

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN A DEMOCRACY

Prepared by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Republican Institute as part of their ongoing effort to help strengthen Cambodia's political parties. If you have any comments or questions concerning the information contained within, please contact the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Republican Institute in Phnom Penh. Paid for by the people of the United States of America.

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PROVINCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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Province	District	POPULATION		U R B A N		R U R A L		T O T A L		M A R I T A L		90% V O T E R T U R N O U T	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	%	%
KAMPONG CHAM	Batheay	71,609	38,729	32,880	54%	46%	37,732	20,706	17,026	55%	45%	33,959	44,868
	Chamkar Leu	101,953	52,504	49,449	51%	49%	49,853	27,194	22,659	55%	45%	28,980	18,758
	Cheung Prey	65,666	34,230	31,436	52%	48%	32,200	17,741	14,459	55%	45%	15,693	40,034
	Dambe	39,814	20,459	19,355	51%	49%	20,842	11,887	8,955	57%	43%	33,948	33,122
	Kampong Cham (PT)	30,878	15,759	15,119	51%	49%	17,437	9,964	7,473	57%	43%	37,584	36,195
	Kampong Siem	83,890	44,361	39,529	53%	47%	44,482	25,020	19,462	56%	44%	38,098	46,495
	Kang Meas	77,627	41,880	35,747	54%	46%	37,720	23,362	14,958	62%	38%	51,268	43,353
	Koh Satin	70,172	37,120	33,052	53%	47%	36,802	20,551	16,251	56%	44%	32,938	79,579
	Kroch Chhear	79,607	41,188	38,419	52%	48%	41,760	22,611	19,149	54%	46%	614,871	
	Memot	89,111	42,521	40,590	51%	49%	40,217	21,734	18,483	54%	46%		
	O Reang Ov	78,227	42,268	35,959	54%	46%	42,331	23,262	19,069	55%	45%		
	Ponhea Krek	102,948	53,841	49,107	52%	48%	51,661	28,877	22,784	56%	44%		
	Prey Chhor	109,857	57,403	52,454	52%	48%	56,964	30,595	26,369	54%	46%		
	Srei Santhor	97,642	52,074	45,568	53%	47%	48,170	25,591	22,579	53%	47%		
	Stung Trang	74,089	40,144	33,945	54%	46%	36,598	19,119	17,479	52%	48%		
	Tbong Khnum	178,497	91,977	86,520	52%	48%	88,421	48,567	39,854	55%	45%		
	16	1,345,582	706,458	639,124	53%	47%	693,190	376,781	306,409	55%	45%		

Kampong Cham

ROLE OF THE POLITICAL PARTY

PROVIDING A VISION

In a democracy, people who share similar political views and goals often come together to form political parties. They do this in order to strengthen their ability to influence the political and governmental decisions of their country.

In forming political parties, party founders usually promote a common set of beliefs and values (ideology), and develop a message which conveys to others their collective ideology, as well as their plans for governing.

I. Developing a Message.

- A party's ideology serves as the foundation of its overall message for governing. For instance, if a political party believes in democracy it will generally send a message which promotes some form of representative government.

- However, because "democracy" is such an unclear term, most party messages focus on proposals that seek to address the needs and concerns of the people the party wishes to represent. In order to do this effectively, a party must:

- 1) Identify the needs and concerns of the people it wishes to represent (For example: better roads, schools and jobs);
- 2) Develop policies which address those needs and concerns (e.g. party proposals to improve roads, schools and the economy); and
- 3) Devise ways for disseminating their ideas (for example: distributing party platforms and leaflets, writing news articles and press releases and talking on the radio).

II. Governing: Delivering on Promises.

In representative democracies, political parties that win elective offices participate directly in governing the nation. In order to govern effectively, parties must:

- 1) Know how the government works and operates (for example: study the country's government, laws and constitution);
- 2) Teach their members and candidates how to govern (for example: produce educational guidebooks and conduct training seminars);
- 3) Develop comprehensive plans for governing (party platforms, issue papers and transition outlines); and

4) Prepare plans, so that, if it does not win enough elective offices to govern alone, it is ready to serve as a partner in a coalition government.

III. Democratic Opposition.

In a democracy, political parties which do not receive enough votes to win elective office still play a valuable role by serving as a voice for their members and supporters, as well as for other people who might oppose some of the policies and activities of the elected government.

PARTY BUSINESS

Once established, political parties undertake a broad range of activities, administrative and otherwise, to ensure their growth and success.

I. Organization.

Modern political parties prepare for success by establishing well managed party structures. How well a political party organizes itself internally, often determines the quantity of work it will accomplish and the amount of success it will achieve. In order to manage your party efficiently, its important to:

A. Establish a command management structure.

- Individuals should be assigned specific titles and duties and be held accountable for carrying out those tasks to a supervisor or the party committee. It is important that decisions are made quickly, that work gets done, and that the party spends time talking to the people not just each other at the office. Also, It is important that the person who is assigned a big job like keeping track of finances is not put in charge of issue research.

B. Constantly monitor your party's structure and its progress.

- As your party grows, so too do your party's tasks and responsibilities. Alter your party structure when necessary to address your party's ever changing needs.

C. Assign people to:

- **Recruit and involve new party members.** Provide membership identification cards and information on the party's positions, meetings and structure. Invite prospective members to party activities. A new member today may be a party leader in a year;

- **Research and monitor governmental and constituent assembly laws and issues.** Political parties need to know what's going on in their country at all times;

- **Collect information.** Parties should gather newspapers, news magazines and policy publications. Parties should get ideas and opinions from its members and non-member groups. For instance, asking cyclo drivers about traffic laws and conditions;

- **Establish and maintain good relations with the press and public.** Its important for parties to continually publicize their efforts and ideas. Doing so allows them to expand there base of support and strengthen their identity;
- **Monitor the country's election laws and procedures.** Watch for changes, requirements and deadlines;
- **Recruit and train party candidates.** Provide candidates or potential candidates with information on the party's positions and current issues. And then train them to speak and become known in the communities;
- **Create and monitor a party budget.** Parties need to create budgets which highlight their needs and expenses;
- **Raise money.** Parties should establish and carry out plans to raise money to cover their needs and expenses; and
- **Plan for the next election.** Party campaign responsibilities do not end with the close of election day. In a representative democracy, there is always another election. In order to grow stronger, parties must constantly prepare for the next election. Be sure to review your party's performance in the last election. Past election results give parties a good sense where to focus their attention and resources in future elections. What campaign activities worked well? Which did not? Where did the party do well? Where did it do poorly? Where did other parties do well, and why?

II. Open and maintain offices.

Its important to maintain as much of a presence as possible. Pick and choose your office(s) according to your objectives, needs and resources. If you open an office, keep it active and productive.

III. Plan regular party meetings and conferences to discuss current issues and party business.

IV. Work together with other parties to ensure a free and fair electoral process.

Work together with other parties when monitoring the campaign or elections. Conduct multi-party activities to ensure that information about your party gets to the people.

EDUCATING THE VOTERS

In September of 1992 Romania held elections for parliament. None of the political parties made any effort to educate their supporters about why voting was important and how to vote. As a result, only 65% of the population bothered to vote. Even worse, more than 12% of the people who did vote marked their ballots wrong and so their ballot was not counted. In Romania, a political party must receive 3% of the vote nationally in order to win a seat in parliament. In the September elections ten parties won seats in parliament. There were three other parties which received just 2.9% of the vote and therefore are not represented in parliament. There are people in Romania who are not represented in today Parliament because they did not know how to vote properly on election day.

Political parties cannot depend on the election officials to educate voters. The political parties must educate voters if they want to be sure to win as many votes as possible.

I. Six Questions the Voters Need Answered:

- 1) Why should I vote?
- 2) What is the role of the Constituent Assembly/Parliament?
- 3) Do I need identification in order to vote?
- 4) Where do I go vote?
- 5) How do I vote?
- 6) IS MY VOTE SECRET?

PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

The two most important things to remember about a campaign plan are: 1) you must have one; and 2) if your plan is not written down you don't have one.

Losing campaigns are the ones that have no strategy, no direction, and no allocation of time, people and resources...in short, those that have no plan.

Another key point to make is that if you write a campaign plan that you don't follow, or that you can't finance, then you shouldn't have one at all. Campaign planning should include:

I. A written plan.

- In writing a plan, make sure you have the capabilities and time to accomplish what you want to do.
- Include your strategy and message and how it is to be delivered (voter contact)..
- Write it down and follow it.

II. Delegating responsibilities/assigning tasks.

- Create an organizational chart and assign people specific responsibilities for implementing your plan. Put the names of the people assigned in the organizational boxes.
- Establish a reporting mechanism. Every one should be ultimately responsible to someone else. There should be no one without an assignment.

III. Creating a calendar.

- Early on, construct a realistic time line for all of the campaign activities you have planned (For example: advertising, campaign events, etc.). And remember to always assign specific people to oversee all assignments.

IV. Formulating a budget.

- Be sure to write it down and once it is written, follow it.
- It must be realistic. Estimate how much money you need to raise, based on how much you are likely to spend. Will your money go for staff, advertising etc?
- Set fund raising goals based on your overall campaign objectives and always be sure to have enough cash on hand to cover any crucial activities toward the end of the campaign?

V. Setting goals.

- In setting goals, determine such things as: how many seats your party realistically wishes to win in the constituent assembly; the type of organization you want to establish in every province, city and village; and how many voters you want to contact, and in what manner?

VI. Evaluating the Campaign.

- During the campaign, monitor your campaign organization weekly to make sure that all of your party's campaign assignments are being carried out. Any problems should be identified and resolved immediately.
- After the election, evaluate and assess how well your campaign plan was implemented. Identify its strengths and weaknesses, so that all future campaign plans will work better than the ones which preceded them.

CONTACTING VOTERS

How well a party does on election day is often determined by how well it communicated with the voters before the election. Voter contact activities provide parties with many ways in which to communicate with the voters. Such efforts are essential for encouraging and persuading people to both support and work for the party. The party who first, and most effectively, reaches the most voters usually wins. In order to reach and win the support of voters on election day, a party should implement a voter contact plan that includes the following:

I. Delivering an effective party message.

- The message a political party or its candidates communicate verbally, visually or otherwise, assists the voter in determining who to vote for.
- A party's message generally summarizes its own vision of how the government should be run. To ensure that the voters understand its message, a party's message should be distinguishable from the messages of other parties, and it should be constantly repeated.
- Sample message: The Banana Tree party, if elected, will provide economic opportunity, education and health care for all Cambodians.

II. Choosing and Using a Party logo.

- A logo is an image, marking or word that in some way symbolizes or embodies a party's message. It should be highly visible, easily identifiable, and, of course, present on all party and campaign material.
- Sample logo: A party that uses a bushel of rice stalks as a logo is perhaps symbolizing farming as its top concern.

III. Educating Voters.

- A party must instruct its supporters on how to vote for it. The instructions should be simple and they should be repeated continually.

IV. Targeting Voters.

- Which voters should a party contact? Aside from its members, a party should

TARGET voters who are likely to be persuaded by its message. Yet, before it does that, it should first know where all the voters are located and in what numbers. This kind of information can be obtained by reviewing the country's demographics.

- Demographics equal such things as the age, gender, occupation, income, ethnicity, religion, and living style of the voter.

- Example: Knox province has 1,000 African American voters who earn \$400 a year and live in rural farm houses.

a. 500 of the voters are male, and 500 of the voters are female.

b. Of the 500 male voters 50 % are under the age of 30, and of the 500 female voters 40% are under the age 30.

- Beyond knowing the numbers and demographic make-up of the voters, parties should, as mentioned above, tailor their campaign message to garner the support of certain voting groups.

Example:

GROUP	ISSUE
Women	Health care
Farmers	Farm subsidies
Cyclo drivers	Road conditions
Fishermen	Fishing rights
Young Adults	Economic opportunity

V. Contacting Voters.

- A party can contact voters by:

- Distributing leaflets at the market, home campaign rallies, or on street corners.

- Visiting with the voter at their home (door-to-door visits).

- Holding campaign events and rallies.

- Talking to specific groups of voters about specific issues that

might interest them.

- Organizing human posters. Campaign workers holding up posters in highly traveled areas.

- Having community leaders and others talk positively about the party to prospective voters.

- Producing television, radio and newspaper advertisements. Produce TV, radio and newspaper adds which contain the party's message and a copy or description of the party's logo.

- Utilizing free media. Write press releases and invite the press to all newsworthy party évents (news conferences, provisional office openings, campaign rallies, etc.)

- Posting posters. Produce a poster that contains the party's message, logo and possibly picture of party's candidates or leaders. Include information on how voters can contact the party.

- Conducting general visibility activities. General visibility activities include such things as banners, campaign signs and sound vehicles.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Holding a free and fair election in Cambodia is very important for the people and future of Cambodia. It is also important, however, that the people and the political parties know the elections were free and fair. The best way to know the elections are free and fair is for each of the parties to exercise their right to monitor the campaign and observe the voting on election day.

I. Monitor the Campaign.

During a campaign there are always many rumors about intimidation, violence, and assorted other campaign violations. It is very difficult for election officials and international election observers to make judgements about the quality of the campaign based on rumors.

That is why it is important for political parties to document campaign violations. If someone reports a violation be sure to write a report on the incident. Without a written report it is hard for anyone to make a judgement about the complaint. Some helpful guidelines when writing a report:

- Write down the name, address, age and profession of the person reporting the violation
- Write a thorough description of what happened. Include the time, the date, the location, and a description of the violation. Ask the individual reporting the violation to sign the description.
- If someone is injured take pictures of the injuries. If an office or home is damaged take pictures of the damage.
- Write down the names and addresses of any witnesses.

After writing the report give a copy to the district or provincial electoral officer. The party should keep the original copy in a very safe place. At the end of the campaign the party then can review the reports from around the country and determine if these violations affected the overall outcome of the election.

II. Monitor the Election.

Every registered political party has the right to have an agent present in every polling station in Cambodia. The best way for a party to know that the voting was fair in every polling station is to have a party agent monitor every polling station.

There are three things that a party agent needs in order to perform his or her job correctly:

- 1) Training. All party agents should know the election law.
- 2) Complaint Forms. Each agent should have a form to fill out each day recording any violations that they witness.
- 3) Reporting System. It is important the party agent know how to contact the leadership of the party to report a significant violation. It is also important for the party leadership to receive a verbal or written report from the agent at the end of each day of voting.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Annex - Code of Conduct

1. All persons, all political parties, their leaders, members and supporters, all provisionally and officially registered political parties, their leaders, members, supporters and candidates, shall abide by this Code of Conduct.
2. All political parties are entitled to and shall enjoy, the fundamental right of a free and fair election, including the freedom to campaign.
3. All political parties shall respect the right and freedom of all other parties to campaign, and disseminate their political ideas and principles without fear.
4. In particular, all political parties, officially and provisionally registered political parties, their leaders, members, supporters and candidates shall obey the following rules:
 - (1) Intimidation, in whatever form, shall be prohibited, and manuals, instructions and orders of political parties and provisionally and officially registered political parties shall reinforce and emphasise this prohibition.
 - (2) The possession and use of any weapon of any kind, or of any instrument capable of use as a weapon, at any political rally, meeting, march or demonstration shall be prohibited. Parties' manuals, instructions and orders shall reinforce this prohibition.
 - (3) Parties and candidates shall inform the local UNTAC office of any planned public meetings or political rallies, and shall in good faith take all necessary steps to avoid violent confrontation or conflict between their supporters, and shall comply with all directions, instructions or orders issued by UNTAC in relation to such meetings.
 - (4) All parties shall avoid the coincidence, in time or place, of their meetings, rallies, marches or demonstrations with those of other parties, and to this end they shall liaise and cooperate with UNTAC and with other parties.
 - (5) All parties, their members and supporters, shall refrain from disrupting the meetings, marches or demonstrations of other parties.
 - (6) Parties and candidates shall at all times avoid, in speeches, broadcasts, pamphlets, newsletters, press statements, posters, their party platforms, campaign advertisements or otherwise, using inflammatory language or other language which threatens or incites violence in any form against others.
 - (7) All political parties shall refrain from obstructing persons from attending the meetings, marches or rallies of other parties.

- (8) All parties shall refrain from plagiarising the symbols of other parties, and shall not steal, destroy or disfigure the political or campaign material or posters of other parties, or the election information material of UNTAC.
- (9) All political parties, and especially their leaders, shall ensure freedom of access of other parties to all potential voters on public or private property, in camps or reception centres, or wherever they may be. Parties shall ensure that potential voters wishing to participate in political activities are free to do so.
- (10) All parties shall consistently reinforce and emphasise to their supporters and to all voters that the ballot will be secret, and that no person will know how any individual has voted.
- (11) All parties shall establish effective communication with one another at the central, provincial and district levels, and shall appoint liaison personnel, to be available for this purpose at all times, to deal with any problem arising during registration of voters, the campaign or the polling.
- (12) All parties shall attend, at least once every two weeks a meeting under the chairmanship of the Chief Electoral Officer, to discuss any matters of concern relating to the campaign. In addition, a standing committee of leaders of registered political parties shall attend at least every two weeks a meeting under the chairmanship of the Special Representative or his deputy to deal with matters of concern relating to the campaign. The abovementioned meetings shall commence from a date to be determined by the Special Representative.
- (13) All parties shall bring all information or complaints regarding intimidation or other allegations of unlawful conduct immediately to the attention of UNTAC.
- (14) Parties shall not abuse the right to complain, nor make false, frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- (15) All parties shall cooperate fully with the Special Representative's Electoral Advisory Committee.
- (16) All parties shall issue instructions and orders to their members and supporters to observe the Electoral Law, this Code, the instructions of UNTAC officials, and all orders and directives of the Special Representative, and take all necessary steps in good faith to ensure compliance with the Electoral Law and this Code.
- (17) The Special Representative and all parties shall publicise this Code and the electoral Law throughout Cambodia by all means at their disposal.