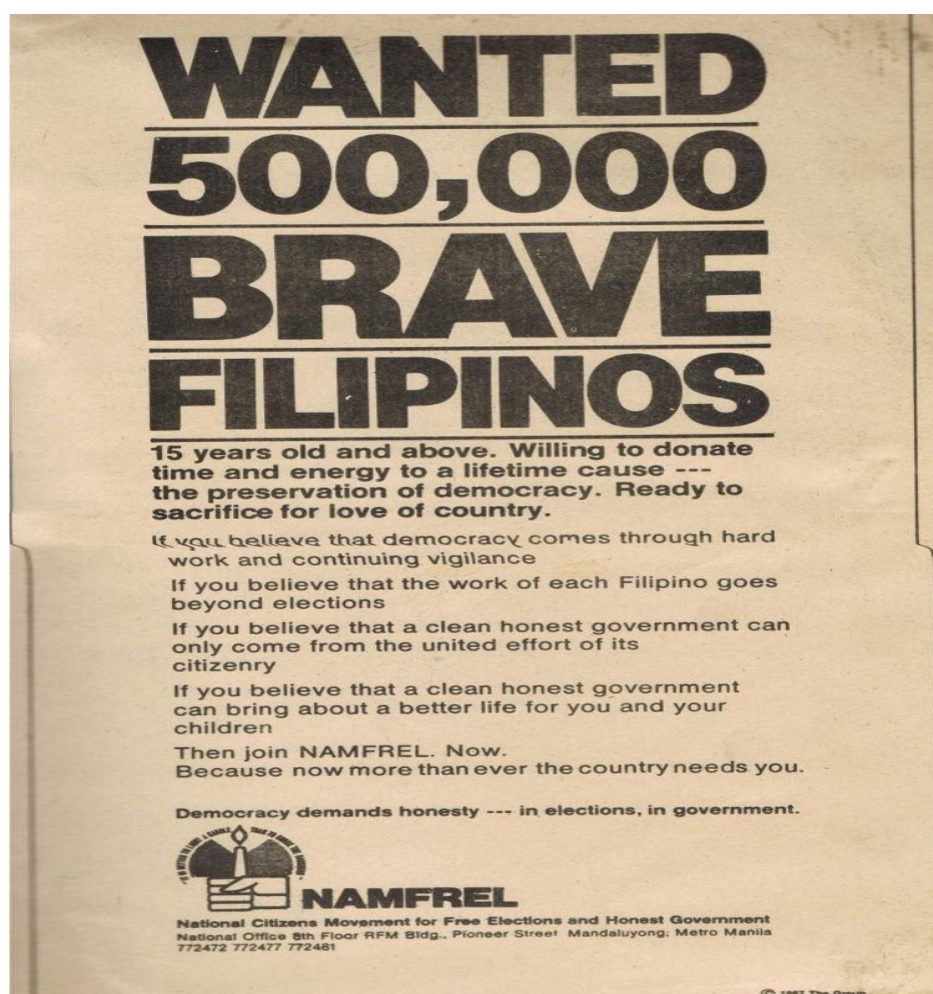


## Supporting citizen observers in promoting and defending Democracy. (F. Ganoux; EIDHR Implementation seminar February 2014.)

---



During the 1986 presidential snap shot elections, NAMFREL successfully managed to mobilize hundreds of thousands of volunteers to physically safe guard the ballot boxes in the tally centres and to realize a parallel quick count of the results that evidenced manipulation of the official results. The following civil disobedience campaign ousted President Marcos from power.

28 years later, NAMFREL was one of the many CSO who took an active role in drafting the Declaration of Global Principles for Non-

partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations which states that “*Non-partisan citizen election observers and monitors can be considered as specialized human rights defenders focused on civil and political rights, which are central to achieving genuine elections.*”

Declarations of principles establish a code of practice aiming at safeguarding integrity and scope of a particular field of activity. In our case, by underlining the higher scope of citizen observation, the Declaration and through it the community of practitioners indicates deontology and methodology as the two pillars on which building sound observation strategy. “*Non-partisan election observation and monitoring seeks to enhance electoral integrity by deterring and exposing irregularities and fraud, deterring and mitigating potentials for election-related violence and offering recommendations for improving electoral and political processes. It seeks to promote public confidence as the election process warrants and to promote citizen participation in government and public affairs through electoral processes that are free of proscribed discrimination and unreasonable restrictions”.*

“*Non-partisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organizations requires the highest ethical standards for impartiality and accuracy based on credible methodologies that incorporate best practices that are suitable to national conditions.*”

Deontology/impartiality and Accuracy/methodology are the pledge of genuine citizen observer organizations. This raises two issues:

- At times the political regime does not allow for existence of **genuine nonpolitical, nonpartisan voices**. Civil society is under control, accreditations are selectively granted. It's a difficult situation where the worst case scenario would be a casting error or doing nothing.
- If genuine nonpolitical citizen organizations do exist, what is there **level of preparedness to embrace accountable methodology** and advanced observation techniques?

Before methodology and observation activities, it's important to glance at the legal framework of this particular field and at the rights and responsibilities of the main actors.

*Citizen observation is rooted in the rights-based approach to election processes* which corner stones are article 21 UDHR and article 25 of ICCPR. Regional instruments, like § 8 of the OCSE's 1990 Copenhagen Document or §22 of the 2007 African Charter on Democracy,

## Legal framework of citizen observation

	Rights & Obligations of the State	Rights and Obligations of citizen observers
International pledge & commitment	Art. 21 UDHR, art. 25 of ICCPR (comments UNHRC "independent scrutiny") § 8 of the OCSE's 1990 Copenhagen Document or §22 of the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance Participation rights	International Declaration is a normative framework that identifies citizen observers as human rights defenders and set responsibilities and methodologies.
National framework	Constitution NGO Act, Political Party Act, Electoral laws Decisions & regulation Access & security	Code of conduct  Do not interfere/obstruct Provide recommendations Work collaboratively with the EMB

- Assessing citizen observation space, impact on strategic planning
- Advocacy

Elections and Governance; interpretative documents, like UNHCR comments of article 25 that highlight the necessity of an independent scrutiny, and codified guidelines of best electoral practices forms the international standards for elections.

An analysis of the legal framework for democratic

elections under International Public Law<sup>1</sup> breakdowns the responsibilities of the State into 21 obligations : Will of the People Shall be the Basis of Government , Genuine Elections, Periodic Elections, Equality and Absence of Discrimination, Right to an Effective Remedy, the State Must Take Necessary Steps to Ensure Rights, Rule of Law, Equal Suffrage, Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Universal Suffrage, Secret Ballot, Every Citizen has the Right to Vote, Every Citizen has the Right to be Elected, Access to Information, Freedom of Association, Freedom

<sup>1</sup> "Using international law to assess elections." Avery Davis-Roberts\* and David J. Carroll. Democracy Program, The Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. 2009.

of Movement, ,Prevention of Corruption, Right to Security of the Person, Right to a Fair and Public Hearing, Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Freedom of Assembly.

Those participation rights have to translate into the national legal framework to be effective, in the Constitution and in the national legislation with the NGO Act, the Electoral law, the Political parties Act... Lower level norms like EMBs' regulations will set precedents and procedures to implement the rights mentioned above. Among states responsibilities are the obligation to provide access (to polling stations, to tallying/constituency centres, to results) and security for domestic observers.

Regarding the citizen observers at the international level, we have seen that the International Declaration is a normative framework that identifies citizen observers as human rights defenders and set responsibilities and methodologies. Among the 13 international organizations supporting the declaration are the European Parliament and the EU High Representative.

At national level, elections laws provides a legal basis for non-partisan citizen observation and set rights and responsibilities (eligibility, accreditation process...). Together with the EMB, or from their own initiative, citizen observers will pledge to respect a code of conduct that underline non-partisanship and the need to observe without interfering or obstructing the process and to work collaboratively with the EMB.

➤ **Measuring the citizen observation space:** Analysis of the normative framework and past practices/experiences allows to assess the existing margins of maneuver for citizen observers and very concretely to : exercise the freedom to associate with other organizations, both domestic and international, and cooperate with and/or receive assistance and support from them, including financial assistance, be free to seek, receive and impart information, domestically and across borders, via verbal communications and printed or electronic media, including the Internet; need for long term accreditation, potential for a controversy on the legality of conducting a PVT... Clearly, the outcome of this assessment will impact on strategic planning.

➤ If the legal framework or its enforcement do not allow for nonpartisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organization of all single steps/events of the electoral process to take place, then **advocacy for change** is necessary. During DRC 2011 elections, citizen observers were not allowed in most of the tally centres on the ground that their accreditation was delivered for EDay. Advocacy activities complement observation techniques.

A quick comparison of the respective assets of EU EOMs and citizen observation missions shows two different pictures. On one side, +/- 150 people with a clear hierarchy and communication flow and who stay +/- 2 months in country around election day (covering phase 5,6 & 7 of the electoral cycle). If gaining deep knowledge of national context is a challenge, EU Observers apply a precise and detailed methodology based on long term observation, which

includes advanced observation techniques like media monitoring. They deploy in teams of 2 on EDay and cover 10 to 20 PS; they are highly trained, structured and equipped (both communication and transportation wise) which allows for fast and accurate transmission and analysis of observation outcome.

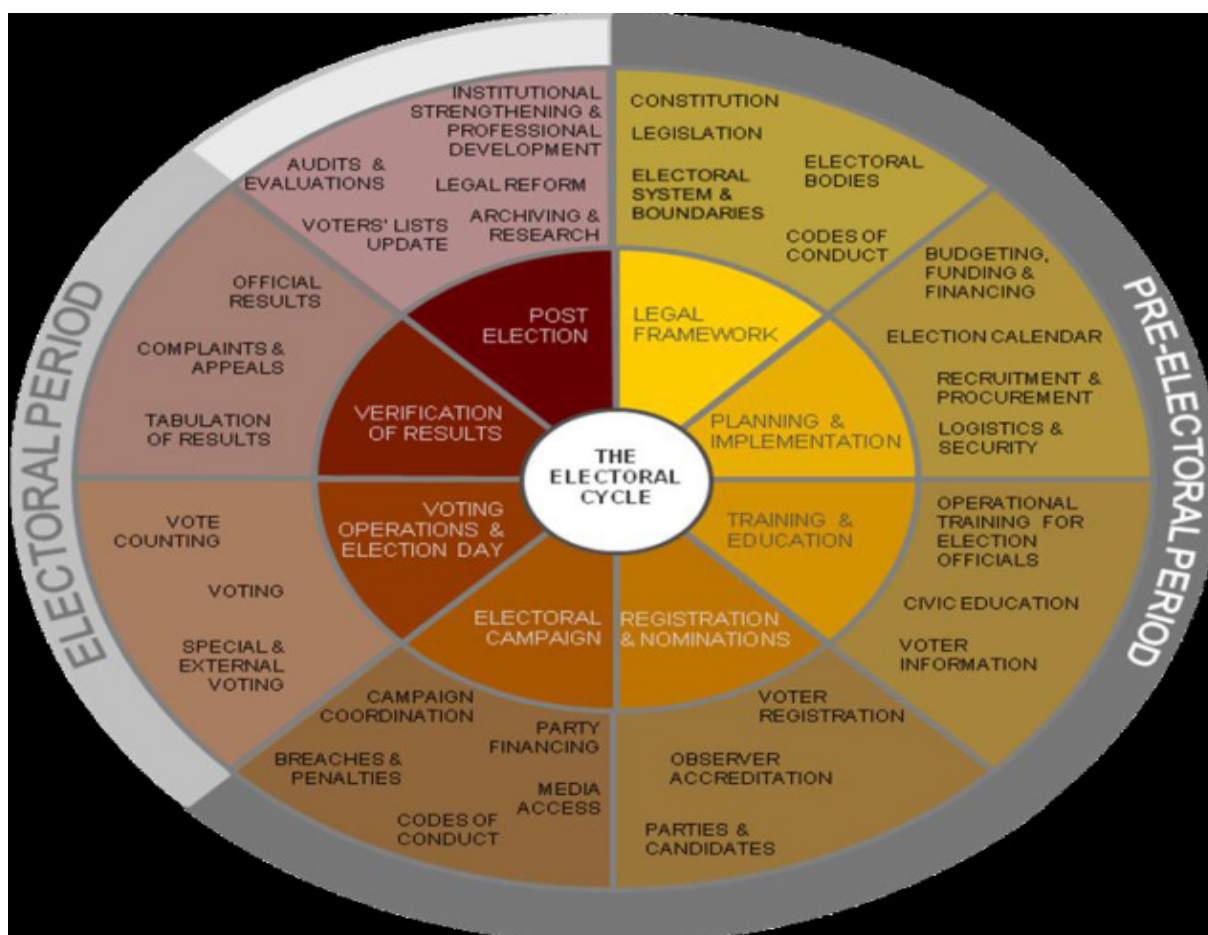
On the other side we found thousands of individuals coming from dozens of CSO with various mandates. They speak the local languages; they have an excellent knowledge of all electoral stakeholders at national & grassroots level and of course, are present all year and all cycle long. Their observation skills range from classic Eday observation to advanced observation technique (PVT, media monitoring...) but fast and accurate collection, transmission and analysis of observation data are often a challenge. Their methodology/structure foresee one fixed observer monitoring per polling station on Eday and most of the times do not encompasses long term observation.

➤ **Interaction with international observers' missions:** There are a wide range of international organizations deploying EOMs. Intergovernmental organizations like the European Union, the African Union, the Organization of American States, the OIF... and structure like regional associations of EMBs. There are many international NGOs like the Carter Centre, the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa... Among those various actors, some deploy 20 persons during 2 days, held 5 meetings and deliver a political statement; others have a sound methodology and seek cooperation with their national counterpart while others will provide technical assistance to citizen observers.

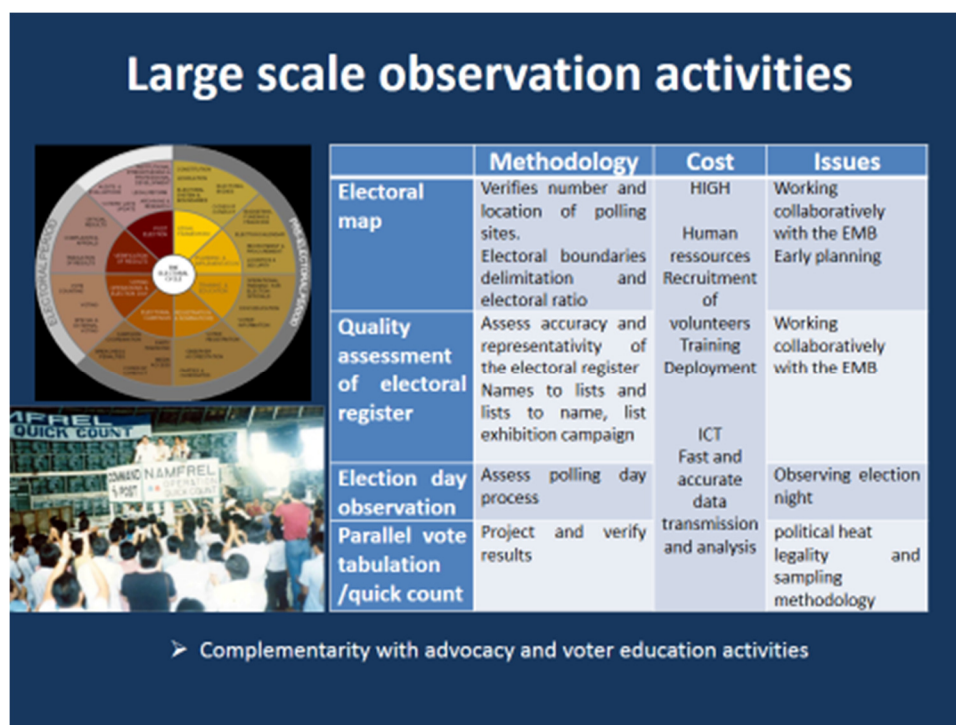
➤ **EU EOMs recommendation, a legacy to citizen observer:** EU EOMs are in permanent dialogue with citizen observers organizations. As they are deployed CT members reach out, share contacts and information. Citizen Observers usually attend LTO & STO briefings; LTOs crosscheck their info with citizen observers in the field. Meetings are organized prior to the preliminary statement and the recommendations. As a result of this permanent dialogue, EU EOM recommendations are a legacy to citizen observers CSO who will advocate for their implementation.

Assets & complementarity of EU EOMs and citizen observation	
➤ Interaction with international EOMs	
EU EOMs	Citizen Observation
+/- 150 people	Thousands of individuals
Clear hierarchy and communication flow	Dozens of CSO with various mandates
Presence +/- 2 months in country around election day (covering phase 5,6 & 7 of the electoral cycle)	Presence all year and all cycle long
Gaining deep knowledge of national context a challenge	Excellent knowledge of all electoral stakeholders at national & grassroots level
Precise and detailed methodology, media monitoring	From "basic" Eday observation to advanced observation technique
Highly trained, structured and equipped observers (both communication and transportation wise)	Fast and accurate collection, transmission and analysis of observation data a challenge
Team of 2 observers observing 10 to 20 polling station during EDay	One fixed observer monitoring one polling station

➤ **Opportunity and pertinence of mirroring EU EOM structure:** Long term observation is at the core of EU EOMs methodology and structured in a vertical manner. In a coalition, analysis is more horizontal by nature and mirroring EU EOMs set up with STO, LTOs and CT could prove challenging. Besides recommendations, another legacy of EU EOMs are 10 to 20 experienced national media monitors who could be, for example, at the core of a strategy to sustain monitoring efforts through a journalist association and keep shaping from outside the media regulatory body. Citizen observers are an opportunity to reframe electoral issues into a more global governance perspective, furthermore as citizen observers engage into a wide range of activities that target all electoral stakeholders from the EMB, to the political parties, the judiciary, the media regulatory body...



Large scale observation activities are paramount to citizen observation. They are an excellent verification tool of step of the cycle/output of the electoral commission; they reinforce electoral integrity and participate in building confidence of the electorate in the process. Large-scale activities bring coherence & unity to the network/coalition and allow moment of collective methodological grow through cross fertilization of knowledge and ownership of the election process, with a maximum visibility. As an example, when deciding on activities and on the content of the observation tools (manuals, questionnaires, database, report format...) all members will bring in their own field of expertise, gender, inclusion of marginalized groups, legal...



Along the eight steps of the electoral cycle, there are four main occasions to conduct large scale activities:

There are two matters of concern regarding the **electoral maps**, the official list of numbers of allocated voters and locations of polling sites (ghost polling sites are one of

the smartest ways to rig polls) and electoral boundaries (gerrymandering: tailored circumscriptions to secure the outcome of the poll; fairness of the electoral ratio and equal representation). Implementing activities to assess the electoral maps suppose early planning and early mobilization from citizen observers.

Quite often, the quality of the **electoral register** is put under discussion. This could be for technical reasons (update of the voters' roll with logistical shortcomings, technological upgrade, unproductive exhibition campaign) or political reasons (massive displacement of population, tensions over perceived over/under representation of a particular group). Citizen observers could be deployed during the voter registration period to monitor the EMB operations or post facto, with names to lists and lists to name observation techniques. Purpose, timing and political heat have to be considered carefully.

For the last three decades **Election Day** observation has been the most common feature of citizen observers. That surely explains why nowadays main electoral controversies usually happen before or after Eday. It is important to keep a vigilant non-partisan eye on Eday *per se*, not only when no international observers are present or during local elections. Observation of E night (transport of election results and materials to the tally centre, intake, aggregation and transmission of results) is often overlooked and could be reinforced.

PVT or **Quick count** is the advanced observation technique that brings the more political heat. It aims at tabulating the results in parallel to the EMB official tabulation to verify its integrity and raises, at times, legal and methodological issues. The first one lies with the legality to conduct: an EMB can consider that it's the only body authorized to announce preliminary results and "order" CSO to renounce to implement or publish the outcome of the Quick Count Operation. Another issue is PVT backlash traditionally the sampling method being put under discussion. Citizen observers do not seek authorization or try to build a consensus on methodology, but in order to build acceptance the Quick Count operations must be highly publicize.

Those four large scale activities have in common to require the recruitment, training and deployment of a high number of volunteers and the use of ICT for data transmission and analysis. Many can be done to support large scale deployment, from boosting mobilization capacity through targeted recruitment campaign (like the Namfrel wanted poster), improved HR handling (database, list production capacity for improved later accountability), means of transportation to take into account sustainability. All the four operations mentioned suppose a large gathering of data to be transmitted and process in the fastest and most reliable way.

➤ There is an **over emphasis on Eday observation** and on results. What is the point of a quarrel on integrity of the results if the candidacy of one of the main contestant has been rejected on dubious ground, if the incumbent dominated the campaign with 90% of exclusive access to public media and the massive use of public resources? CSOs are ready to embark or consolidate with other advanced observation techniques before and after EDay.

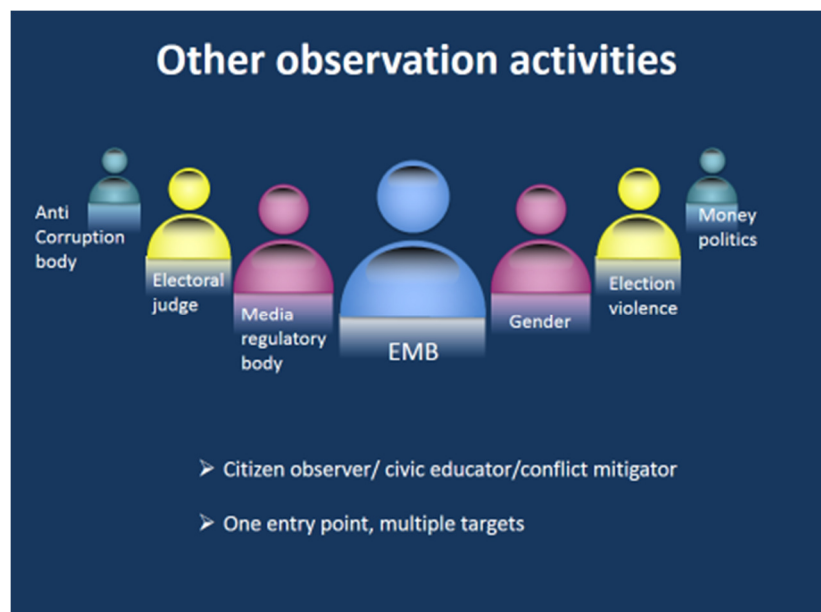
➤ **Complementarity with advocacy and civic and voter education activities:**  
Advocacy for publication of electoral map, for publication of all single polling stations result forms, for improved legal framework... advocacy activities run all along the electoral cycle. More than any other field, talking about cycle, advocacy is both the beginning and the outcome of citizen observation efforts. Voter education envisions citizenry in urban and rural areas fully aware of their rights and empowered to claim their rights. Activities in those two fields can be designed to complement observation efforts. This is twice true for civic education that requires training and deployment on a large scale as well ; it should be possible to pool up trainings to minimize cost and maximize impact.

Aside from large scale operations that require training and deployment of a high figure of volunteers, and civic/voter education and advocacy projects, CSO are involved in a wide range of activities that could target whether a specific issue and/or a specific actor.

Of course, the first actor to be monitored will be the EMB. It's whole performance could be carefully assessed, during all phases of the cycle, including recruitment and training of the non-temporary staff manning the polling stations, the capacity to deliver sensible electoral material...

CSO involved in citizen observation could be involved in preventing and monitoring election violence through targeted activities like:

- addressing youth leagues of political parties: in Zambia, the Anti Voter Apathy project (AVAP) has developed a training across party lines for young people in politics in leadership skills and techniques which resulted in increased inter-party dialogue and tolerance through interactions of youths and their training in democratic principles and an increasing number of young, tolerant and democratic leaders in political parties and government



- set up of a database to document pattern: "Ushahidi", which means "testimony" in Swahili, was a website that was initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008. It's now a non-profit tech company that specializes in developing free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping.

- participation to national/local conflict mitigation bodies : when present at local level (Indonesia, Zambia...) these institutions are a forum where to discuss implementation of the political campaign and to held all stakeholders accountable for actions

During election times CSO promoting gender will mobilize and try to mainstream gender issues all along the process, from supporting women from registration to results as voter, candidate or member of the EMB. Gender participation is a cross cutting issue, as well as minority, youth...

A CSO could develop a program for monitoring candidates access to public media (as we've seen there is a potential with media monitoring with eu eoms), to train journalists to cover elections with a professional association or monitor the work of the media regulatory body.

Another field of interest, pertinent to the fairness of the electoral process is the monitoring of the use of the Government resources and electoral advantage, the target will be political parties, public administration and good governance institution like anticorruption body or specific audit/jurisdiction.

➤ **Citizen observer/ civic educator/conflict mitigator:** If international observers have clearly a strict observation mandate, this does not apply for citizen observers. Indeed, citizen observation is one tool, advocacy, sensibilization, capacity-building, mitigation are others that aimed to improve the electoral process too. Volunteers deployed to the field are mobilized with different purposes but in the same citizen capacity.

➤ CSO involved in citizen observation implement a wide range of activities, as a result target various institutions. We have mentioned so far the media regulatory body, jurisdiction in charge of electoral dispute, national & local mediation committees, anticorruption body, parliament... Citizen observation is an **entry point** that allows to impact on many good governance institutions.

CSO profil		
Mandate	Level of professionalism	capacity of mobilization

You don't always find a citizen organization with a clear cut citizen observation mandate like Namfrel. Indeed, as we have seen, many CSOs implement their different mandates through various activities during election time.

If we should profile citizen observers among the great variety of national CSO landscapes we could distinguish them through their mandates (gender, youth, media, money politics focus) ; their level of professionalism (number of permanent staff, past achievements, affiliation to regional or international network) and their capacity of mobilization.

In this respect, the role of churches is often important. De facto, through their own instances like the Peace & Justice commissions that reach out to the grassroots or through their inter-confessional body, churches are the main providers of the thousands of foot soldiers who need to deploy during large scale operation (Malawi 2009, DRC 2011)



Today, the Global Network of Domestic observers which has delivered the International Declaration, is strong of 190 members (among which six regional network Acuerdo de Lima / Lima Accord ; Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) ; European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations

(ENEMO) ; Réseau Ouest Afrique pour la Surveillance des Elections (ROASE) / West Africa ; Election Observers Network (WAEON); Southern African Development Community Election Support Network (SADC ESN) ; East and Horn of Africa Election Observers Network (E-HORN) and span over 75 countries. Admission is decided by peers.

➤ **Partnering with genuine citizen observers:** Besides specific issues raised in the case of a very limited observation space, there are many indicators on which base a decision to engage with one partner CSO more than the over. As mentioned earlier, citizen observation has 30 years age, reputation of the CSOs are today build on experience. Past achievements alone, or as a member of a coalition, including quality of all public documents and impact, affiliation to an international l organization or to a regional network are all pertinent indicators.

➤ **Impact of & on CSO landscape:** Civil society is a complex election stakeholder which is better defined by its diversity. Among all components power struggles and competition for funds are frequent as well as capacity to work collaboratively with others through coalition or affiliation to networks. The set up chosen to implement citizen observation, like single donor basket or multiple grants to network members, will impact the shape of the CSO landscape.

➤ **Evaluation of space of citizen observation:** subsequent definition of a scope of action and a strategy. NAMFREL successfully petitioned the Election Management Body to be accredited as its citizen's arms, in other places CSOs cannot work collaboratively with the

EMB ; between these two situations there are many shades of grey. Careful choice of national partners, of activities and adherence to deontology & methodology pave the way for further enlargement of citizen observation space.

### Strategic planning & implementation issues

- Evaluation of space of citizen observation
- Early planning = strategic planning
- Handling the political heat
- Accountability

issues for  
extensive field  
deployment



➤ **Early planning = strategic planning :** Elections are not a one day event and has to be put

on a broader context. The registration of voters or the production of the electoral maps are important milestones in the electoral process that can take place, at times, more than a year before election day. Further, each activity requires a lot of advanced preparation and has to adhere to the electoral chronogram.

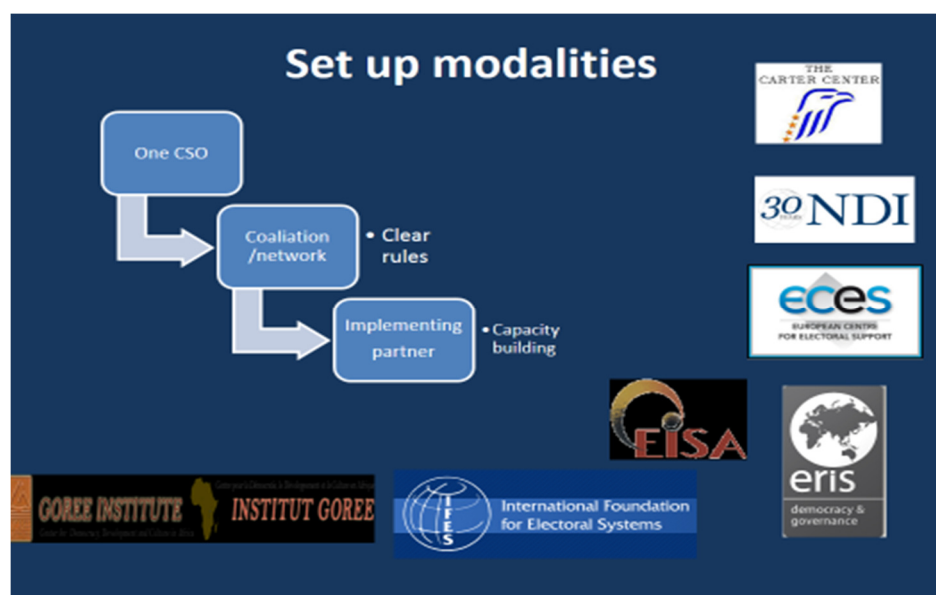
➤ **Handling the political heat :** Election observation activities bring a lot of political heat, especially if there is a quick count. EU Delegation must be on board so as to ensure that this information reaches all those concerned asap, it is always preferable to clearly set a mechanism for sharing information with the diplomatic community. As a suggestion, EIDHR focal points could liaise with political governance and raise attention on outcome and calendar. At critical times observation outcomes can be shared through regular HoM's or political counselors meetings.

➤ **Accountability issues for extensive field deployment:** In DRC, during last presidential elections, in the context of the technical assistance project managed by UNDP, a decision was taken to support deployment of citizen observers by granting the 5Usd fee requested in the proposed budget. Implementation was a nightmare as CSOs demonstrated poor capacity to deliver accurate list of observers with all necessary details. On the other side, even if the partner served many payment locations, observers had to walk long kilometers for few dollars. A good idea poorly implemented. There are many lessons learned to be from this experience: supporting engaging mobilization campaigns through posters, radio or TV podcasts and building the capacity of the CSOs to administratively handle large numbers of volunteers are two important priors. Training and deployment are a significant part of observation budget and need support. But voluntarism and sustainability are two important issues, the advice would be to engage in a serious discussion with the CSOs to clarify past practices, issues, long term impact and sustainability. All major cell phone companies offer nowadays money transfer services which could simplify implementation

.Implementation of citizen observation activities can be done under different set ups. Entry point can be a single CSO, a coalition of CSOs and/or a group of CSOs members of the same network or an implementing partner.

As said earlier, a coalition or a network means that CSOs work collaboratively and benefit of cross fertilization of knowledge while building common observation tools. However, administrative and collaborative rules have to be set up in a clear manner: who among the partners receive the grant?,

modalities of repartition, geographical divide, grounds for use of common pooled resources



(training venues, copy machines...) will the coalition/network have a single network statement, of different statements by member?

Improved citizen observation requires a lot of capacity building: capacity to mobilize large numbers of volunteers, to train them (production of training tools, implementation of training cascade and/or pool of mobile trainers and/or distance learning), to deploy them (logistics and coordination capacity) to repatriate and analyses the observation datas... If there is a strong focus on capacity building, working with an implementing partner should be considered in order to bring added value.

When election fever grows, many rights and fundamental freedoms are being put to the test. Elections are a window opportunity and, thanks to strategic planning and careful set up, citizen observation is the best entry point to impact positively on the performance of good governance institutions and democratization process as a whole.

## **Online ressources**

### **1) GLOBAL NETWORK OF DOMESTIC ELECTION MONITORS**

<http://www.gndem.org/>

Resources are arranged according to 39 priority topics identified by GNDEM's more than 190 members. Each topic in the Resource Center starts with a short introduction and is followed by corresponding materials to help GNDEM members share knowledge and enhance the impact of their activities. Materials range from background materials to manuals, forms and checklists to statements and reports of findings.

You will as well find the links to all regional and individual 190 organizations that are member of the network.

### **2) ACE - ELECTORAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK**

<http://aceproject.org/>

ACE is a collaborative effort between nine organisations: IDEA, EISA, Elections Canada, the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), IFES, The Carter Center, UNDESA, UNDP and the UNEAD. **The ACE website** is an online knowledge repository that provides comprehensive information and customised advice on electoral processes. The website contains in-depth articles, global statistics and data, an Encyclopaedia of Elections, information on electoral assistance, observation and professional development, region- and country-specific resources, daily electoral news, an election calendar, quizzes and expert networks.

The election observation portal allows to consult over 1000 election observation reports by the endorsing organizations of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation in one database.

### **3) INTERNATIONAL IDEA - SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY WORLDWIDE**

<http://www.idea.int/index.cfm>

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is an intergovernmental organization. It's a think tank whose programs aim to provide knowledge to democracy builders, provide policy development and analysis and support democratic reform. Since its establishment in 1995, IDEA has been engaged in assembling, analyzing and sharing comparative knowledge on electoral processes around the world. The results of these efforts are found in publications and publicly accessible databases which contain a wealth of

information on nearly every aspect of the electoral process – from design of electoral systems through to electoral justice

On the elections page IDEA propose an online electoral cycle that allows users to create a tailored cycle based on who they are and how they want to strengthen the electoral process

#### **4) NDI – NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE**

[www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)

In addition to the Institutes more than 150 international election observation missions, NDI was one of the initiators in developing the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*. NDI pioneered in helping citizen organizations around the world to build capacities for monitoring electoral and political processes. Using a peer-to-peer (South-South) approach over the last 25 years, the Institute has assisted domestic nonpartisan election monitoring efforts by nongovernmental organizations in more than 80 countries and territories. This assistance has addressed a wide range of issues — from intensive election-day efforts that mobilize thousands to hundreds-of-thousands of citizens to monitor voting, counting and tabulation of results, as well as issues in the pre-election and post-election periods, including analysis of legal frameworks for elections, candidate qualification, voter registration, media monitoring and scrutiny of the processing of election complaints. Online resources includes manuals to assist civic organizations and political parties in specific aspects of monitoring.

#### **5) BRIDGE - BUILDING RESOURCES IN DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND ELECTIONS.**

<http://bridge-project.org/>

Bridge is a modular professional development program with a particular focus on electoral processes. BRIDGE represents an initiative where five organisations in the democracy and governance field have jointly committed to developing, implementing and maintaining the most comprehensive curriculum and workshop package available, designed to be used as a tool within a broader capacity development framework. Election observers are both a topic and

#### **6) EODS - ELECTION OBSERVATION AND DEMOCRACY SUPPORT**

<http://www.eods.eu>

The EODS project is structured around three pillars, one of them aims to strengthen the capacity of regional organisations involved in election observation, and regional networks of non-partisan citizen observer groups to in turn support their network members. This may involve comparative studies and research, participation in regional forums and development of on line tools. The project seeks to consolidate cooperation with regional organisations and selected international organisations to ensure effective follow up and implementation of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and with the Global Network for Domestic Observers to facilitate the dissemination and implementation of the Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations.

#### **6) CARTER CENTRE**

<http://www.cartercenter.org>

Under its peace & democracy programs, the Carter Center has observed 96 elections in 38 countries. In addition, the Center is working with citizen observer groups so that they too become familiar with international obligations for democratic elections and use this framework to advocate for change. The Carter Center website offers a database of Obligations for Democratic Elections, that consolidate more than 150 sources of international law related to human rights and elections that can be used by international and domestic election observers to assess elections.

## **7) IFES INTERNATIONAL FONDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

[www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections by providing technical assistance to election officials and empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process. Regarding citizen participation, IFES engages in a variety of civic education activities, including informing voters of their rights and responsibilities and empowering them to have a voice in the way they are governed. IFES works to build skills of democratic citizenship around the world, and places special emphasis on encouraging full participation of all citizens, including women, the disabled population, youth and other underrepresented groups. Online resources includes the ElectionGuide which provides content on: national elections around the world (results, turn out, electoral systems, country profiles) and data from the status of women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWEMNA project)

## **8) EISA – ELECTORAL INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA**

<http://www.content.eisa.org.za/>

EISA is a not for profit organisation, established in 1996 in Johannesburg with field offices in Chad, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. EISA promotes credible elections, citizen participation, and the strengthening of political institutions for sustainable democracy in Africa through assisting with elections and political processes and providing various actors with support, including citizen observer organizations. Online resources offers comparative data on voter registration in Africa.