Increasing the Success and Sustainability of Democracy and Governance Interventions in Post-conflict Countries

Analyzing Literature Findings and Partner Perspectives

REPORT | JANUARY 2022

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CEPPS Strengthening Democracy Through Partnership

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Reached 205M+ people with civic and voter education

Trained 759,326 election officials in fiscal years 2015-19

Worked in 145+ countries

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Executive Summary

In February 2019, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Global Elections and Political Transitions mechanism, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) launched the Identifying Successful Democracy and Governance Approaches in Post-Conflict Countries project. The purpose of the project was to conduct a deep analysis of more than 25 years of programming history by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)[1] and to reflect on how to make current and future interventions more effective. This report is the second and final publication detailing our findings from the project.[2]

Our research approach included a systematic review of the literature on the impact of democracy and governance assistance, including USAID's Theories of Democratic Change Phase III: Transitions from Conflict;[3] analysis of CEPPS program reports from 18 post-conflict countries; and interviews with 28 program implementers and 88 individuals who received assistance, including local partners from electoral management bodies, political parties and legislative bodies, and civil society organizations (CSOs).[4] This evidence base enabled us to:

1. Understand the specific mechanisms or interventions through which democracy and governance assistance providers can contribute to the improvement of democratic indicators, as found in meta-analyses in the broader body of literature;
2. Document longstanding challenges that democracy and governance assistance providers and local partners face in implementing or participating in activities and achieving results;
3. Provide insights into the sustainability of intervention outcomes; and
4. Offer recommendations to mitigate or better navigate challenges and enhance the likelihood of interventions yielding successful and sustainable outcomes.

In this report, we consider what the relevant CEPPS interventions accomplished over the medium and long terms and how these achievements relate to the overall findings in the broad literature on democracy assistance and political transitions. We analyze **specific approaches that CEPPS took to support democratization and stabilization in post-conflict environments,** as well as **potential moderating variables**—factors that seem to affect the success of interventions and the strength of their results. Finally, we investigate **which types of interventions appeared more or less likely to yield sustainable results,** taking into consideration local partners' perspectives about which gains were maintained beyond the life of projects, which gains were short-lived and what could be improved moving forward.

[1] CEPPS was established in 1995 as a recipient of a cooperative agreement issued by USAID to three non-governmental organizations: IFES, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute NDI. The CEPPS partners have since implemented programs in more than 140 countries focusing on supporting election management bodies, CSOs and the media, and political parties and legislatures.

[2] The first project report, **Overcoming Challenges to Democracy and Governance Programs in Post-Conflict Countries**, focused on contextual, design and operational challenges faced by program implementers in these complex environments. That report identified patterns in these challenges and documented effective strategies and approaches to overcome them.

[3] Dresden, J. R., Flores, T. E., and Nooruddin, I. (2019). *Theories of Democratic Change III: Transitions from Conflict.* **https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-GMU-TOC-Publication**

[4] In this report, we use the term *partner* to refer to individuals and institutions receiving CEPPS direct assistance or subgrants, *program participants* to refer to individuals who were direct participants in one more CEPPS trainings or events, and *stakeholders* when referring to institutions directly or indirectly either impacted or involved in the execution of a CEPPS project.

The research and analysis for this second report corroborate several findings in the first report, particularly regarding the challenges and factors that moderate the ability of implementers and partners to implement activities successfully (e.g., length of project; security conditions and level of government repression; capacity of partners; and relationships and coordination among donors, implementers and partners). Most importantly, this second phase of the project gave us a rare opportunity to learn what happened to the partners, program participants and other stakeholders, and the products of interventions years after projects ended, allowing for a better understanding of sustainability factors.

Not surprisingly, **interventions that drew more praise from partners and whose gains are still seen and felt years after projects ended were those for which ownership was quickly transferred to partners; those that were relatively easy or affordable to maintain; and those that permanently changed rules, practices and perceptions.** As the examples detailed throughout this report show, however, even interventions that have a lower chance of yielding lasting results can achieve this goal if the conditions are appropriate (e.g., there is local buy-in, time and budget available for implementation and realistic plans for continuity without donor support). The findings that we share here regarding sustainability are not intended to incentivize implementers to pursue certain interventions or dissuade them from attempting others. Our intention is rather to raise awareness about why some outcomes are short-lived and to prepare implementers to address these factors to optimize results in the long run.

The overall findings, and the diverse paths different activities have taken in the countries analyzed here, highlight the importance of understanding the specific opportunities and challenges in each environment. As our examples show, similar interventions have led to different outcomes in different countries and sometimes even within the same country at a different time or with different partners and stakeholders. Some intrinsic features of interventions do seem to make them more or less likely to succeed. However, the ultimate success and potential to produce sustainable outcomes seem to be related to its fit within specific context (including the political, economic and security circumstances).

Given the relatively small sample of programs and the limited scope of interventions analyzed here, these findings should not be seen as generalizations for the entire field of democracy assistance but rather as insights and lessons learned that may be applicable to similar post-conflict, transitional environments. Together, the two reports from this project provide a detailed series of evidence-based recommendations for donors and implementers to use in navigating post-conflict environments and to plan and develop projects with greater potential to yield positive, sustainable outcomes.

Summary of Findings

Literature Findings and Programmatic Mechanisms that Potentially Contribute to Democratization

The table below summarizes our analysis connecting democracy assistance and democratization. The first column presents key findings from *Theories of Democratic Change Phase III: Transitions from Conflict*,[5] a comprehensive analysis of more than 600 journal articles, books, reports and newspaper articles conducted by a team from Georgetown University and George Mason University. The second column identifies the programmatic mechanisms through which CEPPS pursued specific desired results.

Literature Findings	Identified Programmatic Approaches[6]
Democracy assistance can mitigate commitment problems and uncertainty between stakeholders and can increase social cohesion across conflict lines.	Building multi-stakeholder networks
	Creating, formalizing, and monitoring commitments by different stakeholders (e.g., to peaceful campaigns, to accept election outcomes)
	Developing fairer and more inclusive legal frameworks
Democracy assistance can support decentralization of power and resilience to authoritarianism by building the capacity of local authorities.	Clarifying and raising awareness about the roles and responsibilities of officials and authorities at different levels of government
	Improving the performance of local authorities through targeted technical training
Democracy assistance can contribute to the transition of some armed groups into political parties. Democracy aid can help to consolidate the party system by building the capacity of nascent parties and supporting the resolution of intragroup tensions.	Encouraging the creation of diverse and inclusive political parties through trainings for civil society leaders and ordinary citizens on how to organize themselves and build political parties
	Professionalizing political parties, including through guidance to navigate the political party registration process, building parties' legislative capacity and promoting issue-based platforms
	Increasing political party outreach and connection with citizens' needs
	Promoting inter-party dialogue
	Including political parties in the development of electoral rules
	Sensitizing political parties against committing or instigating electoral violence

[5] Dresden, J. R., Flores, T. E., and Nooruddin, I. (2019). *Theories of Democratic Change III: Transitions from Conflict.* https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-GMU-TOC-Publication

[6] The identified approaches are meant to be illustrative and do not encompass all approaches that CEPPS has applied in post-conflict countries.

Democracy assistance can contribute to women's empowerment by leveraging opportunities created by the disruption of power structures during conflict and transitions.	Providing technical training and resources to enhance women's performance as candidates, public officials and electoral workers
	Creating opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere
	Addressing and elevating women's issues within governing and political institutions
Democracy assistance can reduce political violence by increasing the appeal of vote calculations and democratic competition (as opposed to violence).	Helping to establish electoral management bodies (EMBs) and administer credible election processes that become the accepted path to gain power
	Fostering a culture that values elections and the right to vote
	Expanding voter enfranchisement, including for minorities and frequently marginalized groups, increasing the perceived value of such constituents in the eyes of political leaders
Democracy assistance can help reduce electoral violence by consolidating democratic institutions. Strong democratic institutions can provide a fair, non-violent path for political gains, reducing the need for protests and boycotts.	Improving the capacity of EMBs to administer elections with integrity
	Increasing the capacity of EMBs to promote electoral competition
	Improving voter outreach and civic education and promoting peaceful voter participation
	Creating opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges among democratic champions and for regional cooperation and development
	Increasing the security of voters during the voting process
Democracy assistance can support stability by leveraging existing informal institutions or practices (e.g., informal mediation processes, religious groups).	Promoting peaceful narratives and civic and political participation through existing communities of trust (e.g., community groups, churches)
Democracy assistance can increase the accountability of political institutions and actors by strengthening the capacity of civil society to hold them accountable.	Strengthening civil society organizations' monitoring and advocacy capacity
	Improving media capacity to investigate and disseminate relevant and accurate information
Democracy assistance can increase citizens' access to justice and respect for the rule of law.	Making laws and rules more accessible and understandable to facilitate and increase the effectiveness of their implementation
	Establishing or improving methods for electoral dispute resolution and pursuing investigation and sanctioning of election offenses to avoid impunity
CEPPS Additional Finding	**Identified Programmatic Approaches**
Democracy assistance can increase local human capital and mitigate the consequences of conflict-driven brain drain.	Developing or enhancing individuals' capacity (skills, knowledge and experience) to become leaders and catalyzers of democratic change

Identified Factors Moderating the Impact of Interventions

As discussed in the IFES publication **Overcoming Challenges to Democracy and Governance Programs in Post-Conflict Countries**[7], implementers face several obstacles to implementing democracy and governance interventions in post-conflict countries. In our discussions, past partners and stakeholders highlighted several of these challenges again, revealing patterns and corroborating the importance of these factors in determining the success of interventions. The table below summarizes these moderating factors and, drawing from partners' perspectives, provides recommendations to mitigate potential negative effects. Some recommendations are new, based on research findings; others describe approaches that have been used and continue to be recommended when working in post-conflict countries.

Moderating factors	Recommendations
Length of project and preparedness of partners for termination of assistance	Whenever possible, begin projects with sufficient time before major events like elections, allowing for better advisory, planning and decision-making rather than only supporting the implementation of activities that might have been poorly conceived. Work with partners well in advance to develop a plan for the post-project period, and plan for a gradual departure.
Level of insecurity or government repression	Advise partners on security measures that can be followed based on joint country context assessments and lessons learned from other, similar non-permissive environments.
	Adapt program requirements to protect participants' anonymity, including by reinforcing the confidentiality of personal identifiable information from activity attendance lists, agendas and other related documents.
Relationship between implementers and local partners	Implementer staff, particularly new country directors, should be familiar with previous projects and their work plans to foster continuity among projects and expand on earlier gains, thereby avoiding disruptions and/or unnecessary repetition of interventions.
	Project leads should prioritize relationship building with local partners at the outset of programming and should collaborate continuously with partners in a meaningful way to solidify trust and commitment.
Level of stakeholder participation in project design process	Involve partners in program design through consultations and co-design processes.
Management and administrative capacity of partners	Provide relevant administrative, management and compliance training to local partners when needed before and during the implementation of other core activities.
	Whenever possible, donors and implementers should simplify requirements and documentation for smaller organizations receiving smaller grants to reduce burdens on their staff.
Implementer and donor coordination	Establish coordination groups and clear channels of communication between donors, implementers, and partners to ensure coverage of partners' needs and avoid duplication of efforts.

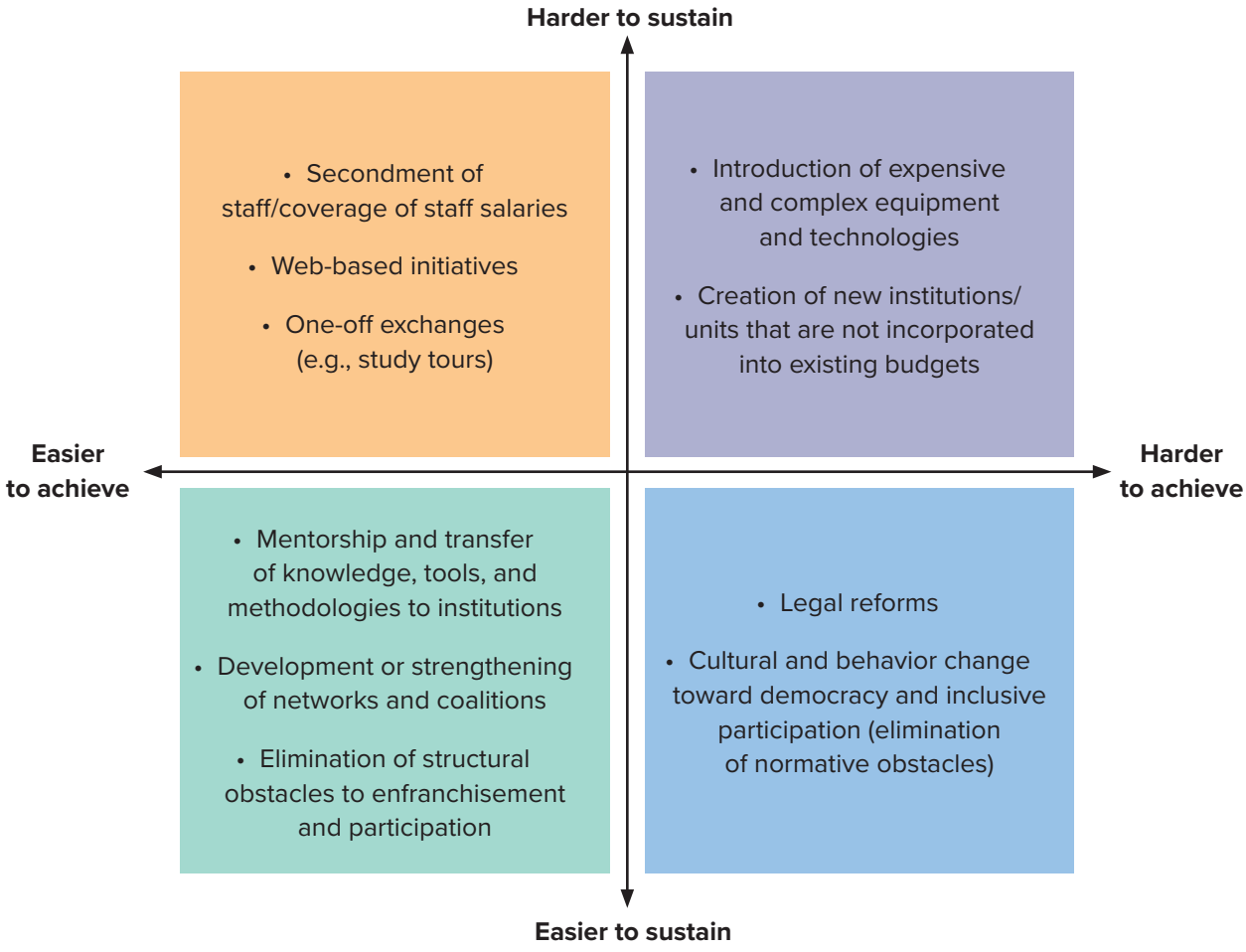
[7] Buril, F. and Dinman, B. (2021). Overcoming Challenges to Democracy and Governance Programs in Post-Conflict Countries: CEPPS Lessons Learned. https://www.ifes.org/publications/overcoming-challenges-democracy-and-governance-programs-post-conflict-countries

Sustainability of Outcomes

Finally, our program analysis and interviews with former partners and stakeholders shed light on which intervention outcomes lasted beyond the duration of the program, which ones local partners continued or expanded, and which enabled new democratic gains over the medium and long terms—and why. Interviewees shed light on what happened after CEPPS' departure and provided updates on the status of program activity outcomes. This process provided insights into types of interventions that tend to be more sustainable and the circumstances affecting this sustainability. The matrix and table below summarize these findings and propose explanations for why some project outcomes are not sustainable without external support. It is important to note, however, that even the interventions whose outcomes are generally harder to sustain can be (and in many cases were) successful; the *harder to sustain* designation does not imply that they should not be implemented, but rather that they will likely require efforts that draw on past lessons for improving sustainability to yield lasting results.[8]

The matrix below categorizes interventions based on their sustainability and difficultly to implement, as informed by stakeholder interviews.

Sustainability of Interventions v. Difficulty in Implementing Interventions Matrix



[8] It is also worth mentioning that this graphic does not illustrate the overall impact of the different types of interventions, as they may vary widely in substance. For example, legal reforms can substantially change political processes (high impact) or they can be mostly superficial (low impact).

Easier to Achieve, Harder to Sustain		Harder to Achieve, Harder to Sustain	
Interventions	**Considerations**	**Interventions**	**Considerations**
Secondment of staff/coverage of staff salaries	Might provide needed immediate support but lead to dependence on the implementer and subsequent staff dissatisfaction with local salaries.	**Introduction of expensive and complex equipment and technologies**	Often requires significant funding to procure, highly specialized expertise and time to familiarize stakeholders with equipment or technology. Might place a burden on partners to keep up with the costs of maintenance and updates, and might be underutilized without comprehensive staff training and public awareness initiatives.
Web-based initiatives	Paid domains, licenses or software and required expertise to make updates may make it harder for partners to continue initiatives on their own.	**Creation of new institutions or units that are not incorporated into existing budgets**	Often requires planning and coordination with other units, buy-in, procurement of equipment and facilities, and hiring and training of staff. If not incorporated into institutional budgets, these units will be dependent on donor funding or risk termination.
One-off exchanges (i.e., study tours)	Might lead to productive learning and exchanges and inform decision-making but usually benefit fewer individuals, and outcomes can be harder to transfer to others.		
Easier to Achieve, Easier to Sustain		**Harder to Achieve, Easier to Sustain**	
Interventions	**Considerations**	**Interventions**	**Considerations**
Mentorship and transfer of knowledge, tools and methodologies to institutions	Ownership and institutionalization of effective procedures and adaptation and reuse of tools and materials help ensure that they will be applied across multiple electoral cycles.	**Support to legal reforms**	Entrenchment of rights in the legal framework, coupled with the establishment of enforcement mechanisms, is more likely to protect rights across successive governments. However, the technical capacity to draft laws, consensus building, political will and advocacy needed to achieve these reforms might be difficult to foster in post-conflict environments.
Development or strengthening of networks and coalitions	Leadership and coordination of networks by neutral implementers help establish communication channels, enable trust-building and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders. Once these mechanisms and trust are established, local stakeholders can more easily maintain the continuity of such initiatives.	**Cultural and behavior change toward democracy and inclusive participation (elimination of normative obstacles)**	Requires longer and consistent exposure to new principles and practices to change perceptions and habits. However, once mindsets change and institutions are consolidated resilience is built against anti-democratic threats.
Elimination of structural obstacles to enfranchisement and participation	Access to required legal documents, public institutions and processes enable citizens to more easily exercise rights throughout different cycles.		

Methodology

As with the first phase of the project, this second report relies on qualitative data from more than 25 years of democracy and governance programs implemented by CEPPS in the same 18 post-conflict countries. To select its sample, the research team started by cross-referencing the list of countries in which CEPPS implemented projects since 1995 with the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Conflict Termination Dataset. This dataset identifies all conflicts "involving armed contestation of a particular incompatibility between the government and at least one armed group that results in at least 25 battle deaths in a given year."[9] It also accounts for conflict episodes, defined as continuous periods of violent contestation for a given incompatibility. Only conflicts ending with a peace agreement or a ceasefire were considered in this initial selection, as stabilization efforts in countries where conflicts end with a military victory by one side, although statistically more likely to result in durable periods of non-violence, are usually driven by the victors and often ignore or defy liberal norms.[10] Given our focus on stability among domestic stakeholders, we also excluded all wars other than intrastate wars, but we did include intrastate

In person interview between IFES' Isach Zulfikar Karmiadji, Head of Programs, Indonesia, and former member of KIP Aceh, Zainal Abidin.

[9] *Uppsala Conflict Data Program*. UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia. Uppsala University. Retrieved August 28, 2020 from www.ucdp.uu.se

[10] Piccolino, G. (2015). Winning wars, building (illiberal) peace? The rise (and possible fall) of a victor's peace in Rwanda and Sri Lanka. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(9), 1772. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1058150

wars with international interventions. Finally, since our intention was to assess the role and impact of governance and democracy assistance during a transitional period, we focused our analysis on programs taking place within 10 years after the end of the conflict. This initial selection brought the country list to 17. Afghanistan was excluded from the original list due to categorization issues,[11] but we added the country given its importance as a source of lessons learned for future programming. This brought our final list to 18 countries (see Annex II).

In addition to analyzing these country program reports, IFES conducted interviews with 88 former local partners[12] supported by CEPPS technical assistance in 10 of our target countries. Interviewees included electoral authorities and electoral management body staff, members of political parties and legislative bodies, and representatives of civil society organizations. The authors of this report conducted some interviews remotely; IFES staff or trusted local consultants conducted others in country offices. Interviews were semi-structured, using a standardized questionnaire (see Annex I) and complemented by follow-up questions.

This report also draws on USAID's *Theories of Democratic Change Phase III: Transitions from Conflict* report[13] and its extensive literature review of how interventions can mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities during transitions to democracy and peace. These consolidated literature findings from the fields of political science, economics, peace studies, anthropology, sociology and psychology informed our framework to identify and analyze the paths of CEPPS interventions. In this report, we reproduce some of these findings and compare them to what we have seen in the field, analyzing how CEPPS' programs pursued the positive results outlined in the literature findings.

Key Concepts

Post-Conflict Transitions

Countries might go through a transition or a period of significant change toward a new order for different reasons—not all of which are positive. For example, as described in the International IDEA 2019 Global State of Democracy report,[14] even though democracy is still the prevailing form of governance, an increasing number of countries are experiencing democratic erosion and backsliding, with some transitioning toward more illiberal or authoritarian regimes.[15] As our ultimate goal is to identify successful democracy and governance interventions, we focus on countries in which, at some point between 1995 and 2014, there were transition movements toward democratic, stable and peaceful systems. These types of transitions may occur, for instance, following the collapse of an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regime, deep political crises or violent conflicts. responsibilities to these local actors.

Although all transitional contexts deserve attention, this study focuses on countries experiencing *transitions from violent conflict*. This criterion helps us narrow the scope of this analysis and forces us to pay particular attention to programs operating against a backdrop of complexity, including insecurity, social tensions often exacerbated by persistent social and gender inequalities and limited service provision and infrastructure.

[11] The Uppsala Conflict Data Program does not consider the Bonn Agreement signed in 2001 to be a peace agreement. Nevertheless, the Bonn Agreement was signed by representatives of several anti-Taliban groups and "established a roadmap and timetable for establishing peace and security, reconstructing the country, reestablishing some key institutions, and protecting human rights." These were also the goals of the several international democracy assistance providers working in Afghanistan, making the country an important case from which to draw lessons, even though it does not meet the definition of a post-conflict country.

[12] Of the 88 interviewees, 57 identified as male and 31 identified as female.

[13] Dresden, J. R., Flores, T. E., and Nooruddin, I. (2019). Theories of Democratic Change III: Transitions from Conflict. Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-GMU-TOC-Publication

Stabilization

One of the main challenges in identifying interventions that contribute to *successful stabilization* is finding a clear and accepted definition for that process. The interagency U.S. Stabilization Assistance Review defines stabilization relatively subjectively as "a political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence."[16] The report continues, "stabilization may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the return of displaced people and longer-term development."[17] The United Kingdom's Stabilization Unit similarly states that the goals of stabilization interventions are "to support local and regional partners in conflict-affected countries to reduce violence, ensure basic security and facilitate peaceful political deal-making, all of which should aim to provide a foundation for building long-term stability."[18] In addition, the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, which acknowledges the "tremendous amount of untapped potential among the world's women and girls to identify, recommend, and implement effective solutions to conflict," notes that women's participation and leadership is essential in "preventing conflict and promoting stable, lasting peace."[19]

Although sustainable peace is the goal of stabilization efforts, the excerpts above reflect the understanding that tackling the underlying causes of conflict is as important—or more important—for long-term stabilization than simply restraining violent actors. Accordingly, and building on the U.S. government definition, in this analysis we assume that democracy, human rights, and governance interventions contribute to country stabilization to the extent that they 1) establish or increase access to formal and non-formal mechanisms to address grievances peacefully; 2) improve the capacity of local institutions to create or maintain peace; 3) improve access to basic services; and/or 4) improve civil security.[20]

It is worth noting that the U.S. comprehensive strategy and framework for country stabilization emphasizes three pillars for promoting and protecting national security interests abroad, known as the 3Ds: Diplomacy (led by the U.S. Department of State), Defense (led by the U.S. Department of Defense), and Development (led by the U.S. Agency for International Development).[21] Although this study focuses only on development—specifically, the role of democracy and governance assistance programs in stabilization processes—coordination and collaboration among these agencies and priorities are essential for the ultimate success of programs.

Development efforts can accomplish their immediate goals and still be undermined by factors within the defense and diplomacy domains or by local developments that are outside the control of donors. For example, as discussed later in this report, the effectiveness and sustainability of democratic gains also depend on the interests of national elites. If these elites are invested in moving toward non-democratic tactics and self-serving behavior, and if they are powerful enough to outweigh domestic and external pressure (including those created by diplomacy and defense efforts), gains made by democracy and governance programming alone cannot

[14] International IDEA. (2019). The Global State of Democracy 2019: Addressing the Ills, Revising the Promise. https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2019.31

[15] This can often be foreshadowed by rhetoric and repression targeting particularly vulnerable groups, such as gender, religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities.

[16] United States Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. (2018). Stabilization Assistance Review: A Framework for Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Government Efforts to Stabilize Conflict-Affected Areas. https://www.state.gov/reports/stabilization-assistance-review-a-framework-formaximizing-the-effectiveness-of-u-s-government-efforts-to-stabilize-conflict-affected-areas-2018/

[17] Ibid.

[18] The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation. (March 2019). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784001/The_UK_Government_s_Approach_to_Stabilisation_A_guide_for_policy_makers_and_practitioners.pdf

be sustained. This is illustrated by recent events in Burma and Afghanistan: As readers will note as they read this report, the impact of certain interventions implemented in these countries are framed positively even though the two countries are currently experiencing enormous democratic setbacks. The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the military coup in Burma, both in 2021, have indeed eroded many gains achieved throughout years of institution-building and civil society strengthening, and especially for gender, ethnic and religious minorities.[22,23] These blows to stabilization, however, should not completely erase the merits of interventions that, until then, were delivering positive results. On a similar note, if diplomacy and defense efforts manage to foster political transitions but the development side is neglected, democracy is almost assured to fail given issues such as governments' lack of capacity to provide services to citizens, high levels of corruption and poorly managed public institutions. However, the diplomacy and defense efforts that contributed to the transition cannot be dismissed as total failures.

The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and the military coup in Burma, both in 2021, have indeed eroded many gains achieved throughout years of institution-building and civil society strengthening, and especially for gender, ethnic and religious minorities. These blows to stabilization, however, should not completely erase the merits of interventions that, until then, were delivering positive results.

We must thus acknowledge that democracy and governance interventions alone cannot prevent the anti-democratic turns that some countries have taken while looking for ways that the diplomacy, defense and development systems can work better together to create resistance and resilience in the long run.

Democracy and Governance Assistance

Although there is a relatively robust body of literature on the role of democracy promotion in reducing violence, such studies usually focus on whether democracy assistance contributes to improving countries' development, using binary variables such as whether the country received assistance or looking at the correlations between the amount of foreign investment or democracy assistance received and stability-related variables. The next section identifies the specific activities through which CEPPS democracy and governance interventions pursued these democracy and stabilization goals.

It is important to note, however, that democracy and governance assistance is not homogeneous, and the scope of programs might vary considerably. Some countries might receive large amounts of democracy assistance to focus only on one or a few of all the possible areas of assistance, so the success or failure of these programs may not be indicative of the full potential of interventions. Annex II summarizes the types of assistance related to each country's program.

[19] United States Strategy on Women, Peace and Security (2019). https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WPS_Strategy_10_October2019.pdf

[20] Civil security systems are defined as "the policies, bodies, and mechanisms that a country has in place to protect it against new and urgent threats to the security of its people and/or the functioning of critical infrastructures." Kuipers, S., Boin, A., Bossong, R., and Hegemann, H. (2015). Building joint crisis management capacity? Comparing civil security systems in 22 European countries. Risk, Hazards and Crisis in Public Policy, 6(1), pp. 1–21.

[21] See 3D Planning Guide (July 2012). USAID Pre-Decisional Working Draft at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/3D%20Planning%20Guide_Update_FINAL%20%2831%20Jul%2012%29.pdf

[22] Myanmar's Civic Space: Shrinking or Closing? (2021). *Pandita Development Institute*. https://pandita.gitbook.io/myanmar-civic-space-shrinking-or-closing/

[23] Mukhtar, A. (September 21, 2021) As Taliban robs Afghan women and girls of work, school and safety, the most vulnerable "have nowhere to go." CBS News. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-taliban-women-rights-girls-work-school-safety-post-us-withdrawal/

Literature Findings and Program Approaches

The use of democracy and governance assistance to reduce conflict and increase stability faces an important dilemma. On one hand, there is evidence that democratic systems can offer effective mechanisms for resolving societal tensions without recourse to violence.[24] On the other hand, it has also been observed that the path to achieve full democracy is usually bumpy, as partial democracies or countries transitioning to a democratic setting are the most prone to conflict.[25,26]

As discussed in the first report, countries transitioning from conflict usually face several challenges that are not favorable to either democracy or stability (e.g., insecurity, unresolved social grievances and weak or damaged infrastructure), creating conditions in which success in democracy assistance is less likely than in other environments. To better understand how democracy assistance can contribute to democratic progress, Dresden, Flores and Nooruddin[27] reviewed an extensive body of literature to extract the most solid evidence linking the two variables. They then translated the literature findings into lessons and recommendations for practitioners.[28]

In this section, we summarize those and other relevant findings from additional academic and practitioner sources. Then, under each broad finding, we describe and analyze the mechanisms and examples extracted from CEPPS programs that help illustrate how CEPPS pursued democratic progress and stabilization.

[24] Lappin, R. (2010). The Unique Challenges of Post-Conflict Democracy Assistance. *Peace Review, 22*(2), pp. 178–183. https://doi.org/10.1080/10402651003751479

[25] re, H. (2001). Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992. *American Political Science Review, 95*(1), pp. 33–48. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055401000119

[26] Fearon, J., and Laitin, D. (2003). Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review, 97*(1), pp. 75–90. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/3118222

[27] Dresden, J. R., Flores, T. E. and Nooruddin, I. (2019). Theories of *Democratic Change III: Transitions from Conflict.* Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-GMU-TOC-Publication

[28] For the full matrix, see pages 20–34 of the report: https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-GMU-TOC-Publication

Democracy assistance can mitigate commitment problems and uncertainty between stakeholders and increase social cohesion across conflict lines

Literature Findings

Studies show that, while negotiated settlements to end civil wars are more likely to initiate democratic change, they are also more likely to result in renewed civil war than are military victories with clear winning and losing sides.[29] This is because previously warring parties have little trust in one another to observe the terms of the settlement. According to the relevant literature, democracy assistance implementers could reduce these fears by **monitoring and establishing lines of communication among stakeholders.** Along the same lines, Savun and Tirone[30] have found that democratizing states that receive substantial democracy assistance are less likely to experience civil conflict than countries that receive little or no aid. The authors attribute this correlation to the power of democracy assistance to **reduce commitment problems and uncertainty.** By strengthening political institutions, implementers would **better equip opposing groups to signal their intentions and commitments to other actors.** The presence of external actors would also help validate and formalize these commitments.

Program Approaches

Building multi-stakeholder networks – Nearly all of the projects reviewed for this report featured activities designed to establish or strengthen communication mechanisms among stakeholders engaged in post-conflict peace, stability, security and institution building. These activities included, for example, public hearings, town halls and other events for elected officials to hear from and discuss issues with their constituents (e.g., in Burundi, the Central African Republic and Liberia); bringing together representatives from different political parties to work on common issues (e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on women's rights issues); and creating working groups and networks of civil society organizations (CSOs). CEPPS thus created opportunities for multi-stakeholder interaction and, in many cases, mediated and monitored those interactions, facilitating collaboration among rival or opposing groups.

> "[With] the establishment of the Inter-Party Collaborative Committee … some of the very critical issues were resolved; bringing together political parties and the [National Elections Commission] to resolve critical issues that were making the country tense."
>
> **— Member of the National Elections Commission, Liberia**

Creating, formalizing and monitoring commitments – On several occasions, CEPPS helped develop and obtain the necessary buy-in for codes of conduct (e.g., for political parties ahead of the Liberian elections and for members of parliament in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and other initiatives that bound competing actors to common commitments, including running fair campaigns and accepting election results. Coupled with interventions to build the capacity of civil society to conduct oversight and monitor the fulfillment of such commitments, these activities often yielded positive results. For example, in Liberia in 2005, for the first time

[29] Walter, B. F. (1999). Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace. *International Security, 24*(1), pp. 127–155.; Toft, M. D. (2010). *Securing the peace: the durable settlement of civil wars.* Princeton University Press.

[30] Savun, B., and Tirone, D. C. (2011). Foreign Aid, Democratization, and Civil Conflict: How Does Democracy Aid Affect Civil Conflict? *American Journal of Political Science, 55*(2), 233–246. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00501.x

political party leaders signed a voluntary code of conduct under which they committed to abstain from political violence and intimidation. The code served as a benchmark for domestic monitoring groups to assess the actions of political parties during the 2005 campaign period. According to stakeholders, these observations and reporting also contributed to a noticeable decrease in vote buying and misuse of public resources during the latter part of the campaign period.

> "It is useful for these kinds of projects that are implemented by several local partners to have the participation of an international organization… [it] helps to have a certain balance if there is not a leadership among the local organizations and [it] facilitates coordination."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Guatemala**

Developing fairer and more inclusive legal and electoral frameworks – Conflict settlements often include commitments to making legal reforms to address grievances. But drafting new laws and regulations is a sensitive task, especially in post-conflict periods when there may be a high level of mistrust among groups or concerns that some will try to manipulate the new legal framework to their advantage. The involvement of international implementers in this process can significantly mitigate these concerns if those actors are seen as neutral. In the programs reviewed, stakeholders welcomed CEPPS' work analyzing existing laws to identify gaps and weaknesses, providing comparative examples of international legislation, developing specific recommendations and helping draft and review new bills. Organizing events that bring together legislators from across the political spectrum to participate in these processes and promoting open discussions also facilitated compromise and acceptance of new legislation. For example, in Peru, consultations with local and national political parties and civil society led the Peruvian Congress to pass 17 changes to the country's political party law in 2011.

Maldives – Participants discuss the draft Gender Equality Law in preparation for a role play activity during the session "Testifying before Decision-Makers."

Democracy assistance can support decentralization of power and resilience to authoritarianism by building the capacity of local authorities

Literature Findings

As Lappin argues[31], in post-conflict countries, power is often considered to be "monolithic," concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. As countries leave conflicts, many of them still have considerable political power concentrated in the hands of only a few, usually ruling from a central government. In democratic settings, however, "power must be understood as something that is diffused throughout society and that, by consequence, is dependent on the consent and obedience granted to it by the larger citizenry."[32] By **providing resources and training to local authorities and increasing citizens' capacity to hold them accountable,** democracy assistance implementers could help dismantle or prevent a monopoly on power.

> "[The Senate] needed any assistance that could help us get started—address the needs of our people and enable us deliver on our mandate as a Senate … The program was great for the Senate and the entire country.... Citizens are aware [of what] a lawmaker must or should do … The activities kind of introduced more and more lawmakers and citizens to openness, accountability, and participatory governance."
>
> "[Now] our hearings are public, financial instruments are made public now, most of our plenary sessions are held in open forum, lawmakers now know that they have to report to the citizens by holding town hall meetings during annual recess … It introduced to our people a new sense of doing business as direct representatives of the people."
>
> **— Member of the Senate, Liberia**

Program Approaches

Clarifying and raising awareness about roles and responsibilities of officials and authorities – Particularly if they have lived under authoritarian regimes, citizens may not be aware of the responsibilities of local elected officials and what to expect or demand from them. Even newly elected officials may not be familiar with the responsibilities of their positions. In the post-conflict countries analyzed here, CEPPS has often organized events for both local authorities and the public to disseminate information about officials' mandates, scopes and limits. This awareness seems to encourage local authorities to better fulfill their mandates, but it is difficult to assess the extent to which it can help them stand their ground in the face of new attempts to centralize and monopolize power.

Improving the performance of local authorities through targeted technical training – While understanding their responsibilities is a first step, being able to deliver on them is the most essential task for local authorities. During CEPPS programs reviewed for this project, local officials (including governors, mayors, city counselors, local legislators and local election authorities) often received tailored training to increase their capacity to fulfill tasks satisfactorily and ethically. Training covered issues such as maintaining integrity in public administration, developing inclusive legislation, and developing clear messages and communicating with the press (e.g., in Indonesia, Liberia and Peru).

[31] Lappin, R. (2010). The Unique Challenges of Post-Conflict Democracy Assistance. *Peace Review, 22*(2), pp. 178–183. https://doi.org/10.1080/10402651003751479

[32] Ibid. pp. 180-181.

Democracy assistance can contribute to the transition of armed groups into political parties, and it can help consolidate the party system by building the capacity of nascent parties and supporting the resolution of intragroup tensions

Literature Findings

After failing to achieve political goals through violence during conflict, armed groups can transition into political parties,[33] but this transition is more likely to succeed if internal tensions are resolved.[34] Leaders and members of groups that formerly engaged in violence need to find common ground and agree on a platform moving forward. In addition, "[p]olitical parties, especially the inclusive ones, impose a structure to the chaotic political process during the transition period by **aggregating interests into broader governing coalitions and bridging social cleavages."**[35] Democracy assistance implementers could increase the likelihood of these political parties succeeding and choosing peaceful paths for achieving political goals by **helping build intraparty consensus and equipping parties to navigate political processes.**

When asked what kind of objective, sustainable results CEPPS' work with political parties had produced, a Congolese member of the Caucus of Women Parliamentarians in the Democratic Republic of Congo listed, among others:

- The formalization of the caucus and its recognition as a framework for dialogue and actions in favor of women parliamentarians;
- The reform of the family code and the elimination of discriminatory provisions against women;
- Improved quality of the parliamentary work conducted by elected women and an increase in the number of parliamentary initiatives proposed by women; and
- Increased number of women registering as candidates.

Program Approaches

Encouraging the creation of diverse and inclusive political parties through trainings for civil society leaders and ordinary citizens on how to organize themselves and build political parties – In transitional countries, it is a sign of success for multiple parties representing diverse groups to compete peacefully for power in a free and fair process based on clear and consolidated platforms. But because of the conflict (and the focus on combat rather than elections as a path to achieve power) or repressive political regimes in place before the transition, diverse political parties may not have developed prior to the end of conflict. To instigate the development of new groups that represent the needs and interests of a wider range of citizens, CEPPS has often developed and implemented trainings for civil society leaders and ordinary citizens (especially from historically disenfranchised groups) on how to organize themselves politically and register as political parties (e.g., in Nepal). A recent report from CEPPS and the National Democratic Institute found that a number of additional external factors also affected these parties' responsiveness to citizen demands, including international incentives, the type of electoral system and opportunities for positive media coverage.[36]

[33] Acosta, C. A. D. (2014). The Ethics of Discourse in the Face of the Challenge of (Neo)populism in Latin America and the Radicalization of Democracy. *Revista CS*, (13), p. 47+; Shugart, M. S. (1992). Guerrillas and Elections: An Institutionalist Perspective on the Costs of Conflict and Competition. *International Studies Quarterly, 36*(2), p. 121.; Matanock, A. M. (2017). Bullets for Ballots: Electoral Participation Provisions and Enduring Peace after Civil Conflict. *International Security, 41*(4), pp. 93–132.

[34] Acosta, C. A. D. (2014). The Ethics of Discourse in the Face of the Challenge of (Neo)populism in Latin America and the Radicalization of Democracy. Revista CS, (13), 47+; Shugart, M. S. (1992). Guerrillas and Elections: An Institutionalist Perspective on the Costs of Conflict and Competition. *International Studies Quarterly, 36*(2),121.

[35] Savun, B., & Tirone, D. C. (2011). Foreign aid, democratization, and civil conflict: how does democracy aid affect civil conflict?. *American Journal of Political Science, 55*(2), 233-246.

Professionalizing political parties[37] – New parties emerging in the post-conflict period, often seizing on a more open political environment, may not be able to compete on an equal footing with well-established actors. Thus, in the mid- to long term, they risk disappearing. To encourage these political groups to grow as formal institutions, implementers can provide support, such as guidance to navigate the political party registration process or advice in formulating platforms and managing political party finance, as well as strengthening their capacity to work effectively in the legislature. To reduce tensions, CEPPS has often included in its programs training on how to build coalitions and work with different parties to achieve political goals, as it has done in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nepal 2017 – Political party candidates were present at polling and greeted voters, as shown here with a ward chief candidate.

Increasing political party outreach and connection with citizens' needs – An essential feature of a strong political party is its capacity to conduct outreach and effectively communicate its platform to citizens, recruit members and compete for votes. CEPPS has provided communications support to political parties by, for example, bringing external expertise to help in the development of strategic communication plans and by organizing training sessions on developing effective messages and conducting successful campaigns. In some countries, such as the Central African Republic, CEPPS also helped political parties formulate concrete issue-oriented messages based on inputs gathered during nationwide forums, which helped better connect political parties to the citizenry. Prior to the 2015 elections in Guatemala, CEPPS organized candidate roundtables and a video forum with presidential candidates to provide an opportunity for LGBTQI+ groups to advocate for their needs. More than 300 people participated in these first-of-their-kind events, which brought visibility to LGBTQI+ issues in the political sphere. A participant described becoming involved in the trainings because "In the past, LGBTQI+ communities have not been taken into consideration. These trainings helped bring visibility to our communities and [hopefully] will lead to a better understanding within the government of our needs and priorities."

Promoting inter-party dialogue mechanisms – In post-conflict countries, mistrust and resentment may continue to simmer between political opponents; political disagreements between parties about the future of the country do not cease upon reaching a peace agreement, and mistrust and resentment are likely.[38] Facilitated inter-party dialogue can provide a streamlined, productive opportunity for party leaders and members to address disagreements, build trust and work collectively to build or strengthen a democratic multiparty system.

[36] Promoting More Policy-Focused Parties Through Civic Organizing: Executive Summary (April 15, 2020). *National Democratic Institute.* https://www.ndi.org/publications/promoting-more-policy-focused-parties-through-civic-organizing-guidance-note

[37] Ibid

[38] ten Hoove, Lotte, and Scholtbach, Álvaro Pinto (2008). Democracy and Political Party Assistance in Post-Conflict Societies. *Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy.* https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NIMD-Democracy-and-Political-Party-Assistance-in-Post-Conflict-Societies.pdf

Democracy and governance implementers can play an important role in coordinating and facilitating these dialogues, ensuring that the conversations are appropriately tailored to the country's context. Leveraging its positive relationships with individual parties, CEPPS has acted as a neutral convener, often working with party leaders to set dialogue agendas and empowering parties to set long-term goals (e.g., in Indonesia).

Including political parties in the development of electoral rules – Arguably, one of the main reasons why groups resort to violence rather than follow peaceful democratic paths for contesting power is the perception that the existing system and rules of the game are rigged, making it impossible to achieve political goals peacefully. As countries experience post-conflict changes and introduce reforms to their electoral systems, including these critical stakeholders in discussions and considering their inputs on changes are important prerequisites to getting their buy-in, and implementers can help coordinate this considerable effort. In Nepal, for example, CEPPS provided comparative knowledge and familiarized political parties with different types of electoral systems, facilitating and informing their discussions to identify a system that would work best for the country. CEPPS also supported advocacy efforts that ultimately led to the adoption of a proportional representation system. CEPPS interventions have also promoted inclusive electoral reform processes. In Georgia, CEPPS' support and technical assistance to the Inter-party Working Group of non-qualified political parties increased plurality and dialogue in the electoral reform process by hosting three high-level, targeted discussions between the ruling coalition and electoral stakeholders and by producing recommendations for electoral system and political finance reform that were considered during the subsequent legislative revision process.

Sensitizing political parties against committing or instigating electoral violence – As social and political tensions are often still fresh in the immediate post-conflict period and peace is fragile, instigation of hatred and violence by political actors can trigger renewed conflict. This may be exacerbated during the electoral period, as campaigns can take an aggressive tone and possibly foment violence. Verbal commitments to refrain from engaging in violence may be empty, but the presence of international implementers and oversight by civil society can lead to greater accountability. CEPPS has often managed to gain agreement from parties across the political spectrum to develop and sign codes of conduct for the electoral period. These focused on commitments to follow ethical principles during their campaigns, refrain from promoting hatred and using security forces in their interest, condemn acts of violence, protect journalists and accept electoral results. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, CEPPS helped gather the signatures of 187 political party leaders on the code of conduct, including representatives in the transitional government. In addition to establishing traditional commitments to peace, the code also prohibited the use of security forces in the interest of specific actors—a constraint on incumbents. In Nigeria, CEPPS worked with the election commission and 50 political parties to develop the Political Party Code of Conduct in an effort to push Nigeria toward issue-based and inclusive politics rather than relying on personality politics and violence during elections. Parties committed to discouraging political violence among their supporters and preventing their party representatives from causing disturbances, committing fraud and encouraging violence leading up to and on election day. Although it is not possible to draw definite causal relationships between these codes of conduct and political party behavior, they may have helped disincentivize violence as parties faced more scrutiny. CEPPS distributed 40,000 copies of the Code of Conduct to Nigerian citizens leading up to the 2011 elections, which were deemed the most peaceful in the modern history of the country.

Democracy assistance can contribute to women's empowerment by leveraging opportunities created by the disruption of power structures during conflict and transition

Literature Findings

Women and girls are often most affected by conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence, most often perpetrated against girls and women, is a pervasive, destructive and calculated war tactic.[39] Women are often disproportionately displaced as refugees and internally displaced persons. Research also shows that domestic violence, trafficking and child marriage are exacerbated during conflict[40] and that conflict intensifies existing gender inequalities. Despite these systemic disadvantages, studies have found that, during and after conflict, women are more likely to **operate outside the constraints of traditional gender norms** and take on roles in the public, political and economic spheres that were previously dominated by men.[41] Conflicts can also **encourage coordination among women to engage in peace movements.** Democracy assistance implementers could contribute to the continuity and enhancement of women's empowerment by leveraging and expanding these opportunities.

Program Approaches

Providing technical training and resources to enhance women's performance as candidates, public officials and electoral workers – Several CEPPS assessments across the world have corroborated academic studies showing that women face greater barriers to competing for public office than their male counterparts, including social and cultural norms that dictate that a woman's place is in the home, lack of financial resource, fear of intimidation and violence, and lack of interest among male party leaders to promote women leaders. Programs designed to eliminate or mitigate these obstacles often include efforts to change the narrative about women's roles as well as direct interventions to enhance their performance during campaigns and/or in their jobs.

> "I appreciated [the messages on women's role in politics] because they are similar to what I am trying to tell my sisters in order to motivate them. When [CEPPS] delivers the same messages, it brings more impact and generates more attention. The messages encouraged me to keep on going and to conclude that the local elections are a chance for women."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Niger**

Recognizing that discrimination and barriers persist within institutions, particularly for newly elected or installed public officials, implementers can also expand these opportunities to elected or appointed women. CEPPS programs often brought female officials together through national or regional women's working groups to improve their knowledge of good governance practices. In Sierra Leone, CEPPS trained 570 women in campaign skills between 2011 and 2013 and ultimately prepared interested women to advocate to their party leaders for nomination. As a result, the number of women parliamentary candidates increased by 17 percent, and the number of women running for local council positions during that election increased by 50 percent. In the Democratic Republic of Congo during the 2018 electoral cycle in which CEPPS worked to engage more women in the electoral process as voters and candidates, 52 women were elected, compared to 36 in 2006.

[39] Matanock, A. M. (2017). Bullets for Ballots: Electoral Participation Provisions and Enduring Peace after Civil Conflict. *International Security, 41*(4), pp. 93–132. www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/gender-and-conflict-early-warning.pdf

[40] United Nations (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.* Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dde04324.html

[41] Hughes, M. M. (2009). Armed Conflict, International Linkages, and Women's Parliamentary Representation in Developing Nations. *Social Problems, 56*(1), pp. 174–204; Hughes, M. M., and Tripp, A. M. (2015). Civil War and Trajectories of Change in Women's Political Representation in Africa, 1985–2010; *Social Forces, 93*(4), pp. 1513–1540. Fallon, K. M., Swiss, L. and Viterna, J. (2012). Resolving the Democracy Paradox. *American Sociological Review, 77*(3), pp. 380–408.

> Programs and initiatives tailored for women in closed societies to develop their knowledge and skills were often their first opportunities to express themselves and pursue goals outside their traditionally strict roles.

Creating opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere – Multiple previous program participants interviewed for this project mentioned that sometimes all they had before joining CEPPS' programs was the willingness to do something to improve their communities, but they had no idea how to effect change, especially in non-permissive environments. Programs and initiatives tailored for women in closed societies to develop their knowledge and skills were often their first opportunities to express themselves and pursue goals outside their traditionally strict roles. Such initiatives have helped mitigate systemic educational and accessibility gaps faced by women.

In Afghanistan, CEPPS trained over 5,500 women in voter and civic education methodologies through the electoral campaign; in 2010, the number of women standing as provincial council candidates increased by 20 percent. The program also worked to instill women's confidence in public speaking and decision-making. After receiving CEPPS' support and guidance, a women's advocacy group pressed for a daycare center for a women's prison, where children were incarcerated with their mothers. After two months of advocacy and meetings with government officials, the group was able to build the daycare center and hire two teachers. They also obtained promises from local business owners to cover expenses for the center and from the governor of the province, who allocated $20,000 for teachers and food. As of the time data on this project was being collected, these initiatives were still active.[42]

> "Some [women participants] were not even able to introduce themselves well—[they were] too shy. But they wanted to do something. Nowadays one of them is very active on social media, where she talks about her personal life, about being a mother and wife. Another is a lecturer in a local university. Three women who participated in the programs got elected to Parliament."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Afghanistan**

Addressing and elevating women's issues within governing and political institutions – As formal institutions are created or changed in transitional settings, opportunities arise to mainstream gender considerations into reforms and bring attention to women's issues. Implementers can facilitate coordination, cite successful examples from other contexts and help amplify women's voices. In many of its programs, CEPPS focused on internal coalition-building between parliamentary members and across party lines, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia and Sierra Leone. In addition, as transitioning countries engage in legal reform processes, CEPPS programs have supported female members of Parliament or electoral management bodies (EMBs) to draft gender-sensitive legislation, as in Afghanistan and Indonesia.

> "Today we have a legal provision that states that at least 50 percent of selected candidates for the position of mayor or deputy mayor and chair or vice chair of a local governance unit must be female. This provision has had a huge influence on Nepal and was the result of support from CEPPS, which proposed its inclusion and convinced everyone to keep this provision. That is the reason that today 98 percent of the deputy Mayors in Nepal are female."
>
> **— Former member of the Election Commission, Nepal**

[42] All interviews with former partners in Afghanistan were conducted prior to the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

Democracy assistance can reduce political violence by increasing the appeal of vote calculations and democratic competition—rather than violence—to leaders

Literature Findings

While this hypothesis is controversial, some researchers have argued that, as most voters favor peace over violence, elites fighting for power will avoid engaging in violent conflict to gain votes.[43] Democracy assistance could help encourage this shift by **contributing to the creation of the democratic mechanisms through which leaders compete.** The United States Institute of Peace Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction also highlight the importance of "channeling the competition for power from bullets to ballots."[44]

> "When the current structure of the commission was established in 2004 following the comprehensive peace agreement [...] you will note that there was no structure here technically equipped to run elections."
>
> **— Member of the Senate, Liberia**

The effectiveness of democracy assistance in consolidating a democratic process that supplants violent competitions for power depends to a large extent on the interests of national elites.[45] When post-conflict contexts end in military victories (rather than negotiations or settlements between balanced forces), research also finds that dominant party systems are more likely to rise, limiting the effectiveness of democracy assistance in promoting political competition.[46]

> "In the post-conflict scenario, we had to manage elections from a level of zero understanding or knowledge, and with no legal framework, no real knowledge of Constituent Assembly election, how it will be conducted, no fixed electoral system and many more [challenges]."
>
> **— Former Chief Election Commissioner, Nepal**

Program Approaches

Helping to establish EMBs and administer credible electoral processes – To effectively divert leaders' attention from violent power struggles to democratic electoral contests, implementers and local stakeholders must ensure that mechanisms are in place to hold credible elections and transfer power to elected officials. In some countries, however, due to lack of experience with democracy or to the dissolution of institutions during conflict, no existing structure may have the capacity to plan and organize elections in a short period. In these cases, international implementers like CEPPS may assume more direct roles, deploying experts to support or conduct tasks that are necessary for the conduct of electoral processes. This was the case, for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996, where CEPPS, along with other international implementers, had a legal mandate to organize the first post-conflict elections. Although sometimes necessary to ensure elections take place and formalize the

[43] Wantchekon, L., and Neeman, Z. (2002). A Theory of Post-Civil War Democratization. *Journal of Theoretical Politics, 14*(4), pp. 439–464.

[44] United States Institute of Peace, Peacekeeping, and Stability Operations Institute. (2009). Guiding principles for stabilization and reconstruction. US Institute of Peace Press. Retrieved from https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/guiding_principles_full.pdf

[45] Zürcher Christoph, et al. (2013). *Costly democracy: peacebuilding and democratization after war.* Stanford University Press.

[46] Lyons, T. (2016). Victorious rebels and postwar politics. *Civil Wars, 18*(2), pp. 160–174.

new phase of the country, this type of intervention faces sustainability challenges (discussed further in the IFES publication **Overcoming Challenges to Democracy and Governance Programs in Post-Conflict Countries**).

> "In the [Democratic Republic of Congo], we did not yet have the electoral culture, we were learning, and everyone wanted to learn and benefit from civic and electoral education in order to make it a culture in our country. The whole population wanted to know how to participate in the process of democratic elections."
>
> **— Member of Election Commission, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Fostering a culture that values elections and the right to vote – Voters, as well as political leaders, must accept the conduct of elections as the primary means for contesting and transferring political power. Citizens must believe in electoral procedures as the preferable way to delegate power to officials and commit to accepting the results of credible elections even if their chosen candidates lose. They must also trust the capacity of institutions to ensure the legitimacy of the process and the ability of elected officials to deliver. To contribute to building a culture of democracy, CEPPS has often worked with CSOs to convince citizens of the benefits of democracy and, in some cases, to train civic leaders on the effective dissemination of democratic values and the importance of civic participation. In Angola, for example, these trainings focused on conducting effective advocacy, making trainees the disseminators of democratic ideas and principles.

Expanding voters' enfranchisement, including for women, minorities and other marginalized groups – The one person, one-vote principle makes all individuals and their needs valuable to candidates and political parties, who must address voters' needs and interests (and not only those of the country's elites) to get elected. By expanding voter enfranchisement, implementers can contribute to more inclusive representation of different groups in elected positions and to greater responsiveness from elected officials, whose political power depends on voters' choices.

CEPPS' work to expand and secure voter enfranchisement included efforts with EMBs, civil society and political parties. In Liberia, for example CEPPS supported observers to monitor voter registration to increase transparency and prevent fraud. In Nepal, CEPPS launched a voter registration and education campaign that targeted historically marginalized populations, including *Dalits* and freed *Kamaiya* (members of the indentured laborer community). In Sri Lanka, local partners requested this type of support, which became a good entry point given its tangential links to political issues, when scrutiny over international organizations was on the rise. Through this support, CEPPS helped Tamils and Muslims who were internally displaced in the country to obtain documents and become eligible to exercise their voting rights.

Burundi 2010 - After years of devastating civil war and armed conflict, Burundi held a series of five elections in 2010. In addition to assisting the election commission and civil society prepare for the polls, IFES launched a campaign to promote election security that included public events highlighting Burundians' common culture and theatre programs to show why electoral corruption and violence are detrimental.

Democracy assistance can contribute to a reduction of electoral violence by consolidating democratic institutions. Strong democratic institutions can provide a fair, non-violent path for political gains, reducing the need for protests and boycotts.

Literature Findings

This finding relates closely to the previous one but focuses on the effect of democracy assistance on people's willingness to engage in violence rather than on political leaders' willingness to instigate it. Electoral processes can provide a non-violent path to political gains, but these processes can still instigate violence if citizens do not perceive them as fair. Fraudulent, violence-ridden and poorly organized elections decrease citizens' trust in the process and lead to a higher likelihood that they will engage in anti-regime protests or violence.[47] Thus, when EMBs do not have the capacity to ensure and convey integrity across electoral cycles and to prevent malign actors from interfering with the process, building trust in democratic paths becomes more difficult.

Democracy assistance could help prevent this dissatisfaction by supporting democratic institutions, and especially EMBs, to **administer credible, transparent and inclusive electoral processes.** Strong democratic institutions and truly competitive elections can constrain incumbents and assure competitors of the legitimacy of elections, thereby reducing the risk of boycotts or violence in response to protests.[48] For this institutional strengthening to succeed, it has become increasingly relevant for implementers to understand the power dynamics underlying these institutions and their relationships with other actors and to consider their incentives and disincentives in program design.[49]

Program Approaches

> "Key electoral knowledge was transferred through training to staff that play a major role today at the commission."
>
> **— Member of the National Elections Commission, Liberia**

Improving the capacity and commitment of EMBs to administer elections with integrity – Related to the previous finding, this one focuses less on building electoral institutions from scratch than on enhancing the integrity of processes conducted by existing institutions. In post-conflict countries where EMBs already exist, or where there is sufficient local capacity and time to establish them ahead of electoral processes, CEPPS has focused on strengthening these institutions' ability to hold legitimate, credible elections, reducing opportunities for political turmoil and electoral violence. Interventions have included basic election administration and logistic training for election officials (e.g., in Indonesia, Nepal and Nigeria) and lessons-learned exercises to help EMBs analyze past performance and correct problems (e.g., in Niger). Through access to international best practices and by learning from previous weaknesses in local electoral administration, officials from different EMB departments and different levels of the institution's structure improved processes and procedures and contributed to more successful elections. This type of support was particularly helpful during EMB leadership transitions or major reforms.

[47] Rose, R., and Mishler, W. (2009). How do electors respond to an" unfair" election? The experience of Russians. *Post-Soviet Affairs, 25*(2), pp. 118–136.

[48] Hafner-Burton, E. M., Hyde, S. D. and Jablonski, R. S. (2013). When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence? *British Journal of Political Science, 44*(1), 149–179. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123412000671

[49] See, e.g., USAID's "Power Dynamics and Project Design." https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/power-dynamics-and-project-design

Programming to support the long-term consolidation of EMBs also often emphasized fair procedures for the nomination of commissioners; strategic planning; building of institutional memory; and equipping these institutions with resources that could be adapted and reused in future processes, avoiding duplication of work and thus saving time and money. In Burma and Nepal, for example, CEPPS helped EMBs create five-year strategic plans with clear goals and work plans to help achieve them. In Niger, CEPPS supported the organization, management and analysis of historical electoral data to inform future election planning. In some cases, as in Nigeria, CEPPS identified structural issues in the EMB and suggested changes to optimize its operations and decision-making, for example by merging or creating units.

Increasing the capacity and commitment of EMBs and other government bodies to promote fair and genuine electoral competition – One of the potential triggers of violent conflict is the abandonment, by one or more competing parties, of formal democratic paths for contesting political power because they no longer consider them fair. This might happen when some actors engage directly in electoral fraud or manipulation, or simply because the conditions (e.g., access to media and resources) are too unequal to allow for fair competition. Implementers who are perceived as neutral, with no stake in the elections, can contribute to a more level playing field. During the programs analyzed here, for example, CEPPS worked with EMBs to help develop regulations on political finance and increase the transparency and accountability of political party spending (e.g., in Afghanistan and Indonesia). Where the legal structure for political finance was already in place, CEPPS helped strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance (e.g., in Nigeria). In Georgia, CEPPS contributed to negotiations that ultimately led to the establishment of public funding mechanisms for political parties. These efforts were usually coupled with support to political parties to build their capacity to comply with the regulations, as mentioned above, and with support to civil society and the media through training and resources to monitor this compliance (e.g., in Guatemala and Sri Lanka). Support to a reasonable geographical distribution of voter registration and polling station centers has also been part of efforts to level the playing field.

Improving voter outreach and civic education and promoting peaceful voter participation – Efforts to consolidate democratic institutions and to promote a culture of democracy overlap with civic and voter education activities. Especially in post-conflict countries where many citizens are experiencing democratic processes for the first time, or where electoral processes have changed significantly, familiarizing citizens with new procedures and building their trust can require significant time and resources. Due to limitations on both, EMBs might neglect this important area of work. The contributions of international implementers like CEPPS have thus been crucial to maximize voter outreach and increase engagement. In Burundi, Indonesia and Nepal, for example, CEPPS trained EMB officials to conduct civic and voter education while also directly producing voter education billboards and campaigns. In Georgia, the focus was on disseminating information about the new electronic vote count system. Importantly, as it is often neglected by EMBs with limited resources, CEPPS has also made efforts to include voters from minorities and other groups that this outreach campaign had marginalized from the country's political processes. For instance, CEPPS helped translate civic and voter education material into minority languages in Georgia and produced targeted material focusing on the right of women and persons with disabilities to vote freely in Burma. These efforts often yielded even better results when informed by survey results and other analyses that unveiled gaps in understanding about electoral processes and levels of engagement within different social groups (e.g., in Indonesia).

Creating opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges among democratic champions and regional cooperation and development – Exchanges and study tours have long been used in the democracy, human rights, and governance community of practice to promote knowledge sharing and capacity development. Peer-to-peer exchanges can be a powerful way to share and replicate structures, systems and practices that work, and to support leadership

development. Leaders can benefit from opportunities to learn from the experiences of others in similar roles and positions. These opportunities can be particularly valuable in transitioning countries, where institutions and actors may be weak or newly formed, and the path forward is unclear. More targeted, topical study trips have proven to be an effective means for information sharing. For example, CEPPS invited members of peer institutions in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine to travel to Georgia to support the replication of anticorruption and bureaucracy-reducing reform efforts that worked in the country. These interventions, however, tended to directly benefit only a limited number of individuals (see more in the Sustainability section below).

DRC 2011 – CENI officials sit near the ballot boxes in a polling station in the popular are of Masina.

Increasing the security of voters during the voting process – Post-conflict countries are likely to face challenges related to violence during voter registration, the electoral campaign, election day and after election results are communicated. Even if the election is conducted with satisfactory levels of integrity and in accordance with good practices, political tensions and grievances emanating from recent conflicts can make violence more likely. Implementers can help mitigate and respond to such threats by working with election officials, political parties and civil society to provide trainings on and techniques for addressing electoral violence, in addition to fostering commitments through codes of conduct. In Niger, for example, CEPPS trained security forces and the EMB's security unit on democratic processes and human rights more generally, aiming at sensitizing security personnel about abuses of force. In Afghanistan, CEPPS developed an electoral security strategic analysis to help secure polling stations.

Democracy assistance can support stability through leveraging existing informal institutions or practices

Literature Findings

As citizens might take longer to familiarize themselves with formal institutions and their roles—especially newly established formal institutions—building on existing informal structures, particularly for negotiation and conflict management, might prove helpful.[50] Some research also suggests that, after conflict, public trust in formal institutions is reduced.[51] Democracy implementers can **bolster the capacity of informal local structures to supplement formal institutions in stabilization efforts.**

Program Approaches

Promoting peaceful narratives and civic and political participation through existing communities of trust – While formal state institutions may be perceived as politicized or illegitimate in post-conflict environments, existing informal networks and institutions often retain legitimacy and trust and can help with reconciliation. Although most post-conflict programming focuses on strengthening formal, centralized institutions—including governmental bodies, political parties or CSOs—there is growing recognition that implementers can (and should) embrace and utilize existing informal channels to facilitate conversation in support of stabilization efforts. Though CEPPS programming does not often report on these mechanisms, as informal networks are often organically identified and utilized, partners found success when conducting activities in comfortable environments that were already frequented by participants. For example, CEPPS voter education activities took place in a public marketplace in Burma where women shopped daily. In Angola, churches were identified as key partners for the successful implementation of peace programming, and the CEPPS team ultimately leveraged faith-based coalitions from churches in almost every corner of the country to discuss how churches could influence the overall electoral process.

DRC 2011 – Local observers with a church group conduct civic education activities on elections in camp near Kalemie in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Residents were displaced from their village by armed gangs. The children gather in front of a diagram showing ballot boxes and voting procedures in cartoon format. The drawings are done on the back of a world atlas.

[50] Manning, C. (2002). Conflict Management and Elite Habituation in Postwar Democracy: The Case of Mozambique. *Comparative Politics, 35*(1), 63. https://doi.org/10.2307/4146928

[51] Jung, J. K. (2012). Power-sharing and democracy promotion in post-civil war peace-building. *Democratization, 19*(3), pp. 486–506. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.674359

Democracy assistance can increase the accountability of political institutions and actors by strengthening civil society's capacity to hold them accountable

Literature Findings

Programs to strengthen civil society would help improve their ability to **monitor state actors and hold them accountable.**[52] Active CSOs can also **increase pressure on political actors to release information to the public,** contributing to more transparency and less abuse of power. A recent study conducted by the Swedish Expert Group for Aid Studies found that assistance has a positive effect on levels of democracy and that correlations are stronger when democracy assistance targets civil society, the free media and human rights.[53]

Program Approaches

Strengthening CSOs' monitoring and advocacy capacity – As mentioned previously, active collaboration between grassroots actors and the state is usually a positive development in post-conflict countries, and implementers can provide the space and support for such interactions. However, it is just as important for CSOs to have the freedom to monitor the work of government and political actors and serve as an effective check—a key function of a democratic system. The support that democracy and governance implementors provide varies across contexts but often includes citizen conducting election monitoring, monitoring the performance of elected officials, leading advocacy workshops and supporting CSO coalition-building. Capacity building trainings and direct support to CSOs' operations during CEPPS programs focused on issues such as monitoring campaign expenditures to help increase transparency and public access to information (e.g., in Guatemala and Indonesia); exposing the misuse of public resources to fund election-related violence and, in some cases, even to identify perpetrators (e.g., in Sri Lanka); conducting CSO advocacy trainings to encourage greater transparency and accountability from government officials (e.g., in Nepal); and preparing CSOs to engage directly with legislators through group forums to identify community needs and recommendations (e.g., in Liberia).

Improving media capacity to investigate and disseminate relevant and accurate information – Fair reporting by the media can also serve as an effective check on state actors by holding them accountable to campaign promises and public commitments. Media professionals can also help inform citizens about political developments in a country; investigate negotiation and peace processes and provide transparency; and demystify electoral processes for the public, making election information more accessible and digestible. Democracy and governance implementers can support more accurate and transparent information sharing by enhancing the professional skills of individuals and organizations. CEPPS programs often involved media training to strengthen the reporting skills of journalists covering the electoral process, equipping them to more competently analyze candidate and party platforms on both the local and national levels (e.g., in Niger and Sri Lanka).

[52] Ibid. pp. 180-181.

[53] Niño-Zarazúa, M., Gisselquist, R. M. and Horigoshi, A. (2020). Effects of Swedish and International Democracy Aid. *Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys.* https://eba.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Rapport_2020_07_webb.pdf

Democracy assistance can increase citizens' access to justice and respect for the rule of law

Literature Findings

A common area of democracy assistance involves legal reforms and judiciary strengthening. As Jung[54] explains, "strengthening the judiciary is important for political stability as a **strong judiciary implies the rule of law and increased legitimacy of the state.** Increased legitimacy in turn improves a state's credibility in the eyes of the society." However, two of the main obstacles preventing people from accessing justice are the elitism of the justice system and the lack of awareness among some groups of their rights and how to defend them.[55] Democracy assistance could increase awareness of political and electoral rights and improve the accessibility and effectiveness of **electoral dispute resolution (EDR) mechanisms,** which would in turn help resolve legitimate grievances and reduce the appeal violent means of conflict resolution.

Program Findings

Making laws and rules more accessible and understandable to facilitate and increase the effectiveness of their implementation – In some post-conflict countries, the legal structure for protecting citizens' rights might be weak, manipulated, lacking in enforcement mechanisms or nonexistent. The lack of established justice mechanisms, or awareness of existing mechanisms to resolve grievances in peaceful ways, can also lead to violence. Democracy implementers can help strengthen and clarify legal and procedural frameworks that protect political and electoral rights and ensure stakeholders have access to and understand these frameworks. CEPPS has often conducted work to strengthen, clarify and disseminate legal information in ways that enable citizens to better understand it, demystifying the law and making it more accessible to all. For example, CEPPS helped the EMB in Nepal to draft a suite of election laws following the passage of the country's new constitution in 2015 and then worked with the EMB to develop simple sets of questions and answers and voter education materials explaining rights and responsibilities under the law.

Establishing or improving EDR methods and pursuing the investigation and sanctioning of election offenses to avoid impunity – Establishing sound procedures for handling and resolving electoral disputes through legally valid mechanisms is crucial to strengthen trust in electoral systems, especially in regard to perceptions of impartiality and fairness. This is particularly true in post-conflict environments and applies to both formal EDR mechanisms and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms that might be put in place to resolve certain types of disputes in a more informal, consensus-driven way. Without fair, effective and efficient EDR structures, serious electoral disputes and violations have the potential to trigger election-related violence and further erosion of trust in electoral and peacebuilding processes. Implementers can bring expertise and comparative knowledge to help establish effective EDR mechanisms and familiarize stakeholders with them. In addition, it is important that formal and informal dispute resolution pathways be governed by sound procedures and complement each other. Implementers can help determine when ADR mechanisms such as mediation might be appropriate in the political and electoral process and when grievances should be referred to professional, formal EDR mechanisms.

[54] Jung, J. K. (2012). Power-sharing and democracy promotion in post-civil war peace-building. *Democratization, 19*(3), p. 236. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.674359.

[55] Abregú, M. (2001). Barricades or obstacles: The challenges of access to justice. *The World Bank*. p. 63.

CEPPS programs in post-conflict countries often included EDR trainings for members of EMBs and CSOs as well as legal representatives of political parties on filing legitimate complaints, contesting election results, managing claims appropriately, investigating offenses and ensuring the safety of the claimants. As trust in these processes also depends on how the justice system deals with such complaints, CEPPS also trained judges sitting on election tribunals to better manage hearings (e.g., in Nigeria). Several programs worked to make EDR more accessible by streamlining complaint forms into user-friendly formats and remove access barriers to the process (e.g., in Burundi and Georgia). CEPPS has also supported the establishment of ADR mechanisms and the training of ADR practitioners (e.g., mediators in Burma).

CEPPS Finding: Democracy assistance can increase human capital

Although not explicit in the literature analyzed for this project, one prevalent finding across the different projects was the potential of democracy assistance to **help individuals grow in their careers, become leaders in the public sphere and catalyze democratic change.** Former USAID mission director Donor Lion argued, "Human resource development is the most important thing in any country.... I think it's even more important than, and in fact contributes to, appropriate policy."[56]

> "The staff are still working with other government agencies and their expertise and knowledge of democracy and democratic systems can be used for electoral issues, as well as for supporting other issues and topics. Take my example .... When I went to the Ministry of Forestry, I used the training techniques developed through [Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections] (BRIDGE) trainings for a number of trainings and programs under the Ministry of Forestry. I even advocated for implementing a training program."
>
> **— Former member of the Election Commission, Nepal**

Although the number of direct number of participants might be relatively low per project, our stakeholder interviews revealed that decades of program implementation created a large group of individuals who became better professionals and more active leaders in their institutions or communities. Given the turnover of staff in some public institutions and political parties, particularly at the highest levels, there might be some concerns about the utility of investing in training. However, such concerns found little corroboration in our program findings. Their participation in trainings and other activities and their experience working with other local and international organizations on electoral and governance issues have led many former program participants to remain engaged and pursue more space in the public sphere. Many of these efforts seem to have contributed to increased human capital during critical moments for these countries, when brain drain driven by violence, economic hardships and other consequences of conflict could be an impediment to rebuilding institutions. As the quotations in the text boxes throughout this paper show, some former program participants and field office staff went on to become elected officials, work for public institutions or join other international organizations, bringing with them the experience and skills acquired during CEPPS programs.

[56] Interview by W. Haven North in Norris, J. (2021) *The Enduring Struggle: the History of the U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Factors Influencing the Impact of Activities

Our program analysis unveiled a series of external factors that seem to moderate (change the strength or direction of the effect) of democracy and governance interventions or their ability to yield long-term results. While we addressed many of these factors in our first report, our interviews with former partners introduced new evidence that reinforced some findings and highlighted additional factors which program implementers should consider. While this list is not exhaustive, we discuss each identified factor below and provide some recommendations.

Factor 1: Length of a project and how it ends

The majority of partners interviewed for this project believed projects did not last long enough and/or that support ended abruptly. Many interviewees echoed this sentiment; they often mentioned the need for an earlier start and a more gradual departure to ensure partners were in a stronger position to continue activities without external support. Many also noted the constant emergence of new trends and challenges (such as disinformation and cybersecurity issues) as a reason for local organizations to resume or maintain long-term partnerships with CEPPS. This perception was particularly acute among those working on civic and voter education initiatives, as well as members of CSOs focused on electoral inclusion. As partners understood these to be part of a continuous effort to change people's minds and relationships with political processes, they often wished activities had started earlier and lasted longer. Interviewees cited Georgia as a positive example in this regard, where CEPPS remained in the country between electoral cycles. CEPPS' consistent presence allowed enough time to transfer capabilities locally in some programming areas, such as civic education and financial monitoring. One interviewee also noted, "Though the [first] program did not achieve all electoral reforms it sought to in 2012, [CEPPS] interventions laid the foundations for next stage of electoral reforms, some which then led to changes in the electoral system."

> "When cooperation starts and ends only within the electoral process, organizations run to meet requirements, but important aspects are overlooked.... Leaving as soon as the electoral process ends leads to recommendations being highlighted but not implemented because there are no organizations that focus on following up on the improvements."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Guatemala**

CSOs working on election observation also often expressed interest in receiving assistance at least six months after elections, especially to follow EDR processes and post-electoral violence monitoring and reporting. They attributed the insufficient time for assistance to a combination of perceptions on the supply and demand sides that, once an election takes place, there is no need for support on post-election matters. A member of a Guatemalan CSO explained that institutions that would benefit from early assistance often do not prioritize it until the needs become very acute, and donors only release funds when problems are aggravated.

> “Help comes late, [there are] funding issues. The electoral process should be organized and monitored ahead of time. [But] the [EMB] does not see the need, nor do the donors”
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Guatemala**

Recommendations

- Whenever possible, begin projects well in advance of major processes like elections. This will allow for more comprehensive advising, planning and decision-making by technical experts, country experts and key stakeholders rather only supporting the implementation of activities that might have been poorly conceived. Although the timeline depends on planned activities, donors and implementers should keep some benchmarks in mind. For example, legal frameworks should be set at least one year in advance of their application in elections, and operational plans should be drafted at least 12 to 24 months before election day to be more effective.
- Work with partners to develop a plan for the post-project period, and plan for a gradual departure.

Factor 2: Level of security/government repression

Most partners interviewed during this project recognized their countries’ unstable security conditions but reported that they had little or no impact on their ability to participate fully in the projects or deliver planned activities. In addition to Afghanistan, where some partners were wary of security risks and retaliation for participating in CEPPS programs, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sri Lanka were notable exceptions to this pattern. Both Congolese and Sri Lankan partners clearly felt intimidated by powerful actors who saw CEPPS’ work as benefitting opponents or reducing their own chances of maintaining their hold on power. For example, members of CSOs in the Democratic Republic of Congo described the difficulty of conducting civic and voter education in certain regions. They stated that, among program participants, “there was mistrust. Some people described us as being subservient to the ruling power. But we explained to them that we were apolitical, we only did civic and electoral education.” Our first report quoted implementers who cited security levels that seemed to be a significant factor moderating the success of activities (that is, more security often helps interventions to be more successful, while less security negatively affects their impact).

Recommendations

- Advise partners on security measures they should follow to operate in the country based on joint context assessments and lessons learned from experience in non-permissive environments, following do-no-harm approaches.
- Adapt program requirements (on the donor side or the implementer side, with donor approval) to protect the anonymity of participants and/or reinforce the confidentiality of their information (e.g., attendance lists, partners' personal information).
- Where appropriate, provide remote support through encrypted channels that protect partners against surveillance.

> "Certain regions were so insecure that the civic educators could not access them. Participants also refused to sign attendance lists, fearing they could be used by armed groups to target and retaliate against them"
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Factor 3: Relationship between implementers and local partners

As discussed in the first report, project leads play significant roles in the success of a project. Their capacity to build trusting relationships with local partners and convey genuine commitment to meeting their needs can dictate whether interventions are even feasible. We found that the way partners referred to country directors was often echoed throughout their opinions of an entire project, whether positive or negative. As also noted in the first report, the relatively high turnover of project leads can become an issue if priority shifts are driven by personalities rather than context needs—and local partners notice these issues. An interviewee from Liberia explained that the turnover of project leads led to several priority shifts and setbacks. Georgia was a positive counterexample. In describing a positive relationship with a CEPPS country director, an interviewee remarked, "[their] level of involvement was very high and [they] were devoted to working together. [They] participated actively and in person, which may not have been [their] obligation, but [their] willingness and the level of our partnership ensured that [they] were participating personally." The interviewee observed that this personal relationship made partners feel included throughout the program.

Recommendations

- New country directors should become familiar with previous projects and original work plans and should work with partners to maintain continuity with and expand on gains, avoiding abrupt or unnecessary disruptions of interventions.
- Projects should hire country directors with specific country, language and/or cultural expertise.
- Project leads should prioritize relationship building with local partners at the outset of programming and collaborate continuously with partners in a meaningful way to solidify trust and commitment.

> "You know what happens with these international [nongovernmental organizations], every time after every turn, the director leaves. Most times, [when] the new director comes, they come with their own agenda."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Liberia**

Factor 4: Stakeholders' participation in project design process

Although most interviewees reported that they were consulted and their feedback often incorporated during project implementation, few had the opportunity to participate in the design and inception phases. By gathering local partners' perspectives and suggestions and co-designing activities, implementers can more easily secure buy-in and avoid unnecessary changes once a project starts. Pre-design consultations may also help donors, implementers and partners understand the timeliness of interventions and plan their sequencing accordingly. When local partners were involved from the beginning, their satisfaction with the projects was higher and they felt more like active partners.

> "[CEPPS did] not just come and say, 'We will do this or that for you and this is it'; no, they [came] and ask[ed], 'What do you think can be done this year based on your strategic plans?' It is not about imposition."
>
> **— Member of the National Elections Commission, Liberia**

Recommendations

- Involve local partners in program design through consultations and co-creation processes. Incorporate their perspectives, needs and priorities into the design of interventions.
- For donors, consider funding more pre-project and pre-design missions to enable such consultations and co-creation processes.

Factor 5: Management and administrative capacity of partners

Many partners reported struggling to comply with management and administrative requirements for receiving and spending subgrants, corroborating another challenge discussed in the first report. As implementers develop projects—and especially when they involve new CSO partners—it is critical to understand their management and administrative capacity and to include relevant training and mentoring, if needed. This groundwork can save considerable time throughout the project, minimize mistakes and, most importantly, prepare the CSOs for sustainability over the long term. Several partners reported that their experience working with CEPPS and learning about compliance helped them secure and more effectively administer new grants.

> “For true grassroots groups like [ours], the administrative requirements in relation to the small amount of the grant were too excessive.”
>
> **– Member of CSO, Sri Lanka**

Recommendations

- Provide relevant administrative, management and compliance training to local partners when needed before and during the implementation of other core activities.
- Whenever possible, donors and implementers should consider simplifying forms and requirements for smaller organizations receiving smaller grants to reduce burdens on their staff. For example, donors and implementers can initially award fixed obligation or in-kind grants.

Factor 6: Implementer and donor coordination

Coordination can be difficult if communication among donors and implementers is not clear and intentional. This can lead to confusion if for example, different external actors provide contradictory advice on technical issues, or duplicate of efforts in some areas while others remain unsupported. In Nigeria, for example, CEPPS and another international implementer recommended different approaches to voter registration challenges, forcing partners to choose one over the other.

> "Coordination was the biggest problem in the field as each organization worked in its own silo."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Some practices helped improve this issue, such as the creation of organic or donor-led coordination groups. In the cases we analyzed, communication seemed considerably better when donors and implementers met regularly and were aware of each other's activities. Local partners' involvement and even leadership in these groups was also perceived as positive. In Aceh, Indonesia, for example, eight organizations provided assistance to the electoral management body, but interviewees said there was no overlap; each implementer had a clear role and "their work actually complemented and reinforced one another."

Recommendations

- Establish coordination groups and clear channels of communication involving donors, implementers and partners to ensure coverage of partners' needs and avoid duplication of effort.
- Ensure compatibility and complementarity among assistance (democracy and governance and other areas of development) and defense and diplomacy efforts, creating incentives from different angles for actors to adhere to democratic principles.

Sustainability of Outcomes

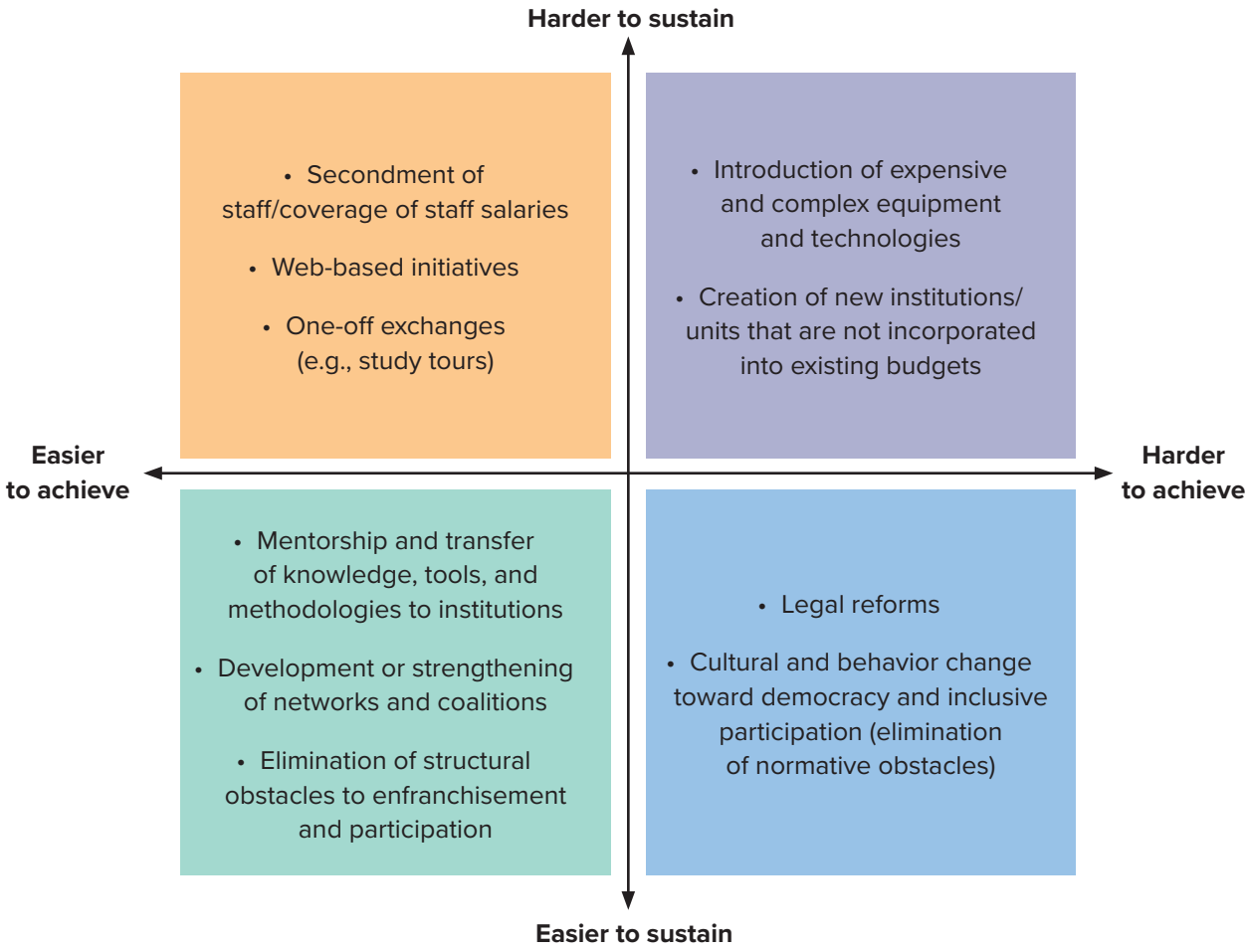
One of the most difficult, yet most important, aspects of democracy and governance assistance is the sustainability of its outcomes. Due to funding and time constraints, projects do not usually plan to return to the country to evaluate the impact of interventions after a certain time. As a result, implementers are often limited to observing the short- and medium-term results of their work during the life of the project. But sustainability problems tend to be most visible only after implementers depart—taking funding and other resources with them.

Based on our analysis of the data gathered through interviews with recipients of CEPPS assistance, we identified general categories of interventions, assessed the difficulty of achieving desired outcomes and determined which outcomes were more sustainable over time. This analysis is purely qualitative and based on the small sample of countries analyzed, although the reasons behind the sustainability or unsustainability of interventions likely apply more broadly. As explained below, even the interventions whose outcomes are generally harder to sustain can be (and in many cases were) successful; the harder to sustain designation does not imply that a project should not be implemented, but rather that it will likely require more efforts to yield lasting results. Underlying all the considerations discussed below, regardless of types of interventions, is the need for a favorable enabling environment and the maintenance of incentives that tilt the balance toward democracy.

Recommendations to enhance the likelihood of sustainability also follow.

The matrix below categorizes interventions based on their sustainability and difficultly to implement, as informed by stakeholder interviews.

Sustainability of Interventions v. Difficulty in Implementing Interventions Matrix



Easier to Achieve, Easier to Sustain

Mentorship and transfer of knowledge, tools, and methodologies

The lack of institutionalized expertise and standardized tools and methodologies is a common challenge among newly formed public institutions and other organizations in post-conflict countries. This often leads to staff wasting time and resources, reinventing the wheel each time they perform certain tasks. International implementers can break this cycle by transferring tools and knowhow that partners can further disseminate within their organizations, adapt and reuse beyond the life of projects.

> "By working directly and jointly with CEPPS, I basically [could ensure] that the experience and knowledge would remain in the electoral institution."
>
> **— Member of Election Commission, Guatemala**

This means, however, that partners must be able to internalize the acquired skills, which is not always possible with one-off training. To maximize long-term use, programming stakeholders such as EMBs and other government institutions, political parties and CSOs must systematically institutionalize new tools and methodologies, commit to using them, measure their effects and pass this knowledge along to other staff. Ongoing CEPPS programming with the Georgian Central Election Commission (CEC) illustrates the success of this approach. In 2013, CEPPS began supporting the CEC's Financial Monitoring Unit, starting with capacity building for members and ultimately supporting the management of social media campaigns and development of quality management systems that the commission fully adopted. One interviewee remarked, "In 2013, the financial monitoring unit had a horrible stigma, nobody wanted to work with us. [CEPPS] stepping in as an impartial actor was crucial. They always asked us what the main needs were. [Now] you can see the observers' reports over a number of consecutive elections, [and] not a single negative thing was said against the financial monitoring unit." Interviewees also mentioned that an EDR database developed by CEPPS is still used by both the CEC and other electoral stakeholders. The CEC also updated a communications guide produced by CEPPS to reflect new challenges and the country's experiences. A former member of the CEC interviewed for this report noted that the commission received positive recognition for its work expanding on CEPPS tools.

Development or strengthening of networks and coalitions

For several reasons (e.g., insufficient awareness of other actors' efforts in the same field, lack of time or effort to reach out to other stakeholders, mutual mistrust), local institutions might miss opportunities to coordinate and amplify their efforts. When CEPPS helped create or strengthen networks and coalitions, it often provided the leadership and neutral environment that partners needed to collaborate. Once communication mechanisms were in place, relationships were built and results were achieved through these joint efforts, it was much easier for such groups to maintain continuity in their networks and coalitions even after projects ended. In Niger, for example, CEPPS helped establish an anti-corruption parliamentary network that made it easier for parliamentarians across the political spectrum to channel advocacy for ratification of African Union and the United Nations conventions and the Economic Commission of West African States protocol on corruption. The Nigerien parliamentary network then connected with other networks in the sub-region and across Africa,

> "It is useful for these kinds of projects that are implemented by several local partners to have the participation of an international organization… [it] helps to have a certain balance if there is not leadership among the local organizations, and [it] facilitates coordination."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Guatemala**

which helped it share and learn other successful advocacy strategies. Guatemalan and Congolese interviewees commented on the importance of having an international partner fill leadership gaps and initiate coordination among local stakeholders.

> “We became a role model in the region with this product, and I was invited to Kiev to share [our] experience, share our communications plan as good practice.”
>
> **— Member of the Central Election Commission, Georgia**

> “The material produced during the project was of enormous use to other electoral cycles organized in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many local [participants] have become lead mobilizers in their respective communities. This is how political participation increased in the areas covered … during the project. We also saw more local election observers with accreditation at the local level.”
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Elimination of structural obstacles to enfranchisement and participation (e.g., facilitating access to formal documentation, enhancing physical accessibility of polling stations and polling procedures)

Raising awareness about political and electoral processes and informing citizens’ decisions is an important factor in increasing participation, but many people are not involved in these processes—not because they lack information but because they lack either the documents required to participate or access to political spaces. Getting documents such as a birth certificates, national identity cards or voter cards can be difficult or cumbersome, especially when authorities purposefully make it so. Once people have their documents, however, significant obstacles are lifted, and citizens can use them to participate in elections and for other legal purposes. For example, in 2010,

Indonesia 2019 - Voters line up to confirm their registration at a polling station at a prison in Jakarta.

CEPPS programming in Sri Lanka largely focused on assisting citizens in war-affected areas, many of whom had been displaced during the conflict and lost vital identity documents. As people returned to their homes, CEPPS assisted people in applying for birth certificates—a voter registration requirement. This effort was a fundamental step toward enfranchisement. However, without addressing the policies for obtaining these documents, CEPPS' assistance might not have been sustainable or systematic enough to eliminate the structural obstacles.

Another concrete obstacle to inclusive participation is access to the venues where political and electoral processes take place, and access to the procedures themselves. Helping establish new voter registration centers and polling stations to serve remote populations and supporting the building of ramps and other accommodations to enable voters with disabilities to exercise their rights also produced more lasting results.

> "Capitalizing on the technical contributions of CEPPS, we have remained active in the field of civic and electoral education. Thanks to the … network … set up by CEPPS, we have found other partners such as the EU and have implemented citizen awareness and mobilization projects for the 2018 elections [and] conducted election observation … We have also set up our own network, which allows us to monitor the elections with local actors and to mobilize resources for voter information and civic education using the tools and techniques learned from CEPPS."
>
> **— Member of a CSO, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Harder to Achieve, Easier to Sustain

Legal reforms

Changes to the structure of the legal framework, by their very nature, have high potential for sustainability because they are harder to reverse. When rights or integrity mechanisms are entrenched in legal provisions and enforced by authorities, gains should remain for the long run if basic checks and balances are in place to prevent new leaders from making arbitrary changes. Research has shown[57] that such legal changes have been particularly effective at advancing women's empowerment in post-conflict environments, for example.

> "Typically, when it comes to electoral reform, the drive does not come from the parties or coalitions in power; usually they are the ones who resist the change because the current system very often helped them come to power."
>
> **— Member of an international nongovernmental organization, Georgia**

The challenges with these interventions have less to do with sustaining legal reforms than with passing them in the first place. To pass reforms, countries usually need political will; stakeholders must also build consensus and apply a certain level of pressure and advocacy. Once passed, the new laws must be implemented fully and continually. An interviewee from Georgia observed that those with the power to enact changes might resist modifying a system that allowed them to obtain power in the first place.

For reasons discussed in this report, such as mistrust among political actors and a weak civil society, legal

[57] Freedman, J. (2015). *Gender, Violence and Politics in the Democratic Republic of Congo.* London: Routledge; Mageza-Barthel, R. (2015) *Mobilizing Transnational Gender Politics in Post-Genocide Rwanda.* Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Mobilizing-Transnational-Gender-Politics-in-PostGenocide-Rwanda-1st-Edition/Mageza-Barthel/p/book/9781472426499.

reforms might be hard to enact in post-conflict countries, although implementers can facilitate the process. In Nepal in 2013, for example, CEPPS, in cooperation with the Inter Party Women's Alliance, several women's rights nongovernmental organizations and women politicians, supported a campaign advocating for a gender quota so women would occupy at least 33 percent of seats in the Constituent Assembly. The group met with major political leaders and Election Commission officials and took their message to the country's president. They produced radio and television advertisements about the need for more women's representation to make the government more reflective of society, and they developed a series of promotional materials that were shared through leading newspapers and radio to build awareness and increase support for women leaders. Ultimately, women won 172 of the 575 contested seats. At 30 percent, just short of the 33 percent goal that women leaders and their supporters sought, this result was still considered an important victory.

Cultural and behavioral change toward democracy and inclusive participation

Changing political leaders' perceptions about the distribution of power within a society, citizens' level of trust in political systems and people's understanding of their roles in enacting democratic changes cannot happen overnight. Partners interviewed for this project are well aware of this. Several who worked on civic and voter education initiatives and on activities to enhance the role of women in politics recognized the need for continuous reinforcement throughout the transition process and across spheres. Once citizens become more familiar with democratic procedures and frequently marginalized groups find their voice and create opportunities to engage in civic activities, however, authoritarian leaders find it more difficult to shrink civic spaces without facing resistance from civil society and other political stakeholders.

> "It was not easy for a woman to be in politics, to express her opinion in public, to take a leadership position in a political party, to run for elections or to vote for the candidate of her choice. But the trainings organized by CEPPS, as well as the support of civil society engaged in civic education, largely helped change power dynamics and the perception of women in society."

> "Our civic education work contributed to increasing citizen participation in electoral processes (before, during and after the election) in four provinces: Kinshasa, Kasaï, Ecuador and Bas Congo."

> "After [CEPPS] left, there were almost no dynamic partners working on voter information and civic education. [The EMB] continued awareness-raising activities but without adequate financial means, which led to lower levels of voter information. Many local partners that previously received subgrants no longer had the means to implement activities, although some continued to find support to continue their work."
>
> **— Members of CSOs, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Easier to Achieve, Harder to Sustain

Secondment of staff and coverage of staff salaries

Especially immediately prior to major processes like elections or after the creation of new units or departments, public institutions often need surge support. Seconding experienced staff from other organizations and/or covering the salaries of short-term staff can be an easy solution to fill gaps and meet immediate needs, but the gains brought by these extra personnel can be short-lived. Without a proper system for seconded staff to transfer skills and knowledge to permanent staff, the institution does not learn how to address similar issues in the future. In **Afghanistan**, stakeholders shared that, once CEPPS left the country, another implementer paid the salaries of the staff hired to work in recently created EMB units. However, once the second implementer left, the Afghan government took over. Stakeholders noted that staff salaries decreased considerably (sometimes by 90 percent). The resulting dissatisfaction and lowered morale forced many people to leave—and take their knowledge and skills with them.

Recommendations

- Ensure the salaries that implementers pay seconded or newly hired staff are commensurate with those offered for similar jobs in the country.
- Work with the stakeholder organization to budget for new staff, if needed, prior to departure to ensure the financial sustainability of new positions. Support coordination with other institutions in charge of budgets, and increase their fundraising capacity.

Web-based initiatives

Although web-based and digital resources are increasingly popular and important in managing both internal processes and external communications, programmatic evidence shows that partners often have difficulty maintaining them on their own, especially when they must purchase licenses or web domains or acquire specialized skills to update them. An Afghan partner recalled that the Afghan election commission was happy with the quality of an election website created during the project, but its leadership knew that the commission could not afford content creation and that the website would become obsolete after the elections.

> “We had very good content before, during and post-election, but we knew this activity relied completely on project funding. We knew we wouldn’t be able to keep [up] the content creation after the project ended.”
>
> **– Member of EMB staff, Afghanistan**

Often, only certain individuals have access to and maintain institutional content online (e.g., on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram); when they leave the organization, it may lose access to the content or must create new material, diffusing their audiences.

Recommendations

- Prioritize the use of online platforms that are free and that partners can operate easily without the need of specialized expertise, such as YouTube channels, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.
- Establish relationships between partner institutions and other organizations that can mutually benefit each other (e.g., start-ups, universities) in the development or maintenance of digital platforms and production of content.
- Encourage the creation and maintenance of a simple and secure repository with information regarding institutional web presence (including login information) to avoid losing access to web content. Provide basic training online security, password multi-factor authentication, and other basic cyber hygiene practices.

Harder to Achieve, Harder to Sustain

Expensive and complex equipment and technologies

While cutting-edge technology and equipment can seem like easy solutions to many administrative and operational problems, it is imperative that donors and implementers ensure that the proposed solutions are appropriate and a good fit for the context. This means ensuring that:

1) The equipment or technology addresses the identified challenges;
2) Decision-making is transparent and inclusive to ensure stakeholders trust the technology and the broader electoral process;
3) The decision to introduce it considers all costs, especially for maintaining it after the election cycle;
4) Local partners are trained to operate it;
5) Time and resources are sufficient to test the technology and familiarize other stakeholders with it;
6) Procurement is conducted in an objective, transparent and competitive manner; and
7) Local partners can take ownership of the technology and afford maintenance, testing and updates in the long run.

> “We had books here, but the shelf is empty now because of theft. The alarm system … is broken. The computers are non-functional; the 24-hour television service we had has broken down. Commodities purchased were stolen.
>
> **— Member of Legislative Information Service, Liberia**

> “After many discussions with IFES and USAID, IFES supported us with the purchase, and it is still the only ballot paper printing machine in the country”
>
> **— Former Member of Election Commission, Nepal**

Given the usual tight timelines for assistance projects, donors and implementers might skip several steps, leading to suboptimal selection and implementation. As discussed in the first report, stakeholders tend to expect new technology to solve problems, prioritizing such assistance even when their institutions are unlikely to be able to afford them in the long run. Financial costs and planning efforts make these interventions harder to achieve, and limited budgets and institutional capacity make any gains harder to sustain.

This does not mean that this type of intervention is not viable or is doomed to fail. Sometimes technology can solve important problems and help institutions professionalize and become more independent from external vendors or service providers.

Recommendations

Before introducing new, expensive equipment or technology to institutions, ensure that:

- The equipment or technology is designed to address the identified challenges;
- The decision-making process is transparent and inclusive to ensure stakeholders ultimately trust the technology and broader electoral process;
- The cost-benefit analysis for introducing technology takes into account all costs, particularly for sustaining the technology after the election cycle;
- Local partners receive appropriate training to operate the new technology;
- Available time and resources are sufficient to test the new technology and to familiarize other stakeholders with it;
- Procurement is conducted objectively through a transparent, competitive bidding process; and
- Local partners are able to take ownership of the equipment and technology and to bear the long-term costs of maintenance, tests, and updates.

Creation of new institutions or units that are not incorporated into existing budgets

Often, implementers identify needs or weaknesses that existing structures or available personnel cannot completely address. The planning and development of new institutions or units within existing institutions—particularly government bodies—to focus on these issues is important to ensure they receive sufficient attention. When partner organizations cannot afford to set up new units, implementers often provide equipment and help hire and train personnel. This type of intervention can be a good strategy to boost an institution's professionalism, but the results can also be harder to maintain. When projects end and funding for salaries and operations is no longer available, the new institutions or units might lack the means to continue their work, putting the gains they have made at risk. Afghanistan provides examples with varying levels of success. CEPPS helped create a gender unit and a data center and media monitoring unit within the EMB, recruiting staff and procuring equipment. Both units are still running today and have produced positive outcomes since their creation. But another unit created during the project, the Election Education Center (intended as a permanent center to inform students on the electoral process), was short-lived. Stakeholders interviewed during this project stated that there were no internal efforts to keep this unit active after the project ended.

Recommendations

- Involve the host institution and/or other local organizations in the development and maintenance of the new institution or unit, ensure long-term commitments to keep it running and develop a plan for transferring financial and management responsibilities to these local actors.

One-off exchanges (i.e., study tours)

Interviewees' opinions of study tours varied across programs. While many welcomed the opportunity to learn from counterparts in different countries, others believed project funding could be better spent on longer-term in-country training. This seemed to be the case especially when the country visited was at a different level of development or political organization, as lessons learned from those environments would be harder to apply in participants' home countries. In addition, study tours and trips usually directly benefit only a few individuals, and it might be harder to transfer the results of that experience to others. Despite these issues, such interventions can be particularly useful if they help decision-makers access appropriate, innovative solutions from similar contexts.

> "Exposure trips, trainings and reading materials are the best way to learn from democracies for a transitioning country."
>
> **— Former Election Commissioner, Nepal**

> "When we traveled to the Library of Congress, we recommended that, instead of spending thousands of dollars for us to spend one week … we [would] prefer you to organize such a meeting in … Liberia for at least a month [for us] to grasp more from the training."
>
> **— Member of the Legislative Research Center, Liberia**

Recommendations

- Ensure sufficient training and support is provided to local partners in-country to address their priority needs.
- Prioritize study tours within the same region or to countries with comparable environments and experiences so lessons can be more easily and directly applied to participants' home countries.

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Annex I: Past Programming Participants Interview Questions

Background

- When was your participation in the program?
- Very briefly, what was the scope of this participation? In which activities were you participating, or what kind of support was your organization receiving?

Timing and Context

- How would you assess the timing of the assistance? Was it the right time/too soon/too late?
- Here, depending on the participant/organization, this timing can refer to how long they had before an election, competing priorities, etc.
- Do you think the length of the project/activity was sufficient? And, if not, what do you think should have been done with extra time?
- Do you think you were/your organization was completely prepared to take on the tasks at that time?
    - Here, we are trying to get to whether the institution had the basic personnel and capacity to fulfill expectations of implementers and donors.
- To what extent was your organization open to receiving assistance (e.g., in what form, from whom, etc.)? Was there any resistance or lack of political will from some in the organization? If so, why do you think that was the case?

Program Planning

- To what extent do you think the program/activity was appropriate to your country's context and culture?
- Did you get to suggest activities, explain your needs or actively participate in the development of the program? To what extent do you feel like your needs were heard?

Relationships with CEPPS

- What was your/your organization's relationship with CEPPS?
- When did you first learn of CEPPS? What was your first interaction, and with whom?
- Do you think CEPPS' international personnel (country directors, program managers) had enough knowledge of your country?

- Were there many other international organizations on the ground? Did you work with any others? Do you feel like those organizations were coordinating well among themselves?
- Do you think CEPPS or other international organizations treated different local partners differently? How so?

Context Challenges

- What was the political atmosphere in the country then? What effects of the conflict were still felt? How did they impact your work with CEPPS?
- Did you experience any security threats because of or during your participation in the program?

Outcomes and Sustainability

- What would you say the main results of the project/activity were, and to what extent did they achieve expected goals?
    - How did the elections/other political or democratic processes/capacity-building activities go?
- Which of these outcomes last to this day? Or how much progress has been made on the target issues since the project ended?
- Can you tell us what happened after the project ended? Did you and other local partners give continuity to the efforts made by CEPPS?
- To what extent do you think CEPPS was able to transfer capabilities and ownership of the program to you, or other local partners?

Lessons Learned

- What would you have liked to be done differently during the program?
- What features of the program did you particularly like and think should be replicated?

Other

Please use this space to record any other interesting remarks made by the interviewees that are not directly related to the questions above.

Annex II: Types of Interventions per Country

	Afghanistan	Angola	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Burundi	Central	Cote d'Ivoire	Democratic Republic of Congo	Georgia	Guatemala	Indonesia	Liberia	Myanmar	Nepal	Niger	Nigeria	Peru	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka
Training and capacity-building for EMBs	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Training and capacity-building for political parties			✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Training and capacity-building for CSOs	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓							✓
Training and capacity-building for independent media	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
Electoral legal analysis and reforms	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				
Electoral operations support	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Peace and security planning/ training; Electoral Justice	✓			✓									✓	✓				✓
Political finance and anti-corruption support	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓
Voter information and civic education support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Election observation/ party poll watching		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Inclusion (women/ youth/ persons with disabilities/ ethnic minorities)	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

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