

Helpdesk Research Report: Electoral Assistance Lessons

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Query: What are the trends, lessons learned and best practices on elections and international electoral assistance over the last 5-10 years?

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1. Overview

In the 1990s, there was a great deal of optimism about the impact that elections and electoral assistance could have on stability and democratisation. This optimism was tempered in subsequent years as the expected benefits, in many cases, did not seem to materialise. Much analysis has been conducted in recent years to draw out lessons learned from past electoral assistance programmes and to formulate best practices. In the process, new electoral approaches have been advocated and developed. The key change has been the movement away from viewing elections and electoral assistance as one-off events which require periodic support, to viewing them as an integral component of democratic transition and governance, which needs ongoing support.

Much of the literature notes that electoral assistance has been mostly successful in establishing and promoting the technical aspects of elections: drafting electoral legislation and regulations; providing logistical support (ballots, ballot boxes etc.); educating voters; and setting up administrative and management institutions (electoral commissions, electoral management bodies etc.) and election observer groups. Without this assistance, it would have been difficult for elections to take place and to be considered legitimate. However, the literature also stresses that such technical interventions are insufficient for good governance and democratisation. More attention must be paid to longer-term institutional and capacity development, particularly in the following areas:

- building the capacity of electoral administrative and management structures to ensure that, once established, they function independently and transparently;
- strengthening political parties and fostering viable opposition parties;
- translating the use of domestic election observers and civil society monitors in elections into the development of a strong civil society and broader human rights culture;
- targeting women, minorities and disadvantaged groups in civic and campaign related educational programmes, as they are often neglected in the tight time frames for one-off voter education.

The UNDP and EC endorse the new 'Electoral Cycle Approach', which seeks to address these areas listed above by conducting more strategic interventions and providing ongoing support (a number of years before 'first' elections and in between elections). The aim again is to direct more attention to institutional and capacity building and to better link elections to democratisation in recipient countries.

The focus on capacity building extends not only to recipient countries but also to donors. Electoral assistance courses and professional networks have been established for employees of development agencies to share and learn lessons and best practices; and to better coordinate their interventions.

There are additional considerations for electoral assistance programmes in 'fragile' and post-conflict countries. Some of these are as follows:

- Elections, if not managed properly, can renew violence (e.g. Angola) or strengthen the role of those instrumental to the conflict (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Political party development is especially important – particularly support for broad-based programmatic political parties, in order to counter parties appealing to ethnic, religious or regional aspects that contributed to the conflict.
- Allowing sufficient time for voter education is also vital. Such education should cover not only the specific electoral processes but should also extend to broader issues of democracy and governance - especially important in transition countries.
- Election observation is also very important as a lack of confidence in the legitimacy of elections can renew violence.

In addition to being conflict sensitive, it is important to be sensitive to local socio-cultural settings in all interventions. Some of the literature and experts note that the formula adopted by international actors and the commodities (e.g. ballot boxes, voting screens) used for conducting elections may not be appropriate to local settings. This in turn makes it difficult to create local ownership and sustainability.

There are a vast number of additional lessons and best practices specific to different country experiences. This helpdesk research report includes literature that focuses on election experiences in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Mozambique, Nigeria and Madagascar. It was not possible in the time allocated to this query to conduct in-depth research on these countries and the others of interest. Further research would be able to uncover more country-specific resources and provide a more comprehensive review of elections and electoral assistance.

2. Key Documents

General

UNDP, Evaluation Office, 2003, 'Electoral Assistance', Essentials, no. 13, UNDP
<http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/Elections-Pub-EssentialsElectoralAssistance.pdf>

This brief guidance note offers an overview of key lessons learned in electoral assistance as well as recommendations for how to address them. It also provides country examples throughout.

The lessons include:

- Since elections are integral to processes of democratic transition and governance, electoral assistance is most effective when focused on long-term capacity building of electoral systems and management bodies.
- Electoral assistance provides a key entry point for broader governance efforts. Including promotion of human rights, gender-responsive leadership, representative institution building and judicial independence.
- Strategic partnerships and well coordinated resources are critical to sustain electoral reform.

- Democracy building depends on inclusive, representative and transformative participation, which requires civic education (that incorporates voter and campaign-related education) and access to information.
- Mobilising public support for accountable and transparent political parties can create a competitive multiparty system.

Bargiacchi, F., Guerin, P. and Tuccinardi, D., 2006, 'Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance', European Commission, EuropeAid Co-operation Office

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/electoral-support/documents/election-assistance-methodological-guide_en.pdf

This detailed guide outlines the framework for electoral assistance, activities and procedures; and provides case studies. Sections 2 and 3 discuss lessons learned from past efforts and how these have led to the proposal of a new method of delivering electoral assistance: the 'Electoral Cycle Approach'. The guide notes that in the past, almost all EC electoral assistance interventions have lacked a strategic approach and often followed upon the efforts of other international donors. In addition, it states that the EC has not properly taken into account the political aspects of elections and electoral processes, viewing them instead primarily through a technical lens. Another common trend has been the lack of incorporation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the electoral process; and insufficient attention to strengthening the accountability and independence of electoral institutions.

With regard to civil society organisations, the guide notes that a key activity of such organisations has been their conduct of pre- and post-electoral surveys that have gauged voter knowledge and attitudes, which has helped in the design and assessment of education programmes. In addition, the guide commends the EC's recent practice of providing financial as well as targeted technical assistance to a few domestic observer groups. This allows the development of a few strong and committed groups.

The new 'Electoral Cycle Approach', advocated in the guide, moves away from event-based, periodic support to more strategic ongoing support that spans several years in advance of the election date and continues in the period in between elections. This approach tailors electoral assistance towards the development of the institutional capacity of the Electoral Management Bodies and the long term needs of civil society – including attention to election observation. Such support in between elections can also assist in targeting and promoting the involvement of women, minorities, disabled persons and other disadvantaged groups that have often been neglected in the implementation of past electoral assistance programmes.

Ellis, A., Guerin, A. and Ayoub, A., 2006, 'Effective Electoral Assistance: Moving Away from Event-based Support to Process Support', Conference Report and Conclusions, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm:

<http://www.idea.int/publications/eea/upload/Inlay%20FINAL.pdf>

This report is based on the discussions of a conference in Ottawa in May 2006 on Effective Electoral Assistance. The purpose of the conference was to launch a dialogue among donors and development partners on the need to shift the focus away from solely the election day to the entire electoral cycle – linking electoral assistance to development and democratisation. The report stresses that "the building of a strong and stable electoral administration capacity is a better long-term investment than ad hoc contributions to electoral events" (p. 6). It notes that in the past, donors have generally preferred to provide short-term targeted training, ad hoc electoral material, and voter education, without contributing to institutional and capacity development. It also points out the almost complete absence of proper donor coordination, which also hinders sustainability and effectiveness. The paper provides a list of recommendations, which include (see pp. 28-29):

- “In order to move towards sustainability, a proper needs assessment needs to be made, which acknowledges the interdependence of tasks throughout every electoral cycle by sharing knowledge and lessons learned and developing programmes with appropriate content and implementation controls.
- In order to move from assistance which is purely related to a particular election event towards a longer-term democratisation programme, it is vital to seek the broader participation of stakeholders, including governments, political parties, the media, civil society organisations dealing with democratic governance, academics and think-tank representatives, and organisations which work with media and political party development.
- The link between electoral assistance programmes and democratic governance and development programmes should be firmly established, and gender issues and cultural perspectives must be taken into account.
- The links between donor agencies and the implementers of assistance programmes need to be strengthened through more systematic lessons-learned exercises.
- Assessment tools are needed to help donors to identify the real needs and to formulate, implement and evaluate assistance programmes that complement democracy support in a sustainable manner”.

UNDP, 2007, ‘Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide’, Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme

<http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/UNDP-Electoral-Assistance-Implementation-Guide.pdf>

This guide offers direction on how to plan, formulate, monitor and implement electoral assistance using the concept of the Electoral Cycle. Such an approach moves away from treating elections as a one-off event and focuses on linkages to longer-term support. It allows for better opportunities to “address in a much more sustainable manner issues of capacity development; institutional strengthening; participation of women, minorities, indigenous people and other disadvantaged groups; and the use of appropriate/cost-effective technology in electoral processes, among others” (p. 2). “Ideally, an Electoral Cycle would start at the end of an election and run through the beginning of the next election. This strategy does not preclude short-term support specifically geared towards an electoral event. It does, however, favour short-term election-specific assistance that is connected (i) to other elements of the electoral process and (ii) to the broader democratic governance agenda in a given country” (p. 3). The guide devotes particular attention to capacity development of the Elections Management Board (a key component of UNDP electoral assistance) and the importance of engaging other important stakeholders, such as the electorate, civil society, domestic observer groups, the media, political parties, and police and security forces.

USAID, 2000, ‘Managing Assistance in Support of Political and Electoral Processes’, Technical Publication Series, Centre for Democracy and Governance, USAID

http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACF631.pdf

This manual provides guidelines for the design, implementation and management of activities in support of political and electoral processes. It looks at short and long term assistance:

- “Short-term (event-driven) assistance seeks to assure that the outcome of a particular election is valid, that the process is accepted, that it is viewed as credible by key domestic and international stakeholders, and that the immediate election produces a credible result.
- Long-term (institutionalising) assistance is developmentally oriented. It seeks to construct or strengthen those institutions and actors involved in the electoral process, either as managers and implementers (election commissions, monitoring groups, the judiciary) or as participants (political parties, candidates, civil society). The primary concern is with

strengthening the electoral process *per se* in order to make it a sustainable endeavour in the long term” (p. 2).

Post-election assistance (immediately after an election and prior to the seating of the new legislature or government) is emphasised as an important opportunity to promote reform momentum and stability of the new political system. However, such assistance is often lacking. In addition, it notes that support for political party development outside of the electoral context is an important aspect of longer-term democratisation.

The manual highlights some specific programmatic lessons. These include:

- “With elections assistance, it is advisable to have different organisations providing the assistance and monitoring the assistance.
- Elections monitoring should not be performed under a contract implementing mechanism.
- In an effort to avoid duplication, it is preferable to have a very limited number of groups performing elections observation” (p. 3).

The manual also provides a useful and detailed list of lessons learned on legal framework assistance (p. 24); election management assistance (p. 29); voter education (p. 33); election observation and complaint resolution (p. 38); local elections assistance (p. 41); post-elections assistance (p. 44); political party development assistance (p. 49).

EC-UNDP-IDEA, n.d. ‘Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance: Participant’s Manual’, European Commission: www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=46&Itemid

This manual draws mainly on the content of the EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance, the UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, International IDEA’s Electoral Management Design Handbook and ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance, with contribution taken from UNDP-IFES CORE Cost of Registration and Elections, International IDEA Electoral System Design, the ACE Encyclopaedia Network, and several other publications and official documents of EC, UNDP and International IDEA. It discusses the Electoral Cycle Approach and provides learning modules.

Under the Electoral Cycle Approach, the manual states that “development agencies and partner countries should plan and implement together electoral assistance within the democratic governance framework by thinking ahead 5 to 10 years, rather than reacting to each electoral event as it occurs ... [T]he core mistake of past electoral assistance projects did not rest in the provision of ad hoc short term support, but in the belief that such support would suffice to ensure the sustainability of the following electoral processes, the independence and transparency of the Electoral Management Body concerned and the consequent democratic development of the partner country” (p. 13). This approach has been officially endorsed by the EC and UNDP for every common electoral assistance project.

‘Fragile’/Transition Environments – General

Johannsen, A. and Boyer, G. Y., eds., 2006, ‘Handbook for Transition Assistance’, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo
[http://gwweb.jica.go.jp/km/FSubject0501.nsf/3b8a2d403517ae4549256f2d002e1dcc/811e24ba027fdb304925714f001c174e/\\$FILE/Handbook_for_Transition_Assistance_3_Mar_06%5B1%5D.pdf](http://gwweb.jica.go.jp/km/FSubject0501.nsf/3b8a2d403517ae4549256f2d002e1dcc/811e24ba027fdb304925714f001c174e/$FILE/Handbook_for_Transition_Assistance_3_Mar_06%5B1%5D.pdf)

This handbook provides guidelines for various aspects of transition assistance, including electoral support (outlined on pp. 144-148). It stresses that elections are a key step in a broader process of building legitimate governance in transition environments. In situations where violent conflict has occurred, the handbook stresses that election planning must consider and address the following issues:

- “The social conflict that underlies violence may be played out in elections.
- The different values and interests of once warring parties may influence the party politics of elections.
- Elections may spark a new violent conflict.
- Poorly planned elections, or those in which there is a significant imbalance of power, may result in social discord and violence.
- Ensuring that elections are fair, efficient and free from violence is paramount. Therefore the timing, design, and mechanism of elections, and the possible impact they might have on a population, need careful attention” (p. 144).

The section on international electoral assistance outlines and discusses key issues in establishing free, fair and corruption-free elections and how the international community can assist (see pp. 145-148). Key areas are:

- *Election security*: protection of voting places, candidates and voters. International or domestic actors may provide security.
- *Independent electoral commission*: election administration, often carried out by electoral commissions, requires significant resources, independence and time.
- *Transparent voter registration*: adequate time and resources must be dedicated to voter registration. Using local staff to carry out the voter registration is ideal.
- *Effective civic education and bottom-up empowerment at the community level*: informing voters of the electoral process is a key component of electoral processes. Civic education can take place through town meetings, radio or other media, leaflets and drama.
- *Political party development*: this is crucial for effective elections in transition countries. Parties can either play a role in consolidating democracy and the new political order or they can be a force to undermine it. Strategies based on offering the best programme to enable the transition society to succeed, economically and politically, will cut across parties and serve to reduce polarization. In contrast, strategies based on ethnic, religious or regional appeals can undermine democracy.
- *Oversight of the media*: training media to be conflict sensitive is critically important. In periods of transition, poor reporting by the news media can stimulate new violent conflict.
- *Election observation*: this is important in transitional environments to ensure election legitimacy. It can be conducted by international or domestic observers.

The section also provides a list of good practices. These are:

- “Invite national electoral officials to participate in some of the regular donor meetings, if appropriate to further dialogue and collaboration.
- Use education to inform the public about the nature of democracy and the electoral process.
- As elections often attract violence and intimidation, use a conflict-sensitive approach when developing programs and workshops. Ensure that security measures are in place.
- Use electoral assistance as an entry point. Providing electoral assistance can have a direct impact on other efforts in areas such as local governance, community empowerment, legislative development, access to information and public administration reform.
- Carefully identify a realistic time schedule for elections, together with national counterparts, as the timing could determine the outcome of the election” (p. 149).

Fischer, J., Walecki, M. and Carlson, J., eds., 2006, ‘Political Finance in Post-Conflict Societies’, Prepared by IFES with funding from the United States Agency for International Development

<http://www.ifes.org/publication/0b087c527792ae130507f80957ad3f2b/Political%20Finance%20in%20Post-Conflict%20Societies-small.pdf>

This paper presents case studies on creating political finance systems in the following post-conflict countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia

and Mozambique. These include an examination of the planning, organisation and funding of elections. The paper discusses in detail various lessons learned and recommendations from the studies (see pp. 9-11). Some of these are as follows:

- Post-conflict societies are often characterised by insecure environments, and former paramilitary groups that transform into politically oriented militias or organised crime gangs. International funds should be provided for the security of candidates or party leaders and their offices, so that they do not have to divert resources from campaigning to security.
- The importance of addressing political finance policy should be recognised early on and incorporated into the general legal framework or elections or into separate laws. The expertise of the international community in drafting political finance regulations should be offered and utilised.
- Efforts should be made to provide information and education to all the agents of disclosure—newly established political finance regulators, political groups, candidates, civil society organisations, media and the general public—about the role of a political finance system and how such a system is essential for creating credible electoral and democratic processes.
- There is a need to prevent the monopolisation of all or most public resources, including access to the media, by diversifying control over state resources and media outlets and by encouraging private media to represent a diversity of opinion.
- In addition to providing support to electoral management bodies (political finance regulators), support should also be offered to civil society organisations (to conduct campaign finance monitoring) and to media (to cover political finance issues in a more complete and balanced manner). Such efforts will promote transparency in the electoral process and support the efforts of newly established enforcement bodies.

De Zeeuw, J., 2004, 'How to Make Democracy Assistance More Effective? Recommendations for Doing it Differently', Paper Submitted for the European Conference 'Enhancing the European Profile in Democracy Assistance', 4-6 July, the Netherlands
http://www.boell.de/alt/downloads/demokratiefoerderung/de_zeeuw_effective.pdf

This paper discusses democracy assistance in the areas of elections, human rights monitoring and media. Of the three, most support has been given to elections. It finds that democracy assistance has had a positive effect in that police forces, NGOs and elections would probably have been unable to function in post-conflict countries in the absence of donor funding. It stresses however that democracy assistance could have had more of an impact if funds were focused not only on *ad hoc* single activities but also on strengthening internal democratic governance (including accountability and transparency) and the sustainability of domestic institutions. It highlights that while democratic assistance may have been successful in creating organisations, such as electoral commissions, it has been less successful in contributing to the proper democratic functioning of such institutions. "When domestic organisations are only performing their technical task without being autonomous or their decisions being respected, their presence will make little difference in the overall non-democratic political context. Or worse, by focusing exclusively on the structures and not seriously taking into account the subtle behind-the-scenes intimidation and manipulation by certain political actors, there is a real risk that regular elections and a vibrant media become part of the 'democratic façade' of semi-authoritarian regimes ... The key to democratic success lies in the functioning and democratic performance of electoral, human rights and media organisations" (p. 124).

The paper stresses as well that the international community has often placed greater emphasis on stability in post-conflict settings, which may entail support for national leaders and the political status quo, at the expense of institutionalising democracy. As such, democracy assistance has concentrated on 'peripheral' activities like voter education, journalism training and civil society support, rather than on state institutional reforms or on changing the political environment in

which domestic organisations must operate. It notes that international political support for existing political leaders has made it difficult for viable opposition forces to emerge.

For further discussion, see:

De Zeeuw, J., 2005, 'Projects Do Not Create Institutions: The Record of Democracy Assistance in Post-Conflict Societies', *Democratization* vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 481-504
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a723759962~db=all~order=page>

Reilly, B., 2008, 'Post-Conflict Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transition'
http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/further_activities/2005-06/D_P/2006_03_Post_Conf_Elections_paper_BR.pdf

This paper addresses the key dilemmas of post-conflict elections. It emphasises that while post-conflict elections have become a core element of peace agreements, they can also contribute to more tension and violence (for example, in Angola and Sierra Leone during the 1990s); or to politically entrenching the same individuals instrumental to the prior conflict (for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina). This has led to criticism of exposing fragile post-conflict countries to early democratisation and competitive pressures of the electoral process. The paper stresses that a more realistic and less ideological appraisal of elections is required. It raises the issues and trade-offs that policymakers need to address in electoral planning in post-conflict societies (see p. 32). They include:

- elections held in situations of insecurity will aid extremist parties and candidates;
- proportional representative systems may be preferable to a zero-sum/winner-takes-all model, but can have hidden and sometimes debilitating political costs;
- independent electoral commissions are preferable to party-based models for both established and emerging democracies; and
- a sequenced step from local to national elections is optimal for most post-conflict societies.

For further discussion, see:

Reilly, B., 2003, 'International Electoral Assistance: A Review of Donor Activities and Lessons Learned', Working Paper 17, Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies Project, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1373>

The following is from the summary available on the gsdrc website.

Lessons learned in post-conflict societies include:

- The timing of elections has been unfortunate in many cases; strong international pressure to hold elections as soon as possible has often been counterproductive.
- A bottom-up approach to electoral timing (starting with local elections, then national elections) is probably the best way to encourage the development of party politics and to inculcate voters in the routines of electoral politics.
- The appropriateness of specific electoral systems to particular political systems cannot be underestimated. These choices have a large and long-term impact on the process of democratisation.
- The issues of structure, independence and effective functioning of electoral management bodies to a large extent determine the success of the electoral process.
- The systems used by the international community for voter registration have proven to be too expensive and not very sustainable.
- Civic and voter education programmes are a key area of international assistance that can play an important role in instilling democratic practices in the population.

The priority for international actors should be helping to build appropriate and sustainable procedures and institutions that function effectively without external assistance. Specific recommendations are to:

- Strengthen the capacity of electoral management bodies.

- Develop and/or strengthen domestic election observer capacity (this is preferable to costly international monitoring).
- Support the building of broad-based programmatic political parties (this may help to avoid narrow, personalised and sectarian party systems that have often contributed to the outbreak of conflict).
- Provide appropriate support to first-time elections and then maintain support in subsequent elections.

'Fragile'/Transition Environments – Country Studies

An, M. et al., 2008, 'Idealism Without Illusions: Lessons from Post-Conflict Elections in Cambodia, Rwanda and Sudan', Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs, Princeton University, New Jersey

http://aceproject.org/ero-en/misc/to-be-filed/Idealism_Without_Illusions-Lessons_from_post_Conflict_Elections%282008%29.pdf

This report provides a comparative study of Cambodia, Rwanda and Sudan – three post-conflict countries (at differing stages in their transition) that are to hold elections in 2008 or 2009. It also discusses trends in electoral assistance and how the optimism of the 1990s about what such assistance could achieve became tempered in the 2000s. This is due to various reasons: the growing recognition that technical assistance does not necessarily lead to genuine democracy; the inability of the political process in Afghanistan and Iraq to contribute to a stable political and security environment; to a general backlash against democracy promotion; and concerns over the electoral victory of Hamas and other Islamist political parties.

The report provides separate assessments, analysis and recommendations for the three countries, but also draws out some common themes and lessons on elections in post-conflict settings (see p. 37). These are:

- *The need for a longer term approach:* it is vital to look beyond the “next” electoral event to the broader process of which it is a part. The international community tends to concentrate resources on high-stakes electoral events, when the returns may be rather low (because the political situation is inherently unpredictable and democratic norms and expectations take time to embed), and to overlook lower-stakes moments later on that may offer more promising returns.
- *The need for a broader focus:* the international community should move away from a narrowly technical interpretation of electoral assistance towards a broader concern with fair political environments. For example, while the technical administration of elections in both Cambodia and Rwanda is now very proficient, the conditions for genuine political competition (civil liberties, a capable media, strong civil society organisations, acceptance of political competition) take more time to develop and require longer-term forms of support.
- *The need for more flexible strategies:* it is important to be able to anticipate and adapt to the changing domestic environment for elections – in order to successfully address challenges and seek out sources of future international community leverage. For example, in Rwanda and Cambodia, traditional technical assistance is a less useful “carrot” now that the technical proficiency of election management has increased and governments in those countries are more able to pay their own way. Instead, “softer” incentives, including the prestige associated with being recognised as a member of the democratic club, may become more important.

Peou, S., 2004, 'International Assistance for Institution Building in Post-Conflict Cambodia', Working Paper, no. 26, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael', The Hague

http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2004/20040500_cru_working_paper_26.pdf

This paper assesses the impact of international assistance in elections, human rights and media in Cambodia. Chapter 2 (pp. 7-38) focuses on assistance for election institution-building from 1992-2003. Donor assistance during this time centred on establishing and strengthening the electoral legal framework, election administration, election monitoring organisations and political parties. The paper outlines the positive overall trends: donors remained committed over time and there was some increased attention to party development, although solely by the United States. It highlights that international assistance was instrumental in establishing electoral rules, which were followed, and for creating the conditions for four elections to take place. However, the paper argues that there has been insufficient attention to the promotion of accountability and transparency in laws and regulations. In addition, slow delivery of donor aid has resulted in slow and insufficient preparation for elections. Furthermore, the paper questions whether international efforts have been sufficient in institutionalising free and fair elections. It stresses that insufficient international donor attention and resources to long term administrative capacity building activities has contributed to weaknesses in electoral organisations. There are still problems with election administration and monitoring; and political opposition parties are underdeveloped and incapable of competing against the dominant governing party. The paper advocates for greater international assistance in ensuring the sustainability and strength of electoral institutions.

JEMB, 2005, 'National Assembly and Provincial Council Elections 2005', Final Report, Joint Electoral Management Body

This report provides a detailed assessment of the 2005 electoral processes in Afghanistan. A detailed section on lessons learned and recommendations is provided on pp. 22-28. These include:

- *Electoral System—The Single Non-Transferable Vote:* the existence of 5,800 candidates hindered the development of political parties and resulted in a complicated and expensive custom-designed ballot in a 'newspaper' format. This also resulted in the need for new and costly electoral materials - in particular ballot boxes and polling screens; and much greater education and distribution efforts. The report recommends that the size of future ballots for Afghan elections should be reduced, if not by a different electoral system then by increased barriers to candidate entry.
- *The Electoral Timeline:* there was insufficient time for public outreach in general, but particularly before candidate nomination. As a result, civic education activities concentrated mostly on the process rather than the broader context of candidacy and the roles of elected representatives. The report recommends that the dates for future Afghan elections should be determined well in advance, at least nine months beforehand in order to better plan for outreach activities.
- *Voter Registry:* the lack of an accurate voter registry made logistical planning for each location very difficult. The report recommends that international donors support the development of a comprehensive registry.
- *Recruitment of Senior National Field Staff:* Afghan staff were subject to incredible pressures from their communities to influence all aspects of the electoral process, from candidate nomination to registration, polling and counting. The report recommends that consideration should be given to the placement of provincial election officers and district field coordinators in provinces and districts from which they do not originate in order to counter these pressures.
- *Campaigning:* a free system of television and radio campaign advertisements was created and managed by the electoral Media Commission, so that all candidates had the possibility of recording and broadcasting an advertisement of a set duration. This system worked very effectively and helped promote equal access to media for candidates. The report recommends that it continue.
- *Quarantine and Audit Procedures:* the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) approved comprehensive quarantine and audit procedures for use in the count centres and Data Entry Centre. However, these were not made public to stakeholders early

- enough, which led to a lack of transparency and suspicion on the part of candidates as polling stations were quarantined. The report recommends that such procedures should be made available in advance of the counting process to ensure full understanding by all stakeholders.
- *Capacity Building and Retention of Staff:* despite the limited timeframe, the JEMB and its Secretariat (JEMBS) implemented an effective capacity building programme, which included a series of courses coinciding with the phases of the election operation and study trips to visit election administrations in other democracies. It is imperative that this staff knowledge and experience be retained with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The report notes, however, that this may be difficult if the IEC awards such staff with pay rates similar to those for government civil servants. The report recommends that once the IEC is funded from the national budget, pay rates of electoral staff should be supplemented in order to keep their essential knowledge and experience within the IEC.

Reeves, P., 2006, 'Impact Assessment: Election Assistance to Palestinian Civil Society Organisations', Report prepared for United States Agency for International Development
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI631.pdf

This study evaluates the impact of election-related programmes, funded by Tamkeen from December 2004 through January 2006 (covering four rounds of local elections, the presidential election, and the legislative elections). The programme conducted 2,834 voter education sessions that reached approximately 100,000 people. The study finds that the sessions contributed to informed voters and a high voter turnout. This included the successful targeting of women and marginalised or otherwise disadvantaged voters. Tamkeen also fielded election-day domestic observers, which was seen by voters as a form of insurance that elections would be carried out in a free and fair manner. In addition, Tamkeen grantees sponsored discussion forums that aimed to highlight candidate platforms and qualifications. This encouraged voters to move beyond voting decision-making based on family ties or patronage. Another critical and successful activity funded by Tamkeen and USAID was the Arab Thought Forum (ATF). The ATF facilitated the public agreement of all political parties, including Fatah and Hamas, on a system of good conduct for the electoral process. This resulted in the development of a transparent Palestinian Code of Conduct, which helps to build trust in the democratic process.

Additional Country Studies - Africa

De Tollenaere, M., 2006, 'Democracy Assistance to Post-Conflict Mozambique', Working Paper, no. 27, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael', The Hague
http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2006/20060500_cru_working_paper_37_en.pdf

This paper assesses the impact of international assistance in elections, human rights and media in Mozambique. Chapter 2 (pp. 5-12) focuses on assistance for electoral assistance in five multi-party elections from 1994-2004. It notes that assistance focused on capacity building of electoral authorities and of political parties and civil society organisations. It finds that technical assistance was very high in earlier years, tapering out later on; and that funding for monitoring activities increased over time. The paper asserts that international assistance was successful in achieving its short term objectives: election administration capacity increased markedly with technical assistance. It notes however, that this capacity is tenuous as the knowledge and skills lie with individuals as opposed to structures. It also notes that although the UNDP electoral support programme in 1999 built in a post-electoral dimension, which the aim of reviewing and consolidating systems outside of election periods, there was little donor interest in its implementation. The paper concludes that while electoral support has built up technical capacity it has not necessarily achieved the longer term objective of strengthening democratisation. More attention should be given, for example, to strengthening civil society organisations and their willingness and ability to act as monitoring organisations.

Kohnert, D., 2004, 'Election Observation in Nigeria and Madagascar: Diplomatic vs. Technocratic Bias', *Review of African Political Economy*, vo. 31, no, 99, pp: 83 — 101
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/crea/2004/00000031/00000099/art00006>
This article is also available from the DFID library. Please email: library@dfid.gov.uk

This paper seeks out lessons from EU election observation, which it considers a component of election assistance. It notes that the main goals of election observation are the legitimisation of an electoral process and the development of a human rights culture. It finds that the more recent focus on 'professionalism' in election observation, as an attempt to shield against 'diplomatic bias' (political pressures from partisan stakeholder interests), does not necessarily lead to less biased observation results. It notes first that in some crucial cases, such as the South African or Nigerian founding elections in 1994 and 1999, respectively, obscuring the actual dimension of electoral rigging and violence for diplomatic reasons may have been justified by the paramount political goal of conflict prevention. Secondly, it stresses that the focus on professionalism and sound quantitative methods (e.g. sample survey of polling stations) may prevent consideration of important socio-cultural dimensions and important systems of informal politics that influence voter behaviour and electoral processes. This in turn can undermine the effectiveness of election observation and elections, in general. The paper advocates that observer missions should employ in key positions experts who are well informed about the countries' informal politics. It cites that "the 'top-down' approach of election observation as applied by the EU observation mission in Madagascar, with a hierarchical line of command, is difficult to adapt to the local political and socio-cultural conditions, notably in remote rural areas. More flexible reactions by those experts familiar with the local socio-cultural setting should be allowed for" (p. 97).

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Websites visited

ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network, the Asia Foundation, CIDA, Danida, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), European Commission, EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance, Google, Google Scholar, GSDRC, Ingenta journals, International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), JICA, SIDA, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, UNDP, USAID.

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