associate other activities and promotional opportunities with such a team.

An alternative approach is to develop a programme that mobilizes existing street performers, perhaps giving them training and resources and then encourages them to weave election information into their own shows. Small subsidies for community groups, perhaps routed not from the election management bodies but rather from performing arts programmes, can have substantial spin-offs not only in educational terms but also in adding colour and confidence to the elections.

10.3.3 Special Events

There are a variety of other special events that can be used to bring people together in support of a cause, but which may not involve a performance in the form of a live concert, play, poetry reading, or some other sort of show. Dance parties or marathons at local clubs, street parties,



barbeques or picnics, a race or other sporting event and fairs are all events that can be planned as a vehicle for promoting awareness and providing information about, as well as building momentum for elections. These types of activities may be targeted at a community at large or at a particular group such as young people, women and persons with disability.

In the case of a dance party at a local disco, organisers may print coasters, table tents, place mats and balloons with voter education and motivation messages. Patrons may also be given t-shirts, caps, pins, stickers or other items to take with them after the party is over. A local radio station may cover the event live, and incorporate voter information into the broadcast. Local celebrities may be used both to advertise the event and to encourage people to vote on Election Day. Picnics, sporting events and fairs also provide opportunities to display voter motivation and education materials, distribute items to large groups of people, set up information stands, and as a means of getting publicity.

10.3.4 Art and Handicrafts

Handicrafts

Go to a market in a country that has tourists. Local people have taken the handicrafts that they established for their own enjoyment, pleasure, religious celebrations and use, and have made versions for general consumption.

Whether these are totems, cloth, baskets, pottery, locally fired metal ware and jewellery, sculptures or paintings, local arts and crafts define the identity of communities and countries. There is a continuing and heated debate about the manner in which these crafts are being dominated by goods from other countries, a fear that the old skills are being lost and a yearning for a time when these arts and crafts were practised in a communal life that may be dissipating or at least perceived to be dying.

In large countries like the United States and India, internal tourists act as a market for additional production; in smaller countries there is an international trade. In fact, the markets of the world have always been markets where goods from a variety of sources come together.

These artefacts can be used by educational programmes as constant reminders of important dates and events, motivators of behaviour, and as triggers for action. Clothing, woven banners, iconic or vernacular paintings and prints and wooden sculptures that communicate the meaning and aspirations of local people are not so readily collected or recognized. Yet, precisely because they communicate directly to people, or because they have a market value that makes them self-financing, they can be useful tools in developing a background milieu that makes the voter education message so much more important and acceptable.

Art

Displayed art no longer conforms to established categories. Painting, photography, drawing and printing interweave with three-dimensional forms; sculpture enters the dimension of time as well as space; and art plays with movement, sound, and touch through computers, installations, video, and film.

Artists collaborating with educators and promoters of democracy have produced photographic records of election triumphs, posters encouraging public participation, evocative sculpture and telling images of the human spirit. Artists working alone or in collaboration with one another have produced exhibitions that support electoral and political moments, and comment on human circumstance.

Such works are on display or are created in public spaces, both in galleries and in the parks, gardens, and streets of cities around the world.

While specially commissioned work may be required, there is educational advantage in developing walking tours, artists' meetings with the public, specially assembled exhibitions, and educational seminars and symposiums that choose democratic themes and moments to coincide with other aspects of an educational programme. These programmes can use existing material, and even material that appears to be undemocratic can be used to provide objective lessons of what the election is moving away from.

Art and the spaces within which it is displayed are resources that educators should use. Many of the larger public museums and galleries have their own education officers. These people may well be willing to support an educational programme and they will have skills and resources of their own to contribute. Such staff members are accustomed to developing programmes that attract audiences, and they often work under limited budgets and in relatively hostile or at least apathetic environments. They may also have developed outreach programmes to schools and poorer or disadvantaged communities, in some cases having established strategies for transporting artefacts.

This expertise is invaluable to voter education programmes.

Competitions

Election management bodies have used competitions as a way of obtaining images and designs for use in voter education programmes as well as for publicizing the campaign itself through such means as slogans and logos. In Ethiopia, a competition produced a theme song for the elections. School competitions are particularly useful in engaging young people in discussing issues and concepts, producing material that can be displayed, and in obtaining publicity. Such competitions require organization, and may result in positive perceptions of democracy and the election management body.

10.4 Face To Face Interaction

Voter education programmes usually include face-to-face interactions. These are also known as direct forms of communication (television or radio being an indirect form of communication). Whether through community gatherings or door-to-door campaigns, direct contact with potential voters is an important aspect of voter information and education. Some evaluations also suggest that it is necessary to supplement indirect forms of communication with face-to-face interaction to move from providing information to affecting behaviour.

In many democracies, where rates of literacy may be low and where there may be widespread unfamiliarity with the newly defined process of voting and elections, this direct contact is a tool that can empower people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will allow them to become active and engaging citizens. The oral nature of face-to-face meetings gives illiterate and semiliterate people an opportunity to ask questions and get answers immediately.



Meeting with people who give information in a credible and nonpartisan way reduces distrust in the process. It also reduces ignorance and the fear associated with not knowing what to do or what to expect. In groups, at workshops or information sessions, people will realise that they are not alone in their concerns about voting and, knowing that others are going to vote, they will feel confident to do the same. People attending workshops or information sessions and who are thereby able to access up-to-date information, can become resources in their communities.

However, face-to-face educational programmes are resource hungry. Unless care is taken to ensure that events are run in local communities using existing venues and local catering, they can be expensive. When events are organized as conference-like programmes in large hotels, the costs can balloon alarmingly.

In addition to venue costs, face-to-face events, such as workshops and conferences, require administrative and secretarial backup, travel, recruitment, training, payment of skilled education staff, and extensive care and feeding of the programme participants. In order for events to be successful, participants must be recruited and encouraged to come to central venues, and this is not always successful. Often there must be repeat events.

Extravagant events are not necessary: face-to-face programme activities can be developed at low cost and with limited external support.

This section of the topic area describes the possibilities and also provides guidance for educators who will engage in such programmes.

10.4.1 Group Learning

Near the time of elections, people may be gathered in groups to get information about the elections. This information can be purely logistical or it can provide citizens with a deeper understanding of the electoral process and voting and the democratic principles that necessitate the regular occurrence of these events.

Not all groups of people are the same. A voter education programme should be aware of each group and the type of meeting that best suits them.

- Briefings are held for people who will be able to integrate the information into their own programmes in support of an election.
- Workshops are longer events held with people who want or require more in-depth information and understanding.
- General information sessions are held as the election date draws nearer, in public spaces where people will listen as they go about their daily lives. These sessions provide basic information in a short, fixed time period.

Briefings

Briefings are meetings held by key groups or institutions with organisations providing voter education. Briefings aim to assist organisations in the work they are doing in the field by providing information relevant to their target groups. Those attending briefings are usually able to take the information back to their organisation and feed it into the voter education programme.

For the sake of informing the public, groups such as political parties, election management bodies and relevant government departments may decide to call together a certain constituency

or group of people to provide them with information about the elections that is pertinent to the work they are doing and the information they want to give citizens. They also provide practitioners with an opportunity to question experts on key issues, and get up-to-date and accurate information on issues, debates, and dates leading up to the elections.

Briefings are usually short, and happen at times that are convenient for the desired audience. They may also be called at short notice in cases of crisis or changes in important decisions. Topics of briefings for voter educators include the following:

- voting and political rights
- registration procedures
- how boundaries have been set and wards demarcated
- important dates leading up to the election and the date of the election itself
- hours of voting times
- the locations of polling stations
- polling station setup and other regulations and procedures
- the availability of special voting services such as early, absentee, or mobile voting
- issues connected to elections such as fraud and intimidation
- the required voter identification documents
- mechanisms to ensure the secrecy of the ballot
- complaint adjudication procedures
- information on how votes will be counted and aggregated
- an explanation of how votes translate into seats
- information on when preliminary and final results will be made available
- information on the rights and obligations of independent observers and party/ candidate agents

Information packs should be prepared to provide more in-depth information to those attending. They may contain the following:

- a short information sheet on the organisation or institution
- an explanation of why the briefing is being called
- a history or recent account of events that have led to a certain juncture, point of view, findings, or decision
- statistics and graphics on the particular subject or issue
- analyses of the situation and expected outcomes
- a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document
- a copy of the election law

In preparing for a successful briefing, groups should remember do the following:

- invite the relevant people well in advance
- make follow-up calls to ascertain who will be attending
- book an appropriate venue



- arrange for catering
- invite speakers and confirm their attendance
- inform the press, if necessary
- prepare information packs
- ensure that there are enough copies of the information packs

Workshops

In voter education programmes, workshops provide logistical information as well as a more extensive look at the purpose and value of elections within broader concepts of democracy and human rights.

As with other face-to-face work with citizens, workshops are labour intensive, but the value of direct interaction with people who are trained and know about elections includes the following:

- Citizens are able to probe the value of elections and their importance in establishing and maintaining stable democracies.
- Citizens will come to a deeper understanding of the process, which will allay concerns they have about a process unfamiliar or new to them.
- Information gathered at a workshop will be passed on to families, friends, and neighbours.
- After workshops, people who have attended can be recognised as information sources in their communities.

Each country has a different context in which democracy takes root and becomes stable. Different statutory and non-statutory organisations can choose to emphasise different aspects of democratic elections given the particular context of the country and mandate or mission of the organisation. Areas that may be emphasised in workshops include the following:

- the history of the country and its transition to a democratic dispensation
- human rights associated with elections
- the values and procedures of democracy
- international principles and standards for democratic elections and good governance
- the importance of citizen participation in elections as part of fostering a democratic culture
- legal and institutional framework that governs and ensures free and fair elections in the specific country
- current political debates
- social and economic issues of public concerns

A number of factors contribute to effective workshop programmes. These factors include the following:

- a thorough and representative needs assessment
- knowledge of the infrastructure of the area, including transport, road infrastructure, telecommunications, and electrification
- knowledge of and sensitivity to the political situation, obstacles, and sensitive geographic areas
- knowledge of the population density and movement of people in an area
- knowledge of the people, their language, customs, priorities, level of education, and daily routine

- knowledge of the laws and institutions related to elections

Tips for Running Good Workshops: It takes a lot of time, commitment, and hard work to organize and run workshops. A number of key factors contribute to well-organized workshops:

- make logistical arrangements for workshops well in advance
- obtain permission to use suitable venues and pay for these where necessary
- have all the necessary equipment
- know the objectives of the workshops and convey these to the participants
- have accurate information
- have sufficient participant materials

Cost awareness: Workshops need not be very expensive. Keeping them at community level and using the resources available will help educators run workshops at minimal cost. Budget constraints often determine the scope of work of voter education programmes and keeping costs down can enable educators to run more workshops than planned.

Having workshops in very expensive venues can create a misrepresentation of resources that are available for public education programmes, and can create false expectations of community workshops.

Possible costs that need to be taken into account for running a one-day community workshop include the following:

- transport for the educator/facilitator
- transport for the participants
- venue hire
- catering
- supplies for the workshop educator/facilitator(newsprint, markers, etc.)
- supplies for the participants (pens, writing paper, etc.)
- copies of handouts and other workshop materials

Minimising Cost: Local educators should be used rather than getting people from outside to facilitate the sessions as this keeps transport and accommodation costs down. Making use of public spaces is another way in which the cost of workshops can be minimised. Organizations and election management bodies should make arrangements to use local venues (church, school or community halls) either free of charge or for a nominal donation.

Catering costs can be kept to a minimum by asking people to bring their own food (if the workshop runs over lunch), getting donations from food suppliers or by using local community caterers. Venues should be accessible so that participants do not have to spend much or anything on transport. Buying equipment in bulk also reduces the overall cost of items.

General Information Sessions



The purpose of voter education is to encourage as many people as possible to vote. Giving information to as many people as possible assists in achieving this goal. Information sessions are an important way to do this. They are labour intensive, but they are valuable because they are immediate and people are able to ask questions and get answers. They are verbal, and so are appropriate for illiterate and semi-literate people. The educator may not have another chance to speak to the same people, so this short opportunity must be used carefully.

Information sessions are short, formal or informal meetings that provide basic information on the elections to groups of voters. Accurate and up-to-date information is provided to people in a very succinct way. People can learn the date, voting times, and how to find out where their voting station is, as well as simply how to vote.

Giving people information too far in advance of the election will not achieve much. People may forget the information and details may change. The dates should be given once they are definite. People will want to find out about the elections in a quick and precise way as the date approaches, and information sessions provide this service.

Which Groups Organise Information Sessions?: Both statutory institutions such as the election management body and civil society groups may organise voter information sessions (sometimes jointly) as part of nonpartisan public education campaigns. The goal is the quick and accurate dissemination of up-to-date information about the elections.. Voters are also encouraged to go to the voting stations and participate in the democratic process.

Strategy: Information sessions are held at convenient times and do not last as long as workshops. They may take place during lunch times in busy commercial areas in a community centre or gathering point. The same information may be given several times a day in the same or different places to different audiences.

Complementary Information: Leaflets reinforce the verbal information by the educator and are easy to take away. They can provide contact details for the local offices of the election management bodies, candidates, political parties, and monitoring organisations. They can also include telephone information help lines.

Tips for giving a good information session include the following:

- know more than simply the topic so that broader questions can be answered
- be clear and concise as there is a limited amount of time
- make logistical arrangements for the session well in advance
- obtain permission from the relevant authorities
- allow time to answer questions
- make sure that there are many copies of leaflets and other take-away bits of information so that people have copies to give out to friends and neighbours. (This is particularly effective for people at school who can pass on information to parents and relatives.)

Cost Awareness: Local educators should be used to do the sessions, as this will keep transport costs down. Making use of public spaces is another way in which the cost of information sessions can be minimised as there will be no payment for venues. Using public places during periods when there are many people present means that they will listen to messages while they eat their lunch in the town square or wait for their transportation in railway or bus stations.

Equipping Voter Educators

To enable voter educators to run these face-to-face sessions effectively, it is important to provide them with the right tools. They should

- have a thorough understanding and ability to relay information on the logistics of the elections,
- know and have a political understanding of the issues and concerns surrounding the elections,
- be able to satisfactorily answer common questions from the public,
- receive proper training as well as up-to-date and accurate information,
- wear identifying clothing of a nonpartisan organisation to establish where the educator is from and something about the purpose of giving the information.
- provide educators with some sort of documentation, whether mere identification, a certificate, or a letter of support which can be used to further establish their identity, organisational affiliation, professional credentials or relationship to the election authority, should questions be raised.

The person giving the session will be seen as part of the message. It is important that these people are able to create trust in elections, so credible people should be used. The recruitment of voter educators is crucial. Recruiting from reputable organisations or from electoral authorities can ensure this but it is the responsibility of coordinators of such programmes to constantly monitor people in the field to make sure they are unbiased.

10.4.2 Simulations

Simulated experiences provide people with a chance to experience reality. They may include the campaign experience, giving participants a chance to play candidates, campaign managers, spokespersons, and volunteers, NGO activists, and journalists. The simulation can also demonstrate the election experience from preparation of the voting station through to the counting of the ballots, from the perspective of poll workers, voters, election monitors, independent observers and party agents.

These experiences take place in an environment controlled by the educator. People do not learn to ride bicycles by watching how to ride: they learn by actually practising on a bicycle. In the same way, an effective way to educate voters about the practical ins and outs of campaigns and elections and voting is by creating a real situation where citizens have an actual experience.

Mock elections, games, and role plays are ways to provide people with real experiences. They usually form part of a workshop programme and provide an opportunity for people to work in an interactive and participatory manner. The real success of the activities will depend on the way in which they are facilitated and debriefed. It is not enough to simply have the activity. Educators need to facilitate a discussion with the participants about their feelings and opinions as well as the relevance of the experience to their own situations.

Mock Elections



These are used to create a situation in a workshop that is a replica of a voting station, but which will allow people to explore the realities of this situation in a safe environment. One of the reasons that mock elections can be so effective is that they are able to demystify the election process. First-time voters will be eager to discover the practical workings of voting and election procedures. Mock elections will empower them to know what can be expected.

People need to be aware from the outset that the simulation is not the real thing and does not take the place of going to the voting stations on Election Day.

Care needs to be taken to create a picture in people's minds of the scene of elections before launching into the exercise. This will make the situation as real as possible and clarify in people's minds the process they are about to undergo. Near the time of elections, people unfamiliar with voting can have many of their concerns laid to rest by going through a simulated voting experience.

As people go through the experience, it is important for the voter educator to factor in unforeseen possibilities to alert citizens to situations that are not in the textbook but that may well arise. Situations of conflict between voters themselves, between voters and officials, or instances of cheating and bribery must be considered, and options for dealing with them need to be discussed.

Setting up a mock election need not take much time or money. Simple, inexpensive materials may be used to create a very real situation. The voting station can be set up in a workshop venue or even outside. This method of conveying information to people will also allow the voter educator to stop and start the process at strategic points to give people a more in-depth explanation of why the process happens in the way it does.

Mock elections are most effectively used amongst groups unfamiliar with the procedures preceding elections and on Election Day itself. In transitional contexts, mock elections can happen on a large scale and aim to reach as many people as possible.

Educators should use what they have: any box with a lid can serve as a suitable illustration of a ballot box. The point to highlight about ballot boxes is the need for them to be sealed and placed in the full view of all persons in the polling station. Voter education programmes can make their own dummy ballot papers with fabricated parties and candidates. If the activity is being undertaken by or in cooperation with an election management body actual election materials may be lent for the purposes of the activity.

Role Plays

Role play is a much-used technique in educational events based on the principles of experiential learning. Trainers do not always have to get learners to reflect on past experience: they can construct experiences for them in the workshop situation. A good way of doing this is through role play.

Role play requires participants to put themselves in somebody else's boots. For a while, they suspend their real identity and take on another role. For this reason, role play is a particularly good tool for developing empathy and getting people to understand other points of view. It is also a useful way for people to practice a new skill in an imaginary situation.

There are many different ways of conducting role plays in a workshop, ranging from complete improvisation to acting according to a carefully developed brief. Sometimes all participants can get involved in playing a few similar roles. Alternatively, a role play can involve all

participants playing different roles. The purpose of the exercise must determine the most appropriate approach.

Examples of Role Plays

Communication Skills. You are conducting a training session on communication skills. You divide all your participants into pairs and instruct one partner to play the role of a parent and the other partner to play the role of an angry, rebellious teenage child. You could keep your brief as simple as that and allow participants the freedom to spontaneously act out any situation that comes to mind. Or you could expand the brief a little and, for example, describe a situation where the teenager insists on going out with some friends and the parent does not approve. In a role play such as this you do not want participants to "learn" the bad behaviour of the teenager, but somebody must play this role in order to give the parent an opportunity to practice his communication skills. It is useful to interrupt the pairs after a few minutes and get participants to swap roles. It can also be a good idea to form groups of three (rather than pairs) and have one participant observe and comment on the behaviour of those playing the roles.

Individual Roles. At the end of a voter education workshop you run a mock election in which all participants play a different role. Everybody receives a role card with detailed instructions on the role they must play. The role cards indicate not only the part each person should play, but also how the role must be played (for example a lazy election official who does not check voters' identity or entry on the voters' list carefully, or a drunk voter who disrupts the queue). After all participants have read and understood their briefs, you allow the role play to begin. There is room for spontaneous acting, but you have structured the roles quite carefully to ensure that the mock election follows a certain course. If the simulation or role-play is part of a school based programme or voter education curriculum rather than a single workshop, for example, the scope of the activity can be expanded to include the campaign period. If limited time is available, however, educators will want to keep the exercise manageable and focused.

Derolling

After a role play is over, it is very important to "derole" the participants. Sometimes it is sufficient to thank people for entering into the spirit of the exercise and then invite them to return to their normal seats and resume their real identity. However, particularly when people have taken their roles very seriously and when the situations have been fairly intense, it is often necessary to derole more carefully. Ask people to take off any costumes they may have worn, get opposing parties (e.g. parents and teenagers) to shake hands, do something to help everyone relax and accept that the exercise is over. It is important to derole to avoid a particular role from sticking to a participant (or group of participants) for the remainder of the workshop.

Debriefing



Having created a common experience for participants in a workshop, it is important to ensure that the learning cycle is completed. Experience on its own is not enough. You should allow sufficient time for reflection after the role play. First let participants recall what took place in the role play (the "identification" step). The comments of observers can be particularly useful here. Then encourage people to analyse what happened. Then draw out the lessons that they have learned and that they feel can be applied in similar life situations.

Things to Remember while Conducting Role Plays

Be sure to set the scene very carefully before the role play begins. Role play instructions can be quite complex. It is important that everyone understands what is going on otherwise the experience can be quite confusing. If necessary, write out the scenario in which the role play will take place, or provide role cards for individual participants.

Do not let the role play go on too long. Remember that people are acting and that the situation can become quite forced (or alternatively just fizzle out) if you lose track of time. In the case of elaborate role plays with multiple parts designed to illustrate numerous issues, it can be useful to use the "stop-start" technique. Stop the exercise after a few minutes, discuss what has happened, and then resume the action. If necessary, you can stop and start several times.

Encourage participants to be true to their roles and to avoid stereotyping. Role play requires a good deal of sensitivity as people try to enter into the minds and experience of others. Stereotypes tend to confirm prejudice rather than facilitate learning. The point is not to go overboard with acting, but to succeed in seeing the world from a different point of view. As the trainer, always be open to see how role plays develop. Assist participants in their reflection on the experience (through observing what happened and asking questions), but be sure to let people derive their own points of learning. You cannot dictate what is meaningful to people, nor impose what they should learn.

Games

In voter education, games are a much-used tool to illustrate many aspects of elections. As mock elections and role plays create a virtual reality of voting stations and the voting procedures, games assist potential voters with the importance of voting, the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of the voter, attitude to other voters and electoral officials in an interactive and participatory way.

In some games, people may have to practice listening to what people are saying instead of assuming what someone is going to say based on prejudiced ideas of political or religious affiliation, or gender and age.

10.4.3 Door To Door Canvassing

Going to people where they are is a very personal way of spreading information about elections. For many people, this is the only time that politics becomes part of their immediate environment and they are faced with political dynamics in such a tangible manner.

Statutory organisations and political parties are both involved in some form of "go to the voter" drive in an effort to provide information, encourage voter registration or check the accuracy of voters' lists, answer questions and, in the case of political parties, persuade citizens to vote in a certain way.

This kind of door-to-door activity serves to sensitize members of the public to their right to vote or how they can register. Alternatively, it can be used to disseminate information on the different decisions at issue in an election or plebiscite (referendum).^[1]

Door-to-door canvassers are able to ask basic questions about people's readiness for an upcoming election. Importantly, they may also be able to take complaints and concerns to the responsible authorities.

This type of activity calls for proper planning so that volunteers know how to react correctly in the different situations that may arise. This is best done by making door-to-door programmes part of a time-defined campaign in which there is a preparatory phase including the following:

- training of volunteers
- establishment of a record-keeping system
- establishment of a visitation strategy

Following the preparatory stage, volunteers may conduct a sustained programme where they meet regularly with the organizers, debrief, and receive any additional training and materials.

Such a programme works better when it is condensed into a short period of time and when volunteers are not left on their own to cover a number of homes. Immediate changes can be made, information can be recorded, and any adjustments in the programme made on a daily basis.

It is important that there is a differentiation between door-to-door programmes designed merely to obtain information, such as surveys and census, and those that form part of an education programme. Volunteers are expected to interact with those they visit and need to be prepared to do this.

Privacy and Security

There are many societies where home visiting is not possible. The residences may be too spread out or too secure. Or visitors may not be willing to walk streets. Or residents may be suspicious of and unwilling to talk to persons they do not know.

Certainly, any campaign should be well publicized and visitors should be able to identify themselves before entering a residence, either by an identity card or special clothing.

Notes:

[1] Monica Jimenez de Barros, *Citizen Education: Its Importance in Latin America and Central Europe* (n.p.: Participa), 40. An unpublished and undated paper.

10.4.4 Each One Teach One

Any national voter education campaign is a huge undertaking requiring lots of time, planning, and resources. Training people to run workshops, setting up the workshops or information



sessions and conducting them, and preparing and broadcasting radio and television spots have much more impact if people who attend the meetings and receive information pass this information on to others in their families, streets, and communities. Personal recommendations from reliable individuals result in helping people to become better informed, trust the process, and appreciate the value of their contribution.

Every meeting and interaction between voter educators and citizens should include an element on disseminating the information. When information has been provided and meaningful learning has taken place, participants should be encouraged to spread the information to as many people as they can. Asking the question: "So, what now?", will get participants to come up with formal as well as informal ways of spreading the information in their communities.

In some settings, religious institutions can provide some people with an appropriate platform from which to encourage people to vote and provide them with information on how, where, and when this will be done.

The kitchen table is another site of much discussion and can provide a participant with an opportunity to share the information gathered with friends and have free-flowing discussions in a safe and familiar environment. The market place provides another location where there is a lot of human interaction and where information can be passed along.

Essential to doing this well is providing participants with ways of updating themselves with information about the elections. Sources should be reliable and equipped to deal with queries from citizens. Providing people with many copies of information leaflets or fliers will enable them to give something concrete to those they encounter. Asking each person at the workshop to take a poster popularising the elections back to their community and place it prominently will also spread information on elections. Contact information that they and others are able to use will be useful for updating information they have.

Finding and making use of people who are well connected in the community can be especially valuable (see Interlocutors and Intermediaries).

Apart from the initial cost of the first level of workshops, word-of-mouth transmission of information is cost free. There are, however, concerns about passing on information in this way. Ensuring that the information is accurate is difficult. Telling people where and how to get accurate information enables them to update themselves. Unbiased information is extremely difficult to monitor, thus it is vital that citizens are encouraged to emulate voter educators in their unbiased and nonpartisan behaviour.

Another reason this is difficult is that people, because they have to make a choice, naturally want their friends and neighbours to agree with their choice and in persuading them may give a slanted view of one party or candidate over another. Here too, encouraging citizens to pass on reliable central hotline numbers will enable people to verify the information they received from their family, friends, or even the press.

Ideally, every citizen should take responsibility for passing on to other citizens the message of participating in the democracy by voting in the elections. In a country where every citizen is passing on the message of voting, everyone eventually will hear how they can contribute to building democracy.

It is this multilayered approach of working together, to bring everyone to a point of believing in the power of the individual vote to make a difference, that will make an election free and fair and contribute to a stable democracy.

10.5 Other Strategies for Education Programmes

Included in this section are four programme possibilities that do not easily fit into the general categorisation.

These are the following:

- Voter Education Outreach via Information Centres and Hotlines
- Direct Mail
- Telephone Canvassing
- Street and Neighbourhood Campaigns

They have considerable merit.

While the first topic, setting up information centres and hotlines, has not been widely used, examples of national experiments suggest it should be a regular component of an election programme.

Direct mail tends to be used by political parties and by election authorities for general information. As such, it is a regularly used, but not always an obvious component of a voter education programme.

Telephone canvassing is also used in many countries by political and special interest campaigns.

Finally, street and neighbourhood campaigns describes the active involvement in local political life through which the majority of political leaders have come, and in which the most important education for civic responsibility takes place.

10.5.1 Voter Education Outreach via Information Centres and Hotlines

The establishment of hotlines and information centres provides the necessary capacity to respond to the public and enhances any general educational programme.

The majority of education interventions are based on an outreach principle: taking information and education to people where they are by using active strategies such as advertising, face to face interaction, campaigning and mass mailings.

But, particularly at election times and during important social moments, members of the public want and seek out information. This sea of change can overwhelm an organisation or an election management body because it is not prepared for individual calls or contacts with members of the public.

Yet such contact has significant advantages. It demonstrates some form of civic participation that, however selfish in motive or limited in design, has to be affirmed. The individual seeking information has a specific educational need that can be met quickly and with uncommon focus. Those seeking information also give information about their impressions and attitudes, about



the actual conduct of the election, or the condition of the society, and about the performance of the educational programme or campaign. Finally, the satisfied individual is likely to convey both the satisfaction and the information to others, becoming a powerful ally of the educational programme.

It is not enough to wait for the public, though. When a decision is made to establish such a centre, it must be advertised and should complement the general programme, through providing information to it, and using information from it, by advertising the general programme's services and being advertised by it.

Types of Information Centres and Hotlines

An information centre can be established as a walk-in facility or it can be linked directly to a telephone line and be invisible to the public. A hotline can be centralized and operate on a continuous basis or it can be decentralized and operate only at particular times in a campaign.

Whichever model is developed, it should be a one-stop shop, where the people who interact with the public have information at their disposal to answer any question without referring people to another department or information source. Members of the public do not have the time or the knowledge to go from pillar to post looking for information. They expect it from their first contact. It is important for anyone opening an information centre to understand that they will be faced with a range of questions and therefore develop systems for dealing with such questions.

With the rise of a consumer society in urbanised and industrialised countries, many companies have established such hotlines to deal with their customers. The technology and techniques of a public information line are similar to these.

The difference is in the level of service demanded, the neutrality that must be engendered, and the diversity of service required by statute or by organisational intention. It may be essential to deal with people in their home language to be able to refer them directly to legal or administrative assistance and to have access to a broad range of information to answer their questions. Perhaps the closest general parallel is the computer software support offered by vendors.

The Importance of the Telephone

Information centres are made possible by computers and telephones. In particular, they require access to telephone banks, central exchanges, and where possible, toll-free facilities enabling callers to place their call anywhere in the country and get a well-trained, and well-resourced, operator.

Because these centres have to gather information, it is easier to do this in a centralized fashion and regional centres often require heavily networked computer systems.

This means, however, that members of the public have to have access to a telephone. In some societies, this is taken for granted, either because there is universal personal access to an instrument or because there is a good and cheap public service.

In other countries this is not necessarily the case.

In setting up an information centre there is a need to consider alternative ways of making contact with the public. Amongst the strategies that have been tried are the following:

- establishing branches and community information desks. A national centre can establish regional walk-in centres or field-based desks that have trained staff who can replicate the national service, or operators who can use radio, cellular phones, or land lines to contact the trained staff on behalf of the individual.
- setting up temporary communications systems. In some circumstances, it is possible to set up temporary telephone systems. Solar-powered telephone systems are available, and community-based cellular systems can be arranged. In some cases, an electoral authority might have to prepare a telephone or radio link for a future voting site and this same site could be used as a dial-in point for a national information centre.
- including postal service responses. In addition to call-in systems, it is possible, when the mail is reliable, to have a postal response system.

All these systems are complementary to the central information hub and its establishment is key to the success of such a venture.

There are a few experiences of such a system operating in support of elections and democratic participation, and the lessons from these are available.

At the heart, they boil down to the following:

- the importance of setting up systems for collecting, storing, and retrieving information
- good one-to-one communication with the public
- extensive advertising to make sure that the system is used
- a robust telephone system capable of growing to meet almost unlimited demand and then shrinking down when this demand falls off
- a positive working relationship between the centre organizers and the statutory authority

When systems are set up, they are extremely popular. In South Africa, the information centre at the 1995 local elections took three thousand calls an hour during the voting period. In Australia, more telephone calls were made to the election management body's service in the last days of registration than to all government departments and the national airline.

This popularity, with sensational spikes in demand when the numbers are advertised on television or radio shows the importance of setting up such a line and also the importance of getting the planning and the technology right.

Spinoffs

One of the major spinoffs of such a centre is its ability to act as an early warning system of security and administrative crises. It can act as a cushion between election management bodies and the public when complaints are being raised.

Many citizens have complaints on Election Day but with election management bodies stretched, an information line not only hands out good information, which reduces frustration, but reduces tension and possible post-election grievance.



Mobile phones

Mobile telephones, or cellular phones, have been adopted with alacrity in most countries. In developing countries they have been particularly successful in leapfrogging the paucity of existing cable based infrastructure and the informal habitations which inhibit telephony requiring cables, billing addresses, and fixed base services.

As mobile telephony technology develops, commercial operators and individual consumers have exploited the technology in surprising ways. Education planners can take for granted that national mobile networks will incorporate through individual subscribers and community services (such as those in Bangladesh) an increasing number of their urban population, and possibly a significant proportion of the commercially active rural population.

Key features capable of exploitation at the moment include the short messaging service (SMS), value added telephone numbers, and caller identification and caller location, ring tones and logos. Technology which is coming on line at the time of writing which may introduce new innovations includes cameras and multi-media services (MMS), video-phone and GPRS data services, and e-mail.

An increasing number of mobile handsets will allow radio reception, and the features of MP3 or similar music players (see radio and convergence) are being incorporated in some instruments.

Amongst the experiments presently being undertaken are:

- Access to various broadcast or pre-recorded services
- Cell based access to services such as voter registration and roll checking
- Mass distribution of public education messages
- Election observation and related monitoring
- Voting and
- Political party campaigning

10.5.2 Direct Mail

Countries with reliable postal systems have an information resource that is inestimable. Educators and election administrators who are able to make their mail appear different from commercial and unsolicited advertising (junk mail) and who are able to prepare it so it has high status and readability are able to penetrate directly to each and every citizen. In countries where the postal system is not reliable, direct mail campaigns will not be a feasible option.

Getting Prepared

In order to do this, educators must

- have access to the mailing addresses of all citizens, through one or other statutory list or through a computerised voters list,
- allocate sufficient money to prepare and mail the material or have a special arrangement with the postal services to carry the items free or at a substantial discount,
- have a system for preparing and personalising the items being sent.

Deciding on Content

Successful direct mail campaigns can be conducted on the basis of an effective set of materials that have utility value for the citizen. When materials are personalised, the utility value may increase, but the motivation to read slightly less useful material also increases.

The material that is sent in the mail could therefore include registration and voting information, general information about the election, general constitutional information, and motivational material.

The direct mail package with the most impact includes a personal letter on a letterhead and supplementary leaflet material that is referred to and explained in the letter. Such a package can include more than one piece of material. If no letter is possible (even a circular that is prepared in the form of a letter), then the amount of material contained in one envelope should be reduced to avoid confusion on the part of the recipient.

In some countries, the election management body is mandated by law to send out "invitations" to vote or notices about the vote. These invitations typically include the voters' name, voter ID number, and the number and location of the voting site assigned to them. Educators may take advantage of this regular mailing by including brief voter education messages either in the invitation or to accompany it.

Accuracy with Names

If the recipient's name and address are to be included, these must be accurate. If there is any likelihood of them being inaccurate, an apology should be noted and the recipient encouraged to make the correction. This has the advantage of checking voters' list accuracy and establishing the impact of the mailing campaign, but it requires a system that does make the correction once it is noted.

Hand Delivery

While it is possible to hand deliver mail, this is less highly valued by the recipient, especially if it is addressed to the householder or not addressed at all. In some circumstances, such mail can increase its impact if it is part of a larger campaign and comes with an organisational identity on the envelope and an expectation of its arrival by the recipient.

Costs and Impact

While a direct mail campaign requires solid infrastructural support as mentioned above, and while the total cost of such a campaign can be high, the individual item cost can be quite low. Because the materials are standardized, they can be prepared centrally with limited staff and expertise. In addition, if the information is valued and anticipated, the delivery to an individual can be quite reliable.

The assumption driving such a campaign is that the package has general relevance and will be well received. In private direct mail campaigns, where it is intended that recipients respond by



making a donation or a purchase, responses are generally under five percent of the total mailed out.

This suggests that a campaign that relies on direct mail for motivational purposes or to advertise events or educational products, has to have a massive universe of names before the returns become significant.

Direct Mail Responses

Direct mail seeks to increase the response by becoming more scientific in its determination of the universe and by directing information based on better demographic studies. When responses are forthcoming from individuals, these can be tracked. When purchases are made, or particular services are required, these can be tracked and the mail that is sent revised to meet the anticipated needs of the individual more directly.

It is for these reasons that direct mail systems encourage response, and why an increasing number of commercial institutions are using credit card and other card systems to track individual patterns of consumption.

As yet, there is no example of an educational programme making use of these techniques, although private companies use them.

Obtaining Mailing Lists

In addition to the voters' list, organisations involved in more general educational programmes may decide to add a direct mail component to their programme and may be at a loss as to how to obtain substantial mailing lists.

In some countries, these can be purchased on the open market. However, a democracy programme, because of its social value, may be able to obtain such lists more cheaply and may be able to obtain access to lists that are less frequently sold. Amongst these are registration lists of tertiary institutions, church membership lists, union membership lists, motor registration and driver's licence lists.

Mailing When There Is No Mail

A programme may decide that, despite the difficulty of delivering a package of materials to individuals, it wants to do this in order to overcome the difficulties of arranging outdoor meetings, overcoming prejudice and fear of the only available educational or information staff, or the unreliability or distrust of other forms of communication.

It is possible to prepare materials and have them distributed through nodal organisations and civil society networks, through government departments, and on the basis of an individual collecting the packet at a convenient depot. Depending upon the country's infrastructure, such systems may be less reliable than a postal service. Whatever that distribution system, if it is unreliable, then the voter education programme will not reach each individual, and there is likely to be some loss of materials that will add to the cost per item delivered.

10.5.3 Telephone Canvassing

Effective telephone canvassing is a powerful tool in finding out about the electorate, answering people's concerns and questions about voting, popularizing the elections, and encouraging people to vote. The major advantage of contacting voters in this way is that telephoning provides access to many people in a relatively short period of time.

Telephone canvassing relies on an operational telephone system and is based on the assumption that there are telephones available at people's homes. There should be an accurate electronic or manual directory of names and telephone numbers. In instances where recipients do not have telephones, where the quality of the telecommunications system is poor, where contact information is not available, or where telephone canvassers are held in low regard, there will be obvious constraints for telephone canvassing campaigns.

At least some of these constraints may not exist, however, for the setting up of hotlines, where public or mobile telephones are made available for people to phone into a central number to receive information.

Both political parties and non-statutory organisations can use tele-canvassing. Political parties use this tool to provide information and elicit the support of potential voters. Non-statutory organizations use tele-canvassing organisations to popularize the elections and encourage people to support the democratic process.

A number of factors contribute to successful telephone canvassing campaigns:

One should find out about the target group. Linking with people by being able to speak to their concerns makes them more at ease and freer to discuss voting and elections.

One should be sure of the facts. Having up-to-date and accurate information enables canvassers to provide valuable information and assist potential voters.

One should find out about the voter. By obtaining statistical information about voters and their needs and concerns, canvassers are able to create relevant scripts for their operators.

A Popular Marketing Tool

Telephone marketing has become a popular tool to both gauge public interest and to sell goods. By now, people in countries where this tool is used are tired of being solicited over the phone to buy every imaginable product or service.

Voter education canvassers could therefore be faced with tough competition and should ensure that they have thought through precisely what information their operators intend to obtain or give. This should be placed in a script that operators are trained to follow.

A successful telephone call relies on canvassers introducing themselves and their mission effectively. There are a number of points to remember and include in an introduction:



- the canvasser's name
- organisation the canvasser represents
- what the canvasser can offer the person
- what the canvasser would like from the person
- an assurance that the information the person gives will not compromise the secrecy of their vote

All of this information should be conveyed in a friendly, honest, and open manner.

Setting Up a Canvassing Operation

For a national organisation to set up and implement a telephone canvassing operation, there are a number of factors that will contribute to its success:

- good telephone systems
- proper training of canvassers and supervisors
- committed staff who believe in the importance of voting and providing information to the public that will encourage them to vote
- effective supervision of operators and where necessary retraining
- good technical set-up and assistance
- user-friendly mechanisms for maintaining data and guaranteeing the confidentiality of information received
- continual assessment and flexible adaptation to meet the needs of the electorate

10.6 Training

Speaking to a canvasser can be very frustrating if the potential voter continually asks questions that the canvasser is not able to answer. For this reason, much effort has to be spent on equipping canvassers with useful skills and information. They need

- to be thoroughly briefed on the logistical information about the elections and have access to more technical information like ward demarcation and exact location of voting stations based on an individual's address,
- to have a clear voice when speaking,
- to speak neither too fast nor too slow,
- to speak with patience when answering questions,
- to have the facts of the upcoming election at their fingertips: this should include an analytical understanding of the implications of key decisions (such as ward demarcation) taken by parties or the election management body,
- to be able to refer people to other bodies or institutions that will assist them with specific information,
- to gather pertinent information from people,
- to be able to feed information into a central databank if required.

Tele-canvassing works only in societies that use the telephone as a natural means of communication and business. Where this is possible, educators have a potential tool for reaching out to individuals at a relatively low cost per contact.

10.6.1 Street and Neighbourhood Campaigns

Educators have to be open to the possibilities of live campaigns and events that can provide educational opportunities. There are several types of campaigns that are appropriate, actions that can be taken by educators and election moments that should be exploited.

Action Leads to Learning

Political and civic participation is learned by action in collaboration with other citizens. Such action, however small, enables people to learn the skills of working together and making decisions, unmask the social contracts and dynamics that underlie community life, and exposes people to one another's strengths and weaknesses, to models of civic action, and to the dilemmas of the common good.

While the majority of citizens engage in such action for a mixture of self-interest and altruism, many political and social campaigns begin because of a personal experience, frustration, or loss. There are those social movements with a model of activism that coaxes people to learn and grow through a sequenced and carefully selected exposure to different campaigns and to different tasks in those campaigns. Political parties provide such an opportunity for citizens. Those involved in voter and civic education need to consider ways to use existing opportunities for civic participation and where these do not exist there is a need to create them.

If learning is a disciplined reflection on experience, then such experiences must not only be lived but also reflected upon. While a number of civil society organisations do build in such opportunities for education and reflection, many do not, to their and their members' detriment.

Types of Campaigns

Educators need not attempt to limit the possibilities open to citizens but it is important that they are open to two possibilities:

- Civil society organisations, social movements or local groups of citizens will undertake a campaign that clearly has implications for the promotion of civic participation and democracy. Educators should look for ways to connect with the organizers of such campaigns and offer a range of services to them and to their members that will enhance the effectiveness of their campaign, and in the process ensure that it results in long lasting change in those who participate.
- An issue might emerge that has the ability to mobilize citizens. Educators will work with civil society and other potential allies to establish a social campaign around the issues.

In both circumstances, educators have to be aware that while their motivations are primarily educational, it is unlikely that the participants have the same motivations. Those engaging in civic campaigns expect to change their lives, whether it means ensuring a traffic plan for their neighbourhood, obtaining the right to a forty-hour work week, reclaiming ancestral land, passing legislation, or overthrowing a corrupt mayor. They may be realistic enough to realize



that they will not achieve all their objectives, and may be happy to have come through the campaign having learned how to do things better in the future, but they are unlikely to be satisfied with a better understanding of the electoral system.

They may, however, during the campaign, learn a great deal about the electoral system and about the role of local, regional, and national politicians, the importance of seeking allies, of using what democratic institutions are available, and of the possibilities of obtaining and maintaining public support for their cause.

Civic education thus cannot escape the demands of political activity; but educators can approach the matter in a nonpartisan way and with a belief that people can collaborate to achieve social goals, and that these goals need not be predicated by conflict and contradiction.

Such views will be tested by campaigns. The educational opportunities are great and especially significant for those involved. The risks and challenges to the educator are larger in similar proportion.

Ways of Building in Educational Opportunities

Citizens in pursuit of a goal want to learn. They want to increase their understanding of the issues facing them and to increase the skills they need to organize themselves. It may be, however, that those who already have these understandings and skills are peripheral to the campaign or uninvolved. Often, leadership is thrust upon those who feel unprepared.

So, the first task of educators is to ensure that they can get close to such people and provide them with support and encouragement. If educators are in organisations that have a reputation of supporting human rights and labour organisations as well as other civil society groups, then it is likely that in the course of providing this support, the opportunity for education will emerge.

Other organisations may have a strategy of leadership development that has resulted in the creation of a wide range of aware citizens who have received some skills training and already have links with this organisation. When a campaign starts they are likely to turn to those who trained them for further support.

Having established this relationship, or having been identified as a trainer or educator by the organisation leading the campaign, educators should consider the ways in which the campaign is planned, organized, and carried out as opportunities for sharing understanding and skills.

Strategic planning exercises increase people's awareness of social issues and social forces; planning exercises increase skills in planning and in organizing, in mobilizing resources and in building alliances; preparation for particular activities assists in developing a range of personal skills that have civic consequence as well as more general consequences. Amongst such skills might be those of advertising, letter writing, administration, bookkeeping, record keeping, communication, printing, and distribution of materials.

Educators should insist on two additional activities being introduced into the campaign plan. The first is the use of rehearsal before any public activity, whether a piece of street theatre, a neighbourhood market, a door to door visiting programme, or a direct protest action. Such rehearsal and simulation has the benefits of better preparing people, especially the inexperienced individuals or teams, for the activity.

They will have the additional educational benefits of establishing a reference framework for the activity and also of developing critical distance amongst the participants even in the heat of the moment.

All these will stand people in better stead for the second educational intervention, which is post-activity debriefing and reflection. In addition to thorough campaign evaluation, debriefing should encourage personal and organisational learning.

Election Campaigns

Because of the power of civic activism as a learning tool, educators involved in nonpartisan programmes such as voter education should direct people who are interested in becoming involved not only to assist in the voter education programme but to support a contestant or join the election administration.

Those who have organised or even worked in, a voting site or a counting station have an understanding of, and likely commitment to, elections that cannot be achieved by a voter education workshop however exciting. Those who have worked in a political campaign, (whether successful or not), have some understanding of political life and a point of reference for future political activity that enables them to make sense of any future education.

Again, it is worth repeating that experience on its own, without disciplined reflection, may not result in extensive learning. Those who are involved in party campaigns and in election administration therefore need to consider educational interventions, both for individual and organisational learning.

10.7 Commercial Advertising

Educators will use advertising during their programmes, but they may choose to use advertising techniques as a major component of their programme. This section looks at the reasons for this, the responsibilities of the educational team, the limitations on advertising, and the need to assess impact.

Many educational programmes require advertising, and large programmes may well develop a relationship with an advertising agency in order to assist them. Such advertising ranges from the placement of staff ads to advertising for events and products. It might involve national and community media.

What Advertising Can Do

Advertising is good at short repetitive messages, reminders, simple facts and establishing a mood (especially through television). It is less effective with detailed information and complex issues. Advertising cannot solve every problem or deal with every aspect of an educational programme, though agencies may suggest it can.

Using and Choosing an Advertising Agency



There is a much more significant use of advertising in voter and civic education. This is the use of an advertising paradigm and the retaining of an agency to lead and coordinate the entire programme.

Advertising agencies with experience of handling public service accounts can be chosen, or those that have previously worked on political contestants' campaigns. [1] But the central feature is that an agency rather than an educational institution is given the commission to assist in the handling of the public education and information programme.

Such a decision appears to solve a number of problems for those commissioning the programme. Advertising agencies immediately have access to information about voters and citizens built up through market research; they have a commercial interest in the professional conduct of the programme; they know how to produce and place large advertisements on national, and more occasionally, community impact media; and they make use of their programme management skills and contract money to develop synergy with other companies.

Of course, while the programme may achieve certain objectives, it may miss out on a variety of other educational outcomes that the programme may want to achieve. And not all advertising agencies have the same ability to manage such an account or the inclination to work with a bunch of bosses that such a commission to a civil society organisation or election management body may bring. Their involvement on behalf of political parties or candidates contesting an election might also present some problems, even if only in perception for nonpartisan efforts.

In general, those choosing an advertising strategy, as opposed to an educational programme with advertising support, will be required to enter into a contract with one or more advertising agencies and these agencies manage the account under the normal private sector advertising agency terms. In this case, there is a need for overall budgets to be set and tenders (bids) submitted, acceptable profit margins will also need to be agreed upon and the brief has to be explicit.

Project Management

An advertising campaign is not an opportunity for the organisation to abdicate responsibility for the programme, although there may be temptation to privatise the programme and adopt a hands-off approach, merely paying bills and accepting the final report.

Such an approach places the onus on the advertising agency and can result in extravagant and unnecessary expenditures, overambitious plans with an eye to advertising awards rather than impact, and occasional incongruences between the messages communicated and the voter or civic education programme itself. There can also be poorly managed relationships with potential allies of the overall programme, especially amongst educators, election management bodies and civil society organisations who operate outside the private sector paradigm.

In particular, organisations should understand that if an advertising campaign goes wrong, the advertising agency will not be blamed. It is the sponsoring organisation itself that has to deal with the public criticism. There have been cases where agencies have been less than professional in their choice of images and slogans, product spokespersons, or placement of advertisements.

It is therefore essential for the organisation to establish a vigorous and well-resourced project management team with direct access to all the information they might require, including the ability to conduct their own assessment of impact (see below). Such a team will develop the brief, establish the calendar, and oversee each and every aspect of the project. The agency will

report to the team and will not be responsible for convening the meetings at which reports are made and decisions canvassed.

Tenders and Contracts

Those responsible for implementing a programme, especially one related to elections, are under time pressures. They may be inclined to hand over this aspect of their responsibility as quickly as possible. Such an approach may include a decision to consult an advertising agency in order to determine what can and should be done, and then to request the same agency to go ahead and do it. There might even have been an informal recommendation that such and such an agency could handle the job.

There are dangers to omitting an opportunity for competitive tendering (bidding) that can enable the organisation to discover alternative approaches to the project and ensure that an appropriate price is paid.

There are ways to speed up this process, and to develop the internal capacity to establish the original project brief. An initial proposal can be sought from an agreed list of agencies, and then a final brief can be prepared on that basis; or a task group of individuals can be established to develop the brief.

The tender (bid) document can make various organisational demands that ensure that the job is spread between a number of advertising agencies each of whom have some particular expertise, without allowing the industry to dictate the terms of the tender (bid).

When an initial exploration has to be done, or the preparation of a tender (bid) document and investigation of the initial conditions within which the project will have to operate, it is better to exclude those who prepare this material from submitting a final tender (bid). Otherwise there is a temptation to slant the documentation in favour of the expertise of one's own organisation. For guidelines on how to conduct a competitive tender (bid) please refer to Newspaper - Sweden - Multilingual.

When it has been agreed that a tender will be given, care should be taken with the contract in terms of cost overruns. [2] It is far too easy to allow an agency to say that the brief was inaccurate, or the expectations of the client have grown, or that the time available was incorrectly estimated. With election management bodies under pressure to get an election right at almost any cost, there are possibilities for agencies to escalate the cost of the contract beyond the initial figure. [3]

Understanding Terms

Advertising agencies speak a language of their own. Educators can misunderstand it. It is important to take some time to ensure that any project management team is on the same wave length as the agency.



In particular there are two types of activities with relevance to a campaign being conducted through an advertising paradigm. Agencies talk about *above-the-line* activities, which involve the standard and tried forms of advertising campaigns through the national and local media: press, radio, and television spots, and billboards. They also talk about *below-the-line* activity, which means the management of events to achieve the ends of the campaign. Amongst these below-the-line activities are the distribution of trinkets, the running of game shows, product placement, and conducting of public events.

Involvement of Civil Society

It may be assumed that the activities of civil society can be managed through those agencies with experience in *below-the-line* campaigns. This may or may not be true, but there is evidence to suggest that the control over such activities normally exercised by advertisers is not acceptable to nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and membership-based organisations. Nor are they satisfied to have their activities dictated, but prefer to be involved in the strategic planning stage, something that is often not possible where an agency has received the initial contract.

However, there are ways in which civil society activity can be stimulated to support an above-the-line campaign. This is best done not by the agency but by those who understand and work with civil society organisations on a regular basis (see Organised Civil Society as Stakeholders in the Voter Education Mandate).

Impact Assessment

There is evidence to suggest that face-to-face educational activities (direct approaches) make a greater impact on people's levels of confidence in voting and elections than advertising spots (indirect approaches). There is also some difficulty in separating the impact of television spots (normally considered the most important factor in an advertising campaign, and the most expensive) from more general television coverage, especially during election campaigns.

Large advertising campaigns also determine the organisational design of the organisation sponsoring them, as they have particular effects on response from the public. Advertising a toll-free number results in a massive spike of calls to that number followed by a rapid fall off, unless the advertisement is repeated. Organisations may have to gear up to cope with the spike when they actually do not need that capacity normally.

There are examples of small businesses suffering because they cannot cope with the demand that a successful national campaign may elicit, and there is also some danger that an organisation might come to be associated with the matter advertised. For example, a civil society organisation promotes a free and fair vote, and then the election fails: at the very moment when the organisation is most needed, its association with a failure makes the public blame it.

These may not be matters that a large company has to consider, but the smaller and more ephemeral democracy coalitions, election management bodies, individual NGOs, and membership organisations have to consider them.

More important than nervousness about embarking on the exercise itself is the assessment of the success of the campaign. An advertising agency has a vested interest in ensuring that the project is successful.

If the criteria by which success is measured are not agreed upon at the beginning, criteria will be put forward at the end that can only be measured positively. In a programme with qualitative goals as an educational programme might have, it is as easy for an agency to massage its achievements as it is for an educational organisation or NGO. A report that focuses on the number of advertisements placed (a quantitative indicator) might produce more positive results, for example, than one that considered their impact on behaviour.

What is more, it is possible to manage impact not only at the end but also during a campaign by selecting the areas where success is likely because of other factors rather than dealing with the difficult areas.

There is a need for individuals managing a project to set in place a monitoring programme and their own research facility for measuring impact. They should make the information they obtain available to the agency, and may even write into the contract the manner in which such information will be collected and how it will be integrated into the campaign as it progresses.

They also should develop a mechanism for ensuring that the programme is responsive to this information, and that there is sufficient flexibility to renegotiate the brief to deal with changes in the initial conditions, in particular, the political context.

There are examples of programmes that have done this and kept very close to the changing dynamics of the overall context and to the evolving needs of the client organisation and their interpretation of the public need. There also have been programmes that have remained true to their original strategy despite evidence that the programme was not dealing with the questions being asked by the public. But that is one of the dangers of contracting an agency more used to selling a product than encouraging people to learn and change.

The Relationship between Advertising and Public Education Programmes

Advertising plays an important role in ensuring the success of a public education programme. It is an essential component and asset of such a programme. But in general, a public education programme should seek to extend its reach beyond the information and marketing approach into areas where advertising agencies may not normally tread. However, the success of public education programmes, and the continuing use of advertising agencies to develop components of such public service projects, has resulted in a convergence between those involved in education and those who are advertisers.

The question that has to be resolved then is not which is better, but who is in control of the public service programme. Given the political needs of public education programmes, their social goals, and the importance of public consultation and public participation, it appears natural that advertising agencies will continue to act as providers of a particular specialized service rather than as managers of the overall programme.

Notes:



[1] Such work is normally put out to tender but there are countries where work on political campaigns would disqualify an advertising agency from taking on a nonpartisan voter education account.

[2] While an election management body or a voter education organisation may not have much experience with contracts, there is likely to be a more experienced body within government: indeed election management bodies which are part of a government office may have to work through a body such as a tender board.

[3] Those contracting agencies should look at the ways in which they charge for their services. They may request a direct payment for work done. Or they might charge a commission on advertisements placed. While the second might appear cheaper, there is an incentive for the agency to **over-advertise** in order to boost its revenue. It is essential that the financial implications of advertising be discussed before contracts are signed.

10.8 Distance Learning Techniques

Distance learning is the preferred term for education in which there is a geographic distance between the educational provider and the learner and where there is not daily or regular contact between the educator and the student. In one respect, all voter and civic education starts from that point, unless conducted in a classroom in an institution where both the educator and the student are regularly present.

In this sense, techniques of public education parallel those of distance learning, with the possible exception that distance learning is inevitably based on specific and testable educational objectives in which the learner must ultimately demonstrate competence through an assignment or examination.

The techniques are particularly well-suited to the training and orientation of educators, and consist of the following aspects:

- *Recruitment of Learners:* In the first place, distance learning requires identification of learners and the establishment of a means of communication between them and the educational institution. This communication can be through a telephone, the post, computer networks, or a locally placed learner coordinator. This contact is essential because there needs to be an ongoing interaction between the institution and the learner. In order for this to happen, the educational institution must prepare a prospectus that enables learners to select in advance the courses they will complete.
- *Preparation and Distribution of Learning Materials:* When the learners are identified, and they have registered for a particular set of courses, materials are distributed that have been carefully prepared for various levels and include self-study directions and exercises. Such materials may make it necessary for learners to meet in small groups to work through particular sections, or they may be entirely individualistic.
- *Programmes in Support of the Self-Study Modules:* Institutions should establish a range of programmes in support of these self-study materials, and it is the ability of an institution to mobilize these programmes that adds value to its role as a distance education provider.

First, and most traditionally, the institution will provide an assignment and testing facility and will provide marking and feedback facilities so that students can assess their progress before any final testing or collection of a student portfolio.

Second, the institution can provide opportunities for learners to meet the course providers in large type events close to their homes. Such events may or may not include personal contact but are likely to include lectures in support of the educational course of study. They may also include counselling in small groups or organised meetings between students from different areas.

Third, a programme of on-the-air schooling can be established through national, regional, or community broadcast channels, through television or radio. Such programmes can be scheduled according to a timetable which is made available to students in advance so that they can attend. This programme can be supplemented by provision of instruments over which students can receive the broadcast, such as wind-up or battery-operated radios, or community television sets.

Finally, the institution can recruit, train, and pay for local education group coordinators who perform a dual counselling and facilitation function for groups of learners on a regular basis. Such groups may get together only to move through the provided material, or they may have joint assignments in courses that rely on collaborative effort.

- *Pre-performance Programmes:* In distance programmes with a formal component, performance is likely to be assessed through an examination. In programmes using distance learning techniques to train people for voter education or some similar programme, performance is likely to consist of going into the field.

Such programmes can also consist of a large event, but in general they will consist of meetings between the educator team and the learners in a question and answer format together with a last-minute orientation and possibly final information session.

At this pre-performance moment, learners are anxious, and such sessions are designed to allay these anxieties by ensuring that people's administrative and practical concerns are dealt with.

Radio provides a particularly good format for such events, because it is possible for listeners to call in with questions and for these to be broadcast together with their answers.

- *Certification:* When the course of study has been successful completed, and the learner's competence has been tested, there will be a form of certification. Two points should be made about this certification.

First, while some participants in a distance learning programme may have little experience, the majority will be educated and have some work experience. Certification should take this into account and, in the case of voter education or similar training, a certain recognition should be given to what learners will accomplish in the workplace over the course of their training. Learners should not necessarily be expected to participate in all activities from the time of registration to certification. Still, the value of certification should be duly recognized, and its importance should be communicated to people in a manner that neither overestimates nor underestimates its value.



Second, the programme's relationship to other certificates and to a national qualifications framework should be considered. If adults are going to be expected to take part in a strenuous after-hours learning experience, they are going to have to give up something else (employment, other study, and time with family or friends). It is hard to recruit such people without some value being attached to the qualification, with possible exception during a founding election.

10.9 Digital Materials

There is no longer a clear boundary between electronic media and the media that have emerged as a result of new technologies. For example, the advent of the Internet has been revolutionary in giving those who own a personal computer access to a range of digital products.

With new technology and the growing impact of social media and digital profession networks, it is possible for individuals to register their interests and information about those interests will be sent to them.. Conversely, new technology enables readers to select the type of information they would like to receive. In short, the Internet has changed the way things are done.

The fact that computers have become more increasingly available in private homes, public places and community spaces, gives individuals direct access to materials (documents, photos, videos, podcasts, and others.) available on the internet and enables them to respond to messages placed on the Internet.

With regard to voter education, this means it is now possible to design programmes and tailor messages, even in developing countries (those with generally few resources, less access to computer networks, and a reliance on telephone connections) where few people have access to the Internet. Interestingly, the Web is a medium without borders. For example, once on the Web, a resource created in the United States for voters with low literacy can be accessed by a library patron in South Africa.

The Internet has drastically changed things. Its evolution is constant, and it is difficult to forecast its impact on learning patterns and educational strategies. So far, voter and civic education programmes have made innovative use of the Web, but much more can be done.

Unfortunately, as with all new technology, one fact remains: innovation is often driven by enthusiasm rather than by a professional assessment of outputs, outcomes and impact. When aiming to develop an effective website, the costs can prove high. It may indeed be possible to recover these costs, for example, by selling advertising space. However, in order to do so, the site would have to generate enough traffic – and attract the target audience. It may initially be best to rely on tools that will primarily enable the distribution of documents to educators and election officials.

In the same light, it may not be advisable to expend resources so that a student in California can learn how to vote in Bosnia. That being said, countries with high numbers of skilled expatriate voters may be well served by a well-designed website.

This section deals with publishing on the Web as well as the advantages and opportunities offered by advances in digital production.

10.9.1 Digital and Recorded Materials

Standard analogue recording methods are still in use in many contexts and their products are important and versatile media for the distribution of educational content, see Alternative. However, the emergence of digital recording means that an entirely new world of production, editing and distribution has emerged.

As with many new innovations, costs of entry and production have come down, and in some cases materials can be produced or reproduced adequately for educational use in individual and small group settings on office or home computers equipped with the necessary peripherals such as microphones, digital cameras and digital recorders. The ability to sample professionally produced materials – clips of films, stills, music excerpts and so on - editing these into productions developed in one or other digital format – from the ubiquitous power point (or similar presentation software) through to the various sound and moving image formats – has liberated the means of production from production houses.

Educators have to be aware however of copyright and software licence issues; of mistakenly thinking that an adequate production can be done by untrained people - owning desktop publishing software does not make a person capable of designing a publication – and of underestimating the costs of software support and staff time for in-house production. Nevertheless, a new world is opening up.

Having acquired or developed digital materials for use as supporting educational materials in a larger curriculum, or relying on them as the primary educational tool, there are new opportunities for distribution.

Audio materials

There has been a boom in personal audio devices. The most successfully marketed is the Ipod, but it is only one of a number of devices designed for storing and playing audio material at the user's discretion. Made for music, these devices are now doubling as storage devices for large files, and there is an increasing trend towards users downloading material specially prepared and made available on websites. Known as podcasting – although not confined necessarily to this particular brand – materials have now been produced in the form of weekly radio magazines, museum guides, and audio blogs or diaries on current events.

As these devices become more generally available, or can be given at low cost to travelling educators, they can be plugged into public address systems and provide a relatively seamless interface between those producing material, loading it onto a website, having it downloaded at any remote location and then having the material played to an audience of one or more people at a time of their choosing.

Video materials

Similar devices are arriving on the market capable of displaying still or moving images. However, these are more expensive. More appropriate for the distribution of video materials is the increasingly available DVD. Recording equipment for digital video disks is now readily available.

Cellphones / mobile telephones



Manufacturers of mobile telephones are using the combination of software and hardware developments to enable their telephones to double as digital devices, and to act as radio receivers. However, commercial imperatives have meant that their development is driven in favour of encouraging users to download material directly through wireless connections and to stay connected while listening, viewing or sending.

For the educator, this means creating separate (at the moment) arrangements for distributing materials to those who use mobile telephones.

10.9.2 Web-based Voter Education Materials

With most computer software developed in societies with the ability to connect computers at low cost and high speed, even standard operating and office software is Internet enabled, with connections for purposes of upgrading, bug fixing, and help operating in the background. The revolution, much talked about previously, is now over. The world has changed fundamentally – and those who have access to a telephone and a computer find it hard to even conceive of a time before the Internet.

Nevertheless, there are still digital divides, between those who have this access and those who don't – still the majority of the world's population; and amongst the haves, between those for whom telephones and computers are cheap and easy to obtain and maintain and those for whom these are necessary but costly tools.

Educators developing web-based materials must remain as attuned to their audiences as those developing materials in any other medium. Unfortunately, the cost of entry and publishing to the web are low, materials can be rushed to publication and they can be amended on the fly. All these make the temptation to publish on the web without considering standard publishing and quality control questions quite high, see Printed Materials. This temptation should be resisted.

But in addition to these standard questions, those committed to web publishing should consider a number of other matters which arise as a result of qualitative change which the Web has brought.

While there are a few examples of web-based materials being projected to a group audience, this is primarily a use of the Web as a distributor of particular content – for example a video clip or document, or possibly a web-based live interview – but quality of reproduction still imposes some limits to this. However, the Web is largely a facility for simultaneous access by a number of individuals. Even where these individuals are engaged in a joint activity, the technology requires separate screens and keyboards, if not separate computers. Collaborative work on a single access point is possible, but not entirely successful or satisfying.

Multi-media

There are very few limits, other than those of the imagination and skill of the educator and his or her technical team, to the range of media which can be used to animate, highlight, illustrate, illuminate or merely decorate materials made available on the Web. Limitations should rather be imposed by consideration of educational objectives, audience and the constraints of the equipment and download speeds, and reliability at the user end. This can of course mean that those expecting 'bells and whistles' (a term used to describe websites with a high degree of features) may be disappointed by apparently bland or 'low tech' sites. Sometimes these people have provided the money or resources, have been commissioned to do the necessary programming, or are programme stakeholders rather than the intended audience. Educators should be prepared to defend their choices vigorously.

Differential user platforms

In addition to the concerns above, it is in any event true that those at the user end come to the web materials with different interfaces. Different browser software, different screen size and quality, and different download systems – slow modems, cable or satellite, data streaming devices, digital, analogue or fibre telephone lines or wireless - are all present-day possibilities. This affects just what a user sees, in what order they see the material being loaded onto their screens, and the extent to which colours and images display themselves. Managing these differences is normally left to programmers but educators should take some interest in the outcomes of their work, especially if they are trying to ensure standardization and general, as opposed to discriminatory, access to their materials. A number of sites have advisory notes regarding the most appropriate software, screen settings, and other conditions for viewing material, but these do not help those who cannot achieve these conditions.

Web to print

The majority of websites still operate as electronic and interactive books, whether providing content, how to's and manuals, or brokering the content developed by others. It is increasingly likely that these materials are going to be printed for later use or for distribution. Therefore educators must consider and develop the appropriate tools to allow such printing without the materials losing their integrity. But in addition to merely considering the conditions under which materials are going to be printed, this facility provides an opportunity for the distribution of materials to educators and learners in remote areas or in widely separate sites. There are a number of possible advantages to this – whether those of reducing cost and impact, overcoming poor infrastructures, or overcoming security and censorship constraints. See Environmental Considerations of Voter Education.

On-line activities

However, the Web is not only a publisher. It provides significant opportunities for interactive behaviour between an educator and learners, either in real time or through consecutive activities. Real time interactions can include conversations between individuals, or within a group, or the delivery of a video or audio lecture together with questions from remote audiences. Consecutive activities might include moderated discussion forums where contributors e-mail contributions which are then displayed edited or unedited for all contributors; submitting assignments taken on-line after concluding readings posted by the educators; and so on (see below on e-mail). There are an increasing number of automated on-line tests and surveys being conducted in which the results are then relayed to the appropriate person after being collated. The efficacy of these distance learning techniques – expanded in scope, speeded up and facilitated by the Web – must be judged in the same way as all distance education processes. Do they result in change in knowledge, behaviour or attitudes? Are they cost effective? Are they of the necessary educational quality and standardization? What are the drop-out rates?

Synergy



Apart from convergence, in which the same material is 'streamed' or broadcast through a variety of media or 'receivers', the Web provides for some fundamental connections between different media. While it is perfectly possible for people to use e-mail independently of a web browser, there are an increasing number of subscriber lists distributing bulletins and newsletters by e-mail which alert people to material on a website. Best practice seems to be to keep these e-mails short and to provide links so that users make the decision about what and when to read. Websites are also using e-mail forms to solicit responses to their material.

Wikis

"Wiki wiki" is an Hawaiian term meaning 'quick' or 'informal'. It was adapted to name and describe the development of collaborative software which enables a group of users to contribute to and amend content. The first use of this software was in the creation of "Wikipedia" but a variety of open source versions has meant that it is now possible at limited cost to develop a wiki site and allow an interest group to establish a web community where they can interact with one another or develop materials. It was previously not possible to do this, and there are alternative ways of doing this. Increasingly, the tools for such collaborative communities and for web publishing are becoming easier to use and more freely available.

User tracking and statistics

Software exists to enable some automated tracking of visitors to a website. Unfortunately these automated systems are not able to discriminate as well as needed, so invariably large numbers of users are recorded as being from Virginia in the USA, or from commercial sites only because of the dominance of certain internet service providers who enable individuals to access the Web. However for evaluation purposes as well as to ensure that delivery of the educational materials is to the right audiences, finer tracking may be required. Sites are increasingly encouraging registration to enable them to recognize their visitors in the same way that an institution may require a sign in at reception or a store or hotel may want to recognize frequent visitors. Such registration systems can sometimes have a chilling effect on visitors who do not expect to have to disclose their identity or remember passwords and user names. As a result of this, some sites are segmenting content as an incentive for registration, or preserving certain parts of the site for those with whom they have established a relationship, whether commercial or programmatic. Public service sites providing educational materials will probably adopt a universal access approach and trade off the quality of their statistical and tracking data, but there have been some attempts by nongovernmental organisations to make their sites self-sustaining through advertising. These are going to be ongoing dilemmas especially for poorer institutions and countries.

File sharing

Software exists for facilitating file sharing and downloading. File transfer protocols are now seldom used by casual computer users who rely on streaming and high speed connections to preserve the integrity of their files: but they were and remain a staple of the Internet. The developments of free copying and distribution mechanisms by programmers have been of particular concern to commercial producers of moving images and music., There may well be times when the ability to file share is useful to educators seeking fast and cheap distribution of materials, see Digital and Recorded Materials.

11. Implementation

Preparing an educational programme requires a thorough knowledge of the learner constituency, understanding of their educational needs, a set of general aims developed with the learners or their representatives, and an idea of the options available to the educator for methodology, media, and message.

Implementation requires a further set of steps.

- Learning objectives must be developed for each learner group (see [Programme Design](#)).
- These must become the starting point of an educational plan.
- That plan must take account not only of the curriculum issues but also the delivery mechanisms.

In particular, delivery must take account of the people involved (see [Staffing](#)), the materials that have to be prepared to support them (see [Procurement](#)), the distribution mechanisms (see [Storage and Distribution](#)), and the monitoring systems that ensure the programme is completed effectively (see [Administration and Management](#)).

When a voter education or information programme is linked to an upcoming election, these tasks can be condensed into a very short space of time. Even when a more general programme of education is required, changes in legislation and in the needs of learners make it likely that flexible and robust delivery systems need to be established.

In addition to these topics, these sections also cover specific programme implementation issues related to closed institutions and Security.

11.1 Preparation

Preparation for implementation requires attention to a range of issues. While some of these can be tackled during the programme assessment and preliminary stages, unfortunately a number of them must be delayed until the educational plan is further developed.

For this reason, a Voter Education Calendar that is much more detailed than the election calendar is required. Plans must be considered for financing the programme (see [Budgeting and Financing for Voter Education Programmes](#)). Unless funding has been obtained in advance for the programme plan, educators need to seek funds after developing a plan and before implementing it. This can take a considerable amount of time.

The programme design itself has to be developed in macro and micro details. Having blocked out the various elements that will be used, curriculum developers and materials producers need to focus on specific micro or lesson plans.

Having established these plans, there will be a need to commission the production of materials and materials that already exist have to be procured, stored, and distributed (see [Procurement](#)) Staff recruitment and training will also be required (see [Staffing for Civic and Voter Education](#)).



Any plan will also have to have some degree of flexibility built in to deal with any unforeseen developments.

Making Use of What is in Place

This narrative suggests a linear progression, but even when there is little in place before the programme, preparation is based on local conditions. There may be existing staff or materials around which the programme can be developed.

There may be an existing plan that was used to finance the programme before the appointment of the first members of the educational team, or certain goods and services may already have been commissioned.

Having determined one strategy, it may become apparent that there are not sufficient materials for its success, or it may be beyond the capability of available staff. Changes can be made at a macro or, more often, micro level.

Time Lines

As the preparatory phase of the programme consists of repetitive elements, care should be taken to establish a time line or calendar that allows sufficient time - particularly for materials production and distribution. In addition, the calendar should be prepared to allow the programme to develop as it unfolds. This is essential if the programme is to be responsive to feedback from the field. It can also strengthen the programme's content and shorten its duration. It may not be necessary to recruit staff to train voter information officers at a voting station until just before training workshops begin. Or, it might be possible to familiarize trainers with that programme and then have them engage in other training activities. Especially for election programmers, staff should be employed on this basis from the beginning. Materials required for that same event may also not be needed until just before the event.

Commitment

The whole preparatory phase is one of marshalling resources and time in the most efficient way possible. Educators who have conducted a similar programme before will find they have a book from which to work. Those conducting a programme for the first time should work as a team to test their plan, and can expect that even with the best possible plan, they will work longer hours and under more pressure than originally expected.

11.1.1 Voter Education Calendar

Preparation for an education programme requires knowledge of any set calendar, whether it is an election calendar or a calendar of special commemorative dates. It also requires its own calendar.

Visibility and Detail

This calendar should be inscribed where all can see it. In education programmes where administrators are experienced, such a calendar may note only the event milestones. But where administrators are less experienced, the calendar should include all the preparatory deadlines. Detail is important, as is display. All those who have a stake in the programme need to be able to see and understand the programme.

Apart from the confidence this gives that the programme will continue even in the absence of a key team member, the calendar provides a visual imperative in favour of completing the programme according to the original plans.

Calendar Construction

In order to construct such a calendar, educators should begin by blocking out the phases of their programme. Then they should identify particular event milestones.

On these basis, educators count back to put in realistic deadlines. Such deadlines may include a best and worst case scenario so that a set of dates become bracketed as alternative dates..

There is project management computer software to assist in this process, but it can be done manually and charts can be prepared using newsprint or year planners. Of course, as staff become more experienced, their ability to predict precisely how much lead time is necessary before each milestone on the calendar improves.

To begin with, extra time should be built in and calendars should be constructed in such a way that alterations can be made as more information about progress is acquired.

Imposed Deadlines

In some cases, planning the preferred route backwards when a programme is being established for the first time is not possible: there are so many days to a democratic moment. In such a case, the crucial issues are those of external suppliers and available person-days (multiply the number of days available by the number of persons available for that particular job). Speed can be obtained by spending money: to increase supplier incentives, and to employ more staff to do the same job.

Decisions about these can be made earlier if the education team has a draft calendar already available.

11.1.2 Budgeting and Financing for Voter Education Programmes

Educational programmes require funding, but how much is required?

Before consideration can be given to ways of financing the programme, a budget has to be prepared. And preparing a budget for an educational programme requires some understanding of the programme that is to be implemented.

Educators have to be involved in the budget process and need to know the different ways in which budgets can be formulated.

Zero-Based Budgeting



The most accurate, and also the most time consuming, budgeting is done on a zero-based system alongside the development of the educational programme.

Zero-based budgeting means that the actual cost of each item in the programme is worked out. For example, if the programme calls for twelve sheets of paper to be distributed, then the cost of those twelve sheets of paper is calculated and added to the cumulative total.

Such a process requires very close attention to detail and a very clearly described programme.

Block Budgets

A block budget starts with a specified grant or income figure. Such a figure can be split up according to gross categories: staff costs, administration, publications, and voter education events.

From these blocks start a set of calculations determining how to spend the available money most efficiently? When there are designated blocks, it may not be possible to move money from one block to another and this can be a real frustration as those doing budgets realise they could save money on salaries and spend more on events or vice versa.

Impress Systems

The weakest and most disempowering system is that where the money is held at the centre and various projects can draw down cash on request and occasionally in advance of expenditure. In such a system, the centre may have an idea what the budget is, but this is seldom shared with the periphery that must ask for each bit of money without knowing whether it will be available. With the criteria for availability so vague, those asking do not know whether there genuinely is no money left or whether the centre just does not approve of the particular project.

Cost of Living Budgeting

Next to impress systems come the historic systems in which the budget from one year is merely recalculated to allow for any inflation or changes in cost of living (COL). Such budgets become more and more inaccurate and less and less reflective of the actual programme that has to be presented. When there was and is continuity, such budgets may be possible.

But planning a programme to meet the context and a specific set of educational objectives is likely to require the innovation of zero-based budgeting at some time, even if it takes longer.

Financing

After completing a budget, educators should consider ways in which the programme is to be financed. Two ways predominate social interventions outside of those financed by the state:

- grants and donations and
- cost recovery and self-financing

Grants and Donations

Education in support of elections and democracy is a national and international priority, although it does go through phases when it is more or less popular. As such, it is most likely to be funded by grants or donations. In order to obtain grants, whether from government, international aid agencies, philanthropic or solidarity foundations, or charitable institutions,

certain documentation has to be prepared based on the programme planning that the education team has undertaken.

The depth and coherence of the planning, and its social significance, duly documented and noted, is the primary source of success in obtaining grant funding. General donor funding, which might be based on a far wider range of individual perceptions of what is worth giving money to, is likely to be influenced by additional factors. These include the style with which appeals are made, the endorsements that the programme has received, and existing relationships between the donor and the implementing organisation.

Grants are given on the basis of homework done and matching priorities between the grant maker and the proposal.

Different grant makers have different priorities and standards for the presentation of proposals. In most cases, they offer these publicly.

Proposal Writing

A proposal needs to include documentation specifying the context for the programme and the reasons it is necessary. This will be followed by a description of the strategy to be followed and the intended outcomes expressed in a set of objectives. A detailed or summarised work plan is also required, including arrangements for evaluation and monitoring. A budget for the proposed programme must be given.

The proposal must also provide information about the organisation that is proposing the work and the individuals within that organisation who will be taking responsibility for the programme.

Within this simple framework certain grant makers require additional information, and may direct precisely what this must be. Such directions inevitably increase the difficulty of preparing proposals for education organisation in civil society: but there may be concomitant increases in the amount of money made available.

Educators preparing the proposal should consider the following sections of this topic area.

Logical Frameworks

An increasing number of grant makers request logical framework plans or *logframes* from those who submit proposals. Unfortunately, they do not all use exactly the same format and terminology.

The logic of a log frame is straightforward. It is an attempt to ensure that those submitting the proposal have dealt with the matters outlined above and also with how the programme will be



evaluated. The log frame also lays out the basics of a business or work plan and enables a programme planner to ask 'if' and 'then' questions.

The first condition of a logical framework is to settle on the goals and outputs that are expected and the logical relationship between these, the activities the programme will undertake, and the actual societal impact. Logframes are likely to require a listing of planning assumptions, assessment of the risks to be considered, and the indicators that will be external reference markers of the success of the programme.

It is possible to develop a logframe that is displayed in simple form of a table, in which the various stages of the plan follow one another. It is also possible to use the logframe outline to create a narrative document.

When the logframe has been established, it is theoretically possible to budget each item (and thus prepare a zero-based budget). Such a budget can be linked directly to outputs rather than to the general organisational processes that must be undertaken to achieve these outputs.

Perhaps the most useful contributions of the logframe movement have been to systematise the planning process and to force the asking and answering of certain questions, such as: "Is this worth doing?" and "Will it really make a difference where we think it should?"

Sources of Funds

There are many sources of funds and civil society organisations involved in voter and civic education should develop partnerships with as many as possible. One valuable resource on grant-making institutions throughout the world is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) website which can be accessed at <http://www.ned.org>. <http://www.ned.org>.

Election management bodies might be constrained in their ability to develop the same level of partnership by legal restrictions. But the source of the money is more limited.

First, there is the discretionary income of individuals and private organisations that these individuals and organisations have control over and make available according to their own priorities.

Second, there are trust funds that have been set up to manage money earned over time. These funds have a predominantly professional approach to the disbursement of their funds based on the wishes of the originator of the funds. This implies both flexibility and limitations.

Third, some countries make available percentages of their state revenues for international aid and partnerships. Such money is controlled in the final instance by the voters of that particular country, although it might be in the hands of state officials or development professionals. It is therefore subject to the vagaries of the electorate, but more importantly, it is money that has been earned by ordinary people even if they are fortunate to live in a more affluent part of the world.

Funding Agreements

When a proposal has been submitted and accepted, it is likely to be followed by a legal agreement that imposes on the organisation accepting the grant and certain conditions in relation to reporting, auditing, accountability, and restrictions in the use of the money linked to the original or amended proposal.

Cost Recovery and Self Financing

Even with government funding and international grants, voter education projects can require additional funding. There is even the possibility that, if additional funding can be acquired for certain projects, this can extend the reach of other aspects of a national programme.

Certain types of projects lend themselves to cost recovery or self-financing, and there are certain institutional arrangements that provide better ways of doing this type of work. This section defines cost recovery, suggests that some voter education programmes can pay for themselves, and explains how to set up a system to achieve this.

What is Cost Recovery?

Most non-statutory organisations involved in voter education are registered trusts, charities, or non-profit organisations. They do the work they do for the public interest. In terms of their national or international legal status, they are not profit-making companies.

However, they can recover their costs of doing business from a client or from a third party. These costs will certainly include, if carefully budgeted and billed, the costs of project development, organisational overheads, and future project sustainability.

What about Commercial Activities?

As voter education becomes a more specialised activity, and with the advent of voter education programmes being tendered out (competitively bid), there are companies that see the possibility of obtaining work on a commercial basis. This is true of suppliers to voter education organisations themselves, whether printers, commercial artists, advertising agencies, or distributors. Election management bodies may be able to obtain the services of government agencies at a cost, or to use their size to obtain special commercial rates, but nevertheless the majority of services are not offered *pro bono*.

Managing these services, whether as subcontracts or as primary suppliers, requires special attention and raises a number of separate issues. See [Managing Contracts](#), and [Commercial Advertising](#).

Making Voter Education Pay for Itself

There are a range of options open to programme planners.

Provide Education to Those Who Can Pay for It.

Certain organisations have an interest in ensuring effective voter education for their members and are able to pay for this service. Companies, in particular, may consider civic education to be essential for their workforce. If they see the benefits of this in terms of higher levels of commitment to the company, less disruption due to political uncertainty, and improved human relations and decision-making skills, they are likely to include such training within their company budget.



In addition, they may be willing to cover the costs of materials and allow extra copies to be used beyond their company members.

Find Third-Party Paying Clients.

Many companies have social investment and marketing budgets that they may be willing to make available on a third-party paying client basis. Voter educators identify the target audience that has some links to the company. Perhaps it is the school children of company employees, or the security establishment in the vicinity of the company premises, or just the group that the company supports in other circumstances (persons with disability, a theatre group).

An educational programme is designed for this group and members are charged for the programme either on an individual or group basis. The third-party paying client picks up the bill.

Solicit In-Kind Contributions.

While some companies or institutions may not be in a position to cover the costs of a voter education programme, they may be able to provide an in-kind contribution that reduces the over-all cost of the programme. This might include the provision of office space, equipment, supplies, vehicles, or perhaps even staff personnel.

Obtain Sponsorships or Local Advertising.

Voter education materials go to large numbers of people. Companies may also want to associate themselves with the positive messages that are communicated. It is possible to structure arrangements in printed and broadcast material that enable companies to use their advertising budgets to cover costs.

As usual in these arrangements, advertisers are paying for exposure and do not have control over the message. But they might have certain contractual expectations that have to be met: the number of people to whom the message goes, the quality of the production, and the nonpartisan and professional attitude of the message. Advertisers want professional service and do not want to become associated with slipshod workmanship.

This applies whether the advertising that is being sold is for a simple local newsletter in which the local butcher and corner shop will receive exposure, or whether it is a national broadcast on television during prime time.

Encourage Voter Education Messages on Commercial Products.

Companies distribute their own products. They pay for their production. It is possible to encourage them to do special election runs of their packaging. Many dairies and breakfast cereal packages are designed to support competitions, short run campaigns, and so on, and these have been used to advertise missing children and various health campaigns. Providing companies with a set of logos and standard messages that can be printed on packaging is a simple way to cover distribution and production costs.

In addition to products, many companies run their own in-house newspapers and newsletters. Standard articles will find acceptance in these media at no cost other than the basic preparation and focussing of the article.

Set Up the Necessary Systems.

To run these and other cost recovery programmes, voter educators will need to set up a range of systems that are often beyond the normal order of business for either nongovernmental organisations or election management bodies.

They will need to have a licensing operation to prepare and monitor the use of standard messages and logos, a billing department that can track and invoice all commercial and contract activity, and an advertising agency that can handle the booking and placement of advertising.

The point of such activity is two-fold. It needs to generate income that can then enable other non-income-producing programmes to be extended. It needs to assess opportunities for low-cost or no-cost distribution of voter education messages through interaction with the marketplace.

It is essential to understand the purpose of this activity. Otherwise, it could gain its own momentum and begin to dominate decisions about where to place resources. It should also be kept entirely separate from decisions about the handing out of commercial contracts to do voter education or to supply services, or else it could lead to rather messy conflict of interest and commission or fraud controversies. A company could easily decide to sponsor a publication in order to ensure that a printing job is given to them, and similar controversies are limited only by the imagination of the commercial sector.

11.1.3 Programme Design

An educational programme is a planned and sequential arrangement of educational activities designed to achieve a set of predetermined and explicitly stated educational outcomes. The programme can be simple, consisting of a forty-minute lesson in a classroom, or it can be a slightly megalomaniac attempt to educate every person in a country to vote and to understand the electoral legislation over which politicians and judges have been fighting for years.

In the case of the first, the written programme can consist of a couple of pages in a notebook. The second requires the balancing of a range of programme elements in a coherent strategy, and the development and aligning of resources to meet a series of educational objectives.

The Design Cycle

This topic area requires educators to consider the larger programme and also organize ways in which the smaller programmes can be designed in order to achieve complex objectives.

In order to do this, educators should

- use the Design Cycle,
- build a diverse team to assist in the planning and implementation, (see Team Development),
- spend considerable time with that team and with other stakeholders in developing Educational Objectives,



- obtain broad commitment to the plan that has been developed (see [Obtaining and Maintaining Commitment To the Plan](#)).

Overview of Programme Design Theory

It is possible to construct a range of different educational programmes to achieve a set of agreed objectives. The challenge for the educator is to select that programme which achieves its objectives in the shortest time, with the least resources, and with the greatest chance of effective learning taking place.

It is possible, for example, to learn about aerodynamic theory by working as an apprentice in a shop building an experimental aeroplane, by visiting a wind tunnel, by watching a wind tunnel in operation on a video, by building a model aeroplane out of balsa wood, or by reading a textbook on aerodynamic theory. Each is a valid educational programme, but educators have to make selections based on what they know about their learner constituency, available resources, including money and time, the objectives that must be achieved, and the level of competence that is required.

Programme design requires the application of Occam's razor to develop a programme that is effective and efficient. [1] This is particularly true of programmes that can be seduced by the availability of state funds. Expectations of the powerful or influential can pose a distraction, as can the mistaken belief that the public appearance of the programme is more important than its ability to empower citizens to deal with their social and political environment.

Any programme usually includes activities that are inessential to the achievement of the objectives, or that set out to achieve other objectives. This results from inexperience or the lack of post-event analysis. These unnecessary elements need to be stripped from a programme.

In face-to-face programmes, such inessential components can include particular exercises or theoretical inputs. In public education programmes, these can include public events or advertisements that, for all their fun or the amount of energy that goes into them, make no additional difference to people's behaviour or knowledge.

Notes:

[1] Occam's razor is a thinking technique that includes slicing up questions, usually asked by scientists, and reducing to their essentials the number of possible answers. This technique owes its origin to philosopher William of Occam (d. 1349), and to his saying, "Entities ought not to be multiplied except from necessity."

11.1.3.1 Design Cycle

The educational design cycle is an iterative planning tool. [1] This section lists and explains this tool. It consists of seven steps, namely:

Establishing the Focus of the Programme

In voter and civic education, this focus has already been determined in its most general form. The mandate or mission (see [The Educational Mandate](#)) of the educator will confirm and restrict this focus.

This focus is essential in determining the area within which initial analysis will be done of the intended target constituency. Without this, educators will founder. Focus should not be confused with educational objectives. These must still be established.

Understanding the Learners and Their World

Educators need to understand and enter the world of the learners. This is particularly true of educators who come from the outside, but it is also necessary for educators who consider themselves to be part of this world. They need to develop the reflective distance that comes with studied analysis.

The analysis will attempt to discover basic information, as well as uncover a set of educational needs.

Understanding the Available Resources

In addition to understanding the world of the learners, educators need to know what resources are available to them. Such an understanding ensures that the objectives set for the programme are realistic and achievable within the framework of the available resources.

There is likely to be an ongoing dialogue between the available resources and the intended objectives. To begin with, educators are likely to overestimate what can be achieved, or they may be expected by others to deliver too much. Some adjustments inevitably must be made, and are best made during the assessment and design phase rather than during the implementation phase.

Selecting Educational Objectives

During this period of the design, educators should discuss potential message statements, generative themes, and establish a set of programme objectives that are WARM: Worthwhile, Action oriented, Realistic, and Measurable (see [Educational Objectives](#)). These objectives are couched in language that puts the learner at the centre of the programme.

To ensure that the programme can be evaluated, a set of indicators should be created to mark the achievement of these objectives.

- *Primary and Supplementary Objectives.* In a complex programme, it is likely that the objectives set are the primary objectives. To complete the design a set of supplementary objectives need to be established. At the end of the design, it could be described as an objectives tree. For example, in order that "voters in the rural north will be able to vote with confidence," they may need "to find their way to the correct voting station," "be able to handle a pen," and "understand the role of political parties in a democracy."
- *The Objectives Tree.* Some educators consider this objective tree to be the most fundamental aspect of educational design. Others find it superficial in its belief that all likely educational outcomes can be determined in advance of interaction with learners. It is used most often when the proposed educational programme is highly skills based, and when the curriculum is predetermined rather than generative.



Voter and civic education falls somewhat in the middle. It does require technical skills, but also has a generative component.

However, all those supporting such a programme (donors and other stakeholders) will require a description in advance of what is intended, and educators should be able to state their intentions also for adult learners who have a right to know the likely outcome of their interaction with the educator.

A detailed set of objectives, written in appropriate and specific language, is essential.

Those who operate primarily on the establishment of messages or generative themes can find it possible to communicate these. What counts is not the first communication, but the change in knowledge, behaviour, or attitude of the recipient or learner. Education is about change, not only about sending messages into the ether.

Designing the Programme

When the objectives have been framed, educators should begin the design process. This process should include the macro design: a blocking out of the whole programme according to a logical and chronological framework.

Many educators have some experience of doing this for a single group of learners: a timetable is such a macro design.

Macro Design. But the macro design required for a national programme consists of a much more detailed outline. This is likely to include a range of what might be considered timetables for sets of extended training courses, blocking of time for broadcast material, overall estimations of the number of events to be organized, and the sequence in which these will be offered. This design puts together all the information collected about potential programme elements. It is to be based on a general strategic paradigm, and it attempts to conform to the available resources by being neither overly ambitious nor too timid.

Micro Plans. The second aspect of educational design is the development of micro plans. Such micro plans or detailed designs can be likened to lesson plans, but because they are likely to consist of programmes that vary in time, in site, in method, and contain a range of options or Educational Strategy Development, calling them lesson plans is hardly appropriate.

These are done in part before a programme beginning, and also during the implementation phase. Detailed design of this nature is a tedious process, but it is offset by the impact of such a carefully designed programme on learners and on the ability of the education programme to make use of educators and materials producers who are not highly qualified educators.

Designers will attempt to ensure that each aspect of the programme conforms to learning theory, is matched carefully to what is known about the learners, and can be achieved within the time, in the place, and with the staff, educational, and financial resources available.

The reason why certain of these detailed or micro designs are done before implementation is that they are determinative of the materials to be produced. It is not enough to prepare a set of materials and then work out ways to convey this material.

It is far better to determine the educational design and then prepare materials for that design. It is more cost effective because the material produced is limited in scope to that level and amount of content required. It also is prepared in the form required.

When existing materials are available and must be used (perhaps a manual or a textbook), designers should consider the best ways to adapt that material to the particular context in which they will work (see Assessing and Adapting Existing Materials).

Programme Implementation

At this point, it might be considered that educational design has ended, but in fact the implementation phase is the moment at which the programme is tested and further lessons are learned. Some of these lessons must be immediately implemented; others may have to wait for the next cycle.

In educational programming, while there may be a pilot phase during which materials are tested and adapted, there is some sense in which the whole programme needs to be open to innovation and adaptation in order to better ensure that the outcome intended is achieved.

Evaluators might prefer that a programme run as scheduled, and that any variations from the plan become apparent. People cannot, however, be experimented with. If it becomes apparent that a programme, whether in the overall or in a particular aspect, is not meeting people's needs and is not appropriate for achieving the stated objectives, it needs to be changed as soon as possible.

Programme Evaluation and Preparation of the Next Cycle

On completion, the cycle moves through an evaluation phase and into an even better understanding of the learners and their world, and of the resources available to the educator. The cycle has returned to its beginning.

In voter and civic education, such a cycle may be used to describe a large national programme. It could easily also be used to describe a small aspect of the programme.

It is likely that educators in different parts of the programme and in different organisation within the general programme network may go through their own versions of the cycle.

An educator given the task by the macro programme of conducting a programme for women in an inner-city environment in a modern state has to enter their world, determine their needs, set objectives for the particular programme, design it, implement it, evaluate it and either themselves, or with others prepare for future educational interventions with the same constituency.

Notes:

[1] The word "iterative" is used in the sense of a process that is partly linear, one step follows another, and partly circular. There are times when a step or set of steps has to be repeated as more information is available or changes have to be made.



11.1.3.2 Team Development

A complex educational programme conducted under the pressurised conditions of an election or within the constraints imposed by a national civic education programme is best conducted by a multidisciplinary team of educators. A good understanding must develop between team members. This section covers team diversity, liaison with other stakeholders, and team-building exercises.

Importance of Establishing and Developing a Team

Establishing such a team needs to be done very early. It may even be the first task undertaken by an organisation or by the election management body.

Once such a team is in place, attention has to be given to team development. The educator team is going to operate in a milieu where the roles and responsibilities are negotiated on a regular basis, and where the interaction between any one member of the core team and those engaged in the networks and organisation implementing the programme is crucial.

With time so important, it is not possible for the education team to wait for the one person who can provide an answer, or to have a meeting at which a policy can be derived, before making a decision. It is essential for team members to understand the programme strategy and objectives.

Educator teams are likely to be composed of members who have not previously worked together. They may have collaborated before but are likely to come from different organisation or backgrounds. Early intensive work is therefore required to get everybody on board.

Those establishing the team may feel they can shortcut this process by selecting a homogenous team, but this is short-sighted

Diversity

An intentionally diverse team brings with it a range of programme advantages.

First, diversity brings with it different skills and experiences, essential components of a multifaceted programme. This type of diversity also ensures that, if controversy is managed constructively, team members play off one another and increase the creativity of the programme.

Second, diversity brings access to different communities, whether because of language, background, or work experience. Such access, whether just in understanding of a particular learning community or in actual entry into the community, is essential in a programme where trust, credibility, and legitimacy are so important.

And finally, diversity brings public acceptance and recognition. There are few countries that are homogenous. Their heterogeneity can and should be reflected in an educator team. Even in apparently homogenous countries there are questions of class, gender, and geography that should be considered.

An educator team that is consciously diverse provides an image of the society which the education programme is promoting.

Liaison

There is one area where there has to be some agreed specialisation and where the team will want to develop considerable trust in one another. This is the area of liaison with other organisation or levels within the organisation that has been created for the purpose of the programme. In such roles, continuity is essential.

As a result of this continuity, it can be that a single person ends up as spokesperson for the team, or makes decisions on behalf of the team. Where there are low levels of trust or bad communication within the team, this can become a hindrance to a full, effective programme and may result in the team spending too much time in dealing with interpersonal dynamics.

Team-Building Exercises

There is a range of team building exercises which are appropriate for the development of educator teams. Exercises should concentrate on the following:

- ensuring that all team members have a common understanding of the mandate and educational objectives of the programme
- a good understanding of the styles of other team members and of their strengths and weaknesses
- a commitment to assisting one another in attending to these weaknesses and to personal development during the duration of the programme
- clarity about general administration and organisational procedures

11.1.3.3 Educational Objectives

Selecting and framing objectives is one of the most difficult tasks for educators and, incidentally, for those developing social interventions and programme proposals (see Budgeting and Financing Voter Education Programmes).

As a result, there is even a school of thought that considers setting the objective to be a somewhat arrogant exercise and preferably left to the learners themselves. However, adult learners engaging in dialogue with an educator require an understanding of the intentions of the educator and of their own expectations. An explicit statement of goals or objectives can achieve this. [1]

There may even be opportunities in small group learning events when these objectives can be set jointly. But national education programmes do not have that opportunity, and educators themselves must set objectives based on their best understanding of the educational needs of the target constituency.

Framing Objective Statements

There are ways educators writing objectives can remind themselves of the criteria needed to be useful to the planning and educational exercise. There are a number of acronyms used in the



process. Marie-Louise Strom of IDASA in South Africa has developed an acronym which is particularly useful: WARM. WARM objectives are those that are Worthwhile, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Measurable. They also are warm, or passionate, as adult education should be reminded of its greater purpose to empower and enable.

Worthwhile

Educational objectives need to be of significance to the learner. They should be based on relevant educational needs and important life opportunities. Individuals framing objectives have to remind themselves that significance is based on what the potential learners consider important rather than what the educator considers important. When it is possible to engage the target constituency, or component parts of it (see Message Development), a dialogue can ensue about what is significant.

The word worthwhile suggests that whatever the significance, it is worth must be apparent to all at the outset.

Action-oriented

Objectives should be framed in terms of changes in behaviour, knowledge, or attitudes. Even cognitive objectives should be framed to describe activity after the educational intervention rather than the process during the event. The purpose of all objectives, whether educational or programmatic, is to describe a set of predictable and probable outputs from the processes and inputs made during the intervention.

While these processes and inputs may require specification, they are not objectives.

Realistic

Objectives have to come to terms with the limitations imposed upon learning by time, methodology, and other available resources. Framing objectives to make them realistic requires a number of iterations. Often, educators will set objectives that are worthwhile and action-oriented only to find that they cannot be achieved in the time available, or that the educational strategies available are not suitable or pliable enough to achieve these objectives.

Realism goes hand in hand with the next measure because it keeps educators honest. It is not enough to set objectives and then say they could have been achieved if only there was enough time, or if only the field educator was more skilled, or the learners more amenable. Such constraints usually cannot be changed, and the planning team needs to come to terms with this during the planning stage.

Measurable

The achievement of objectives must be capable of measurement. How the outcomes are measured requires consideration of sets of indicators that may well have to be developed at the same time as the objectives. But without objectives framed in ways that allow measurement, assessment of learning and evaluation of educational impact are impossible.

While programme planners are most concerned with general assessment of educational impact, learners require less grandiose but equally urgent assessment. They want to be able to know whether they can trust what they have learned and use it in their daily lives or to move on to further learning experiences.

So, the setting of objectives as a first step in determining the educational programme is absolutely essential. This stage in the planning process is likely to be the most intensive, and if a team is doing the planning, the most frustrating. Getting it right provides the sort of certainty and direction that stands an educational programme in good stead. Getting it wrong, or ignoring it in the hope that the process will make the endpoints clearer is a recipe for wandering in the thickets of confusion and wasting much valuable time later in the programme.

Notes:

[1] Because of the necessity to explain a taxonomy of objectives - each one leading to another set, and each of these requiring further definition - educators and planners have developed at different times and in different places their own ranking of the various words available in English. Over time there has come some commonality of approach but there are still differences and it is important that those involved in planning realise that they are creating these taxonomies for their own convenience. In countries where English is not the first language, training of educators can be severely hampered by confusion and outright conflict over whether something is a *purpose*, *aim*, *objective*, *outcome* or *goal*. Which term is the larger and which the smaller and more concise is entirely a matter of habit, local convention and choice.

11.1.3.4 Obtaining and Maintaining Commitment to the Plan

Once a plan has been developed, and people trust it, it needs to be followed. Educators cannot take this for granted, especially in pressurised situations such as elections. They must ensure commitment by creating a programme book, holding programme conferences, and communicating with everyone who is involved.

If the plan has been developed through a consultative process involving a range of stakeholders, there will still be many who have been excluded from its design. Even those who were involved in the initial data collection or in the determination of educational objectives are likely to have been excluded from the more technical detailed design work that follows.

So it is essential to get commitment to the plan and to its various component parts from those who must implement or support it. This commitment cannot be taken for granted over the full period of the programme. People, including staff, come and go and it is essential that a mechanism is created for integrating new arrivals and orienting them to the plan as soon as possible after they arrive on the scene.

Sticking to the Plan with Flexibility in Implementation

Because such a programme has been constructed at substantial cost, and because it is likely that there will be a crisis of confidence at some point during the implementation, there will also be a need to work on maintaining commitment to the plan. This last is a particular art as it requires a



balance between asserting trust in the original plan against the potential need for change as a result of flaws in the plan or changes in the conditions within which the plan is being implemented.

Creating a Programme Book

The first activity must be the creation of a programme book that can be given to stakeholders and can be used by programme staff for introducing themselves and explaining their programme to potential partners and participants.

Such a book need not be a full text of the programme design, although it might have that as an appendix for those who require it. It should be a well-laid out summary of the context, objectives, strategy, outline, implementation staff, and organisations. It may even be appropriately prepared in the form of slides that can be used for posters or flip charts, overhead projector presentations, or digital projector shows.

It is likely that such a presentation will be used regularly to recruit new members of the network, raise money for the programme and obtain publicity, and so on. As a result, it should be prepared in such a way that it lasts, and has the flexibility to provide an overview for those who need it as well as a detailed plan for those who must follow it.

Conducting Programme Conferences

There are a range of different programme conferences that are needed.

Initial stakeholders events will make sure that everybody who needs to be apprised of the programme before it is implemented are brought on board. Staff conferences will orient new staff to the programme as quickly as possible.

During the implementation phase, conferences might be held at particular moments to assess the programme, build support for the next phase, introduce new materials, or advertise new staff and components of the programme.

Such conferences should be a mix of good communication and proper consultation. Staff conferences should include training, staff development, and personal review; stakeholder conferences should have an aspect of reporting and accountability.

Circulating a Newsletter

Even with conferences, a large programme cannot keep everybody apprised of what is happening on a regular basis, especially if they are spread throughout the country. In addition to encouraging coverage of the programme by the national and community media, and by the organisation that are part of the programme network, the programme itself should consider a newsletter.

This can be expensive if the temptation is to prepare a glossy and widely distributed newsletter. This may be necessary in circumstances where the programme requires substantial marketing. However, it is more important to produce a newsletter that comes out regularly and that covers the programme adequately.

New technology makes even the well-edited and laid out colour newsletter easier to produce, but. distribution must be considered before production. It is better to establish a letter that can

be faxed, e-mailed, or obtained on a fax/voice mail system by someone dialling in when they can.

Such a newsletter can be broadcast without much cost in production and printing. Even when some recipients are without fax, telephone, or computers, it may be possible for a nodal organisation to print out a single hard copy and photocopy this for the few other organisations and individuals with whom it has contact.

Setting up a Website

Linked to the newsletter is the need for a web site that can do the twin tasks of providing public access to educational materials and information, and the more technical user information that might be required by educators and partners involved in implementing the programme.

In particular, such a web site can ensure that rapidly changing information and large documents (such as electoral legislations) are available when required and do not have to be stored or alternatively searched for in offices around the country.

Identifying Public Moments

Finally, maintaining commitment to the plan means taking the public into one's confidence and maintaining this confidence over time. To do this, people must see that something is happening, even if the programme is presently not reaching them particularly. In addition, obtaining media coverage of events multiplies their impact.

So the programme will identify specific moments and capitalize on these by holding media events, celebrations, larger public events, and by advertising these.

A programme cannot exist on these, and cannot rely on public moments in place of a serious educational programme that reaches people where they are. Indeed, setting up public events without having prepared for these fully, including face-to-face events and community organising, is likely to backfire. Gatherings happen as a result of programmatic activity, not in advance of it or in place of it.

11.1.4 Production Considerations

There are educational issues that can be considered in producing some of the most regularly used instructional materials. These issues are discussed in the three ensuing sections.

Projected Materials deals with some of the different ways in which instructional materials can be produced and the advantages and limitations of these.

White Boards and Black Boards offers suggestions for that most natural of teaching activities, "chalk and talk," in light of limited resources and the need to work in informal settings.

And Preparing Instructional Materials offers a set of rules for dealing with illustrations, colour, words, and lettering.



Educators wanting to develop general production briefs for materials that they are commissioning can find that information in Commissioning.

11.1.4.1 Projected Materials

Projected materials enable educators to convey information to large numbers of people at the same time. However, such materials have to be prepared carefully and may need to be prepared professionally.

In all cases, they require three things:

- the material
- the projector
- the screen

Inadequacies in any one of these items can render the material, no matter how good the content, useless. In fact, the distractions of poorly projected materials, or the delays of having to set up screens or projectors, can make these expensive preparations less useful than a well-prepared talk or live demonstration.

These problems are compounded when there is no available electricity.

The Screen

Projections require a smooth, unblemished, white and shaded or darkened screen. Within these parameters there are many options.

Screens can be manufactured for the occasion, a premise with built-in screens (such as a training or seminar venue, a cinema, and so on) can be borrowed, or an appropriate wall can be used.

In the case of any temporary arrangement, whether a wall, a piece of material, a polystyrene sheet or the raised side of a truck, there must be a rehearsal at the same time of day and in the same place as the final performance/event so that questions of light and definition can be resolved.

The Projector

There are different kinds of Projectors:

- small, portable, and cheap single slide projectors and strip projectors
- ubiquitous overhead projectors
- somewhat outdated, but still immensely useful epidiascopes and 16mm film projectors
- high tech and expensive video projectors and digital projectors

Each of these has its place. Educators should use what is most easily available, and in the places they are available.

The Materials

Fortunately, there are only two different media that can be used in all these different projectors:

- slides
- film or animation

This is somewhat of a simplification, but for the purposes of materials production, it is possible to use a single image (or slide) in a range of different ways:

- on an overhead projector transparency for use by the overhead projector
- as a photographic slide for projecting by slide projectors
- for incorporation into a video production for showing on a television set or through a video projector
- for placing on a CD-ROM or a software package for showing through a digital projector

In all of these, the basic principles are similar and one can consider a slide in much the same way as a small poster (see [Posters and Banners](#) for additional information).

Film requires, much more specialised production. Educators should work with production houses in doing this, whether they are preparing a short advertisement, a film on voting procedure, or something larger on democracy.

It is likely, because of the costs involved, that such a production will be done on videotape. But animations increasingly can be done on computers alone and this may be sufficient for the achievement of the educational objective.

Those considering producing videos or films must take account of the costs, which vary from place to place; and they must take account of the special and costly projection needs as the equipment is not cheap. Further discussion of video is contained in [National Impact Media](#), [Community Impact Media](#), and [Alternative Methods of Communicating Voter Education](#).

11.1.4.2 White Boards and Black Boards

Those in developed countries or with good educational systems to which democracy educators have access may not need to think about ways of finding or making boards on which to write, display posters, or even project images.

Experience with training of community educators in some countries, however, suggests that this is a pressing need and one of the most difficult to overcome.

Generally, educators seem to overcome the shortage of boards by the use of newsprint. But this has its own dilemmas and it can be in short supply. However, there are options.

Use of Available Paper

In addition to the specially prepared newsprint paper (or butcher paper) sold in sheets or blocks for use by educators, it is possible for community educators to make use of the following:

- brown paper and other plain coloured paper prepared for covering books, lining shelves or wrapping parcels
- off-cuts from printing works



Manufacture of Blackboards

In India, merchants sell treated linen wall hangings that can be used as chalk boards.

In many other places, it is possible to buy green and black paint that can be used to transform a wall into a chalkboard.

Coloured chalk can even be used on a white wall, although it does not easily wash off. Perhaps it is better used for basic messages and advertisements.

While chalk itself is not always available, charcoal normally is and it can and has been used as a writing tool.

Manufacture of White Boards

A white board is a tool used with a wipe-off marker pen. Those who manufacture and supply such boards have made them an essential training tool. Indeed, their one disadvantage (that material written down has to be wiped off) has been overcome by adding a photocopier camera to the screen.

However, these are expensive and are normally only available at educational institutions or commercial training venues.

The pens that write on these boards are reasonably priced, and the versatility of the boards is considerable. So community educators should consider making portable white boards out of framed and hinged plastic laminate, the material used to cover washable kitchen surfaces. It is possible to create a carrying case for educational materials that opens up into a useable white board (or, using paint, a blackboard).

These and other low-cost techniques are used by health educators and community educators throughout the developing world, but there has not been as much concentration yet on transferring these skills to those doing voter and civic education.

11.1.4.3 Preparing Instructional Materials

Educators are generally well versed in managing content, and it is likely that instructional materials will reach their production stage with the content issues clarified (see Printed Materials).

However, there are production issues that have to be considered for their educational impact on any material.

These are illustration, the relationship of illustration to words, and colour, particularly in the printing process.

What Illustrations are Best?

The following guidelines apply to instructional material for participants who may not have a high level of visual or pictorial literacy:

- Avoid pictures with depth.
- There should be a moderate amount of detail.
- Eliminate background and unnecessary detail.

- The important objects should have enrichment of detail: texture, gradients of texture, shading, etc.
- Portrayal should be realistic, no impressionism or expressionism.

The following are ranked in order of usefulness:

- blocked-out photographs (photographs with the background eliminated). They provide good contrast, realistic cues and details for identification of the objects portrayed, and the neutral background eliminates distracting details
- photographs
- silhouettes
- line drawings, especially in the form of diagrams or cartoons, are visual shorthand impoverished of all details

Pictures can be more expressive and informative using some features of Egyptian art. That is, drawing in two dimensions rather than using perspective to create three-dimensional effects.

Other tips include the following:

- Use consistent physiognomy, clothing, complexion, etc. in depicting people.
- Action should be simplified.
- Behaviour should be depicted in accordance with the viewers' and not the producer's traditions.
- Pictures of people and places should be relevant to daily life and environment for proper recognition (be in the correct cultural context).
- Colours and shapes must be carefully chosen because of symbolic meanings attributed to colours and shapes which can distort the intended meaning. Especially the use of colours in the context of an election as some colours may be associated with political parties. The use of symbols, themselves, can also be tricky and may be best avoided.

Illustrations versus Words

Illustrations are interesting in their own right, compared with words that are not particularly interesting as things in themselves - it is the ideas conveyed by the words that matter. Thus, illustrations may attract or distract the reader.

- Illustrations are good for conveying concrete images and providing support material when teaching a concept, as a way of avoiding technical jargon, and for conveying visual and spatial concepts (e.g. relative size of objects).
- Words are good for conveying abstract ideas and for communicating concepts that have already been learned and for conveying propositional concepts.
- Illustrations and diagrams are good for conveying ideas that have to be considered simultaneously. They allow learners to make multiple discriminations easily.



- Words are possibly better for conveying ideas that have to be treated sequentially when the order in which the ideas are encountered is critical (a poem or set of instructions) though cartoon strips are useful for instruction.
- The positioning of illustrations is very important and should be tested if necessary.
- Pictures should not be used when the information can be readily conveyed in words.
- -dimensional representations of three-dimensional objects cause some difficulty in some cultures.
- Translation of time into space includes learned conventions: authors must either teach the code or be sure readers know it. (This is a crucial point in teaching the mechanics of voting).
- Illustrations of a process involving separate steps or actions should have at least as many individual pictures or frames as there are main steps or actions.
- Illustrations of things (especially line drawings) are more easily remembered than their names.
- Illustrations are usually better with captions. Labelling of illustrations aids classification and helps long term recall.
- Simple line drawings are best for instructional material particularly for signifying general concepts (a stick figure "man"), while highly detailed illustrations can be used for particular concepts ("a foreign election monitor").
- People are attracted by relative complexity and change.
- Beware of problems of ambiguity, literal or figurative meaning, depth cues, action, changes in scale, etc., especially for illiterate people.
- Reading illustrations, tables, diagrams, graphs and symbols has to be taught. People have to learn to interpret the conventions of illustrations in much the same way as they have to learn to read. Authors and designers must therefore have knowledge of the background experience of their potential readers.
- Place diagrams and illustrations where readers will see them and repeat them if necessary.

Colour

In some cases, colour may be unnecessary and can cause problems. Some points to consider are:

- Do not use too many colours or too few (e.g. when using it to depict or represent several functions).
- Colour codes must be understood and these are culturally constructed although there appears to be some more universal constructs.
- 8.5 percent of all men and 0.5 percent of women are colour blind.
- If the material refers to a colour, it should have a name in the language of the learner. Use the general name of colours as opposed to colour variations that may not be very popular (for instance, purple is more popularly known than lilac)

Colours and Printing

The following happens with certain colours when printed:

- Pale colours are almost invisible for words or fine lines.
- Dark colours appear almost black for words or fine lines.
- Bright colours dazzle for words or fine lines.

For contrast, black on white is best. Legibility of printed text suffers on coloured paper or when used over illustrations or photographs. Strong colours or black and white patterns distract if too close to text.

Materials producers should allow for what will happen to the page if it is photocopied, unless they are able to control whether it is copied or not. Educational materials are likely to be copied, and it may be that this will be encouraged to extend their usefulness and range of distribution.

11.1.5 Procurement

Educators face special problems when it comes to obtaining materials. While election administrators have a standard list of supplies, educators have to obtain educational materials of a wide variety and from a wide range of suppliers. This section of the topic area focuses on five issues for educators:

- Commissioning Materials
- Managing Contracts
- Assessing and Adapting Existing Materials
- Goods and Services
- Storage and Distribution

Educators working in an election management body authority or a larger organisation may have assistance in these areas. Many working in smaller, specialized organisations organisation may not. These may want to obtain guidelines and assistance from others in their vicinity. This is unfortunately not often sought, and when sought not easily given because it often relies on institutional history and personal experience rather than being written down. For set of procurement guidelines, see Newspaper - Sweden - Multilingual.

11.1.5.1 Commissioning Materials

Educators commissioning materials are faced with a range of educational and commercial issues. The resolution of these depends in part on their ability to develop strong and clear descriptions of the materials required, and especially of the educational and performance issues that must be covered.

Educational Issues

Educational materials have to conform to appropriate standards in regard to content and performance.

Congruence with Intended Outcomes

Materials have to be prepared by writers, designers, and practitioners that are suitable for assisting with the achievement of the stated objectives of the programme. Even if they are prepared for a very limited aspect of the programme, there needs to be a set of educational objectives against which the appropriateness of the materials can be judged.



For this reason, it is ill-advised to order materials in advance of the generation of educational objectives. There may be times when the time constraints require materials to be ordered soon after educational objectives have been set, and before the full programme has been designed.

But this should be avoided at all costs. There are many examples of posters, audiovisual materials, textbooks, and so on being ordered and then found to be surplus to the requirements of the final programme. Some organisation have tried using inappropriate materials, simply because they were there, to the detriment of the programme.

Appropriate Level

The educational level at which materials should be prepared is not that of those commissioning the materials. They are designed for use out in the field, and for the learner group. Materials that have to be approved by a board, especially if it is a board of governance rather than a group of educators, often err on the side of impressing the board rather than meeting the needs of the learners.

This may ensure that budgets are made available, but does no service to those who must be educated. For this reason, those doing the commissioning should explain precisely for whom the materials are intended. And this explanation should be made available to those who must approve materials in advance of the materials being seen.

In general, those commissioning materials have different expectations about those materials and have a different knowledge base and life experience from the learners. They are seldom representative. If it is possible to establish representative groups of learners to assess materials, this can obviously help, as can initial field testing.

Appropriate Language and Symbols

Materials have to use appropriate language and symbols. In multilingual and multicultural societies, materials translated from a master copy can run into problems. But even materials prepared in countries where there are dominant languages and cultures can miscue in their combination of words and symbols.

These need to be tested in advance of the commissioning process; and there should also be opportunities during the production of materials, especially display materials, for a review.

Clear Instructional Texts and Directions for Use

When commissioning books and instructional texts, educators may be inclined to separately hand over text and illustrations to a publisher, assuming that they will design the publication in such a way that it becomes a coherent whole. This assumption should be tested, and if there is any doubt, either an instructional text should be handed over in completed form, or educators should review materials during the layout stages and up until the pre-print moment. They should have to sign off explicitly on a "mock-up" of the product before it is handed over for final production.

There are too many possibilities for developing confusion amongst learners and trainers to allow educators to leave these to non-educators.

In addition to the care that must be taken over the layout and clarity of instructional texts, materials can seldom be handed to those who have not prepared them or been involved in preparing them without an orientation to their use. And this orientation may not be possible face to face.

Expensive posters prepared for one setting can become waste paper if used in a different setting. Training-of-trainers materials handed out directly to ordinary learners turn into very expensive and unreadable lesson notes.

Often, educators commission the basic materials and, having received them from the producers, whether a publisher, printer, writer, or designer, discover they need to produce a second set of materials, a short manual or set of instructions for use. These are then rushed off in-house without the care given to the original.

Commissioning briefs should take account of the full package of materials that is required.

Appropriate Format

Educators need to know in advance what is possible and make use of these specifications in their planning. Educators have no time or cost leeway.

If they determine that a poster should be a particular shape, or a folder for an educational package a particular colour or weight of paper, only to discover that this material can either not be sourced, or can only be obtained by cuts that result in wastage, they have done a disservice to the programme.

Some formats for materials that are more appropriate than others. And commissioning original designs should proceed from the assumption that the educational purpose will never take second place to the design considerations.

Performance Issues

In relation to performance, educators will need to consider:

- *Durability.*

A flier might be designed to be read once and then discarded. In fact, it may even be necessary to design and produce it in such a way that it can be recycled or that it biodegrades rapidly. On the other hand, a leaflet might be designed for use by several readers, not just the original recipient. This presumes that the recipient will pass on the leaflet to friends, family members, or neighbours. In this case, the paper must be sufficiently strong to accommodate excessive handling.

A training guide is likely to be opened and closed often. It will be the subject of copying and note taking; will be in and out of briefcases; on and off tables and floors; and is likely to be close to food and drink. It also requires more durable production.



Will posters be outside? If they are, how long do they have to survive? Flip charts may have to travel on buses or in taxis. If they do, will the cover fall off or the pages start stripping.

Commissioning specifications need to take account of and describe the likely use and the required level of durability for all materials. The durability of packaging may also need to be taken into consideration to ensure that materials arrive at their final destination in good condition. Where durability is required, it might need to be over-engineered. In other words, educators will make it last in the worst conditions rather than the optimum conditions.

- *Legibility.*

Whatever the materials, they will have to be read, whether words and illustrations read by literate people, or symbols and illustrations read by the illiterate.

It is essential, therefore, that educational materials are completely and comprehensively legible. Smudged printing, bleeding colours that obscure foreground and background, pictures that are incorrectly scanned or lose their definition because of the wrong dots per inch specification, or posters that use the wrong font size, the list could go on with disasters experienced by educators working with inexperienced production companies, and even with those with some experience.

- *Storage, Distribution, and Ease of Use.*

When materials come back from the printers, they have to be distributed. Suddenly, the envelope that was going to be used is discovered to be too light, the decision to fold posters results increases that disturb the ink at crucial places and the stack of manuals so high, staff are in danger of avalanches. Questions of distribution have to be considered in advance of production (see Storage and Distribution) but the question of packaging has to be considered during the commissioning phase and by educators themselves, because it impacts on other related questions. As noted earlier, the durability of the packaging materials will have to be addressed. The number of units per package will also need to be specified. And, delivery and distribution labels and instructions may need to be included as part of the packaging.

For these reasons, it is often best to use a single printer who can then pre-pack, label, assemble, and protect (by plastic shrink wrap or paper wrapping) the materials in the correct way.

Once educational materials reach their destination, they have to be stored by users, retrieved from storage for use, and maintained by users. Users faced with large cardboard rolls, cardboard, plastic, fabric portfolios, or crates full of paper so heavy that they require a trolley to move them, can resent the industriousness of the designers and education team rather than welcome the materials.

Those who have to travel with the materials may find themselves forced to go by road rather than air, by private car rather than public transport, or may have to bring learners to them rather than go to where learners are.

These questions cannot be answered in a general sense, as they are determined by what is available in countries, and by what is required of a particular set of materials.

In some countries, lightweight materials such as corrugated plastics are available or special laminated or fabric papers. Other countries have to make do with what they have.

As a result, materials should be considered that require limited distribution, can be transferred by instruction and then created at the point of use, can be carried by individual educators when they move around the country, or can be boxed with other election materials.

- *Safety and Security.*

Materials intended for use by citizens and voters, and by younger people in particular, need to be safe. This may not be a major concern with publications, but materials produced for simulation games and for display need to be prepared in ways that make them fire resistant, difficult to break, non-toxic, and so on.

Once this matter is considered, the safety, or rather security, of the materials also has to be dealt with. With the possible but unlikely exception of some high level training materials, educational materials are designed to be available to the public.

However, they are valuable if only as a source of recyclable paper and this value may increase in poorer countries where resources are scarce. So, care has to be taken to ensure that the manner in which they are produced encourages and enhances their safekeeping. Materials so large that they must live outside, cloth banners hung in vulnerable places, consignments that require shipping in advance of educators, and other similar arrangements, can all result in unnecessary loss.

While these may seem matters of concern to be addressed only after receipt of the materials, consideration during the preparation and production stage will assist in reducing security hazards.

Contractual Matters

In general a commissioning process will involve the development of a detailed brief, a letter of agreement or contract by which a supplier of goods or services agrees to deliver the product on a particular day and under particular conditions, and a system by which this commission is managed.

Detailed Briefs

Educators will prepare a brief in which all the necessary details, some of which were considered previously, are described. When they do not have all the necessary detail, they should negotiate with the potential suppliers on the basis of a draft and then firm this up in a final brief.

This brief will form part of any contract, so it should be explicit and unambiguous. It could become the cause of conflict if it is not; and could assist in resolving any conflicts in favour of those doing the commissioning if it is unambiguous.

Experienced suppliers may have a detailed order form or cover sheet of their own that includes a checklist with the necessary technical specifications. Educators unused to the specification language should ask that it be explained.



Contracts

Several formal contracts can be used as examples for those involved in commissioning materials. But these must conform to the legal requirements of the country in which they are prepared and signed.

However, even small commissions should be covered by a letter of agreement that includes the following:

- lays out the terms of the agreement
- the product required
- the objectives it is designed to meet
- the standards it must live up to
- the deadlines that must be adhered to
- the manner in which any disputes and faults will be attended to

Suppliers may wish to use their version of such contracts or letters of agreements as they regularly enter into contracts. An educator might do so infrequently and may be used to a verbal discussion only. Both of these should be avoided unless there considerable trust between supplier and the programme; and educators should prepare (or review closely) any agreements themselves.

If a formal agreement is not possible (it might be an agreement with a community carpenter to sink two poles so that a banner can be hung), there should be an understanding of how the agreement came about and a proper record kept by the educator or the education team.

Management System

How the educator manages these contracts and commissions, whether large and formal, or small and informal is discussed in Managing Contracts.

11.1.5.2 Managing Contracts

All contracts have to be carefully managed. This is particularly true when quality, price, and time sensitivity are important. Educators need to think about how they are going to manage, and must give time and attention to this.

Educators Get Separated from Suppliers

Once a contract has been drawn up, questions of project management might well get separated from questions of management of the educational programme. The contractor may do some project management (or all of it) or an administrative unit in the educator's organisation or the election authority may take over the contract.

So the relationship to the education programme can attenuate, and it can easily happen that those who commissioned the work stop assessing it and managing it closely.

When educational capacity is limited, it is even more likely that a contractor will take on major responsibility for the project.

The consequence of this is that all the information available about the project, all its assessment and all the performance criteria shift their locus from the contractor, who is paying the bills, to the supplier, who is submitting bills. This may be considered a licence to print money.

Project Management Capacity

An education team, or an election management body, which commissions goods and services, whether on a grand scale or on a more limited scale, needs to ensure it has the capacity to manage these contracts in detail. Project management skills, regular meetings, review of targets and of costs, and consideration of variances in costing, supply quality, and project details need to be considered jointly by the contractor and the supplier.

This is partially a matter of trust, and there could be an argument that trustworthy suppliers who are working to a set of agreements can manage themselves. But it is also a matter of knowledge and power.

A supplier left to its own devices, conducting the project, without oversight, can become the experts. This leads to two problems. The first is the problem of future contracts - the expert is in an advantageous position in regard to future projects and can set the price if there is no alternative way of getting the job done. The second is the problem of staff capacity - the expert supplier is never matched by a knowledgeable contractor, leaving them always able to assert their authority.

A Service in the Short Term

Project management resources could, in the short term be resolved by buying in these services separately and independently of general goods and services. Often this is done by new election management bodies and organisations. However, those who intend to commission goods and services on a regular basis need to build up this capacity in-house.

In-house capacity can be built into contracts, so a project management team has to leave behind its expertise by doing training and helping set up indigenous systems.

11.1.5.3 Assessing and Adapting Existing Materials

Voter educators should have access to materials prepared for previous voter education programmes either in their country or in other contexts. They may also have requested potential suppliers of programmes to submit materials for assessment or for further production and distribution.

There are general curriculum assessment tasks that have to be undertaken as well as more detailed programme adaptation tasks, which should be done before the running of a particular training or educational event.

Assessment of materials cannot take place until and unless programme objectives and individual programme element objectives have been defined. In the absence of these, there is no objective measure against which to do the assessment.

Once these objectives are available, it is possible to assess materials on the basis of the following:



- their appropriateness in achieving the set of objectives for the particular target audience,
- their cost in relation to the cost of preparing new and specific materials,
- the ability of the available educators to use the materials and;
- the ease of adaptation to local conditions

Adaptation to local conditions can include having to translate the materials, having to replace Eurocentric illustrations with appropriate local illustrations, having to simplify the language, or having to adjust the materials to deal with particular local conditions, including differences in the political context.

When the materials are going to be used in workshop environments facilitated by local trainers, it may be possible to do limited adaptation, perhaps by providing guidance and a small set of alternative visual aids. When materials have to be sent out on an individual or display basis, considerable adaptation will be necessary and it may be that the submitted materials really only have use as a potential guide for self-production.

Obviously, materials that are closest to home are likely to be the most useful and easy to adapt. Those produced for previous elections in the same country may be assumed to be most suitable, but care should be taken that all the initial programme assessments and objective-setting exercises are done even before this material is considered. Times do change, sometimes substantially.

It may also be helpful to see any evaluation that was made of the materials after they were first used.

Adapting Materials for Specific Events

Many educators have to make adaptations to materials prepared in general and then given to them for use. This applies even to a national programme package prepared according to the most carefully designed criteria. As a result, training of educators should include information on making adaptations on the ground.

11.1.5.4 Goods and Services

Procurement of goods and services requires

- the establishment of needs,
- a request for the goods,
- obtaining a series of quotations or putting out the requirement to tender, and;
- a decision-making process based on independent assessment of the appropriate supplier.

Organisation and governments tend to have procedures and standards for procuring goods: materials, publications, furniture, computers and audiovisual equipment. These typically include a categorization of procedure based on cost, together with a steadily increasing level of authorisation and formality. They may also have a list of approved suppliers (see below). There may also be special considerations that educators want to consider and this section refers specifically to these.

Development and Affirmative Action

In some countries, there may be additional criteria designed to further the development of the country. For example, procurement may be biased in favour of local companies and organisations, or small companies, or companies with majority ownership by women or

minority groups. Where there is no legislation in this regard, an election management body can set its own criteria and in this way encourage or promote the equalisation of power and wealth, within which democracy resides most easily.

General Procedures

In some cases, procurement regulations apply equally to the suppliers of goods and of standard office services.

There can be more uncertainty about the supply of professional services when less stringent criteria are used to speed up processes, or to overcome perceived limitations in the number and quality of people available.

Whether goods or services are being procured, there are standard tender (competitive bidding) arrangements that can be used to ensure that the best supplier is found at an appropriate price and without the organisation appearing to be unfair or to favour those who might have an advantage because of family or political connections.

Possible Approaches

- *Closed Lists.*

One option that can speed up the procurement process while making it fair is to establish certain general criteria in advance and ensure that a list of potential suppliers has been created. Once the list is in place, requests to tender (bid) are submitted only to this list and choices are made from the list.

Entry into the list might require the supplier to demonstrate competence, to have passed through a set of basic requirements, which could include a site visit, submission of company information, and possibly the delivery of services previously.

- *Pre-bid Briefings.*

If it is preferred to open the competition as widely as possible, and not exclude those who may previously have been unable to participate perhaps in emerging markets, or in countries with bars to certain people forming companies or organisations it may be possible to level the playing fields by requesting all potential suppliers to attend briefing sessions at which information is shared and questions can be asked in public.

Tenders (bids) are submitted only after this briefing, and the conditions under which tenders will be evaluated are understood by all.

- *Accredited Suppliers.*

For various reasons, there may be certain specialised specialised tasks and long-term commercial relationships that result in organisation establishing a list of accredited suppliers. If



such a list is established, there needs to be a regular review of prices, an assessment of quality, and an opportunity for new suppliers to join the list.

The list can be opened in part by the following strategy, but there may just be a limit to how long a company can remain on the list.

Disaggregation of Goods and Services

Those responsible for procurement may need to cut up their requests into smaller chunks so that a wider range of companies and organisation can be brought on board. There may be a temptation to award a large single contract and to leave the matter of sourcing to this winner who may or may not use smaller subcontractors.

Splitting up the tender can enable smaller organisations, including non-governmental and non-profit groups, to make a bid and to be successful. Such a strategy is particularly useful in obtaining professional services from a range of different backgrounds without these people moving into unnatural consortia or partnerships. But they also provide opportunities for small businesses to gain access, especially if the disaggregation is done along functional or geographic lines.

Selection Criteria

The best price is not the only economic criterion. Even those who procure goods and services on this basis evaluate quality, delivery capacity, reliability, and so on.

Those preparing procurement on a national scale may choose to add criteria that encourage certain organisations to apply and give them as good a chance of winning the tender). Apart from straight forward affirmative action strategies, which may reward minority group or women's participation, there may be linguistic criteria, or knowledge of local conditions, or the ability to work with and draw in large numbers of volunteers. In all of these the presumption is being made that these criteria will benefit the delivery of the service and its general acceptance in society; and that large scale procurement has a duty to extend equality.

11.1.5.5 Storage and Distribution

The more decentralised the educational programme, and the more reliant on paper leaflets, posters, fliers and publications that have to be created at the centre, the larger the storage and distribution problems of any programme, especially election programmes.

Educators need to think of ways to reduce the costs and difficulties of storage and distribution. They should do this during the planning phase by considering programme and strategy alternatives.

Media-Based Programmes

Programmes designed around a set of centralised messages, using primarily national media, reduce the problems of distribution and storage.

Balancing Complexity with Impact

Educators will have to balance the value of involvement in the campaign and face to face contact or individualised distribution of materials with the costs and difficulties of distribution and storage of materials.

Ways of reducing difficulties include the following:

- adhere to tight production schedules that enable materials to go directly from production to distribution without having to be stored
- use a central preparation system, served by more than one production agent, close to the distribution point
- encourage the local production of materials according to agreed specifications or with agreed messages
- double up on materials with those prepared for other aspects of the elections

Costs

Educators who have to distribute materials either have to rely on a wide network of educators and participating organisations, or will have to contract those who specialize in distribution. In transitional settings where there may be no functional nationwide distribution and where the country's transportation infrastructure is poor, educators will face more challenges in putting together a cost-efficient and reliable distribution plan. The geography and climate of the country may also come into play. In mountainous countries with remote areas and climatic conditions that may make roads impassable during certain times of the year, educators may have to use airfreight or the rail system rather than trucks, for example. Airfreight is the most expensive method of transporting materials. In general, the shorter a time span and the greater complexity of undertaking, the greater the cost.

Space

If materials must be stored and then moved out in various quantities to different locations, educators will need to understand exactly how much space is required to house, for example, 1 million tri-fold leaflets, and how many and/or what size trucks or transport containers will be required to move them out. Educators should confer both with their printer and the distribution company on these issues. If an ad hoc group of distributors, from civil society organisation, for example, is used it will be all the more important to solicit expert advice on the amount of space required.

Time

One mistake that novice educators make is not allocating enough time for distribution. The emphasis tends to be focused on the production phases and the project. Yet, if materials do not arrive in time for a special event or for learners to receive and reflect on the information contained therein, then the entire undertaking has been for nothing. Educators need to build time into their programme plan for delivery and distribution. The amount of time required for distribution will depend upon the challenges associated with getting materials to their ultimate destination, the number of materials to be distributed, and the number of people assisting in the distribution process.

Onward Distribution



Those who are delivering materials to regional or even local hosts for further distribution do need to make sure that the materials are expected, and will move to their destination expeditiously. There are examples of many materials, particularly those that are not absolutely crucial for the administrative success of an election, languishing in a passage or storeroom because the one person expecting the material has not been alerted to the fact that it has arrived. It may also be useful to include distribution instructions on the packaging materials so that those who have been recruited to hand them out or leave them at local establishments are clear on their task, including any restrictions. It may not be appropriate, for example, for official voter education posters to be hung in or on the premises of political party headquarters. Local ordinances may also restrict the hanging of posters on certain historical or cultural sites. Distributors need to be made aware of these requirements in order to avoid potential fines, wrangles with local officials, or even citizen complaints.

Weight Considerations

Storage is always at a premium. National programmes that rely on large amounts of paper, especially sequential poster and leaflet campaigns, should understand how much these materials weigh, and the difficulty and costs of moving them from one place to another.

11.1.6 Staffing for Civic and Voter Education

Those planning an education programme must establish a staff team, no matter how small. In programmes that are national in scope and which last for an extended period of time, staffing occupies a particularly high priority. The major component of education budgets tends to be spent on staff.

Where voter education programmes are run, it may be necessary to employ staff at short notice, for short periods of time, and to forge a team out of a widely disparate group of individuals. Whether it is the election management body that creates the team, or one or more non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the team is likely to be built around a small group of existing educators.

To overcome potential problems and to ensure that the staff is up and running as quickly as possible, there has to be careful definition of jobs (see Job Definition and Profiling) and the establishment of candidate profiles, Recruitment, and early Training and Orientation

The teams created are likely to be formed of full-time, temporary, and voluntary staff, who require special management (see Managing Staff and Volunteers).

Those who have human resources departments or stable staffs may want to ignore this section. Those responsible for establishing educational teams will find material here to supplement more general personnel issues.

11.1.6.1 Job Definition and Profiling

Without defining the jobs that must be done, and considering these in their relationships to one another and to the programme objectives, it is hard to see how a staff team can be recruited. Yet, there are examples of rapidly forming or growing organisations operating entirely on a set of job designations or titles.

Such designations may or may not result in a team that is able to define interdependent roles and functions. Often, such titles result in considerable time being spent during the initial stages and throughout the programme in negotiating roles. Because designations do not explain precisely what is required by a particular job, people establish who does what on the basis of what they are capable of doing. It is highly likely that the programme will change to meet the personal gifts and aspirations of the staff appointed rather than its set programme objectives.

A sample job definition is available at [Job Descriptions/Staff Profiles - New Zealand](#), and a summary of the component parts follows.

Accountability

The supervisor should be identified by title, and if there is a dual or matrix reporting line, or a set of committees to whom the person must report, these should also be listed.

Despite having a detailed job description, the chain of accountability is the primary indicator of job performance, organisation expectation, and actual day-to-day work.

Key Objective

A short statement can set the overall objective to be achieved by the person filling the job. But the key objective should be the defining characteristic of the job. The following details can be considered a guide in carrying out the job.

Results Areas

To achieve the key objectives, the individual has to achieve certain results in areas such as management of other staff, financial control, team building, acquisition of materials, development of courses, and liaison with the public. These criteria are the body of the description, but again, it should concentrate on results areas rather than all the activities a person must do.

The results framework may require a listing of specific objectives which must be achieved under each result.

Job descriptions should identify what has to be done, with the person allowed considerable discretion as to how to achieve the results. Such an approach makes it possible for those with even relatively menial jobs to have some personal control over their job and to be able to develop themselves and take initiative.

Level of Authority and Discretion

Finally, the document should establish the level of authority that comes with the job. This should include a list of those who will report to the person.



Other responsibilities should be spelled out, such as discretion over budgets, their ability to enter into contracts, speak on behalf of the organisation, make decisions outside the set parameters of the work plan, and so on.

Establishing a Job Applicant Profile

Having established a job description that enables recruitment, letters of appointment, and on-the-job assessment, those responsible for recruitment should develop a profile that helps them to search for appropriate people to fill the job.

Such a profile will take into account not only the necessary competencies demanded by the job description, but also the qualities that make it possible for a person to fit into the team being established.

Job profiling has to be done internally and with due consideration not only for the labour and employment laws of the country but also with a human rights and democracy orientation.

Certain jobs require people who are extroverted or who speak certain languages, or have political and cultural access to certain stakeholder groups or potential programme partners. Those selecting teams may have certain views about whether teams are more effective if they are diverse in background and age, or should be more homogenous.

There may also be views on whether women or members of minority groups should be incorporated into the staff team for reasons other than those above in order to ensure that they get equal opportunities for development in societies that may otherwise discriminate against them.

Once a job profile has been developed for the type of person that is to be sought for the job, recruitment can begin.

11.1.6.2 Recruitment

It is standard practise that recruitment be done in a competitive manner. This can be achieved through open advertisement or by closed list advertisement. In the case of open adverts, this can be done in the newspapers or magazines also posted online. This is particularly useful when the organisation is open to recruiting staff both locally and internationally.

However, in a case where recruitment is targeted at local applicants, this can be done through a closed list advertisement. This involves placing the job vacancy adverts in media that is restricted to local media.

It is important that a vacancy advert clearly states the objectives of the job and required qualifications and personality profile. The advert should also include a contact address, a deadline for applications and a description of the application process.

It is also standard practise to put together a recruitment or screening committee that will consist of staff from the human resource unit and from the education team. This committee will be responsible for screening the applications received and recommending the required number of applicants for an interview process. The number of applicants recommended for interview will depend on the number of persons to be recruited. For instance, 6 applicants can be interviewed for one position.

Depending on organisational policy, the mode of interview could be face-to-face or by telephone. The format of the interview process also depends on the skills and capabilities to be

tested in the process. For instance, to test an applicants' facilitation or training skills, they may be required to facilitate a focus group discussion during the interview process.

11.1.6.3 Managing Staff and Volunteers

Whether staff members are volunteers, contract workers, or full time employees, they need to have explicit statements about job goals, performance standards, conflict resolution and assessment strategies and procedures. Staff also need to know how they fit into a team.

Maintaining a balance between the needs of the programme and the needs of staff, especially volunteers, requires a management style that encourages team work and personal autonomy, keeping programme goals the priority. Following are some suggestions for ensuring team work and managing volunteers.

Voter and civic education programmes will want to encourage voluntarism. They also will have specialised staff, and amongst these the programme might find a range of contractors, consultants, seconded personnel, interns and researchers.

Managing this diverse group of people can be difficult, especially if it is done by a group of educators whose primary responsibility is the delivery of the programme and the use of their specialized expertise .

Teams with responsibility for a component of the programme, composed of a range of job definitions and personal skills, enable a programme to meet a variety of personal needs for significance, learning, and job fulfilment. Segregating people so that there is no contact between specialists and volunteers can create divisions. It is essential that there are additional supervisory staff to oversee and manage volunteers and more long-term staff.

Team Work

Teams members should be clear on programme goals (see Team Development). Then, staff members can add their experience and enthusiasm to the mix.

Volunteers, whether working in a team or not, require formal and explicit agreements about what can be expected from them and what they are likely to receive from the programme. Such agreements need to cover the following:

Volunteers

- the amount of work time that can be expected,
- the particular days of the week that the volunteer will be present,
- whether or not any remuneration is expected and;
- a set of performance standards

In addition, there should be an explicit statement about whether the contract can be ended and the conditions for ending the contract, even if it is not a remunerated one.



Volunteers may have opinions about what they can or should be doing, and the explicit agreement is designed to ensure that their place in the programme is recognised without being undervalued (some volunteers are treated like slave labour) or overvalued (some volunteers demand the sort of care and attention that even senior staff cannot demand). At any rate, it will be important to keep volunteer staff motivated.

11.1.6.4 Training and Orientation

All staff members, irrespective of their position in the organisation, should receive the training they need to do their job properly, and also to enable them to do simple educational work or to explain the objectives of the education programme.

But those who have to conduct education programmes require additional training and this section of the topic area is about the preparation of educators rather than about internal education and administrative staff training.

Standard Training Principles

The level of training required depends on the educational strategies chosen. If there is little face-to-face work, and the majority of the programme is based on mass communication and direct mail or similar techniques, there may be a limited need for educator training.

Instead, training may be needed for a cadre of home visitors, information officers, or telephone operators.

Whatever the case, the same principles apply:

- cascade training, subject to the limitations discussed below,
- active learning methods and;
- orientation programmes

Cascade Training

A mass training programme that must be achieved in a limited time frame should consist of a cascade system. Care has to be taken that cascade training does not turn into trickle down training. With this care and the enthusiasm of those receiving the training, a great deal can be achieved.

Cascade training is based on the principle of training an advance group of educators, who then transfer their knowledge and skills to a second set of people, and they to a third, and so on. This has also been referred to as training of trainers (TOT). If each training event operates on a ratio of one staff member to fifteen participants, by the third round of training it is theoretically possible to have reached about eleven hundred people. The fourth round reaches almost seventeen thousand people.

In order to be effective, materials for the full programme must be available, and these materials must provide participants with content competence, as well as the ability to transfer this to others. Given the likelihood that the majority of those participating will have limited education skills, fixed course designs that can be easily replicated are essential.

For this reason, it is necessary that every event, including the first, be conducted in circumstances similar to those likely to be faced at the bottom of the cascade. Many

programmes make the mistake of assuming the first round is more important and can therefore be conducted in different (normally more salubrious and costly surroundings).

Limitations of Cascade Training

Quality - The cascade system does have certain limitations that make it unlikely that a strictly geometric progression will be possible. The first of these is that those who are recruited may not be able to replicate the quality of the first event. Like a photocopy of a photocopy, cascade programmes tend to degrade even if there is a monitoring programme in place.

There are a number of reasons for this.

- Those preparing the first event typically are highly skilled educators who have had the privilege of preparing the materials over time, and because it is the first event, take some care in getting it right, even to the extent of more elaborate preparation than will be possible out in the field.
- The first round of recruitment attracts the stars; later rounds must make do with more ordinary people, if as committed.
- Those conducting the second and third rounds, and further down, have to prepare to conduct programmes in conditions less conducive to reflection and possibly further away from available resources.

Participant Choice - The second limitation is related to the choice of participants. Unless considerable work is done before all the events, it is likely that the participants will consist of a mix of the knowledgeable and competent, the willing but less able, the confused sent by the person who actually got the information, and those who are just looking for a bit of part-time or even full-time work.

So, more and more time is taken on clarifying the goals of the programme, administrative matters, and dealing with a diverse group in terms of educational competence.

The drop-out ratio increases, unless the programme has strict contractual obligations and a separate group that is organising events so that the trainers just have to turn up.

Final Level Resources - The final limitation can emerge quite rapidly. While the intention of a cascade programme is to eventually create a cadre of educators who can conduct a face-to-face programme with the final target audience that target audience often starts arriving at the programme quite high up the cascade. Education organisers can spot this in a voter education cascade when it becomes clear that those present are learning a great deal but have no intention or inclination to go out and educate others. This situation may also occur when there is not enough time to implement the cascade training prior to elections, for example. When time runs short, the pyramid may collapse as pressure grows to reach the final target audience rather than prepare trainers who will not have time to execute training activities prior to Election Day..

But those programmes that get the final level in place need to plan for the possibility that the resources available may not stretch far enough. Once seventeen thousand people are in place,



the organisers have to be able to resource seventeen thousand local events. At a nominal cost of \$2 a person for a fifteen-person workshop, the budget must suddenly bear an amount of half a million dollars. And it must have worked out how to ensure that those seventeen thousand events are organised.

Cascades Remain Important

Despite these limitations, it is possible to use cascade methods to reach a relatively large number of people and prepare them for the task, whether to conduct voter education events, provide public information, or visit voters and distribute materials.

Active Learning Methods

Training-of-trainer methodologies that work most effectively are those that combine considerable attention to the goals and objectives, provide simulation and rehearsal opportunities, and ensure that those who will be training others understand the principles behind the course and how to conduct it for others. See Group Learning, Simulations, Distance Learning Techniques for appropriate methodologies.

One important aspect of simulation and rehearsal activities is preparing trainers to deal with difficult participants. While most participants, whether prospective trainers or the final target audience, may have the best of intentions, there is always a small group of people who may be disruptive. Simulations will prepare trainers in how to deal with challenges to their authority and difficult group dynamics.

Trainers should also remember that they cannot rely on people taking large amounts of material home to read. Adults have limited time (see Adult Learning) and expect the workshop to be the primary learning experience.

Orientation Programmes

Apart from more detailed training, there are times when materials have been produced that have to be used by others. It is likely to be necessary to orient people to the use of these materials.

This can be done with large groups of people. The numbers are limited only by the size of the venue and the quality of the public address system.

Orientation sometimes masquerades as training. However, truly training in large groups requires a course design that creates the equivalent of a large number of small groups, with perhaps theoretical concepts offered in the large group and practice, reflection, rehearsal, and feedback done in extended breakaway sessions.

An orientation programme is a walk through materials with opportunities for discussion and basic familiarisation. The assumption is that people are competent to take the material, prepare it and perform adequately with limited training interventions. These training interventions can be provided back home, for example, at a pre-event run through.

11.2 Administration and Management

Education programmes require management. This is no different than any other enterprise.

There are certain specialized administration and management concerns in the implementation of a programme:

- Leadership
- Coordination and Control
- Quality Assessment
- Staff and Volunteer Morale
- Relationships to Other Stakeholders
- Security for Staff which deals with Peacekeeping and Peace enforcement, Education In Closed Institutions, as well as Education

In general, voter education teams rely on the standard techniques of management. While there are different ways in which people describe best practice in management, a simple categorization assists those who perhaps have more educational expertise than management expertise .

PLOC, or Planning, Leadership, Organisation, and Control, establishes the four functional areas within which one or more people, or a team of people, exercises management to achieve intended outcomes and to reduce unintended outcomes.

Planning refers to the setting of objectives, the aligning of resources, the assessment of strengths and weakness, and the identification of opportunities and threats that result in an operational programme.

Leadership concerns those behaviours that align the organisation with the stated objectives, and motivate and challenge staff to their achievement. Leadership might also be concerned with the positioning of the organisation to ensure its continued effectiveness.

Organisation deals with the construction of the necessary means to achieve the objectives. This includes procedures, policies, teams, operating units and other systems.

Control, sometimes softened to *coordination*, indicates the need to manage the achievement of objectives. This includes systems to monitor their achievement, rewards and non-performance consequences, reporting and auditing, and so on. Control is achieved in different ways in different organisations.

11.2.1 Leadership

Voter education programmes make particular demands on those who lead them. The demands are increased if the programme is being run by a coalition.

The Team under Pressure

The education programme team is likely to be

- extended and meeting demands and deadlines on a daily basis,



- under some pressure by those who have certain expectations of what should be done and how it should be done,
- facing a myriad of staff issues, amongst these the rapid growth in the size of the operation,
- dealing with maintaining non-partisanship and neutrality as an election campaign heats up,
- dealing with considerable public relations demands, because of the importance of involving national and community media in the programme.,.

All of these have to be handled in a diplomatic and nonpartisan way, irrespective of the source of the pressure.

Team Leader

Team leaders are also going to be assailed with information from those conducting educational programmes, often negative information about the level of preparedness of the citizenry for example. They have to deal with any negative information in a way that maintains confidence in the electoral process.

A Shared Leadership Approach

Leadership can be centralized. It can even be assumed to be natural. But given the pressures outlined above, it makes more sense to develop a theory of shared and functional leadership in which responsibility and expertise is diversified and shared on the basis of appropriate competence.

Functional and shared leadership is not always easy. It does not ultimately absolve those responsible for the final call. The buck does stop somewhere and under pressure, it is likely to force those who are designated as leaders of the programme to make regular and on occasion unpopular decisions.

Hershey and Blanchard provide a useful model of situational leadership that does not take away responsibility from the leader, but changes that responsibility to diagnosing the appropriate moment to behave in typically four different ways.^[1]

- a directive or telling mode
- a persuasive or selling mode
- a participative or consultative mode
- a delegative mode

Each of these modes is based on the leader's diagnosis of the group of whom s/he is the designated leader being willing and able to take on and complete a particular task. In this model, a group may be able to do one thing, and the leader may delegate this and take no further part in it.

The same group may, on another task, be immature or either unwilling or unable to complete the task. Here, the leader may have to take the directive role, determining what should be done and telling people what to do and how to do it.

11.2.2 Co-ordination and Control

National education programmes that are largely decentralised, whether geographically or functionally, place special coordination and control demands on the education team. This section discusses these demands and provides suggestions for dealing with them.

Coordination

Apart from the general requirement to manage different programme inputs according to a calendar or timetable that can be particularly tight, there are issues of power and authority.

In coalitions, consortia, or programmes involving civil society, there is no direct line of authority, unless it has been negotiated for the duration of the programme. In this circumstance, an education team has to be developed in which there is time given to managing the partner relationships and defining the terms of work, the delegation of tasks, and the relationship of these tasks to one another.

Sometimes this requires a full-time staff of its own, and such staff is typically drawn from amongst the partner organisations.

Steering committees, management committees, engine rooms, or project coordinators have to commit themselves to very close relationships and spending time in meetings. Other responsibilities of the representatives who sit in on these meetings may need to be reduced.

Control

Team leaders require good information and accurate reporting on the progress of the programme. When programmes are biased in favour of field staff or outside contractors, the team is likely to rely heavily on them for this information. There are potential problems in the areas of reporting and financial accountability.

Those who have to report may find it difficult to report accurately for the following reasons:

- Accurate reporting requires particular skills and a good knowledge of the outcomes planned. Neither of these may be available to those who are far from the centre.
- An educator or a contractor may under-report problems or poor performance; or may underestimate the number of people reached by a large event or a mass distribution of materials. This may be because of the reporter's own lack of information, or misperception of what has happened. There may also be some self-delusion. Each of these reduces the accuracy of the information filtering back to the programme centre.

In addition, there may be false reporting of events not actually conducted, or services not actually rendered. But it does not take such deceptiveness to skew the information and make it difficult to respond appropriately.

On the financial side, education programmes have to manage many different expenditure flows from the centre. In decentralised programmes, there are lower and lower levels of expenditure.



Educators often have to pay for venues, catering, and even participant subsidies when accurate invoicing is difficult, and where the field educator is event secretary, bookkeeper, and trainer all at once.

These different expenditure flows need to be resolved during the planning stage and systems developed that enable good financial control without hindering the delivery of the programme.

Systems and Trust

In each of these dilemmas, the need for external sources of information and the necessary checks and balances of accounting and management have to be developed. Such systems have to be relatively slim, and judgements have to be made about the cost of such systems in relation to the overall budget of the programme.

Perhaps the best system is one that develops personal integrity based on pride in performance; commitment to the social aims of the programme; and defined, generally agreed, and inevitable censure where personal integrity fails. It is difficult to see how it is possible to put in place an administrative system capable of dealing with all the coordination and control demands of a national education programme without some level of trust.

When this trust does not exist, the costs of establishing it can be lower than implementing a bureaucratic control. When this cannot be done, bureaucratic controls, audit trails, double reporting procedures and inspectorates, spot checks, dip-stick audits, and external investigations will be the order of the day.

11.2.3 Quality Assessment

Educational programmes set standards for themselves or have these standards set for them by the sponsors of the programme. When certification is a component of the programme, this acts as a benchmark. When there is no certification, a combination of staff qualifications, learner results, available educational plant and materials, support staff, and programme are considered.

In monitoring non-formal educational programmes (for more detailed evaluation suggestions, see Monitoring and Evaluation), two benchmarks that must be considered are *process* and *outputs*.

Process

Education programmes require certain processes. These may be the conduct of a calendar of education radio slots and television advertising, or a set of educational events, with each of these having its own internal processes.

Education organisers should attend to the processes that are under way and ensure the intended quality is being maintained, through a set of monitoring activities, staff assessments, and peer evaluations.

Outputs

Outputs require monitoring only in order to ensure that they are happening. The assumption is that the objectives have been set correctly and that if certain outputs can be seen and measured, the programme is attaining its planned quality. This is the "if it works, don't fix it" approach to quality management.

Of course, it may be that in addition to the expected outputs, there are some unintended outputs that may, over time, begin to affect the quality of the programme.

Such outputs can include perceptions of the education organisation, impressions about the manner in which business should be conducted, and even attitudes toward other learners.

Regular Programme Assessment

Uncovering these outputs and considering process questions can be difficult unless there is a regular programme assessment forum in which programme staff meet with team leaders or managers and go through a checklist of the intended staff behaviour and educational objectives. Progress can be assessed by asking: "How are we doing it?", and outputs: "What is happening as a result of the programme?"

Such checklist-based assessment should be backed up with data from external sources. This data can be provided by a monitoring and evaluation body, or can be collected by managers participating in actual events or behaving as clients of their own services.

11.2.4 Staff and Volunteer Morale

Education programmes, and especially voter education programmes could easily tire people, under pressure, they find it hard to perform at their best. This section suggests some ways to help people perform well.

Indeed, while the programme itself may be going along quite well, some staff may start showing the symptoms of burnout and depression. They become defensive and egocentric, and the programme begins to demonstrate the same characteristics.

Dealing with this under stressful conditions is not easy, and there may not be the resources or time available to give people a real break. But there are certain things that can help both staff and volunteers.

Affirmation

Managers and team leaders have to develop systems for recognising and affirming good performance. They will identify this performance in a number of ways in order to ensure that they do not start focusing only on a narrow band of behaviour.

Small Teams

Construct and then maintain small teams in which people can find support for their own work and assist in providing support for others. Such teams are likely to be objective based rather than specialized in orientation. But, across such teams, an organisation might construct affinity groups, which draw together researchers or administrators with a particular focus.

Both such gatherings of people should meet during working hours: the time spent on maintenance should not have to happen during people's own time.



Celebrate

Team leaders will find opportunities for celebration. Birthdays, holy and high days, especially those that commemorate human rights and democracy milestones, and other similar moments provide an opportunity for people to gather and celebrate the importance of their work and that of other people. Interestingly, the Election Day and its aftermath can be a major letdown for voter education workers. The non-partisan nature of their work leaves them outside the real contest and its emotions; and the fact that they work through the last-minute administrative preparations often means that they do not hold election staff positions in voting stations.

In South Africa, a special T-shirt was produced for workers so that they would not feel out of place in the entire hullabaloo.

When it is not possible for education programmes to free their staff to participate fully on Election Day, special arrangements should be made to ensure that staff and volunteers do have a chance to celebrate the closure and likely success of their enterprise.

Be Administratively Competent

Cheques paid late for services rendered, misspellings of names on certificates, being left off internal mailing lists, late decision making about policy and practice, having to wait for stationery and the materials necessary to do the work: all of these have a debilitating effect on people. These situations can be avoided by ensuring adequate and professional administrative backup to the programme.

Manage Terminations and Closure

The morale of the staff and volunteers is important. No programme can afford to have people leave during the last days of its life.

It should be noted, however, that many programmes end not only with an election but also with the termination of employment. So, in the most hectic moments, staff members have their thoughts on future employment or the insecurity of unemployment. Programmes should either schedule contracts so that they run through an election or ensure that people resolve their futures early. It helps to have absolutely clear and unambiguous statements and contracts that determine the period of employment, but it may be necessary to start quite early in stating the obvious to people, so they do not leave their arrangements to the last minute and do not get distracted when it is least appropriate.

11.2.5 Relationships to Other Stakeholders

Educators do not necessarily have to please everybody when they are conducting a voter or civic education programme. But to make the programme a success, and to ensure cost effectiveness and the multiplier effect, they have to keep everybody involved.

This has to be done by establishing and maintaining channels of communication between stakeholders and the programme.

Reporting

Regular reports to those who provide the budget can include a newsletter, a series of briefings and consultations, and one-on-one meetings between team leaders and designated people within the stakeholder community.

Consultative or Advisory Groups

In some cases, it may be possible to establish one or more consultative groups amongst stakeholders that meet on a regular basis. While it is difficult to maintain interest in these groups if they do not have decision-making powers, or if they have too broad a focus, it is possible to develop a set of tightly focussed and representative groups.

For example, a group may review and provide advice on an advertising campaign, another on the content of messages, and a third on a code of conduct and monitoring of programme effectiveness.

Such groups are more than focus groups, because a relationship is built up with stakeholders over time. Groups require attention; to set them up and then not service them can be worse than not setting them up in the first place.

If such groups are established, they should remain open to new members, but the new members should have to meet certain criteria. Members who represent stakeholders should be identified and required to come to meetings with some consistency, otherwise each meeting will turn into an educational event rather than a continuing discussion.

The Effort is Important

All these strategies are important, because an education programme, particularly one conducted over a period of months, cannot take for granted the goodwill and understanding of the programme that might have been generated in initial discussions. Stakeholder views change because of their experience of the programme, changes in the external environment, and sometimes changes within the stakeholder group itself. So the legitimacy of the programme has to be constantly attended to.

When stakeholders are kept on board, a programme is able to reach into territories it might not otherwise get to. The programme is protected from political fallout as implementation takes place (an aspect of the programme might otherwise be deemed too sensitive or not sensitive enough), and there is a ready and continuing early warning system that ensures programme leaders do not get all their information from their own staff (see Coordination and Control).

11.2.6 Security for Staff

Education organisers and team leaders conducting programmes during election times cannot protect their team members against all eventualities. In circumstances where there is conflict over an election, those promoting it may also be at risk. In educational programmes conducted in situations where there are large numbers of events and limited numbers of staff, the chances of travel accidents increases.

While all programmes should take basic precautions and care, there is no guarantee of perfect safety for all programmes. There are specific needs in relation to security that must be considered in managing a voter or civic education programme.



- In closed or secure institutions, such as prisons or army barracks, voter education may be essential, but the nature of the institutions requires separate attention from the mainstream programme.
- When there is community conflict, such conflict is likely to result in territorial strongholds; and these will still be in place once an election is promulgated. Programmes have to be developed for such places. Some would say that these are precisely the places where voter and civic education programmes are most needed.

11.2.6.1 Peacekeeping and Peace enforcement

There has been an increase in international interventions in failed states and in conflict resolution for intra and -state conflicts. While peacekeeping has a long history and has developed its own protocols, there has been a convergence between this activity and that of electoral assistance. Full scale post-conflict re-building actions led by the UN or similar regional inter-governmental organisations are receiving more attention. The cases of Namibia, Cambodia and Eritrea have been joined by Bosnia, East Timor Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the African continent, peacekeeping and its more complex and controversial peace enforcement missions are present in countries in the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and West Africa. Afghanistan and Iraq are drawing the attention and the resources of many Northern countries.

Educators are conducting innovative civic education programmes in many of these countries, making use of voluntary associations, expanding school enrolments, especially amongst girls, and adapting or reforming curricula, using many of the techniques and tactics described elsewhere in this topic area. The process of developing and implementing these programmes under adverse conditions may be as important in developing a commitment to democracy and the re-invigoration of a social fabric as the overt educational outcomes.

A more dangerous activity is undertaken when voter education is conducted in insecure or unstable countries in the run up to elections intended to act as conflict resolving mechanisms. While it is understandable that elections get planned under these circumstances, where there is presently either no legitimate national government or contested legitimacy, it is essential that such elections do actually poll the informed wishes of a broad electorate; otherwise they fail even in their limited aims. This means voter education or at the very least universally provided voter information.

In some of the countries where international troops and police are deployed, they have taken on either an educational mandate themselves or the mandate of protecting civic and voter educators. It is perhaps too early to evaluate this activity and to determine whether it has strengthened domestic commitments to democracy or has had the effect of creating a perception that democracy is a foreign or imposed concept. Where it is the only way to ensure the safety of educators and participants in educational events, there may be some particular principles to be born in mind. These are:

- Non-partisanship
- civilian and local ownership and mandate,
- empowerment of voters and;
- non-discrimination

There are some particularly technical concerns in the delivery of elections under conditions where authority may be dispersed in a country between international administrators and security forces, previously existing state organs and emerging transitional structures. These will

have an impact on educators and on educational provision, although they will often have no say in the manner in which these relationships are developed.

The experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo suggests that educators can insist upon empowering and thence developing the capability of the election management bodies which are created. This places the locus of authority where it will subsequently fall and increases domestic ownership. This has some immediate consequences – efficiency of delivery may fall – but in the long run it contributes to the state-building and democracy-creation agenda which is presumably why international agencies have entered the country in the first place.

Lessons in the delivery of education and information programmes in these often unstable or contentious circumstances are still being learned. Some have chosen the centralised media route, others have used cascade strategies to ensure that local education programmes are delivered by local people who have less problems with access and security.

11.2.6.2 Education in Closed Institutions

All societies have closed institutions. In some cases, these are literally closed to members of the public and to their inhabitants, for example maximum security prisons or asylums. Others may be partially open, but the nature of the institution shields it from general contact with the public: for example detention centres, special homes, hospitals for chronically ill people. Others may create an aura of closedness, which makes it difficult for members to enter: military institutions, some religious houses, and police stations in some countries.

In these closed institutions, with few exceptions, people are either already participating in society, or will return to that society at some point in the future. In institutions where there is a ready contact between the members and the outside world, education can happen during this contact. In some cases, there may be little or no contact and, while it may not be possible for the members, inmates, or patients to vote in a particular election, it may still be necessary for them to have opportunities to learn about democracy and citizenship.

This section suggests three things that must be balanced in managing the security of programmes conducted in closed institutions:

- the security of the staff;
- the security of the participants and;
- the efficacy of the programme

Programme Choices

Educators talk about the hidden curriculum of schools: what is taught not during the lesson, but as a result of the environment within which the lesson takes place. Prisons pose a particular problem if they are primarily designed as places for restriction and punishment, while military bases operate on an authority system somewhat at odds with what is generally considered democratic behaviour between people.



As a result of this special context, special programmes need to be developed, and a variety of methods found to ensure the efficacy of this programme.

Security

Having established this, arrangements have to be made to deal with general security issues: access to the institution, contact (or lack of contact) between educators and inmates, relationships to the staff of the institution, and their relationship to those participating in the programme. Such discussions should take place well in advance of the initiation of any programme, and the specialized nature of the work suggests that specialized staff take responsibility for it.

Using Existing Specialized Staff

Many closed institutions have visitor programmes, welfare and psychiatric services, religious chaplaincies, formal educational studies, and vocational education. Contact with the most appropriate of these is essential, as these are people who have already forged a working relationship with the institution and know its organisational culture, regulations, limitations and opportunities.

Such experience may have been hard won. It is important that this is not jeopardised by sending inexperienced staff members to conduct programmes. It may be better to orient existing educators and other visitors with the information and materials needed and have them conduct the programme on a proxy basis.

11.2.6.3 Education in Unsafe Areas

Societies in conflict spawn geographic areas that are unsafe for the authorities or supporters of an alternative faction or group.

These become areas where no one can go, at least not without being under threat of attack. In most, but not all, such cases, the borders of such territories are clearly marked. There may even have been a general "chasing out" of perceived aliens (whether as a result of their ethnic identity, political or religious persuasion).

When such a society begins an electoral process, or starts reconciliation or nation building exercise, these geographic areas remain. Indeed, they may be the most significant obstacle to the re-establishment of peace and democracy.

It is essential that there be an education programme in such areas. During elections, it may even be considered necessary to allow the citizens living in such areas (who may or may not have had a choice in the matter) access to the various political contestants or their ideas.

The political parties and factions may have divided up a country in such a way that they cannot enter the territory controlled by one another. This could be a recent or long-standing phenomenon. It poses special questions for election administrators.

But for educators, it raises a series of dilemmas. Voters require information and education that must be made available on a professional and nonpartisan basis, when the risks to educators and voters may be high. Voters require access to information about all the contestants if this education is to be relevant and efficacious. The very state of territoriality is having a negative effect on voters and their perceptions of democracy, which may be difficult to overcome

through standard educational programmes. Indeed, these may be so at odds with the reality of those being educated that the programme engenders cynicism or disbelief.

Life is not perfect. It may be decided that despite the problems (and the problems of educators are invariably secondary to those of political settlement) it is important to continue with elections despite the creation of "no-go" areas where political opposition is neither welcomed nor tolerated.

In these circumstances, programmes may have to be developed that require the assistance of the security forces to protect the educators, and where the educators themselves have to convey political party information on a non-partisan basis.

In some cases this dilemma can be overcome by the use of broadcast programmes that can be received across any border. In other cases, programmes should include face-to-face activities even in the unnatural environment of an event protected by security forces.

Security Precautions

When this happens, care has to be taken to protect voters on their way to and from the event, and to ensure that the event details in every respect have been approved by the party or faction controlling the territory. Educators will leave with the security forces, but voters will not, and the determination about whether to proceed with such education has to be based on the personal safety of the participants after the event is over. Security for the event itself is the easy part of the exercise and should not be the primary concern of the security forces and the organizers.

In some cases, it may be decided to conduct a road show in which the electoral authority creates a platform for all candidates or contesting parties to speak in a particular area. Educators should use the opportunity to convey messages about the secrecy of the ballot, tolerance for opposition, and acceptance of the results of the election. They should also make handout materials available that are clearly identified as nonpartisan.

In some situations, even education is risky. A territory may be controlled by a faction that is resisting the election itself. Here, a determination has to be made about how the election itself will continue and what security is going to be provided for voters wanting to vote despite the opinions of the controlling faction.

Broadcast material may be most appropriate in these situations, although there may be other information networks that can be used.

Voter education conducted under such difficult circumstances can still be worth it. The presence of nonpartisan educators in a no-go area can increase the climate of tolerance of different points of view. These educators develop levels of trust that cannot be achieved by broadcast programmes, and they form the vanguard for what must inevitably follow the setting up of voting sites and the monitoring of the conduct of the elections during voting time. By being present when political party campaigners cannot be present, they also establish the one



presence not linked to the party in control, and thus provide an opportunity for voters to obtain on a one-to-one basis general information about the campaign.

Non-partisanship is Crucial

Care must be taken to ensure that those involved in such programmes are amongst the most experienced and clearly non-partisan. They may be the only people present and they may be approached for information about other parties. If this information is not given carefully, educators could provide just the excuse a party leadership requires to turn the election to its own advantage, or even to withdraw from the election. This care should include consideration of language: using a familiar term that is acceptable in one area but not another is all that is needed to make the educator seem partisan.

One way to overcome this particular problem is to always have teams of educators from different regions. This has additional significance as a physical demonstration of the reconciliation that is being sought, but it is likely to be difficult for the team itself and such people need special support from the programme administrators and leaders.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Educational programmes have intended outcomes. They have plans that are being followed in order to achieve these outcomes. These plans consist of a range of components working together to ensure their successful implementation.

This section deals with ways in which monitoring and evaluation take place and some of the dilemmas faced by those who conduct evaluations. It looks at methodological and organisational questions, and at the key question faced by all evaluators: the extent to which programme implementers take advantage of the evaluation recommendations. The section following offers a general overview of evaluation and its relationship to educational testing.

By implementing monitoring plans and evaluating their outcome once completed, educators seek to ensure that they are being accountable to their stakeholders, true to their intentions, and that they themselves will learn from disciplined reflection on the experience of the programme for further work that they might do.

Terminology and Meaning

While it is common to use the twin terminology of monitoring and evaluation, this section merges these terms into the single generic term evaluation, and. It talks about formative evaluation (that conducted with a view to changing a programme while it is in progress) and summative evaluation (that conducted to sum up the programme). But neither is entirely independent of the other.

The meaning of the word evaluation is a slippery one. Those requesting evaluations may be trying to determine the value of a programme by measuring its impact. Evaluators may already have a view of the programme and may be merely seeking external verification of that view. They may be trying to build support for a particular course of action either to defray responsibility or, more generously, to obtain a second opinion before acting.

What Can be Evaluated

Everything about a programme is worth evaluating. There is no restriction on the locus of an evaluation but the feasibility of doing it. There may be an assessment of the contextual analysis

that is done, the relevance of purpose, aims and objectives, the cost effectiveness of the programme, the extent to which it met its objectives, the process by which it did this, the competence of staff, the relationship between materials and objectives, and so on. At its heart, people expect evaluation to tell them something about the difference the programme made to the participants or intended beneficiaries.

Such evaluation inevitably takes place, whether planned or unplanned. People develop opinions about aspects of the programme or its success. These opinions may be well-informed, or they may be informed by prejudice, a particular limited experience, or a restricted perspective on the programme. Good evaluations are designed to ensure that the most reliable picture is obtained of a programme. Educators should ensure a professional rather than merely intuitive evaluation for all programmes that are complex in their number of components, cost, length, or long-term implications.

Educational and Programme Evaluation

Educational evaluation has often, therefore, consisted of evaluating the learners and their achievements or progress over the period of the educational programme. Depending upon the type of intervention, this can be done in a number of ways. First, this can be done by testing competence or knowledge through written and oral presentations or examinations. Second, information might be achieved by collecting baseline data and conducting of tracking polls throughout the course of the intervention to identify changes in awareness levels, attitudes, and even behaviours. This qualitative data might be further supplemented by qualitative feedback collected through focus groups. Some election statistics might also provide useful polling information. However, educators need to keep in mind that it may not be possible to isolate their intervention as the sole reason for a particular result in the case of some polling data and election statistics.

Programme evaluation goes beyond the assessment of individual learning. But educational programmes should not escape the need to ensure that this is assessed. In non-formal educational programmes this may not be best done by examinations, although tests of competency are essential for training of educators.

Indicators

Evaluators establish a range of indicators by which they will be able to judge whether or not the necessary learning has taken place.

Similar indicators are established for other components of the programme. In each case, the achievement of these is deemed (unless there is evidence to the contrary) an indication that the programme has been successful. Sample indicators might include: A significant increase in the number of registered voters, in the number of first time voters, or of voters using a special voting service might all be indicators that an education programme has affected awareness levels and behavior. Similarly, decreases in the number of spoiled or invalidated ballots might also be used as indicators of voters' better understanding of the voting process.



Establishing these indicators is a difficult task and has to be done at the same time as the setting of objectives. Failure to do this leads to the development of programmes whose objectives are not able to be evaluated, or the development of indicators that are alternatively insignificant or established after the fact.

Evaluation Controversy

Because evaluation is seen as an important component in validating a programme to outsiders, and because it contains these technically difficult activities (see Measuring Impact and Importance Of Prior Planning) and such a range of stakeholder expectations and fears, it can become a highly charged and political activity, especially if the programme has a high stakeholder investment. This could be the case if it is especially expensive, or if the programme has been endowed with societal significance (for example a founding election or the tryout of new technology).

Educators should retain control over the evaluative process and its planning, implementation and costs. The best way to do so is to ensure that evaluation is built into the programme from the beginning and is not an activity imposed on the programme at a later date. Evaluation becomes a valuable tool. when it forms part of the standard operating routine. On the other hand, when it is an afterthought or used for crisis management, evaluation becomes a burden and a controversial and difficult activity.

12.1 Who Should Evaluate

Educational programmes will be evaluated, whether professionally or intuitively. The question is, who will be responsible for planning and conducting the evaluation.

Monitoring is a responsibility of those who manage the programme. They may use a range of tools to ensure that it is done accurately and adequately. But evaluation implies a distance from the programme that, it is assumed, cannot be achieved by the staff themselves.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of an evaluation that can appropriately be done by staff, and there are evaluation designs that benefit from staff participation.

Independent Evaluators

External evaluators provide independence and disinterest in the evaluation outcome necessary to ensure the study produces reliable results. Such results are unencumbered with the bias, short-sightedness or defensiveness that comes from those who are too close to the programme.

Outsiders can find it easier to obtain objective comment from participants and access to those who have been excluded from the programme. They also can provide the additional prestige that an evaluation requires, to be taken seriously and in order to ensure that the recommendations of the study are implemented.

They will have the time to conduct the evaluation that is unlikely to be available to staff who are involved in ongoing programmes.

And finally, commissioning external evaluators may be the only way of obtaining the necessary expertise for the evaluation of a large and complex programme.

Self-Evaluation

Those who are close to the programme bring their own intimate knowledge of the programme and of the intended and actual outcomes to an evaluation. They have an interest in the outcome and, a professional commitment to the improvement of their work, so that implementation of evaluation findings is more likely.

Internal evaluations increase the awareness of staff of programme issues which have to be considered, such as the cost-effective use of resources, the need for clear objectives, the importance of collecting appropriate information throughout the programme.

Weaknesses of Both Approaches

- *External Evaluators.* External evaluators can take a considerable amount of time to understand the context within which the programme is running, to be able to enter the world of the programme stakeholders in order to interpret their responses to questions and their reaction to evaluator reports, and to follow the programme plan and its implementation.

They are costly, although the cost of employing outsiders can be offset by their ability to conduct the evaluation in a shorter period of time, assuming their familiarity with the context and the concepts.

They do not have to live with their recommendations. They do not have to live with the consequences of their reports. At the worst, this can result in unrealistic recommendations which do not adequately reflect an understanding of the environment within which a programme has to be delivered.

- *Insiders.* Insiders, on the other hand, can get too close to the programme. They have relationships that have to be protected and personal careers that can be jeopardised. They may have a vested interest in a particular outcome or recommendation.

As mentioned before, they often do not have sufficient time, although it is possible to give the task to a specific team within the organization. It may be difficult for them to get reliable and objective information, either from their colleagues or from programme participants.

Combining Insiders and Outsiders

Effective evaluation requires a combination of insiders and outsiders. It may be that the final report is prepared by the outsiders, while the insiders act as liaison and facilitation staff. Alternatively, both insiders and outsiders can declare their interests in the report.

An effective evaluation design encourages stakeholder participation, concentrates on skill development, and establishes the usefulness of the report and its recommendations. It uses a variety of data collection and analysis tools that encourage participation and ownership.

In such an evaluation, the roles of evaluators and of all programme stakeholders is carefully described. The determination how to make use of staff insiders or independent outsiders is based on what is most effective for the particular evaluation study.



12.2 Monitoring Or Formative Evaluation

Evaluators refer to formative evaluation, which is similar to monitoring. It is an activity that runs parallel to programme implementation and which seeks to refine and improve the programme during the implementation phase.

Advertising agencies refer to tracking research: keeping the programme on track, or keeping track of the programme.

The tools used for such evaluation can be the same as those used in more traditional end of project or summative evaluation (see Measuring). They also include more traditional managerial tools and those developed for dealing with individual educational events.

The difficulties faced by formative evaluation are not those of data collection. They are primarily those of establishing mechanisms for turning evaluation insights into programmatic innovation and amendment. This section deals with conflicts that might emerge, with the importance of the programme plan (see also Obtaining and Maintaining Commitment To the Plan) and with some monitoring tools.

Monitoring Must Keep Pace

Education programmes run on a tight schedule. Events and activities are planned in advance and decisions are made about production of materials, preparation of educators, and broadcast of information that are not easily altered. Face-to-face activities, in particular, require substantial lead times.

Evaluators must be closely linked to those managing the programme and must be able to analyse data received very rapidly if it is to make a difference. In addition, they need to have good knowledge of the programme objectives and purpose so as not to suggest courses of action that take the programme away from these objectives. All suggested changes need to enhance achievement of objectives, with one exception.

Extended programmes can build in mid-term assessments that are more thorough and can include an assessment of strategy and objectives. Any changes recommended as a result of feedback received have to be carefully considered, especially if there are contractual obligations based on the original programme objectives and outline. While it is relatively easy to make changes to how a programme is implemented, it is much more difficult to make changes to what is intended.

In some cases, this is necessary if the information being received suggests major problems with the programme design. Formative evaluation usually is concerned with refinement.

Conflict between Evaluators and Programme Managers

Even if there is a clear distinction between the evaluation and management teams, and even if the roles are carefully clarified, conflict can emerge between those who obtain and analyse evaluation data and those who are responsible for programme implementation.

Regular meetings, and a formal agreement about how to resolve such conflicts, are of assistance. Evaluators can be forced to note for the summative record recommendations that were not followed. At the same time, having had their recommendations followed can also cause conflict if the changes are not successful. Evaluators can suddenly find themselves evaluating programme innovations that they motivated, but which are not working.

The role of evaluators therefore becomes quite problematic unless they act as technical assistants providing unanalysed data directly to programme managers and assisting in the joint analysis of such data. This relationship is less open to conflict.

Working the Plan

The preliminary work done on the education plan is the most essential tool available for formative evaluation or programme monitoring. On a regular basis it is possible to check the extent to which the programme is being implemented and the extent to which changes in the context or amongst the target constituency require adaptations to the programme.

Having a plan documented also enables such changes to be recorded and noted for later general evaluation.

Tools for Monitoring

In addition to the general data collection tools discussed in this topic area, the client response or post-event reaction form is perhaps the most important.

Such response forms have been refined by commercial concerns and it is possible to use these as models of layout and brevity. When the audience is literate, it is possible to collect individual responses from events or particular services, process these, and use the results to fine-tune the programme. When the audience is illiterate, small group discussion and recorded feedback can serve a similar purpose.

Additional tools can include telephone complaints lines, peer assessment of educators, short surveys, and occasional gatherings of stake holders in focus-group-like discussions.

Role of Staff

The best source for information is a reflective and aware staff. Orientation to evaluation and monitoring concerns should be part of every training event, programme meetings should include opportunities for staff to communicate what they have learned and what they have discovered from their interactions in the field.

The purpose of formative evaluation is not to be able to say: "I told you so," but to make sure that the programme is appropriate and effective. Everything should be geared toward this end and the educators should create a learning environment both internally and externally.

12.3 Measuring Impact

Summative evaluation is not only about measuring impact. Evaluation conducted at the conclusion of a programme could focus on a range of different interests such as cost effectiveness, appropriate educational materials, and efficient implementation strategies.

In general, however, people want to know what difference a programme has made. What impact has there been on the institution, the learner, the target audience, and the programme



beneficiary. Even cost-benefit analysis presupposes some understanding of the impact that the programme has had and the weighting of that against the cost.

But measuring impact of a social intervention is not easy: for the following reasons::

- The targets move.,
- Indicators are hard to determine.,
- Controlling the inputs and processes is difficult. and;
- It is possible for the programme to be interrupted.

A fairground metaphor is useful. In a test of strength (and as a means of parting patrons from their hard-earned money in the hope of impressing friends), fairgrounds often have a "ring the bell and win" game. It consists of a target to be hit, a hammer, and a long column with a bell at the top that rings if the impact of the hammer on the target is hard enough.

In this exercise, there are a range of indicators (normally using words that start off derogatory of the person swinging the hammer, encourage the person to try again, and then ring the bell for a prize); there is a clear target; there is a very simple input (person plus hammer); a range of potential processes (how does the person swing the hammer); and an impact that can be measured (assuming that the whole game is not rigged).

Would that social processes, of which education is one, were so simple.

The Moving Target

In the first place, discussions of impact make some presumptions about the target. It is assumed that the target is known, that the programme is directed at that particular target, and that the target is subject to no other significant alternative programmes or learning processes.

But, people are constantly moving and changing as a result of a range of different social activities and opportunities. It is unlikely, in educational programmes such as voter and civic education, that everything will be known about the public for whom the programme has been prepared. And, because programmes are conducted over time and space, it is likely that they will not only be received by a particular specified target group but by others. The target group may also shift in size or scope as more becomes known during the implementation of the programme.

Despite these difficulties, the more that is known about the learner constituency, including the development of a programme baseline (see Baseline Studies), the more the evaluation will take into account all of the programmes to which it was exposed. If the evaluation is open to change, the estimation of the programme's impact will be more reliable.

The Indicators of Impact

In the fairground, ringing the bell is an indicator of success and at the same time the objective of the exercise. There is a very close correlation between programme objectives (described by some as results statements) and programme indicators. If a programme is to be evaluated summatively, then a set of indicators should be established at the same time as the objectives are framed.

The questions that planners may ask are:

- How can we know that our objective has been achieved? And;

- How will we measure the achievement of the objective?

There may be a range of indicators for each objective, or alternatively one central indicator that validates the whole set of objectives. Planners look for this silver bullet, but it is a chimera.

Spoiled and Invalidated Ballots and Voter Turnout as Indicators
Voter educators have been tempted to use the indicator of spoiled and invalidated ballots as a silver bullet. If the objective of a voter education programme is to ensure that voters are able to vote, then it appears to make sense that a low percentage of spoiled and invalidated ballots means that the educational programme was successful.

- But the percentage of spoiled and invalidated ballots can be affected by many other things:
- There may be a very good ballot design.,
- Voters may be allowed assistance at the point of voting.,
- The definition of a valid ballot may be very broad and vote counters may be generous in determining acceptable votes. and;
- Ballot box stuffing or other forms of cheating can result in prepared ballots entering the box rather than those of the uneducated or ill-prepared voter.

Or it may be that the voter education programme has had an objective of motivating people to vote. An obvious indicator would be the percentage turnout.

As with the spoiled ballot, there could be a range of alternative explanations:

- The sun could be shining.
- The political contestants could have succeeded in developing a high interest in the issues or outcome.
- The social significance of the election might be considerable.
- Material incentives or threats of retaliation may have driven up turn-out. and;
- Turn-out statistics may have been manipulated by election officials.

Evaluators should interrogate indicators carefully to ensure that they do indeed have significance only for the measurement of the impact of the programme. Or they may have to, at substantial cost and time, investigate whether these alternative explanations have validity and by a route of exclusion, attempt to show the impact of the programme itself. Indicators that focus only on the personal do not come to terms with the overall impact of the programme on the society. Measuring the impact of the programme on the larger society requires assumptions about cause and effect that can hardly be described let alone measured.

The Inputs and Processes

Establishing indicators is difficult. Controlling the inputs and processes that might lead to an impact is even trickier. Some of these can be invisible, or unintended. The plan may specify certain inputs and describe certain ways in which the programme will be implemented (the



process). But successful completion may come about because of some unanticipated and unreported variations.

Evaluators who are involved with programmes from the beginning or who use methods that encourage participant observation and data collecting may notice these. An astute investigator may notice anomalies that can be explained only by looking for the unrecorded, and may then be able to find it.

But the bigger the programme, the more difficult it is to keep track of all the inputs and processes and, through evaluation, ascribe impact to one or the other, or ascribe lack of impact to one or the other, except in gross or obvious terms.

A particular set of training events can be very successful in turning out effective trainers:

- This may be a result of the training programme developed and used.,
- It may equally hinge on the personality and skills of the trainer.,
- It may be that participants were all effective trainers in their own right. and;
- Participants may have been recruited from an organisation that gave them continuing support and ongoing assessment of progress.

Possible Interruptions

In the "ring the bell" game, the bell may not ring not because of the impact of the hammer but because of the game owner's hidden anti-success contraption.

There are many possible reasons why a programme may not achieve its targets even though it does everything according to the book. It is not always possible to understand these reasons or identify them fully.

It is not the fault of the voter education programme if an election is stolen. Citizen apathy, despite an extended civic education programme, may be caused by a political system which disempowers rather than through a poorly developed or implemented programme.

In Summary

Establishing the impact of a programme requires basic knowledge about the target audience, carefully considered and humbly stated indicators, the ability to make visible and reflect on alternative reasons for the apparent success or otherwise of the programme, and extensive knowledge not only about the plan but also about the actual implementation process.

And all of these are difficult to achieve even in a small and limited programme intervention. In a large national programme, it therefore becomes extremely difficult to measure impact with any degree of certainty.

Evaluators should, therefore, consider summative evaluations with some caution and develop a range of ways of communicating the value of a programme rather than making glib statements about the extent to which it has changed the world.

12.3.1 Importance of Prior Planning

It is possible to evaluate an educational programme after it has been completed. But it is a much more difficult task. Because of this, evaluation should be built into the programme from the start.

It may otherwise prove impossible to do more than merely report on the completion of the programme in a manner that could as easily be done by a concluding report.

To properly evaluate a programme, there must be measurable objectives, meaningful indicators, concrete evaluation criteria, a commitment to document the programme, and preparation of the necessary information that an evaluation requires at the time of the events.

All these pre-suppose that the decision to evaluate is taken at the time the programme is planned, and that the evaluation design is built into that planning. Very few programme planning exercises achieve this simultaneity.

The best that can be hoped for is that the commitment to evaluation is made at the inception, that money is set aside for this activity, and that dates are scheduled for designing the evaluation, bringing in any external evaluators and conducting the necessary evaluation activities that happen separately from the programme activities.

The earlier this happens, the easier it is to obtain a satisfactory summative evaluation.

12.3.2 Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation is a specialised form of social research conducted either by one or more independent consultants, or by the staff of a programme. As such, it makes use of any social research methodologies (see Surveys) that enable the answer to a set of evaluation concerns or questions.

These questions will be established together with any limitations on methodology or other obligations in a Terms Of Reference or evaluation contract document.

When the terms of reference are established, the evaluation team is able to consider a range of Evaluation Design Options and, on the basis of the design, use a range of different Data Collection Options.

Because elections involve social policy and can be highly politicised, evaluators have to consider the related concepts of Legitimacy and Reliability.

Finally, evaluation design is significantly determined by the time available and the size of the budget (see Time and Cost of Evaluations).

12.3.2.1 Terms Of Reference

Whether an evaluation is done by an outside team or the staff of the programme, it is necessary to write terms of comprehensive Terms Of Reference (TOR) document.

Such a document enables all stakeholders (and a number of them are likely to become involved in the evaluation as recipients of the report, as interviewees, or as providers of core information) to understand and agree to the areas under investigation, the manner in which the



enquiry will take place, the time schedule and, when the TOR constitutes a contract with external evaluators, the costs.

A TOR document typically covers the following areas:

- *The Background.:* A short section setting out the reason for the evaluation and the background to the programme.;
- *Primary Purpose of the Evaluation.:* A statement descriptive of the overall intention of the evaluation so that it can also be judged according to the extent to which it achieves the goals of those who request the investigation.;
- *The Methodology to be Adopted.:* The most extensive section which, identifies whether the evaluation is to be primarily qualitative and descriptive, whether it is going to be quantitative and survey based, and the manner in which the evaluators should go about their job. This section can also include decisions about meetings of stakeholders to be convened, whether interviews are to be face to face, group, or telephonic, structured or unstructured.
- *The Time Line.:* An evaluation typically must be conducted in a very tight time frame. To alert all participants to this, a detailed time frame may be included with the TOR. If this is not possible, then starting and report delivery dates will be specified.;
- *Additional Information.:* Each evaluation is different. It is likely there will be other conditions that have to be specified. These might include restrictions on who does the evaluation, whether the team includes or excludes staff, and other evaluator qualifications. There may also be instructions about the accessibility of certain stakeholders to the evaluators, and existing data that should be taken into account. and;
- *Contractual Obligations.:* If the TOR is to be used as a tender document or as a contract between an external evaluator and the education programme, then the TOR will include information about cost, the manner in which the report will be submitted, the obligations of the evaluator to submit preliminary reports, confidentiality and disclosure of information and so on.

A TOR document is an essential tool in conducting an evaluation. It is likely to go through a series of drafts before being accepted by those whose acceptance is required.

Discussion on this matter is also facilitated by the development of a TOR. When an evaluation is determined upon, it might be assumed that the appropriate stakeholders are the educator team, their organisation, and possibly the programme financier. As discussion ensues, other stakeholders can become apparent and the draft can be shown to them.

Care needs to be taken over the development of a TOR document, because it is the document to which evaluators refer during the evaluation. Many evaluations and evaluators are attacked (see [Legitimacy and Reliability](#)) and they must inevitably refer to the TOR in their defence.

The more explicit the document, the better for all concerned.

12.3.2.2 Evaluation Design Options

A good evaluation will meld qualitative insights with quantitative analysis to establish a strong case for the recommendations being made. It will consider the utility value of its recommendations and will be conducted in such a way that the recommendations are likely to be adopted and implemented.

There are different ways of achieving these goals. Designing an evaluation requires some of the following decisions about approach:

- who should be involved;
- the design to be chosen and;
- the objects of the evaluation

Then, some micro choices must be made in relation to data collection instruments and methods (see Data Collection Options).

Independent Outsiders or Knowledgeable Insiders?

What relationship will there be between external evaluators (if any) and programme staff? These questions are addressed in Who Should Evaluate.

Typical Evaluation Designs

Many evaluations could more easily be considered as professional opinions. A single person (or possibly a small team) is given carte blanche to speak to stakeholders using a semi-structured interview, which might be conducted one to one or in a group. Evaluators will also have access to documents of the programme.

On

Evaluators prepare a report on the basis of these, and even using the series of interviews to test their developing opinion... The report can be submitted as is or, if there is time, tested with a representative group of stakeholders before submission.

Such an evaluation stands or falls by the reputation of the evaluator. It can be done rapidly and at limited cost. Because of the reputation of the evaluator, it can be done on the basis of a very generalised terms of reference (TOR) document. The evaluators are chosen because they know the field and the background to the programme, and because they are able to enter the world of the stakeholders with ease.

An Audit

A related design provides the evaluation team with access to all documentary material from the programme and conducts the evaluation entirely as a paper assessment. No interviews are conducted other than with those who commission the report. All information necessary to the evaluator is considered to be available. Such an evaluation can be extended by conducting general surveys based on preliminary indications of areas of interest so that there is additional data gathering. But the primary sources are documentary.

While such an investigation (perhaps of the voter education materials) can be useful, it can never replace an evaluation of a programme in action.



A Disciplined Conversation

The most complex, and most participatory evaluation, is that which can most adequately be described as a continuing discussion.

In such a design, the discussion begins with the development of the TOR. It may include the establishment of one or more standing committees of stakeholders to assess the progress of the evaluation, to discuss data and findings, and to dictate further research.

Evaluators typically play the role of group facilitators and technical assistants. They may also manage the collection of information, but there can even be data collection by individual stakeholders.

In such an evaluation, the final report is negotiated and can consist of a set of meetings at which recommendations or proposals are not only assessed but put into action by the responsible bodies or individuals.

How Close Should Evaluators Get?

Between these three typical designs lie many nuances, and each evaluation is approached by the evaluation team in the manner most likely to yield reliable results. For example, by its very nature, participatory evaluation becomes closely entwined with general programme implementation, which enables it to become increasingly self-monitoring rather than summative.

In such participatory exercises, the role of evaluators can become a contested one. They are outsiders with insiders' influence. Confusion can develop between evaluation and programme implementation: Evaluation or reflection on experience becomes primary. In an ongoing adult education group, this can be appropriate, but in a national education programme, it can become cumbersome and undermining of the general programme design.

Objects of Evaluation

Typically, an evaluation begins with a set of questions to which answers are sought. Such a list can become more extensive as the evaluation proceeds, or it may be discovered that a smaller and more concise list is sufficient.

These questions need to be generated in consultation with the organisation that sponsored the evaluation. The various stakeholders can frame their questions differently or ask different questions, but the final list establishes the parameters of the evaluation and its objects.

By setting out a list of questions, the evaluation provides the first step toward utilisation of the results. Relevance is predetermined, and ownership is partially guaranteed. The evaluators could discover that, as a result of ignorance or intentional misdirection, stakeholders have not asked a crucial question that they then add to the list [1].

Evaluators do so at their peril. They must provide their motivation for including such questions, and may be accused of going beyond their brief. It will be up to evaluators to establish the importance of the question for the outcome of the evaluation.

Notes:

[1] Typical examples of such questions might be those relating to the continuation of a programme, the role of the director or governing structure of the programme, or the outcome of a particular pet project of the staff.

12.3.2.3 Data Collection Options

As a form of social enquiry, all appropriate data collection options are available to the evaluator. As such, methods used to collect information about Assessing the Context for the education programme will be as appropriate for evaluation of the programme.

Methods include open-ended, structured group or individual interviews, focus groups, surveys, contact with interlocutors and intermediaries, consultative meetings with stakeholders, and the use of existing information (see Voter Background and Using Existing Data).

Amongst this existing information, there is the client survey or post-meeting reaction forms, which should be used in all face-to-face and service-related educational programme elements. In addition, evaluators should have access to other documents prepared by the programme and investigations done by others.

The relationship between planning and evaluation should now become transparent. Much of the data required for programme development is collected during an extensive evaluation of the previous programme cycle. Linking programme development with previous evaluations is essential if efficient use is to be made of resources. Indeed, an evaluation might have amongst its terms of reference (see Terms Of Reference) the requirement that an assessment is made in preparation for a future programme.

12.3.2.4 Legitimacy and Reliability

There are two remarks that evaluators come to dread. The first is: "Who are you?" The second is: "It's not that I disagree with you, but did you really speak to the right people/ask the right question?"

The first remark deals with the legitimacy of the evaluators and hence their findings. The second deals with the reliability of the findings and is generally couched not as an attack on the results or outcome of the evaluation but rather on the methodology.

It is hard not to repeat the fault of the person making the remarks and become equally defensive. There are things that an evaluation team and the educator can do to establish legitimacy and make sure the outcome is reliable.

Establishing Legitimacy

Evaluators can be selected as a result of a full discussion by all of the stakeholders who, having developed an agreed terms of reference (TOR) document, and having established a set of criteria for the evaluator, then select the person from a list of preferred people.



They may just as easily get appointed by the programme financier or the governing body of the programme, or even the director of the programme.

Even in the first case, there will be some who are surprised, for whatever reason, that the evaluation is happening, that they are being evaluated, and that the evaluator is the person they are.

First Meetings

It is essential for evaluators early on to establish who the key stakeholders are, and armed with a TOR document, interview them or meet with them to discuss the evaluation and seek their expectations of its outcome. It may be that these interviews are part of the evaluation design. In such a case, stakeholders who may possibly be resistant to the evaluation should be first on the list of those interviewed.

After establishing a basic agreement that the evaluation is going to happen, that its outcome will be prejudiced by non-cooperation, and that cooperation and participation by all increases the likelihood of the results being more reliable, evaluators. Evaluators should maintain their relationship with the stakeholders throughout the evaluation.

Regular Reporting

Keeping in touch is done by adequate communication through meetings or the submission of interim reports.

It is also done by canvassing any alterations to the TOR or any recommendations that are likely to be a surprise or likely to have political import with stakeholders or at least with a set of evaluation guarantors.

Evaluation Guarantors

These guarantors will be a set of stakeholders who are highly committed to the evaluation and who have sufficient organisational power or a high enough reputation that their commitment will ensure the ongoing commitment of others. To people of this nature, regular reports should be made, together with a commitment from them that they will accept the outcome of the evaluation even if it comments on their role.

Evaluators have to ensure that the outcome of the evaluation expresses truths about the programme without fear or favour: However, they have to do this in a way that enables the truths to be heard.

Ensuring a Reliable Outcome

Evaluators are presenting a set of recommendations to a group of people who have responsibility for programme development. The recommendations could affect the staff, financial base, operational design, and the personal aspirations of individuals within the programme or governing structures. A high-level evaluation can even have an impact on the outcome of an election or the renomination prospects of a member of the electoral authority.

It is essential that those making use of the results can believe in them and can trust them. In order to do that, evaluation reports need to consider the following:

- *Ensuring a Transparent Process.:* Recipients of the recommendations need to understand the process that produced the recommendation. This includes the methodology for the

collection of information, the manner in which the information was analysed, and the manner in which the evaluator came to the recommendations, including any testing and draft versions that may have been prepared. Even if there has been good communication up to the presentation of the report, evaluators will have thought harder about the recommendations than those listening to the report, unless the evaluation was entirely participatory. Evaluations conducted behind closed doors stand more risk of being misunderstood unless people are taken through the same thought processes as the evaluator.;

- *Testing Recommendations Against the TOR.:* The TOR document contains the overall purpose of the evaluation. It spells out how the recommendations will be used. So, the extent to which the report meets these explicit expectations is the extent to which the recipients will accept its results. When there are divergences from the TOR, these will need to be explained.;
- *Creating Support in Advance of the Final Report.* Before delivery of a final report, evaluators should conduct a series of activities to ensure that the recommendations and the report are reliable. Amongst the possibilities open to evaluators, and depending on the extent to which the evaluation team is independent of the programme, are the following:
 - an external audit of the draft report by a recognized expert in the field;
 - consultative meetings over the whole draft or aspects of the draft with stakeholders
 - discussions with the likely implementer of a recommendation regarding its feasibility and validity;
 - the collection of additional information to test the recommendations in more detail

By the time a final report is prepared, support should be widespread, if not universal.

- *Layering the Recommendations.:* It is likely that an evaluation will result in a range of recommendations: the essential, the obvious, the innocuous, and the controversial. Reports are more likely to be well-received, if the recommendations are layered so that people can concentrate on the contentious or the difficult, and accept the straightforward. Acceptance of the straightforward validates the report and ensures that discussion moves from the questions of reliability and methodology to questions of feasibility and implementation.

12.3.2.5 Time and Cost of Evaluations

Evaluations are expensive. Even if they are conducted by the staff, they take valuable time. If they are conducted by outsiders, this normally includes international or national teams requiring fees, accommodation, and air travel.

Once the team is in place, there are substantial costs for data collection: national or regional surveys, field work, stakeholder interviews, and consultative meetings.

In general, evaluation studies should receive a budget of between one percent and three percent of the total programme budget. In some cases, additional money may be needed. It is unlikely that it will be possible to conduct an evaluation, even one internally conducted, for a very small



amount of money. Programmes that are not expensive to conduct, and perhaps that do not intend to continue, should consider whether a traditional evaluation is worth doing.

In such cases, it may be sufficient to use staff meetings to assess the programme through a series of basic questions that address best practices and lessons learned:

- What went well?;
- What could have been improved? And;
- What would we do differently if we did this again?

When a small percentage of an educational programme amounts to a substantial budget, educators should consider how best to spend the money in order to have an evaluation that is useful.

Quick and Dirty, or Deep and Thoughtful?

Researchers can extend evaluations over long periods of time. Usefulness requires good information as soon as possible.

Cost and time must be weighed carefully. It may appear to be true that spending more and taking longer will produce more reliable results. This may not be true, and whether those results will come in time for policy development and future planning must be assessed.

In general, evaluations err, unsurprisingly, on the quick and dirty. When there is a great deal at stake, and where there is more money available and a larger programme to evaluate, educators may consider setting in motion the deep study.

Both have their advantages. But there are many things that need to be done, and only so much time and money. Which will it be?

12.3.3 Baseline Studies

Because of the importance of measuring impact, evaluators and education planners have to resort to baseline studies. These are studies which, using a range of methods to establish a starting point for the programme, make it possible to see if anything has changed as a result of the programme.

This section suggests ways of obtaining baseline information, and how to manage if this is not possible.

This base or starting point is best established before a programme is implemented, and certainly before an evaluation is undertaken. It may be possible to recall how things were, but memory is closely bound with present perceptions and future aspirations.

With luck, it might be discovered that a study done by someone else is contemporaneous with the programme starting point. But, leaving it to chance or memory is not the best policy.

Difficulties of Measuring the Base

Studies operate on the assumption that they can determine what information is relevant and what is likely to change as a result of the programme, and on the assumption that information can be collected and analysed with sufficient speed, and that it will not change before the programme is implemented.

These are major assumptions. When the information is gross, it may be possible to do. A school building programme can count the number of schools in existence, implement the programme, and count again. A voter education programme being conducted in a society where people have not voted before can be fairly confident about that fact and can measure voting performance during the first election.

When there are a large number of factors affecting baseline information, establishing the baseline is much more difficult and requires considerable research and analytical skills.

Nevertheless, developing even a ragged baseline as a working model is preferable to having no idea where the programme is starting and how to tell whether it has made any impact at all.

Gathering Baseline Information

There are two ways in which baseline information can be obtained on a regular basis. When neither of these ways is available, educators have to weigh the need for a baseline study when they conduct their first programme.

It may be more cost effective to go into the field without a full understanding of the context and without the ability to evaluate impact fully so that a second cycle can use the data obtained in the first.

Periodic Elections

When elections are happening regularly, and where voter and civic education programmes have been institutionalised, it is possible to look back on an annual or periodic basis. This becomes the baseline information for each successive programme, and as the amount of information accumulates, it is possible to identify trends, to compare results of programmes, and to transfer lessons learned in one programme to another.

This can be done only if there is good record keeping from one election to another and if there is continuity in the organisation (whether the electoral management authority or a nongovernmental organisation) conducting the educational programme.

Context Assessment Data

While an educational programme can be developed without undertaking a context analysis, this will surely mean it is limited in scope or less effective in outcome. Conducting a context assessment ensures that a great deal of the information considered necessary for a baseline study is in place.

The programme will have at its disposal basic information about voters or citizens, survey or anecdotal information about their educational needs, and certain basic geopolitical information that, while primarily intended to facilitate the programme, can also be used by evaluators.



Indeed, the relationship between evaluation and context assessment is a symbiotic one. The ultimate goal of a major educational programme is the cyclical continuity that enables much of the setup work to become regular.

In this way, there is the possibility of constant programme improvement, as well as a research cycle that maintains certain basic information about programme participants or target constituencies.

Unfortunately, many national education programmes do not repeat themselves at intervals regular enough to achieve this. In countries that do not institutionalise civic and voter education, large-scale programmes must constantly redo work and pay for it on each occasion.

If No Baseline Can be Established

It may not be possible to establish a reliable base. Evaluation can still happen, and even impact studies can happen.

An evaluation can be designed with a series of cycles so that the same area or question is revisited at periods during a programme. Or, evaluators can draw comparisons between similar areas, one that has experienced the programme and one that has not.

There are a number of social study techniques that may work, and most evaluations operate in this way. However, those who want to study the impact of an education programme over time should work at establishing a significant baseline.

12.3.4 Developing Organisational Capacity

Skilled evaluation is an essential aspect of adult education and social programming. Yet, there are few skilled evaluators available in many countries, particularly those with emerging democracies. This section suggests ways to change this unfortunate state of affairs and to use evaluation as a way of developing organisational and educational capacity.

The Responsibility of Those Commissioning Evaluations

Those commissioning evaluations should be considerate of the need to develop capacity in this regard. When education programmes have been substantially funded from or provided with technical support from the international community, there is a tendency to also commission international evaluators.

While this may result in a slightly less painful but certainly more expensive evaluation, it leaves countries continually dependent on external support. Evaluations should seek, in their conduct and choice of agents, to develop domestic organisational and personal capacity.

Evaluation is a form of enquiry that brings together organisational insights, social research, educational theory, and group skills. It enables evaluators to get very close to a programme without having had to implement it. These factors make an evaluation an ideal opportunity for learning and skills development for those who will have to conduct not only evaluations but also programmes of their own.

Those commissioning evaluations should consider the following:

- Are there existing indigenous independent institutions that could conduct the evaluation??;

- Should electoral authority develop its own evaluation capacity??, and;
- Can evaluation programmes be implemented without international leadership, if not without international participation?

Indigenous Independent Organisations

While few countries have the privilege of having organisations that specialise in educational or programme evaluation, many have social research institutes based at tertiary institutions, organisational development consultancies, or adult education centres and associations.

Because programme evaluation is an essential component of programme design, organisations that specialise in grant making may also have evaluation capacity.

In addition to the formal organisations from which an evaluator group might be drawn, there will also be individuals situated in academic institutions and civil society organisations which may have evaluation expertise.

Make Good Use of Limited Resources

If the programme is operating in an environment where such individuals or institutions have only limited experience, it may be possible to segment a larger evaluation and commission aspects of it. It may also be possible to establish a team of evaluators comprising an international and domestic component.

It can be possible to include in the terms of reference (TOR) some training and skills development responsibility, making a certain number of places on the team available to local people, making sure that there is participation in management and planning of the evaluation, and so on.

In each of these cases, the management of the evaluation is more complicated, but the developmental benefits are considerable.

Electoral Management Authorities

It is not appropriate for the election authority to entirely evaluate its own programme. It inevitably should draw in outside evaluators, even if they act primarily as facilitators of a participatory process. The election authority is likely to be involved with a broad range of educational initiatives. When it decides to strengthen civil society by outsourcing much of its work to independent organisations, its own ability to evaluate programme plans, to assess educational tenders (competitive bids), and to evaluate implemented programmes is a real advantage.

Specialised evaluators employed by an electoral management authority can not only operate in the voter education area, but can also be useful in the evaluation of training programmes conducted for election officials, party agents, and others.



For these reasons, electoral management authorities should consider building their own evaluation capacity, whether by starting with technical assistance from the international community or by deploying already qualified evaluators.

These people should participate in any programme evaluations if they are in the process of being established, and they should develop a library of evaluation studies. Because such studies are seldom published, this requires contact with other electoral authorities and educational institutions in order to obtain them.

Managing the Implementation of Evaluation Studies

Programme evaluation is an international endeavour. It is increasingly the domain of organisational development consultancies from the private sector. As a result, there is considerable competition for work and the costs of commissioning individuals, companies or organisations is increasing.

Countries commissioning evaluation studies of their voter and civic education programmes should have the capacity to manage the teams of evaluators that get created. They need sufficient expertise to ensure that they are able to manage any external consultants and also to develop indigenous leadership capable of establishing and leading such teams.

In order to achieve this, they should look for opportunities for their electoral staff and others to obtain international experience.

12.3.5 Managing Evaluation Recommendations

Both formative and summative evaluations make recommendations. But those prepared at the conclusion of a summative report have a double burden. First, they must receive general acceptance. Then, they must await implementation until a future programme.

The formulation and communication of recommendations is crucial to the success of an evaluation. Unless the recommendations are taken seriously and have an impact on future work, the evaluation study will have been somewhat in vain. This is the case despite terms of reference (TOR) that ask primarily for a judgement of whether the programme has been effective. Surprisingly, a report that merely describes the impact of the programme is not always well-received. Those who commission evaluations want recognition and affirmation, but they also want suggestions for the way forward.

While the evaluation may discover a range of interesting things, it is constrained in its development of recommendations by the TOR or by any negotiated alterations to that document.

Testing Recommendations

Before conveying the final report, evaluators need to test the recommendations they plan to make with a representative stakeholder group. In the case of recommendations for future programmes, evaluators need to interact with those who can test the validity and feasibility of the proposal.

If the proposal has implications for budgeting, staff, or organisation, it may be necessary to test validity and feasibility with an expert outsider. When this is not possible, the recommendation may need to include suggestions about how additional work can be done before implementation.

Directing the Recommendations

Recommendations not directed to an agency capable of implementation may be of general interest, but have the virtue of sermons rather than proposals for policy. If it is not clear at the time that the recommendations are drawn up precisely who will be required to implement them, then this should be ascertained during the testing or final reporting phase.

If necessary, a recommendation can be couched as a double proposal. Such a proposal might state: "This body should investigate and steer the setting up of a standing committee on programme evaluation."

Layering Recommendations

The evaluation team should organise the set of recommendations that emerge from the evaluation so they are easy to understand and also capable of prioritisation over time.

Some recommendations are simple to implement and arouse no controversy. These should be identified as such. For the evaluator, they have the advantage of establishing commitment to the report without requiring major investment from the recipients of the report.

Recommendations that are essential should be separated from those that are optional. Those that will make a fundamental impact on future programmes may be separated from those that might be tried if there is an interest.

Timing Recommendations and the Entire Report

Evaluations are time bound. Individual recommendations should have time schedules attached to them, particularly if the evaluation includes preliminary programme assessment responsibilities.

But the whole report should also set itself a shelf life. Recommendations that are initially passed over but are warmed up long after the report is presented become less relevant because time has passed. This is particularly true of recommendations related to staffing or organisational change.

Evaluators should set a time limit on the efficacy of the recommendations and also suggest a way in which future evaluations may be considered if necessary.

Planning for Implementation

Evaluators move on. Much of what they suggest or write is not implemented. By increasing the ownership, legitimacy, and reliability of the process as the evaluation unfolds, it is possible to increase the chance for implementation of the recommendations.

There is also the face-saving implementation that takes place apparently without regard for the evaluation study, and evaluators should be prepared for this.



Nevertheless, there are moments when evaluators should consider working with their client to establish terms of reference that enable some planning for implementation, and some participation by the evaluation team in that implementation.

Teams that include members of staff of the client organisation may have more success in this, as evaluations that take time to communicate their findings and have these discussed in a planning and stakeholder forum.

13. System Learning

The systems that are established for civic or especially voter education programmes are invariably ephemeral. They may have at their core a group of educators, or even one or two stable institutions, but many people and resources will have been mobilized for the programme. These people will return to other responsibilities and the resources will be redeployed or completely depleted.

While civic education programmes that are institutionalized will, by definition, have built in system learning, programmes that are of this more ephemeral and periodic nature require special procedures to be put in place to ensure that as little as possible is lost to the next programme. As education linked to elections and to other democratic events is likely to be the predominant nature of national campaigns or organisational programmes, this ephemeral aspect of civic and voter education is likely to remain dominant.

13.1 Maintenance Of Records

Most educators are accustomed to keeping student records. They may also maintain lesson plans and learner portfolios, sets of materials and, more occasionally, staff assessment profiles. The records required for voter and civic education programmes must enable planners to save time and effort when they have to set up a new programme, as well as help planners understand the context within which the previous programme operated. This will facilitate making any adjustments or adaptations.

Responsible Personnel or Organisation

Where an election authority is in place or a state institution is responsible for voter or civic education and keeping records, it may be obvious who is the responsible person, or people. But in many cases this will not be so obvious. Many of these programmes involve a range of international and domestic organisations, each of which may insist upon maintaining their own records. They may not have a protocol whereby they can be shared. Any records that consist of shared resources often fall between the cracks. Where a universal record has been maintained, this might, by virtue of its having been maintained by the organisation established for a particular task (e.g. project implementer or evaluator), either vanish into an unknown cupboard or into an organisation that is not aware of its existence or importance.

Methods of Storing Information

Whichever method is chosen, the main purpose of storing information is so that it can be retrieved again. Different types of information may be stored best in different ways, but, prior to setting up the system, the needs of future users should be considered.

- *Index Cards.* Index cards, filed alphabetically in a set of drawers or (if small enough) on a frame such as a Rolodex, are particularly good for storing personal details. They are used by many professionals to keep information about their clients, since they are easy

to fill in, don't take up too much space, and can be taken out and revised with ease. On the other hand, they cannot hold much information and are not suitable for holding documents. Often they are used in conjunction with other larger bookshelf or filing systems as a way of maintaining an index or summary record for the larger system.

- *Filing Systems.* A simple and easily accessible system has to be developed for filing documents. The developer of the system should understand that the primary purpose is retrieval of documents. Such an understanding, hopefully, will lead to the creation of a system that enables storage in layers of importance and depth. There will always have to be a trade off between storage of all documents and the amount of space available. Some cleaning out and discarding of material will be necessary, and protocols to manage that should be created. Filing systems can vary from a set of boxes to filing cabinets, microfiche and, of course, full computerization. Care should be taken that the system chosen does not degrade the materials over time, and that there are ways of backing up information so that nothing that is needed gets lost.
- *Contact/Address Books.* Documentation and resources may be dispersed after a programme. The standard secretary's tool of a small alphabetised book containing listings of where to find things may be useful. Such a book will list, for example, hotels under "Accommodation", telephone suppliers, telephone bureaus and so on under "Communications." The purpose is to keep in one place all the information that will enable a programme to call in the suppliers, resources, service providers, consultants, volunteers who were used previously and have requisite election experience.
- *Archives and Bookshelves.* Some information will have to be kept in library environments. Where a centralized library location is available, it should be used. Whether there is a central library or whether resources are dispersed, a common index and cataloguing system will enable retrieval. Bookshelf systems are particularly useful for keeping reports and publications. They can be extremely versatile. The F. Clifton White Election Resource Center at the International Foundation for Election Systems, for example, is able to preserve and make available audio and video material, election paraphernalia, case studies, and sample materials in a variety of cabinets and storage facilities.
- *Computerisation.* Before any system can be computerized, there has to be a strategy that enables storage, indexing and retrieval. At its most basic, a computer-based system may replace an index card system. If materials are scanned, however, these computer-based records can store pictures, sound clips, and even film or video. A personal contact, for example, can be linked to a photograph, a speech given and recorded, and a resume or curriculum vitae. Like all systems, however, computers are only as good as the information they store.

All systems need to have clear guidelines:

- who is responsible for recording or collating materials
- what format is used to keep records
- what will be kept
- where the records will be housed
- who will have access to them



- who will maintain the records

13.1.1 Staff and Volunteer Details

Well-organized registration procedures for staff, whether full time, temporary or voluntary, will make the maintenance of personnel details easier. But in the hurly-burly of an election, especially in the last few weeks prior to an important election, volunteers in particular might be coming into programmes rapidly and for short periods of time. As a result, their names and contact details can easily be lost.

This is one of the most important assets available to an educational programme. And it is likely to be the one in which most time and money has been invested. The section uses the terms "staff" and "volunteers" to remind educators that their programmes will involve people from a range of backgrounds. They may be employed directly by the election authority, or they may be sent to that authority for the occasion by another organisation. They may be temporary workers or volunteers paid a 'per diem' or not paid at all. They may also be full-time staff of another organisation who take part in the programme at the expense of that organisation (known as seconded staff). Or, they may be people that such an organisation has recruited according to a similar list of options.

Whatever their positions, it is likely that these people have received training or have had experience in either developing materials or conducting aspects of the programme. Or they may have worked in an office doing set-up work or analysing survey and assessment data. Whatever the case, they carry the organisational wisdom and experience that is normally associated with systems, but they may be dispersed once an election is over. Education programmes are even more vulnerable than political parties in this regard, because there is no reliable expectation that the same people will be available next time unless good records are kept and the people can be found. Even then, they may no longer be available for extended periods. They may be available only to at least pass on their experience.

Obviously, the more often people are involved in educational programmes, and the more people who are involved, the more likely it is that it will be possible to find people for future programmes. Poor countries, however, are likely to have struggled to find and train people at all levels. The scarcity of trained people will be exacerbated if good records are not kept of those who have obtained training and experience.

There are two ways to ensure that adequate records are kept, and both should be used – index cards and certificates.

Index Cards

In the first place, educators should create and insist upon the use of a registration form or index card for recording and storing personal details of all staff, whether employed or voluntary. This record should be prepared when a person begins work, even if it is not yet known precisely how long the person is going to be involved. Prior to the person leaving, this record should be updated to include the latest contact information available.

The greater the investment in the person, the more important it is that contact is maintained, and, therefore, the more care that should be taken. But a volunteer who comes in to conduct three high-level seminars in one election may turn out to be a valuable and central resource for the next election.

On an index card, or in a computer database, the following information should be included:

- full name
- all necessary contact details (see [Interlocutors and Intermediaries](#))
- information about the job that the staff member did
- a notation on their performance from a supervisor
- training opportunities
- any certificates given (see below)

As elections may be held only every five years, for example, contact information on these index cards, whether stored in computers or in alphabetical files, is likely to become dated and eventually incorrect. People do move; although the extent to which the file has included the name of the person's organisational or work background may make the search for a new address easier.

Certificates

Staff members may be provided with a certificate of performance when they conclude their work. The onus is on the individual, then, to keep this information. Because many unemployed people may be drawn into a programme, and because they may still find this periodic employment desirable, there is benefit to be gained from maintaining personal certification of this nature.

In like manner, certification for all training events can be awarded. This form of record has an additional value. Many of those who work in voter or civic education are not paid adequately, if at all. Certification acts as a recognition of the work they have done. Such a certificate should not be confused with a competency-based diploma or other certificate that has educational currency, although the ability of educators to provide such certificates for at least some of their training is obviously an advantage. Rather, it should be considered as a token of public recognition that should not be overlooked.

Thus, with institutions and the individual committed to remembering and carefully recording the work done by an individual in the previous campaign, it is possible that finding people to work in the next will be easier.

13.1.2 Logistical Arrangements

Every organisation has a version of the joke about the pecking order in which the secretary turns out to be more important than the boss. One suggests the boss thinks he is a god, but the secretary feels she controls her boss. Without her, he wouldn't be able to get out the door, let alone be a god. When it comes to getting things done, the reasons for this little joke may become obvious.

Important information (both formal and informal, recorded and common wisdom) often rests with secretaries, clerks, or assistants, who also prepare schedules, minutes of meetings, and reports of decisions. Unfortunately, in the voter education enterprise, there is a good chance that this person will not be around to ask when something is needed. In all likelihood, they will have moved on, together with their director or commissioner, to other ventures. If the education



organisation was a very temporary one, the knowledge normally maintained by one or two key people may have been dispersed and then may be lost when those people leave.

So, good written and retrievable records need to be available that enable people coming in to the programme for the first time, or returning to it from another job, to get on board quickly and easily. Even where there is a core group that remains in place, for those people to quickly communicate with a rapidly-growing organisation, a book of logistical and managerial procedures is essential.

Such a book should include a comprehensive range of information, preferably collected so that it can be found easily. Secretaries' "where is it" index books or alphabetized lists are useful. Documents collected in a form that can be searched by key word may also be used. However this recording is done, the user and their needs should be borne in mind.

Suppliers of Goods and Services

Goods and services might vary from the very basic (what realty/estate agents provide property to lease) to the highly technical (who provides the demographic statistics for various radio stations). The list may include preferred suppliers of telephone systems, legal or notary services and educational institutions, through to the name of local fast food outlets and other necessary day-to-day resources.

Such lists will include not only the formal information but also the names of contacts who actually expedite the business. They may also include notes about the commercial relationship that previously existed and any special arrangements that had been made for special services or reductions in costs.

This is information that is taken for granted in larger more stable organisations and may be collected by permanent election authorities. But it is surprising how often even in those institutions, this knowledge is personalized and only exists while certain key staff remain in position. This cannot be guaranteed in educational programmes; and is a particular problem in the NGOs who are likely to be closely associated with such educational endeavours.

The Civil Society Network

A second area of record keeping is to have available the details of all civil society organisations that have provided support to the educational programme. Here, lists should be computerized if possible so they can retain a range of information about each organisation and be easily updated. In particular, educators will want to record the details, including the personal contact details, of all those who were involved in coalitions and consortia. NGO staff may move on, and it may be necessary to involve individuals as well as the previous organisation.

Who Has It?

Because of the likely dispersal of staff and resources, especially of materials prepared for previous programmes, there should be a fail-safe record of where such resources may be and how best to find them. Such a listing may include information about copyright and other libraries, research institutes and individual researchers.

How Do We Do Things?

During educational programmes, procedures are established that will protect assets, ensure fiscal responsibility and fair employment practices, reduce expenditure, and improve staff

effectiveness. These procedures need to be written down and made available to people in advance of their falling foul of the procedure or having to go through the learning curve that led to the procedure being established in the first place. Because many of these procedures have legal or financial implications, they should be written in such a way that they cannot be misunderstood. They are designed to make people's lives easier, however, so they need to be accessible and simple rather than convoluted and under lock and key.

13.1.3 Best Practices and Lessons Learned Documentation

If educators have conducted the necessary post programme evaluations and assessments, and have engaged in their own debriefing activities, they will obtain a set of substantial reports and documents containing recommendations (see [Preparing Reports](#)).

Even if these have been prepared according to the best possible standards, they will contain a great deal of information that may not be useful for future programmes that will, of necessity, start from a different base than the one that has been evaluated. In addition, those who gather to establish the next round of programmes - whether immediately following the previous programme or a number of years later - may not have time to read all the documentation. A short, pithy document may be prepared as soon as possible that lists "Best Practices and Lessons Learned". This little guide may be the first port of call for future education teams.

How to Do It

It will be therefore be useful to conduct a closure exercise following the presentation of any reports at which a significant number of the important participants in the programme are present. This would include the educator team, representatives of the election authority, and possible representatives of membership or public interest organisations who can represent the interests of the citizens at large. Such an exercise would include presentations of various reports, if there are more than one, and consider various recommendations made to develop a much shorter document that will list a set of statements that can be used in the future by education planners.

Such a list will consist of statements under the theme "best practices and lessons learned" or "principles to be adopted in future programmes". The statements will be composites and categorizations of the various recommendations that are valid for an education programme. They may be grouped under a series of separate topics such as planning, administration and implementation.

Two Key Advantages

- *Ownership of the best practices and lessons learned:* Future programmes start with the confidence that there is general acceptance of any changes and innovations, or of any alterations in roles and responsibilities of particular offices or organisations. Such confidence is essential if programmes are to get up and running quickly. And this confidence is created both by the development of the set of learning statements and the fact that it has been created by a group of people, not only by an evaluator or educator.



- *Summarized and accessible planning statements:* Such a document is inevitably a condensed distillation of a range of recommendations. As such it can be turned to with confidence by educator teams preparing for future programmes. It can form the basis of briefings of those developing surveys, focus groups, or field research, and can be submitted to materials producers by fax or e-mail in ways that a full report cannot. Indeed, if it has been prepared with care and documented accurately, it is more likely to be implemented than the more extensive recommendations than often flow from reports.

Keeping the Documentation

All this may be fruitless, however, if the documentation is not kept. In general, it seems to be easier for people to keep books than a short document on a couple of sheets of paper. There is every possibility that either the "best practices and lessons learned" statement will be transformed into a book (obscuring its very purpose) or will be lost in favour of the heavier reports from which it has been distilled.

The best way to ensure its survival is to bind it as a preface or executive summary in project reports; or, if this is not possible, to have it referred to and then bound as an appendix. In some cases, a collection of all reports might be archived as a single bound document or box file, and then such a slim document may be included, preferably as the first of the set of documents.

13.2 Preparing Reports

The discussion about the nature of a final programme report, its format, audience, general content, and the people who are to be responsible for its preparation is best done during the preliminary planning phases of any programme. Educators have a responsibility to their organisation, the electoral authority, donors or sponsors, and the general public to report on the programme once completed.

There are examples of electoral legislation that set time limits on the preparation of post election reports, and such deadlines will also apply to educational programmes sponsored by or organized on behalf of the electoral authority.

Once It's Over, It's Too Late

The worst time to consider the report is after the educational programme has concluded. By this time, the motivation for the report is low, information required is not always readily available, and staff whose comments are required have departed and are now difficult to reach. In addition, while those conducting face-to-face programmes or engaged in advertising may have built in post-meeting reaction or assessment systems, or ongoing audience assessment, the relationship between these and the final report will be unclear. A mass of information, of which only some might be relevant to the concerns of the final report, will have to be digested, and this takes additional time and energy.

Preparing for the Report

Having determined at an early stage that a report will be required, staff will be allocated to its preparation and will begin to block out the necessary areas for collecting information and reporting. They will also be discussing with those for whom the report is required precisely their expectations of the report and the manner in which it will be used or made available to the public.

The purpose of the report will have to be clear from the start. Is it to be a history of the programme, for example, a day-by-day journal, an overview of highlights, or a thoughtful

opinion by an outsider? In some cases, there may be some inclination to leave the report to those conducting external evaluations: but the best scenario would be for such evaluators to have the internal report as part of their documentation.

For the purposes of system learning, reports should be sufficiently anecdotal and descriptive to enable future educators to understand the context within which the programme took place, and to provide the necessary experiential information that can be analysed for the development of general lessons.

Type of Report

There have been a number of fine reports that make the programme review itself an educational and communication exercise. They use a range of voices to provide different perspectives on the programme, quotations and reflections from participants, local educators, planners and administrators. The compendium report enables the reader to reflect on the programme and serves as a public record of some distinction.

Reports need not be entirely written. Alternative forms of record keeping and narrative have been used; and these have some advantages in capturing the emotion and humanity of the programme and conveying this to the public in ways that are perhaps more accessible and persuasive.

Photographic documentaries, video and audio productions, and the publication of special magazine issues all provide a record that can be used in conjunction with the more technical narrative that may be required by statute or by agreement with a funder.

Reports will cover at least the following aspects of the programme:

- context within which the programme was designed and implemented (see [Assessing the Context](#))
- strategies that were adopted (see [Educational Strategy Development](#))
- purpose and objectives of the programme (see [Educational Objectives](#))
- the target audience(s) of the programme
- manner in which the programme was implemented (see [Voter Education Programme Implementation](#))
- impact of the programme and the extent to which it achieved its objectives (see [Measuring Impact](#))
- unintended outcomes (see [Importance Of Prior Planning](#))
- lessons learned for future programmes (see [Best Practices and Lessons Learned Documentation](#))
- financials, including full disclosure
- collection and storage of the records (see [Maintenance Of Records](#))

Reports that are prepared after the event, and that are delayed because of the lack of staff, information or access to the relevant parties, may be useful in preserving a record of the event but are unlikely to have the formative impact of reports prepared more expeditiously. It can be



argued that such a report benefits from the necessary hindsight that only comes with time. But such reports become rather academic exercises at that stage with all the disadvantages of such an exercise.

And they rely quite heavily on contemporaneous records - minutes, journals, interim and daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly reports. If these have not been prepared, even the delayed substantive report is at a loss, and the more it is delayed the more difficult it becomes to convey an accurate record.

Public Accessibility and Transparency

Whichever way the report is conceived - even as a collation of different reports - it is essential that reports of educational programmes be made available to all stakeholders. A discussion of the manner for release should be conducted at the same time as the planning of the report so that a commitment can be made that is not broken by a sudden fear of the content of the report.

If there is a belief that the reports have confidential matters that cannot be shared with the general public, then there are a number of options open to educators. A public report can be prepared together with a confidential briefing document for the primary stakeholders. The report can be separated into a closed technical report and an anecdotal and generally available one. The report may include an annex which addresses confidential matters, but which is removed prior to its public release. Or, the report can have a date by which it will be made available so that it can first be considered confidentially. Finally, the primary stakeholders for whom the report has been commissioned may choose to release it without their endorsement or with a disclaimer as an addendum.

All the above are compromises that at least enable the public to have access to reports that are, after all, in the public interest and about them to a large extent. Hopefully such compromises may not be necessary. But, in the end, they are better than outright proscription of reports that occasionally happens when reports contain critical information. The word "critical" itself conveys the meaning that makes this such an unfortunate occurrence. These reports often provide the most important lessons for the general public and for educators at large.

13.3 Archiving and Protecting Materials

As in all spheres of institutional activity, voter education processes generate large quantities of documentation, ranging from published information to minutes of meetings, from paper correspondence to computer directories. It is essential, therefore, that an appropriate documentary record of these processes be preserved. Such a record will:

- support the institutional memory of the organisation,
- enable the organisation to demonstrate accountability,
- assist in ensuring that best practices and lessons learned are passed on appropriately,
- ensure that future projects do not have to start from scratch,
- contribute to broader social memory.

The term "appropriate documentary record" is used quite deliberately. Clearly no organisation can afford to keep all the documentation generated by it, nor would it want to obscure the really valuable material in an avalanche of ephemera. Information management is a huge field embracing a range of corporate processes and technological elements.

The fundamental prerequisites for success, however, can be summarized as follows:

First, adopt a flexible, implementable, and cost-effective information management policy. Assign workers explicit responsibilities in the management of information resources. Documentation should be managed in terms of systems that facilitate classification, retrieval and preservation. This is especially important in the sphere of electronic (computer) records. Adopt conventions around issues like how to deal with e-mail, what constitutes an organisational record (as opposed to personal record), shared directories, and classification and identification procedures. There should be clear guidelines on where specific categories of documentation are to be kept and who has access to them. There should be clarity on what needs to be kept only in the short-term and what needs to be kept indefinitely. For instance, policy might determine that staff personal files be kept for only three years after termination of service, but that two copies of each published information report will be preserved.

It is imperative that documentation which has been identified for preservation be managed systematically rather than in an ad hoc manner. Ideally, an institutional archive should be established, to be managed either internally or through an agreement with another institution specializing in archiving. Organisations are often governed in this regard by public archival legislation. The organisation should, of course, be conversant with all legislation with implications for the management of documentation. Archival legislation is just one category. There is also likely to be copyright legislation, legal deposit legislation, tax laws, and other legislation governing financial documentation, and freedom of information and protection of privacy.

13.4 Developing Continuity

Education is a task that thrives on innovation and change. Because both learners and the context change from event to event, and because successful education should by definition result in change even to the individual learner, there is a tendency amongst educators to underestimate the need to develop continuity from one programme to another.

Continuing Shortages of Resources

Amongst other problems that this has caused, has been a shortage of skilled adult education practitioners in the sphere of voter and civic education. In addition, there is only a limited transferral of best practices and lessons learned and materials available from one election to another. It is remarkable how even a simple but recorded piece of material finds its way into programme after programme around the world. While this might be as a result of the efficacy of that particular piece of material, it seems more related to the shortage of information and materials in general circulation.

Those electoral authorities that have been able to develop continuity have been able to run programmes that proceed through the entire cycle of needs assessment, development of objectives and educational strategy, implementation, evaluation and reassessment necessary to establish an ongoing educational curriculum. Other authorities are forced to rely again and again on external technical support and expertise.

Documentation is Better than Nothing



Continuity is achieved in part by good documentation, and in part by having access to people who have experience. But some continuity can only be achieved by the development of an institution or organisation that can exist between programmes and that can develop through its own marrow the lessons which must be taken forward.

Establish Some Responsible Institution

For this to happen, countries must charge either the election authority or some other statutory body to conduct voter and civic education programmes. Russia, Ukraine and Mexico provide a few examples of permanent election bodies that have been given a legal mandate to undertake on-going voter or civic education activities. Such bodies may only have a small staff, but having such a body will mean that many of the record keeping and procedural matters that have been detailed in this section can be delegated to it without a fear that programme expertise will be lost. It is the establishment of such bodies with state support, irrespective of the strength of civil society - unless it can reliably be anticipated that civil society will be able to sustain these bodies - that educators should give their attention to when they are able to lift their eyes from the immediate tasks. [1]

Notes:

[1] Some societies may choose to establish funding mechanisms which enable civil society organisations promoting democracy to obtain state funds without undue state oversight; others may establish statutory organisations or give these functions to the electoral authority or existing state departments. Whichever is chosen, it will be essential to maintain a separation between the promotion of democracy and a democratic state, and the promotion of a particular government of the day.

14. Contributors to Civic and Voter Education

The Civic and Voter Education topic area was first written by Paul Graham of IDASA and developed under the supervision of IFES. Updates to the topic area were made by Catherine Barnes from 2000-2001 and fully revised from 2004-2006 by Paul Graham under the supervision of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

