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**EVALUATION OF SUPPORT FOR ELECTORAL PROCESSES,
POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT AND LEGISLATIVE
STRENGTHENING IN NIGERIA**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFRIGOV	African Center for Democratic Governance
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance of Nigeria
BEAT	Basic Election Administration Training
CAPP	Community Action for Popular Participation
CSC	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
EU	European Union
GON	Government of Nigeria
IR	Intermediate Result
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
IRI	International Republican Institute
IT	Information Technology
LDC	Legal Defense Center
MCID	Mississippi Consortium for International Development
NDI	National Democratic Institute for Internal Affairs
NDP	National Democratic Party of Nigeria
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDP	People's Democratic Party of Nigeria
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission of Nigeria
SO	Strategic Objective
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

PREFACE

The evaluation team is indebted to Sundaa Bridgett of USAID/DCHA/DG for her invaluable support and for participating actively in the Nigeria visit of this team. The team also wishes to thank the DG Team of USAID/Nigeria, especially Victor Adetula and Adamu Igoche, for their outstanding assistance during the fieldwork period. The Chiefs of Party and the staffs of IFES, IRI, MCID, and NDI contributed immensely to the evaluation, and helped us coordinate a very tight schedule of meetings in Abuja. To all of them, thanks. The team is also grateful to the USAID/Nigeria Mission Director and other members of the staff of USAID/Nigeria and to Brian Brown, the U.S. Embassy Political Counselor. The cooperation of all the interviewees is highly appreciated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the past and current assistance of USAID in support of Nigeria's electoral processes, national and state legislatures, and political parties. In addition to learning what has been achieved by this assistance, the evaluation sought to contribute to the quality and effectiveness of future USAID assistance. From May 19 through 30, 2003, the evaluation team employed a combination of desk studies and key informant interviews with USAID's democracy and governance team, its implementing partners, and the program beneficiaries.

A key finding of this evaluation was that, due to political imperatives and high hopes about the prospects of democracy in Nigeria, there was an exponential growth in funding activities that were broad and diverse but without the benefit of focused and targeted interventions that could effectively achieve sustainable impact on the democratic transition. Absent any form of baseline data, or some other kind of measurable indicators, it was extremely difficult to come to any conclusive affirmation that the targeted institutions perform better as a result of USAID's investments.

Notable amongst the lessons learned was the need for a beneficiary buy-in to external assistance efforts. This buy-in should not be limited to the technical cadre but should involve the political leadership of the targeted institutions. The turnover of recipients of training assistance from their respective institutions and organizations results in a "training drain" and an "investment drain." Without complementary systems, procedures, budgets, and equipment in the targeted institutions, capacity strengthening efforts may not lead to performance enhancement.

Nevertheless, USAID has made significant contributions to the overall democratic transition in Nigeria. In particular, USAID's activities enabled attitudinal changes, mitigation of political tensions, and improvements in the process through which political decisions are made. While the professionalism of election administration might have only marginally improved, INEC's IT Department, for example, made a giant leap due to USAID's assistance. The communications equipment, leased with USAID funding, that was used by INEC in difficult and remote areas during recent elections made a significant difference in forestalling electoral conflict.

USAID's assistance for political party building enabled some women's caucuses to negotiate reform within their parties so as to enhance the access of women to leadership positions. The exemplary process by which the National Assembly engaged civil society with regard to HIV/AIDS legislation, was largely due to USAID's efforts. Even if the overall performance of the last National Assembly was disappointing, there is no doubt that it was able to assert itself as an independent political institution as opposed to being a rubber stamp; USAID's support contributed to this irreversible democratic gain in the separation of powers.

Key recommendations of this report include the need for the Mission to employ a strategic approach of targeted activities that deepen constituencies for reform in the political sector. This demand approach should be complemented by cross-sectoral synergies amongst the Mission's strategic objectives and its implementing partners. In order to achieve accountable and responsive political institutions, there is also an absolute need for the institutions to receive a push from ordinary citizens and their interest groups.

A successful DG program in Nigeria requires complementary political and diplomatic interventions. In order to further the democratic agenda, it is recommended that the Mission engage in policy dialogue with the higher levels of political leadership. Equally important is the need for the Mission to give greater attention to recommendations from local program stakeholders and partners, particularly with regard to what the local stakeholders perceive as their needs.

It is recommended that the Mission exercise its “substantial involvement” authority by measuring performance and using frequent reviews of performance measures to guide program management. Future institutional development efforts should be premised on an analysis of whether weaknesses within the targeted institution or environment could adversely affect the goal of performance enhancement.

EVALUATION OF SUPPORT FOR ELECTORAL PROCESSES, POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT AND LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING IN NIGERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

After decades of military oppression, and its attendant destruction of democratic institutions, USAID/Nigeria began the implementation of a transition strategy after transfer of power from the military to democratic government. USAID operates under difficult circumstances ranging from weak governance and public institutions to difficult working conditions. In addition to inexperienced democratic leaders and a conflict-prone environment, the Mission contended with rapid program growth during a short period of time. USAID's program approaches had to respond to challenges of capacity building and institutional strengthening at all levels. This was particularly true for the Mission's Strategic Objective on Democracy and Governance (DG).

The democracy and governance transition strategy focused on supporting the most critical elements of governance, particularly in the areas of legislative strengthening, political party development, and support to electoral processes. After four years of program implementation and in order to prepare the groundwork for a sustainable development strategy for Nigeria, USAID/Nigeria resolved to evaluate its ongoing activities so that future investments can better respond to the priorities of democracy building in Nigeria. Accordingly, the Mission contracted with Development Associates to conduct an external evaluation, which is the subject of this report.

A. SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The evaluation assessed the impact of past and current activities on legislative strengthening, political party development, and electoral processes support. At the same time, it sought to provide suggestions for future USAID assistance in support of Nigeria's democracy. Responses were provided to the following questions in the Scope of Work:

- ▶ Did programs achieve their stated results?
- ▶ What was the impact of [the] achievements on the relevant DG Intermediate Results (IRs) and Strategic Objective (SO)?
- ▶ What explains [their] successes and/or failures?
- ▶ How could the programs have done better?

Initial meetings with the Mission's DG Office further clarified the purpose of the evaluation and encouraged an evaluation of individual activity performance. Specifically, the Mission requested the evaluation team to provide answers to the following key questions:

- ▶ How have the performance of targeted institutions been enhanced as a result of investments?
- ▶ What are the new opportunities for investment?

With these questions in mind, the evaluation team assessed the development challenges and the context of assistance in Nigeria. An analysis of the actual activities, compared with what was planned, and their results were matched against the anticipated impacts that USAID wished to achieve. The appropriateness and strengths of the implemented activities were assessed and, based on the findings, lessons learned were delineated and recommendations were developed.

The team consisted of two evaluators, with significant assistance from Sundaa Bridgett, a Democracy and Governance Officer from USAID/Washington. Prior to departure to Abuja, the team spent four days (May 12-15) in planning sessions on evaluation methodology and questionnaires for interviews. The team also met with officials working on the Nigeria desks at USAID/Washington and State Department. In addition, meetings and telephone interviews were conducted with officials of the implementing partners' headquarters. The team undertook fieldwork over a period of 10 days (May 19-29, 2003). In order to maximize its time, while in the field, the team organized itself by deciding on a 'division of labor,' with Yinka Oyinlola assessing the activities on electoral processes and political strengthening while Philip Griffin evaluated legislative strengthening activities. In addition to reviewing an extensive array of documents, the team conducted interviews with a total of 92 people. Although site visits were planned, travel restrictions based on security concerns prevented travel outside of Abuja.

B. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this evaluation was rapid appraisal and case study. This choice was predicated on USAID's stated purpose of understanding the 'why' and 'how' of impact and the need to generate suggestions for the future. This methodology allowed for a descriptive and qualitative assessment of impact in the absence of quantitative and more representative data. The methodology was deemed as the most appropriate given the imperative of analyzing previously collected data as well as the short timeframe within which the evaluation was to be completed (ten days of field work).

The evaluation team was able to gather systematic but limited information for reporting results and issues for management action. The technique consisted of secondary data collection and key informant interviews. The first technique was a documentation review of other assessments, implementing partners' proposals and quarterly reports, performance management plans, and other bibliographic materials on recent Nigerian democratic experience. The second, key informant interviews, were conducted with the staff of USAID, the State Department, implementing partners and Nigerian beneficiaries.

To discern patterns, trends, and comparisons, content analysis was utilized to sift through the interviews and existing data. Since measurable impact was difficult to achieve, as a result of the constraints enumerated below, a "chain of events" approach was used to outline direct and causal linkages of changes that took place as a result of the specific activities. This approach reduced the chances of bias or of finding excuses for non-attainable desired impacts; rather, the evaluation examined the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of activity outputs.

C. EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

This evaluation faced several important constraints which had a cumulative impact on its overall conduct. The first and most important limitation was the time available. As stated earlier, the

team had only 10 days of fieldwork in which to measure the impact of four activities amounting to approximately \$16 million dollars over a 4-5 year period. Time constraints limited the team's ability to interview a wider number of beneficiaries. Time also imposed limitations on the evaluation methodology because approaches such as focus group interviews, sampling, and triangulation (i.e. use of more than one method of data collection) were severely curtailed.

Security issues restricted the team's ability to travel to activity sites and resulted in an inability to measure the extent or depth of impact of USAID's assistance to eight state legislatures, grassroots political party development and, to a limited extent, electoral assistance such as poll worker training and work with State Independent Electoral Commissions. In conducting evaluations, it is often problematic to extrapolate and measure impact on the broader society without receiving testimonials from a broader audience in the locales where assistance interventions were conducted.

Incomplete performance and complimentary monitoring systems limited the team's ability to have empirical evidence of impact as well as to disaggregate data, particularly those related to gender and the role of local partners. This constraint made it difficult to quantify data where it could have been possible.

Another limitation the team faced was the fact that virtually all the direct beneficiaries who were interviewed were recommended by the implementing partners. While the interviewees provided valuable insights on the performance of activities, it would have been more credible to have other independent sources of information as a way of reducing bias and cross-checking of information.

While the evaluation team takes responsibility for its findings, the above constraints and limitations did have an effect on the interpretation, accuracy, and validity of information. In arriving at its conclusions and recommendations, the team relied heavily on its technical expertise, comparable experiences, and a thorough analysis of documents reviewed.

II. COUNTRY SETTING

With the exception of a few brief and failed flirtations, Nigeria has little tradition of a democratic system with multi-polar centers of power. Previous attempts (in 1964 and 1983) have followed a recurring pattern: the incumbent regime, desperate to cling to the lucrative opportunities of public office, has been unable to resist rigging the results in a variety of ways. After the resultant public outcry and civil unrest, the military stepped in with claims that it was the only force capable of restoring public order. These military exercises of political power lasted for nearly 29 of Nigeria's 42 years of independence from Britain.

After another period of 14 years of uninterrupted military rule (1984-1998), Nigeria began another process of democratic transition that culminated in the inauguration of President Olusegun Obasanjo as a democratically-elected leader on May 29, 1999. However, the successive authoritarian regimes left an adverse legacy on Nigeria's overall development. For all its wealth, the country is one of the most indebted nations (approximately \$28 billion). The factors most often cited for this are the corruption of government officials, the siphoning off of oil revenues to benefit only a few in power and the lack of any oversight to minimize this corruption and pilfering. Nigeria is beset with regional, tribal, and religious differences that flare up with all too great frequency. HIV/AIDS infection rates have steadily increased and are on their way to

equaling those elsewhere in Africa unless dramatic steps are taken in the very near term. Because of Nigeria's repressive history, the building of civil society and institutions lags far behind.

It is important to note that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership."¹

The 1999 elections, despite the fact that they represented only a first step at resolving the above problem of leadership, were met with both national and international euphoria. Nevertheless, the new administration confronted a wide array of problems that made democratic consolidation tenuous. Notable amongst these problems were the provision of basic services, poverty, effective and accountable government, economic crisis, insecurity due to ethnic and religious conflict, the role of the military, and even Nigeria's basic identity as a nation-state.

However, over the intervening four years, Nigeria has made progress in establishing a foundation for democratic governance. Nigerians are still supportive of democracy and largely reject non-democratic political alternatives.² Election violence, while still problematic, is down significantly. The country's vibrant press exercises its freedoms to the full and the judiciary has over the past few years operated with renewed independence. The rate of human rights violations has substantially diminished. The vibrancy of civil society activities, particularly in the social sectors and in working collaboratively, as opposed to the confrontations that characterized the military era, points to a revitalization of political freedoms and pluralism. Furthermore, the military, which at least so far has accepted civilian supremacy, appears to be more professional. Nigeria has exercised a constructive leadership role both continentally and internationally.

Despite these encouraging developments and continued public support for democracy, most Nigerians reportedly consider the "democracy dividend" to have been elusive. The overall performance of the political transition of the last four years has been characterized largely by Executive-Legislature stalemate, lack of accountability of the political leadership, a stagnant economy, pervasive corruption, grim social indicators, and tribal and religious conflicts with resultant insecurity.

It is against this backdrop, and within this context, that the United States Government, working through the US Agency for International Development, embarked on assisting Nigeria to "rebuild its economy, heal national and ethnic divisions, and advance its democratic agenda."³

¹ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Heinemann, 1984.

² In a recent survey on "Changes in Attitudes Toward Democracy and Markets in Nigeria," 71 percent of Nigerians expressed their preference for democracy and 80 percent explicitly reject a return to military rule. Afro Barometer, December 2001.

³ "Nigeria: Supporting A New Path to Democracy, Prosperity and Leadership," Executive Summary of the US Inter-Agency Assessment, October 1, 1999, p. 3.

III. USAID'S DG PROGRAM APPROACH

Prior to June 1998, especially during the military dictatorship of Sanni Abacha, USAID's support to Nigeria was confined to humanitarian assistance. However, following the death of Abacha in June 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar's government embarked on a number of political reforms that included a transition from military to civilian rule. To assist the Government of Nigeria (GON) during this transition, the U.S. Government (USG) provided \$5 million in elections support - specifically for training poll workers, for domestic election monitors, election supplies and logistical aid. After the elections, and before the inauguration of the new government, an additional \$2 million was made available to train 11,000 elected officials in the fundamentals of representative democracy, accountability, transparency, constituent relations, and coalition building.

The inauguration of President Olusegun Obasanjo led to a period of partnership and engagement by the USG. In June of 1999, an Inter-Agency Assessment Team went to Nigeria, comprised of 17 members from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Justice and Transportation. One of the results of the Assessment was a transition strategy for the engagement of USAID with Nigeria.

The conclusions reached by that mission, and incorporated in the Transition Strategy, served as the underpinnings for USAID's Democracy and Governance (DG) programming during the transitional period from 1999 to 2003. The strategy provides for assistance to the GON and civil society to ensure that the "transition to democratic civilian governance is sustained" and to strengthen the GON's ability to govern responsibly. The strategy adopts a two-track approach, short-term and long-term. In the short term, immediate assistance was geared towards addressing issues that could derail Nigeria's political transition, namely the role of the military and concomitant civilian oversight; crime and corruption; government-societal consensus on economic reform; and regional conflicts. Longer-range programming was aimed at strengthening the institutional foundations for democracy and good governance.

The problem analyses underlying the DG strategy included: citizens' lack of trust in governing institutions; absence of accountability with the attendant opportunities for corruption; disarray of the electoral system and resultant lack of viable political support for elected officials; personality and patronage-driven political party structures; the weaknesses of countervailing institutions such as the police and judiciary; and the lack of women's participation in public life.

In light of the above problems, the DG strategy was designed to strengthen government institutions to be efficient and representative by achieving the following intermediate results: transparency and responsiveness of government institutions; establishing the foundations for fair and competitive electoral system; mitigating potentially destabilizing forces; and increasing participation by civil society in public deliberations and oversight of government.

To achieve the above results, the Mission began in 1999 to implement four activities that can be grouped into three major areas: election administration assistance; political party support; and legislative strengthening. The assistance for election administration, implemented by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), is premised on the expectation that the assistance would encourage the Election Commission (INEC) to initiate key reforms to improve the administration of future elections. These would include facilitating inter-party dialogue;

electoral law reform with clear provisions for improving accountability; and an open, transparent and technically sound electoral process.

To strengthen political parties, the International Republican Institute (IRI) implements an activity that assumes that an increase in political parties' capacity will lead to a more effective and representative role for citizens in public policy development. Progress in this area would be indicated by greater internal democracy within the parties, platform development on key national issues and a greater role for women in the party leaderships and hierarchies.

Finally, to accomplish the establishment of transparency and responsiveness of government institutions, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID) are strengthening the capacity of national and state legislatures. NDI works with the National Assembly while MCID assists state legislatures, legislators, staffers and executive branch officials. It was expected that as a result the National Assembly would demonstrate increased ability to represent citizen interests in policy making and be more receptive to the input of citizens. The support to lower-level deliberative bodies was to enable the state legislatures to increase their ability to represent citizens' interests in government decision making. These efforts were to mirror those at the National Assembly.

IV. PROGRAM DIRECT RESULTS AND IMPACT

This chapter assesses the activities of each of the implementing partners of USAID/Nigeria's program in support of electoral processes, political party development, and legislative strengthening. Each activity purpose is stated together with the strategies employed for achieving anticipated results (outputs). The summary of activities subsumes a review of the outputs based on the objectives and the indicators outlined in the cooperative agreements, work plans, and performance monitoring plans of the respective implementing partners. These outputs are juxtaposed with what happened as a result of the activity, i.e. the outcomes. A key question for the evaluation team was to what extent USAID's intervention made a difference based on the development hypothesis of what changes must occur at the end of the activity.

Recognizing the tremendous challenges posed by the environment for activity implementation, the tenuous and shifting conditions over which neither USAID nor the implementing partners had control, and the problem of establishing causality, the team arrived at its findings by applying three evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness. Effectiveness refers to whether the activity produced an actual, and not potential or theoretical, medium or long-term developmental change through its chosen approach; efficiency speaks to whether the effect was achieved reasonably in terms of effort and/or expense; and appropriateness looks at how else the same effect could have been achieved so as to attain sustainability.

The team is cognizant that control of activities and their outputs is within the management of the activities, and can largely be dealt with by project management adjustments. By contrast, the achievement of outcomes depends on exogenous factors of how target institutions and direct beneficiaries respond to the activity. However, in order to come up with lessons learned and a set of recommendations, the team focused on whether outcomes are or not being achieved.

A. INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS (IFES)

The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) has been supporting the strengthening of Nigeria's electoral administration and processes since 1999. The \$4.2 million cooperative agreement runs through December 2003. The goal of IFES' activity is to increase the professionalism of election administration through the following objectives:

- ▶ Development of INEC's (Independent National Electoral Commission) capacity to monitor operational effectiveness;
 - ▶ Acquisition of basic skills and understanding of best practices by election administrators;
 - ▶ Promotion of regular consultative meetings at state and local levels between INEC and political parties;
 - ▶ Facilitation of cooperation on joint and/or complementary projects between INEC and civil society; and
 - ▶ Assistance to INEC to prepare for the 2007 elections.
- To support the above objectives, IFES is engaged in the following specific activities:
- ▶ Performance monitoring and evaluation for INEC;
 - ▶ Training for State Independent Electoral Commissioners (SIECs);
 - ▶ Training for Resident Electoral Commissioners and INEC's senior staff;
 - ▶ Polling station official training program development;
 - ▶ Logistics organization and planning support;
 - ▶ Workshops on constructive relationships between INEC and political parties;
 - ▶ Grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) to enable involvement in the election process;
 - ▶ Post-election assessment; and
 - ▶ Conference on legislative/regulatory reform.

In addition to the above activities, in 2002 IFES requested USAID's approval to reprogram funds so as to procure materials (plastic ballot box seals and tamper-evident plastic envelopes) to improve the transparency of Nigeria's 2003 elections. Furthermore, IFES provided support to INEC to enable quick dissemination of election results in "difficult" communication areas in addition to completing the Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT) program in all the 36 states of Nigeria. The final element of the reprogramming request was the development of a website for IFES/Nigeria and collection of data on women voter turn-out during the 2003 elections.

Underlying IFES' activity is the assumption that a more professional INEC, with improved relationships with political parties and CSOs, will contribute to USAID's objective of establishing "the foundation for a fair and competitive electoral system" and the sub-goal of "restoring public confidence in civilian-led democratic governance."

During the implementation of the above activities, IFES achieved the following results:

- ▶ Provided technical support to INEC for the development of a three-year strategic plan through a process that involved 10,000 Nigerians in 37 public fora nationwide;
- ▶ Conducted Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT) for over 500 electoral officers in 23 of the 36 states;
- ▶ Trained 324 State Independent Electoral Commissioners and Secretaries;

- ▶ Trained the staff of INEC's Public Affairs Department in voter education program development;
- ▶ Provided technical assistance to INEC on options for a new voter registration system;
- ▶ Trained the staff of the Information Technology Department on the management of voter registration database;
- ▶ Assisted INEC for the design of a poll worker training manual;
- ▶ Trained INEC research staff on performance monitoring;
- ▶ Trained INEC operational staff on logistic planning;
- ▶ Sponsored 36 workshops for state and local election officers on building constructive relationships with political parties;
- ▶ Provided sub-grants to 3 CSOs (Community Action for Popular Participation –CAPP, African Center for Democratic Governance –AFRIGOV, and Legal Defense Center - LDC) to improve cooperation with INEC; and
- ▶ Provided material support to INEC: printing of the 2002 electoral law, trainers' guide, poll assistant instruction sheets, and polling station manuals; procured tamper-evident plastic envelopes for results and ballot papers, and nylon ballot box seals; and provided communication support for transmission of election results in 154 local government areas in eight states.

Evaluation Findings

IFES' input contributed to some important outcomes in the Nigerian electoral process. INEC's Chairman, Dr. Abel Guobadia, told us that there was a 75% enhanced efficiency in the speed at which voters were registered and processed for the elections.⁴ This performance was attributed to the technical assistance that INEC's IT Department received from IFES. In addition, as a result of that support, INEC was able to improve its inter-departmental synergies. There was reportedly an improved efficiency between the performance of the electoral officers who participated in the BEAT program and the ad-hoc staff who did not benefit from BEAT.⁵ The Elections Training Unit averred that, as a result of IFES' technical assistance, it had to raise the bar on the quality of its recruited election officials. A BEAT graduate, who had served as an Electoral Officer since 1988, stated that the program enriched his ability to effectively distribute election materials on polling day.⁶

There are eight states in Nigeria with contiguous locations with neighboring countries, such as Chad and Cameroon, and access to them is only possible through these countries. Prior to the 2003 elections, INEC's transported election materials and results by non-conventional means with potentially serious consequences. However, with IFES' communications support, INEC was not only able to establish a credible process of results transmission, but the results were instantly received at the central collation centers via the satellite equipment provided by IFES.

The manuals that IFES printed for polling officials made a considerable contribution to mitigating conflict on the polling day. Anecdotal information describes instances of confusion on polling day, the resolution of which was made possible by referring to the manuals on proper

⁴ The team could not verify or corroborate this self assessment by INEC because of time constraints and the lack of a baseline against which improvement could be measured. There were, however, reports that contradicted INEC's self assessment as evidenced by observers' reports of the April elections.

⁵ Statement of Mr. Ena Isiauwe, Head of Elections Training Unit of INEC; May 26, 2003.

⁶ Statement of Mr. Lateef Yakubu, Electoral Officer in Abuja; May 26, 2003

procedures. The CSOs that received sub-grants from IFES affirmed that in order to comply with IFES' requirements, they had to improve their administrative and financial systems. These improved systems have, in turn, made the CSOs more attractive to other international donors.

However, bearing in mind the premise that training and technical assistance are necessarily aimed at performance enhancement, the overall operational effectiveness of INEC was not deemed satisfactory. The administration of the 2003 elections left a lot to be desired "in the number of trained polling station officials [...], compilation of voters' list and [...] voter identification system."⁷ Although logistics management was an area in which INEC received technical assistance from IFES, Nigerian Civil Society observers of the elections alleged "inadequate preparation by INEC, resulting in logistic problems and inefficiency of its officials."⁸ Given that INEC was assisted to develop a strategic plan, in May 2000, and recognizing that the Commission was interested in "improving management, integrating systems and focusing on specific areas such as information technology, planning, and logistics,"⁹ it is nevertheless doubtful to what extent INEC's operational effectiveness was enhanced, especially since "minimum standards for democratic elections were not met"¹⁰ during the 2003 elections.

Another area in which INEC received assistance was to improve its relationship with political parties and CSOs. Although the comments from the two entities ought to be contextualized in the Nigerian environment, the overall feedback from representatives of political parties and CSOs was not positive. It is understood that INEC would not receive a favorable rating from the newer political parties because the Commission had originally, although eventually overruled by the courts, refused to register 24 of the political parties; nonetheless, even some of the first and second 'generations' of the parties were not complimentary of INEC's ability to engage them.

It was alleged that INEC only reached out to the CSOs in order to give the appearance of doing the right thing but that the Commission resisted substantive engagement. For example, INEC submitted a draft electoral bill for comments from CSOs in 37 public fora sponsored by IFES. However, in the bill that INEC eventually submitted to the National Assembly, none of the comments from the CSOs were included.¹¹ INEC admitted that it had "not done enough and early enough"¹² in terms of its relationship with civil society.

A key finding on IFES' activity was that there were certain factors beyond its control that constrained achievement. For example, INEC was faced with difficulties that stemmed from its constitutional/regulatory framework as well as from the GON's failure to disburse INEC's operational funds in a timely fashion. In addition, the departure of the first IFES Country Director, due to ill health, created a lull with attendant consequences on momentum in activity

⁷ Statement by the African Union Observer/Monitoring Team on the 2003 Presidential, Gubernatorial and National Assembly Elections in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, issued on April 22, 2003 by the AU Observer Team in Abuja; p. 3.

⁸ Nigerian Civil Society Statement on the General Elections of April 12th and 19th, 2003; p. 2

⁹ IFES Quarterly Report, April 1-June 30, 2001, p. 2

¹⁰ Second Preliminary Statement of European Union's Election Observation Mission to Nigeria 2003; Abuja, April 22, 2003; p. 1

¹¹ Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Executive Director, International Human Rights Group, Abuja; interview of May 21, 2003

¹² Interview with Dr. Abel Guobodia, INEC's Chairman, May 28, 2003

implementation. However, given IFES' engagement and close collaboration with INEC since 1999, some problems could have been anticipated and timely adjustments made.¹³

Lessons Learned

In order for training to have a meaningful impact, it must be conducted at all levels (national to ward) and for all types of personnel (permanent and ad-hoc). The impact of the BEAT program was reduced because the ward-level ad-hoc staff was not targeted. Although it was assumed that by training INEC's trainers, they would in turn train polling officials, there was no follow-on monitoring to ensure that INEC's Training Unit did in fact conduct the training. Consequently, the electorate was unable to feel the impact of BEAT.

There appeared to be a disconnect between the conceptual design and implementation of IFES' activity. The activity was designed as a long-term institutional development of INEC, so as to achieve operational effectiveness. However, the implementation approach was heavily focused on the 2003 elections. It is recognized that "on-site advisory teams, serving an election commission on a long-term basis, have proven to be a successful means of securing credible and effective election administration."¹⁴ However, the delivery of some of the technical assistance was too late to have an impact; for example, the logistics management support and performance monitoring technical assistance were only provided in November and December 2002 respectively.

Another important lesson is that technological support requires technical and technological adaptation in order to be fully successful. This was evident in the marginal value added of assisting INEC to develop a national logistics election plan. One of the objectives of this assistance was the development of an electoral material control database. While this could have tremendously facilitated the work of INEC's field operations staff as well as enhanced organizational effectiveness, this did not occur because most of the logistics personnel did not even know how to use computers.

In considering approaches for activity implementation, it is important to consider the "corporate culture" of the target institution. By and large, most INEC staff are civil servants with civil service ethics and mentality. To encourage them to be results-oriented (a private sector culture) and to build constituencies (political parties and CSOs) requires an attitudinal shift so that modernization efforts can yield the desired results.

Given the civil service culture, hierarchical by nature, the areas with the greatest impact within INEC had the buy-in of INEC's Chairman. The Director of the IT Department attributed his success to political support from the Chairman, despite an institution-wide skepticism with regard to computerization.¹⁵ This supports the perception that for impact to be achieved, it is important to win the political support of the institution's top leadership.

¹³ For example, in the BEAT program, efforts could have been made to either speed up training or narrow the geographic areas of coverage so that training could permeate all levels of election workers in a few targeted states. In addition, IFES' Quarterly Reports sometimes included a 'Lessons Learned' section but there was little evidence that program implementation benefited from such lessons.

¹⁴ "Managing Assistance in Support of Political Processes", Center for Democracy and Governance, United States Agency for International Development, January 2000.

¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Tunji Adesina, Acting Director of INEC's Department of Information Technology; May 27, 2003

Recommendations

It is important to pay attention to the type of capacity enhancement that is required at specific levels. For certain targeted audiences, while technical skills may be required, it may also be important to consider complementary management skills in order to achieve impact. For example, assistance to INEC's cadre of Directors could have included some management training so that assistance interventions might have maximum effect. Such training might have had the value added of attitudinal re-orientation that could filter through the organization. The strategic plan that was not effectively implemented was largely due to insufficient skills in management principles and knowledge.

It is recommended that future capacity building efforts include the provision of technical assistance in the form of an "embedded" person within INEC's top leadership. The initial success and access of IFES was due to the fact that the Country Director was always present in the corridors of INEC. This was effective and worthy of replication.

For INEC to improve its performance there is an unquestionable need for it to receive a push from the outside, particularly from civil society but also from the political parties. Despite the deficiencies in the current electoral bill, the eventual amendments to it were the result of the lobbying and advocacy of a coalition of CSOs – the Electoral Reform Network. In an environment such as Nigeria's, with little incentive for civil servants to be "customer-oriented," an effective approach is to have the "customers" constantly and consistently demand "good service."

Continued assistance to the electoral process should not wait till 2007. Some of the immediate activities that can have great impact on future elections include rebuilding the trust between INEC and the political parties as well as providing support to the constitutional/regulatory reforms that will surely take place. Furthermore, assistance can be provided now to INEC to develop a good core-training unit and to invest in voter/civic education, such as jingles, so that the electorate will be better educated to safeguard the transparency of the process in the future. It is also likely that a population census will take place in 2005;¹⁶ support to that process will be a worthy investment that will produce significant impact in election administration.

B. INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI)

The International Republican Institute (IRI) is implementing a political party strengthening and electoral processes support activity. This \$2.75 million activity, conducted since 1999, is aimed at capacity enhancement of political parties so as to foster a legitimate and transparent electoral process that can enhance political stability. To achieve this goal, IRI's program objectives include:

- ▶ Assist political parties in addressing the risk of electoral conflict;
- ▶ Promote effective participation of political parties in 2003 elections;
- ▶ Promote issue-based political agendas;
- ▶ Promote women's participation in political parties and poll monitoring; and
- ▶ Enhance the skills of party poll agents.

¹⁶ Interview with Dr. Abel Guobadia, *op. cit.*

The following are IRI activities to achieve the above objectives:

- ▶ Training of party officials on election procedures;
- ▶ Workshops on issue based political party agendas;
- ▶ Conflict resolution roundtable;
- ▶ Seminars on bringing party leaders to the table to resolve differences;
- ▶ Assistance to enhance fair party registration;
- ▶ Training of party poll monitors;
- ▶ Campaign training;
- ▶ Publication of poll watchers' guide and ballot information sheet; and
- ▶ Provision of support to National Assembly's IT Center.

The premise for IRI's activity was the assumption that, for USAID to achieve its objective of establishing "the foundation for a fair and competitive electoral system," political players would have to be educated, a greater role for women in the political system had to be promoted and the organizational capabilities of political parties had to be strengthened.

In implementing the above activities, IRI has achieved the following results:

- ▶ Conducted grassroots political party training, at the local government level, on: fundraising, communication, membership drives, conflict resolution, and record keeping;
- ▶ Organized a Women Candidate Development program that brought together female politicians, business leaders, media representatives, and CSO activists;
- ▶ Organized 6 political party leadership training on: administration, message development, outreach, voter education, fundraising, and membership development;
- ▶ Provided technical assistance to two political associations to be registered as parties;
- ▶ Trained political party on communications and issue-based politics;
- ▶ Organized conflict roundtable discussions involving 18 political parties;
- ▶ Facilitated the development and adoption of Code of Conduct for the elections by 27 political parties;
- ▶ Published and distributed 1.6 million party poll agent handbooks; and
- ▶ Conducted step-down poll watchers' training for 529 participants in 17 states.

Evaluation Findings

IRI's training appeared to have been well-received by the political parties, particularly the Female Candidate Development Program. In addition to fostering inter-state partnerships, the forums for women politicians provided opportunities for experience sharing between women politicians as well as with others from outside the political terrain. There was anecdotal evidence of the positive impact of this program. For example, IRI's training enhanced the ability of the women's caucus of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to seek constitutional reforms that created opportunities for greater participation by women in party leadership structures.¹⁷

Furthermore, the IRI training approach increased participants' skill and expertise because of the request, at the beginning of training, that participants identify and set personal goals. This success

¹⁷ Interview with Mrs. Josephine Anenih, Women's Leader of PDP, May 27, 2003

could be attributed to a thirst for knowledge by women to participate in the political process and their desire to be politically mainstreamed.

The publication and translation, into three major Nigerian languages, of the Poll Agent Handbook contributed to mitigating polling day conflict. Observer accounts cited instances in which the Handbook was often consulted when disputes arose on the procedural aspects of polling. Some parties were reported to have utilized IRI training to improve their organizational structures. Unverified reports indicated that the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) embarked on developing the party's position on health issues as a result of IRI training. The Kano state chapter of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) began publishing a newsletter after attending IRI's workshop on fundraising.¹⁸

Although the political parties spoke positively about IRI's training, no evidentiary example (anecdotal or empirical) was provided to measure the extent that the assistance has enhanced their organizational effectiveness or competitive preparedness for the elections.¹⁹ This lack of examples limited the evaluation team's ability to establish plausible or causal linkages between the training and the performance of the parties.

Although all parties urged continuation of IRI's political party support, there was little evidence to suggest that the skills acquired enhanced the parties' competitiveness during the last elections or that the parties were better organized administratively or had increased their members. It is important to note that demand is a useful proxy indicator of the impact of development assistance, particularly in the DG sector.

Lessons Learned

An important lesson is that resource discrepancy, amongst parties, will continue to be a constraining factor on political party development. With politics as monetarized as it is in Nigeria, and given that parties are largely associations for power, expectations for leveling the political playing field can only be modest. Political party development is a long-term process of assistance that requires patience and lower milestones for impact achievement.

The approach of 'step-down' training of trainers could have yielded greater impact, especially given how widely the Poll Agent Handbook was put to use. However, this impact was reduced because trainings were a single one-day event and the parties that were to replicate the training could not do so because of financial constraints. Moreover, lecture-style reading for training is not an effective adult training methodology, especially for political activists. Equally, there was a lack of follow-on monitoring of whether the parties replicated the trainings. Of equal importance was the information that most of the trained polling agents did not officiate, on polling day, because they could not be compensated for their service by the parties.

¹⁸ Information provided by Mary Angelini, IRI's Country Director, May 24, 2003. This information could not, however, be corroborated by the National Representatives of the two parties because the improvements presumably took place at the sub-national levels.

¹⁹ For example, the National Secretary of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Air Commodore I. Nkanga, acknowledged the utility of IRI's assistance to NDP when it was still a political association. He claimed, however, that NDP would still have been registered as a political party even without the assistance; he buttressed his view by stating that none of the 24 parties that subsequently received registration from INEC received IRI's assistance.

Political party assistance must factor in environmental conditions (political, institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural) to be relevant and useful. Unlike in developed democracies where citizens identify with the ideology or program of a party, join as members and, sometimes, contribute in-kind for their parties to succeed, the spirit of volunteerism is yet to take root in Nigeria's nascent democracy. Party membership is yet to develop as a civic choice, loyalty, ideology, or conviction. The consequence of this, for example on polling agent training, is that assistance efforts need to include consideration of whether those trained could be remunerated so that there can be a return on the assistance investment.

For political party development to succeed, it is imperative that the needs of the parties be defined by the party leaders themselves and not by the implementing partner. Although party leaders can be assisted to look beyond traditional approaches or short-term needs, the reality is that without their specifying what they need, assistance may be given and received but it may not be put to use. In fact, this lack of a feeling of ownership was why some parties sent low-ranking party officials to training and why, subsequently, the knowledge stayed with the low-ranking official without having any institutional impact.

In targeting women politicians, a single-gender network is the most productive approach. Women participants in training reported being at ease when the room was filled with other women and, in certain instances and within some cultural/religious settings, the presence of men can have intimidating effects on women. Furthermore, direct communication with women politicians, through their party caucuses rather than via the party hierarchy, yields greater impact. There were states, e.g. Bauchi, where the women's leader was male.

Weak administrative structures affect the parties' ability to take full advantage of party building efforts. Future efforts need to take this weakness into consideration. The most effective way to reform party systems is to encourage citizens to apply legitimate pressures so that political parties can behave as leadership training grounds.

Recommendations

Political party training is required at all levels (from national to ward). It is recognized that resources may not permit full penetration at all levels and therefore that the program will use the 'step-down' technique. In that event, there needs to be a built-in mechanism of follow-on monitoring to ensure that replication of training is conducted by the parties. Another pertinent suggestion, given the limited resources, is to develop focal states, instead of targeting the entire country, and deepen capacity development in those states.

It is recommended that training content be adapted to the local environment and that the current approach of standardized training be reconsidered. This standardized approach draws heavily from the American experience by training in such areas as basic party organization and functions, how to conduct party meetings, and membership recruitment. For future programming, a pre-assessment must be carried out to gauge the actual, not presumed, level of party organization and the knowledge base of party officials. Without such a pre-assessment, the efficacy of training is doubtful.

It is important that trainers understand local realities so that training can have relevance for the target audience. Some parties disclosed that some trainers used analogies of experiences in developed democracies that had little relevance to the Nigerian context. It was also observed that

there was a preconceived bias, by Nigerians, that trainers who appear young could not have had sufficient hands-on experience to convey political knowledge. While this bias may appear subjective and irrelevant, unquestionably, trust between the technical experts or trainers and the party representatives is essential to how the message of the training is received.

Support to women's participation in the political process merits a scaling-up. This recommendation is premised not only on the evidence that this support has worked but also on the fact that this represents a window of opportunity to satisfy an insatiable need of mainstreaming women in politics. A possible approach is to commence by supporting women's groups in specific political parties and then facilitate opportunities for such women politicians to work together across party line.

It is recommended that the opportunity be capitalized upon, especially with the increased number of female Deputy Governors, to create a network of women political leaders (executive and legislative members as well as other women party leaders). In addition to, this women politicians network, serving as a forum for exchange of experiences, it can also provide access to or serve as a clearinghouse of relevant resource materials and other documents on women in politics. In terms of capacity building, the first step should be technical assistance in the areas of communications; negotiations; and alliance building.

In order to achieve transparency at polls, an effective strategy is to empower voters to know procedures of polling so that they can be more vigilant to safeguard the credibility of the electoral process. The best approach to achieving this voter empowerment is through civic and voter education with a complementary assistance to domestic monitors. It is recommended that the support for capacity enhancement be provided to the existing pool of domestic observers/monitors that worked with international monitors during the 2003 elections.

C. MISSISSIPPI CONSORTIUM FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MCID)

The Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID) is implementing a \$4.2 million, over four years, state legislative strengthening program. The goal of this program is to enhance the capacity of state legislatures to carry out oversight, representation, and law making functions. Since 1999, eight of Nigeria's 36 states are being targeted: Adamawa, Benue, Edo, Enugu, Katsina, Lagos, Niger and Rivers.

To achieve its stated goals, the following are the objectives of MCID's activity:

- ▶ Enhance an understanding of the legislative process;
- ▶ Provide comparative opportunities, on the functioning of US legislative process, to legislators, staffers and executive branch officials;
- ▶ Enhance the analytical capability of the target group;
- ▶ Develop a cadre of young Nigerians to understand the legislative process and effectively utilize it in carrying out their responsibilities as aides and/or lawmakers; and
- ▶ Establish linkages between Nigerian Regional technology workshops and their U.S. counterparts, thus providing a resource for continued professional development.

The activities to support the above objectives include:

- ▶ Training workshops;
- ▶ Study tours;
- ▶ Production and provision of information resources; and
- ▶ Legislative intern program.

After two years, of program implementation, MCID re-focused its activity to lay greater emphasis on budgeting and legislative drafting, engagement of civil society in legislative process, training on key policy issues (economic reform and poverty alleviation), and greater utilization and management of information resources.

The following are the accomplishments of MCID's activities:

- ▶ Conduct of numerous technology and legislative workshops for legislators, staffers and executive branch officials;
- ▶ Training of over 100 trainers on Legislative Research and Drafting;
- ▶ Establishment of a process to analyze pending or passed Bills, with local partner Nigeria Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER);
- ▶ Organization of study tours for legislators, staffers and executive branch officials;
- ▶ Establishment and management of a legislative internship program;
- ▶ Production of training and information materials such as Democracy Manual.

Evaluation Findings

The state legislatures have underachieved and to a great extent have not been able to carve out their niche in the political equation especially if the performance of the legislatures is assessed on the program objectives of oversight and representation functions. The obstacles present at the national level are also present at the state level, only accentuated; consequently, several of the Findings, Lessons Learned and Recommendations mirror those at the national level.

The State Governors were unwilling to cede power for the legislatures to effectively perform, thereby resulting in lack of checks and balances that naturally occurs within branches of government. For example, in Niger State, while it is positive that there was no acrimony between, the Executive and Legislature, it could be interpreted that the legislature served as another agency of the Executive because it was disclosed that the Governor usually passed instructions to the legislature on issues important to him.²⁰ The idea of the legislature as another center of political power in the state, if not a counterweight, had collectively eluded the legislators. However, on the other end of the spectrum is Enugu State which became so riven with internal dissent and Executive-Legislature squabbling that it was virtually moribund.

Furthermore, the state legislators' inexperience inhibited their ability to be able to assert their constitutional powers to bring about oversight while, to a large extent, they did not efficiently perform their representation role as expected by their constituencies. Not achieving the desired

²⁰ Interviews with representatives of Niger State Legislature: Alhaji Buhari Mohammed; Idris Adamu Kuta, Permanent Secretary and Clerk; Tafida Yakubu Pandogar, Principal Legislative Officer; and Shehu Mohammed, Principal Official Reporter.

impact of representation can be attributed to the “character” of some of the legislators whose priorities were anything but legislation.

Notwithstanding the above assessment, MCID’s activity achieved some notable impact, particularly in addressing the provision of important “democratic dividends.” For example, Edo, Rivers and Enugu state legislatures passed legislation to abolish female genital mutilation and other related harmful tradition practices against women. In addition, in Rivers State, after one of the MCID’s trainings, the state legislature embarked upon and instituted broad new programs of public information about Committee hearings and legislative decisions. The Edo and Niger States legislators passed laws establishing legislative service commissions to manage staffing. This had a multiplier effect in that Lagos, Rivers, and Enugu states followed suit in passing similar laws in 2000.

By and large, there were testimonials that MCID’s trainings were well received. The knowledge imparted on budgetary prioritization and formulation was noteworthy and instructive.²¹ The seminar, for Adamawa State legislature, on “Strengthening State Government” was acclaimed as an excellent opportunity for state legislators to liaise and exchange information on challenges and solutions.

MCID completed many of the tasks laid out in its work plan including the conducting national workshops and needs assessment, establishment of in-country office, regional seminars and the legislative internship program. In conversations with some of the interns²² this program has achieved results and had a positive impact. Some interns were eventually brought on as permanent staff in Niger State while others were able to insinuate themselves into the fabric of their respective legislatures.

Of equal importance was the materials, particularly the computers, provided which enhanced the work of the legislatures. Furthermore, MCID established a Resource Center in its Abuja’s office so that legislators and staff, visiting Abuja, could have a place to do research. While this concept may not be significant in other democratic environments, it is important to state that, in Nigeria, there are states with internet connectivity and electricity problems.²³

Lessons Learned

This activity focused on strengthening the capacity of legislators on lawmaking function but consideration ought to have been given to the fact that the mere enactment of laws is not sufficient. The systemic and procedural problems in implementing and enforcing laws passed need to be improved upon, dramatically. The program provided legislators and their staffs with legislative and technical training. Then they are provided with access to technology to facilitate the legislative process. For the Nigerian people to remain engaged and give the political/democratic maturation process time the laws promulgated must have a positive impact on people, institutions, systems and procedures. All these endeavors will prove fruitless if the laws passed never have any positive impact on the population.

²¹ Honorable Samson Osagie from Edo State legislature

²² Zakari Tanko Muhammad, Buhari Abdualli and Faroul Umar Isah

²³ The representatives from Niger State said that electrification was one of their top three priorities and that there was no ISP in the entire state.

At the state level, the political system lacks accountability. The political system, at the state level, has an underdeveloped “demand” side component. While civil society partners were engaged, by MCID, the development of civil society as a function of the legislative process seemed to be lagging.

There were some laws that were passed whose effects were dubious.²⁴ However, it is noted that there were some successes in the promulgation of laws, in some states, with far-reaching consequences for Nigeria’s democratic development. For example, laws such as those on female genital mutilation in Benue State and Protection of Women and Children Rights of Inheritance in Adamawa State. If MCID takes credit and see a causal relationship between their programs and the promulgation of progressive laws, it must also accept criticism for those laws that would seem to be at odds with universally accepted democratic principles.

The phenomenon of “brain drain” or “training drain” due to early departure and high election turnover has implications on the return on investment of this program. The events of the last four years have shown that, in addition to internal political divisions, there was also an external pressure, applied from the executive on state legislators. This has caused some to depart early and others to move from one legislative Committee to the other. This flux, of legislators, applied to their staffs as well. As a result of the flux, it became difficult for legislators and their staff to develop expertise in specific areas or sectors with the possible effect of reducing their effectiveness.

There is also the issue of the low number of returning legislators. The development and transference of institutional knowledge under such circumstances is very difficult to achieve. If one were to adopt a simple formula of dividing the dollars spent on training by the number of past legislators and staff **returning** for the current legislative session in the states, the results would almost assuredly be alarming.

The expectations of what the state legislators could accomplish exceeded achievable results. The transition period, during which these programs were designed, was extremely short. Insufficient consideration was given to the reality of the state of Nigerian politics particularly at the state level. The absorptive capacity of the institutions focused on was either not considered or misjudged. It must be stated that many of these decisions were taken at the higher/highest levels of the US Government and any shortcomings in the needs assessment/strategic plan development phases of the operation are therefore not attributable to the USAID Mission or MCID.

Not sufficiently taking into account certain realities, such uninterrupted electricity supply as well as internet access and connectivity, dramatically lessened the impact of this activity. It was also imparted that general literacy was an issue in some areas. That is to say some elected official were in need of remedial reading and writing skills before moving onto to computer literacy.

For nearly two years of program implementation, MCID did not have a permanent presence in Nigeria. This, obviously, had inherent difficulties on program management The USAID mission admitted that this was an attempt at trying a “novel” approach. It is praiseworthy to “think outside the box” but this non-presence, on the ground, adversely affected greater accomplishment

²⁴ For example, Sharia law in Niger and Katsina states and laws related to perks for legislators; the latter in particular provided little or no benefit to the citizens.

of impact in that some of the program re-focusing, that MCID eventually embarked upon, could have occurred much earlier and more time would have been possible to see visible results before the end of the last legislatures terms.

Recommendations

The demand side (civil society) of the political equation must be strengthened in order for investments to yield meaningful impact. This must include institutional strengthening, and developing capacity for advocacy and lobbying. Additionally, the skills of monitoring the performances of elected officials must be introduced. NGO's and others must be assisted to follow the work introduced by their elected official. Based on these efforts, or lack thereof, the NGO's can then support or admonish these elected officials. This will foster accountability in the political equation otherwise elected officials will have no incentive to be responsive.

Work with key legislators and legislative staff must continue however, a tilt in emphasis of training towards **permanent** professional staff must be considered. The departure of many of the recipients of earlier training is notable. As the system matures, it can be expected that there would be an increase in the number and influence professional permanent staff. This is where the focus of activity should be, although not at the complete expense of key legislators and staff but realignment must occur for the sums of money spent to have a lasting impact. A natural place to begin would be with the MCID interns that have become permanent members of the state legislative bureaucracies.

Efforts should be increased to coordinate more closely with other international organizations working with state assemblies. For example, the European Union (EU) intends to embark on an assistance program to state legislatures and six states will be targeted.²⁵ Unfortunately there is only one overlap with the eight states where MCID is presently working. It is not clear if this was deliberate, i.e. focusing on states where no work had been done, thus far, or if it resulted from a lack of coordination. It is recommended that future efforts be focused on areas where there is a base of knowledge already present.

D. NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE (NDI)

The National Democratic Institute has been implementing a National Assembly strengthening program since 1999. This \$4.54 million, four-year program focuses on providing skills training and workshops in the areas of budget analysis, rules and procedure, role of committees, legislative drafting, constituency relations, the role of civil society and media, and the development of a legislative resources and IT Center. However, after two years of program implementation with lessons learned and the growth in the constitutional role of the national legislature as well as realities of election cycle, NDI re-focused its program to lay emphasis on capacity strengthening in accordance with the following objective areas:

- ▶ Strengthen the efficiency of key legislative committees, with the focus on training committee staff and improving the frequency and quality of committee hearings;
- ▶ Increase the involvement and capacity of Nigerian civil society organizations to participate in legislative business, including providing testimony, training, support and

²⁵ Interview with Adetokunbo George-Coker, EU's Program Manager.

- information to the national assembly committees, lawmakers and staff in a nonpartisan fashion;
- ▶ Reinforce linkages between legislators and constituents at the grassroots and district levels, as well as making the National Assembly in Abuja more accessible to citizens;
 - ▶ Enhance the ability of women legislators to serve as leaders in the National Assembly and actively participate in key legislative business; and
 - ▶ Foster greater responsiveness and transparency in governmental institutions.

With a general focus on committee strengthening, institutional development, collaboration with civil society, and constituency relations, the specific activities were:

- ▶ Training for Senators, Representative and their staffs;
- ▶ Technical resource support;
- ▶ Technology workshops;
- ▶ Production of information and training materials;
- ▶ Legislative internship program;
- ▶ Legislative drafting training;
- ▶ Civil society strengthening; and
- ▶ Sub-granting to NGOs.

In implementing the stated activities NDI achieved the following results:

- ▶ Initiated and managed a legislative fellows program;
- ▶ Took the lead in implementing the first phase of the National Assembly's IT program by developing an IT policy and equipping the IT Center;
- ▶ Produced training and information materials such as committee manuals, constituent outreach handbooks, constituent logs, budgetary and appropriations primers, etc.;
- ▶ Organized training workshops that were supplemented with one-on-one and small group technical assistance for Senators, Representative and their staffs;
- ▶ Provided technical assistance on several major policy initiatives, specifically on: 1999 and 2000 national budgets; 1999 and 2001 supplemental appropriations bills; Ethics Code of Conduct for the Senate; and other social security, disability and anti-corruption legislation;
- ▶ Organized, together with Pathfinder International/Nigeria, a public hearing on HIV/AIDS that brought several key actors together;
- ▶ Trained Committees' staffs on hearings preparations;
- ▶ Trained legislators and staff on constituency relations; and
- ▶ Provided sub-grants to five CSOs to reinforce relations amongst legislators, civil society, and the Nigerian public. This effort led to the opening of more than 50 functional constituency offices.

Evaluation Findings

The National Assembly was described to us as the greatest disappointment in Nigeria's transition to democracy. This must be the point of departure when discussing the findings of this assessment. However, the disappointment must be viewed in the context of Nigeria's lack of a tradition of a democratic system with multi-polar centers of power. Under such circumstances, it is not difficult to imagine that a national legislature would find it challenging to assert its power.

This poor rating of the performance of the National Assembly can be better understood in the context of the predominant power of the Executive Branch, the inexperience of the legislators and the aforementioned political culture. A relevant question is whether, after an extremely arduous learning process, the National Assembly will apply the lessons learned during the past four years to improve its performance in the future.

The IT Center at the National Assembly received high marks from all the parties involved and from observers. With the concomitant training provided to staffs and legislators, this program has made a large impact. This is evidenced not only by numerous testimonials²⁶ but by the fact that the National Assembly purchased additional computers to supplement those provided by NDI. This indicates the possibility of key “buy ins” by local partners. This “buy in” gives credence to the likely sustainability of the Center after the end of USAID’s assistance.

NDI also produced information materials such as committee manuals, constituent outreach handbooks, constituent logs, and budgetary and appropriations primers. Public hearings on key laws were held. These included but were not limited to the Freedom of Information Act, HIV/AIDS and budgets. One of the more interesting anecdotal accounts was of Nigerian military officers testifying on budget issues relating to military expenditures. For all the negative aspects of the past four years at the National Assembly, incidents like this create hope for effective civilian oversight of the military. Can one or should one extrapolate from the anecdotal evidence that this change has occurred? One certainly cannot and should not. However, it is illustrative of positive changes during this transitional phase.

NDI’s efforts to organize a Women’s Caucus were unable to gain traction. This occurred for several reasons, not the least of which was that none of the women Senators or Representatives would take the lead role in organizing it. This forced NDI to pursue this objective in other ways.

The basics of the committee system were established. NDI worked with the Speaker’s Office to develop a committee system. It was through this mechanism that NDI began working closely with the House Committee on Women’s Affairs and Youth Issues. This ultimately formed the nexus of their “Women’s and Youth Issues Caucus” which was in turn instrumental in planning a National Summit on Issues Related to Nigeria’s Women, Youth and Children. This was the avenue by which NDI pursued their ends of focusing on greater participation and influence of women in politics and of a greater emphasis on women’s issues.

NDI’s work with Pathfinder International/Nigeria on HIV/AIDS brought several key elements together. These were civil society, legislators and the executive. This work was designed to respond to constituent needs, especially in light of ever-increasing sero-prevalence rates. The project sensitized some elected officials by providing them with information and encouraged legislators to engage in dialogue with the Executive Branch. A hearing on HIV/AIDS was held and an “HIV/AIDS Awareness Poster” signed by political leaders from across the Nigerian political spectrum up to and including President Obasanjo was produced. The public hearings held on HIV/AIDS did not have the impact desired. The desire for personal political advantage overtook the intended purpose of these hearings and diluted much of any positive effects.

²⁶ Senators Peter Adeyemo and O. Osunbor; permanent professional staff members (Alh. Lawal Usman, Assistant Director of Computer Services, and Alh. Nasiru Arab, Deputy Clerk); and parliamentary observers (Uju Okagdue, TV Journalist-TV MINAJ)

HIV/AIDS activities engaged in at the constituency level were more successful due to the buy-in by the individual legislators.

NDI/Pathfinder work sets an example of cross-disciplinary synergy for the USAID mission because it appeared to have been completed in a very collegial and cooperative fashion between the DG and Health Offices at USAID. Additionally, the issue of the use of micro-credits to address the looming crisis of single-parent/adolescent head of household was raised. The single-parent/adolescent head of household phenomenon is an inevitable outgrowth of the HIV/AIDS crisis.²⁷

Overall, as stated earlier, the legislators and the National Assembly staff continue to lack experience. It can also be said that their quality varies greatly. Some international donors clearly erred in basing their assistance to “the National Assembly with the thought that the Assembly was filled with little Thomas Jeffersons running around.”²⁸ Thus not achieving all of the desired impacts of the legislative strengthening program can also be attributed to the character of some of the legislators. In short, some of the elected officials had priorities other than legislation.

Lessons Learned

The mere enactment of laws is not sufficient for program success. The enforcement aspect must also be addressed. The systemic and procedural problems in implementing and in the enforcement of laws passed must also be improved upon, dramatically.

The current programming provides legislators and their staff with legislative and technical training. Then they are provided with access to technology to facilitate the legislative process. For Nigerians to remain engaged, and given the political/democratic maturation process time, the laws promulgated must have a positive impact on people, institutions, systems and procedures. All these endeavors will prove fruitless if the laws passed never have any positive impact on the population.

The current political system lacks any kind of accountability component. The political system at all levels, but in particular the National and State Legislatures, lack virtually any kind of “demand” side pressures. While civil society partners have been engaged, by the implementing partners, the development of civil society as a function of the legislative process seems to be lagging. An example of the beginnings of this important dynamic was the work done in HIV/AIDS. The bringing together of civil society groups focused on an issue with members of the legislative and executive branches followed by an exchange of information and finally producing something concrete²⁹ illustrate the potential possibilities. While production of the poster illustrates the positive potential, the public hearings on HIV/AIDS indicate a need for improvement in the approach. It is critical to have the buy-in from leaders. They must be the right leaders, with the right intentions, and have a clear, agreed-upon vision of the process and objectives established up front. The final piece of the puzzle is for these civil society actors to continue to advocate and apply pressure to and hold the legislative and executive accountable for the work they do or do not do in this area. Without the key element of accountability, elected officials will have little or no incentive to be responsive to their constituencies.

²⁷ Interview with Mrs. Shagari, Pathfinder International

²⁸ Interview with Brian Brown, Political Counselor, US Embassy, Nigeria

²⁹ For example, a HIV/AIDS Awareness Poster

There have been some successes in the promulgation of laws at the National Assembly. These include the Electoral Act and several bills dealing with National Assembly infrastructure issues. There have also been laws passed whose benefits are dubious, to say the least. These include the debate and passage of laws wholly or partially focused on compensation and benefits issues for the Senators and Representatives. While these are also important issues it seemed at times as if these had priority over more pressing issues. If the implementing partners take credit and see a causal relationship between their programs and the promulgation of progressive and positive laws they must then also accept criticism for those laws that would seem to be at odds with the stated aims of development assistance. Another question to be posed is what the level of legislative activity would have been if NDI hadn't been involved.

The phenomenon of "brain drain" or "training drain" due to early departure and high election turnover has implications for the return on investment of these programs. Internal political divisions and pressure applied from the executive have caused some legislators to depart early and others to move from one Committee to another. This flux in the status of many legislators naturally applied to their staffs as well.

There is also the issue of the low number of returning legislators.³⁰ The development and transference of institutional knowledge under such circumstances is difficult to achieve. As stated earlier it is inevitable in democracies that the quality of the persons elected and engaged in important issues will vary. Added to the inexperience and therefore limited absorptive capacity of many of these persons, there is the likelihood of minimal impact of training.

As with the state legislatures, there is a discrepancy between anticipated and actual results because of the expectations that underlie program design. This is also evidenced by the shift in program focus, after two years of activity implementation. It is also noted that the transition period, during which these programs were designed, was extremely short. The absorptive capacity of the institutions focused on by the programmers was either not considered or misjudged. It must be stated that many of these decisions were taken at the higher levels of the US Government and any shortcomings in the needs assessment/strategic plan phases of the operation can therefore not be attributed to USAID.

Recommendations

The demand side (Civil Society) of the political equation must be strengthened for USAID investments to yield meaningful impact. This must include institutional strengthening, developing capacity for advocacy and lobbying, and monitoring the performances of elected officials. NGO's and others must be assisted to follow the work of their elected officials. Based on these efforts, or lack thereof, the NGOs can then support or admonish these officials. This will aid in establishing accountability in the political equation. Without this element of accountability, elected officials will have no incentive to be responsive.

³⁰ Of the 109 Senators in the last legislative session, only 15 were re-elected. In the House of Representatives, over 290 of the 360 members in the current session are new.

While it is important to continue work with key legislators and legislative staff, as the system matures, it is conceivable that there will be an increase in the number and influence of professional permanent staff. This is where the focus of future activity should be.

The cross-sectoral work done in the area of HIV/AIDS by the Democracy and Governance and Health offices at USAID needs to be expanded. This work has achieved an impact on the national dialogue; however, a more cohesive and integrated strategy for this cross-sectoral work is recommended, because it was observed that a vertical delineation of cross-sectoral synergies within the Mission is yet to translate into horizontal linkages. These will be key as other “targets of opportunity” for cross-sectoral synergies become evident. As the HIV/AIDS situation worsens, micro-credits and other poverty alleviation strategies will almost certainly need to be incorporated into the overall HIV/AIDS program.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

1. *How has the performance of targeted institutions been enhanced as a result of USAID's investments?*

An accurate assessment of this question must necessarily take into account the context in which USAID's intervention operates. The legacy of military rule with authoritarian leadership left Nigeria with unaccountable rulers who relied on patronage to govern. The centralized political structures were devoid of representation and government institutions were severely weakened. In addition to crises of governance, corruption, fiscal irresponsibility, and economic mismanagement were rife. Religious, ethnic, communal conflicts were rampant with the attendant result of insecurity.

It was within this context that the political transition of 1999 took place. Nigerians were not the only ones with high hopes and expectations about the prospects of democracy. An Inter-Agency assessment of the US Government was full of expectations about what could be achieved in supporting Nigeria's transition. Consequently, there was an exponential growth of funds to support Nigeria's democratic experiment, but the broad and diverse program did not benefit from an in-depth sectoral assessment that usually generates focused and targeted interventions in areas that affect the stability of democratic transition.

Over the last four years, however, “post-transition euphoria has given way to political realism”³¹ not only amongst Nigerians but also amongst international donors. Several factors can be attributed to the “euphoria” but chief amongst them was high expectations about what could be accomplished within a short period of time.

Absent any form of baseline data, or some other kind of measurable indicators, it is extremely difficult to come to any conclusive affirmation as to what, or how much, performance enhancement has taken place as a result of USAID's investments. In order to be able to respond

³¹ USAID/Nigeria, Afro Barometer, “Down to Earth: Changes in Attitudes Toward Democracy and Markets in Nigeria” December 2001

directly to the question, causal linkages need to be established between the activities and performance; however, it was not possible to determine direct or plausible causalities. This is not entirely surprising because changes in a particular political system are generally due to a host of factors. It should also be noted that impacts in the DG sector are largely qualitative and changes take a longer time to be evident. Furthermore, systems and institutions take more than four years to change and it takes robust investment and sustained efforts to see changes.

In the short term, however, improvements can be measured in terms of changes in attitudes, mitigation of political tensions, and even the very process through which decisions are made. Using this as a yardstick of measurement, USAID's activities have made important contributions to Nigeria's democratic institutions.

- ▶ **INEC:** As outlined earlier in this report, there were changes that took place within the Commission that were the direct result of USAID's assistance. The performance of the IT Department is a clear example. The training in basic election administration was equally successful. The very fact that INEC reached out to civil society, through the 37 public fora financed by USAID, was evidence of success, especially if one takes into consideration the improvement in the INEC-CSO frosty relationships. The Commission has now recognized civil society as a key constituency with which INEC needs a better relationship.³² While most of the leadership cadre within INEC may have a "civil-service mentality," and while the strategic plan was not implemented, the process that the Commission went through and the existence of the document would have resulted in attitudinal changes in some senior officials. USAID's funding of the communications equipment for transmission of results from difficult local government areas, has opened INEC's horizons about ways in which it could improve its efficiency.
- ▶ **Political Parties:** Recognizing that political party development is the most political type of DG programming and that for party programs to succeed they must address the needs of political parties as determined by the party leaders themselves, it would never be easy to meet the specific needs of all the 30 political parties in Nigeria. Nonetheless, USAID-funded training contributed to an aggregation and articulation of societal interests through the parties. Political dialogue, expression, choice, and socialization are unquantifiable impacts in which USAID has invested. Undoubtedly, some of the participants in the training are a generation away from attaining the mantle of leadership; but knowledge acquired through USAID's activities will positively affect them when they eventually become leaders.
- ▶ **National Assembly:** The National Assembly suffered from a variety of factors ranging from an Executive that was not willing to cede power easily and the inexperience of the legislators to a lack of any tradition of a system of government where a legislature is equal or a counterweight to the executive. Despite these challenges, the National Assembly has endured. Its very survival must be viewed as a victory. It will hopefully continue to develop over the next four years. With sustained and focused external assistance this should be possible. There is a small cadre of returning legislators and permanent professional staff, the rudiments of a functioning Committee system, and technological support to facilitate the drafting, amending and passing of legislation. In the critical area

³² Interview with Dr. Guobadia, op. cit.

of HIV/AIDS, the engagement of NGO's/Civil Society, the National Assembly and Executive branch in a common purpose proves that the capability exists. It can be done and must be replicated.

- ▶ **State Legislatures:** We have said that absent any form of baseline data, or some other kind of measurable indicators, it is extremely difficult to come to any conclusive affirmation as to what changes have taken place as a result of USAID's investments. Nowhere is this statement more apropos than at the State Legislature level. In a political system still dramatically developing, combined with an infrastructure that is wanting, it seems that some of the programs at this level were a bit premature. The knowledge gained and the sensitization of the staff and the legislators may pay dividends in the future. When will that time be remains unknown at this point. Still, as with more developed democracies, some of the next generation of national political leaders in Nigeria will gain their experience at the state level.

2. *What are the opportunities for investment?*

- ▶ **Increase demand for democratic governance.** For the democratization process in Nigeria to move forward, broad political reforms are required along with strong institutions and changes in the political orientation of leaders and citizens. However, there appears to be insufficient political will, and demand for institutional reform to promote better governance is diluted by general bureaucratic inertia, present in every bureaucracy, and the fact that the current administrative weaknesses create opportunities for corruption. The current structure of the economy and government institutions allows the ruling elite to derive tremendous financial benefits from their positions. Similarly, lower level government officials enrich themselves through petty corruption. There is little personal incentive within the system to implement democratic reforms and improve the quality of governance. Therefore, the most critical investment that USAID could make to support democratization, would be to facilitate greater demand for democratic governance, which in turn will make the implementation of reforms a growing political necessity.³³ Development assistance can be provided to target groups on how to efficiently work as a pro-active coalition for reform as opposed to simply reacting to policy initiatives or decisions.
- ▶ **Support reform-minded leaders.** Critical to engendering effective political pressure is the cultivation and support of reform-minded citizens not only within the general public, but also within political institutions, be they legislators, political leaders, or civil servants. As activists in civil society reach out to one another and to partners within political institutions, they can strengthen the voice of those often isolated reformers in government and thus affect public policy and the character of governance in Nigeria.
- ▶ **The legislative arena matters insofar as it is policy oriented.** The legislative arena will continue to offer opportunities for political reform but USAID's approach to legislative strengthening should be aimed at developing policy capacities. The five possible approaches are to assist the legislature to be: transparent; pluralistic; representative;

³³ This strategy is similar to the one employed successfully by USAID during the past decade in Indonesia and Kenya, where political will was also a primary impediment to democratization.

effective; and accountable.³⁴ USAID's investment will yield greater dividends if the Nigerian legislature can be assisted to be effective in areas that optimize linkages between legislative strengthening and other sectoral areas of USAID's country strategy. Given declining resources and the challenging environment that Nigeria presents, effective programming, with meaningful impact, requires focusing on a few targeted issues that can help legislators to be pro-active as opposed to reactive on policies. Assistance can be in form of technical advisory services on decision-making, research assistance, engagement of specialized interest groups and/or CSOs, and provision of limited commodities to increase efficiency and knowledge. Training that is not geared toward performance enhancement³⁵ in the targeted sectoral policy areas, will not yield a return on investment and should be discouraged by USAID.

- ▶ **Political party strengthening may matter** but it is debatable in the current Nigerian environment in which running for office is still high stakes. In addition, it is arguable if it is within USAID's capabilities to affect the influence of money in politics or whether there can be sufficient resources to prevent election rigging and violence. It is conceivable that, for a while, issue-based politics will not be the norm and that the dynamics amongst political parties will not significantly change given Nigeria's vertical political structure and hierarchical socio-cultural environment. More important is whether there are the incentives or will to change the current system. With regard to political party strengthening, some of the issues that USAID will have to confront include: how parsimonious should the DG program be; and what is the tolerance or patience for failure. Ultimately, the important lesson to bear in mind is that an optimal opportunity analytically, particularly from outside of Nigeria, is not always practical, especially for a results-driven and resource-competitive development strategy.

- ▶ **Support to the electoral process may be needed** but it requires a more focused problem diagnosis and analysis. Electoral assistance can be either technical or political.³⁶ For future support to Nigeria's electoral process, what will be most critical is to assess the context for assistance by taking into consideration the following factors: socio/cultural dynamics; the political environment; constitutional and regulatory issues; the electoral institution's role and preparedness; security; and the engagement of citizens in ensuring a credible electoral process. It is redundant to repeat recommendations already enunciated in this report, on what areas offer the best investment opportunities; however, it is important to state again that USAID needs to make a pre-determination whether its

³⁴ A transparent legislature is one whose proceedings are easily accessible and available to the public; a pluralistic one represents a broad spectrum of political ideologies, religions, and ethnic groups; and in a representative legislature, citizens are able to have input into the policy making process through their elected officials. For a legislature to be effective, the legislative process and policy formulation must be well-thought out, and an accountable legislature ensures that laws and government programs receive fair, effective, and efficient implementation.

³⁵ In the Nigerian context and given declining resources, the following types of generic training will likely not achieve the desired impact: duties, responsibilities, and best practices; drafting, enforcement, and implementation of laws; constituency relations; legislative practice and procedures; and executive-legislative relationships as they relate to power and authority.

³⁶ USAID has employed these two types of assistance in Nigeria by providing support to INEC (technical) as well as to the parties (political).

assistance should be a means to an end or an end in itself.³⁷ As indicated in other parts of this report, the most valuable investment that USAID can make to support the electoral process is to empower Nigerians to safeguard the credibility of elections by demanding an efficient and effective electoral process while at the same time ensuring that their choice is respected.

3. Program design and management issues

- ▶ **Transition activities with long-term orientation:** The activities being evaluated responded to a transition strategy, but the program design and approaches were characteristic of a long-term development-oriented strategy. In a transition strategy, the approach is largely to capitalize on windows of opportunity for strategic interventions that achieve results that could be evident at the end of the short-term period. Implicit in transition strategies is the assumption that impacts may be less sustainable.
- ▶ **Beneficiary Buy-in:** Needs assessments were conducted by the implementing partners, sometimes through a planning process with a technical cadre of local beneficiaries who were, most often, mid-level managers without decision-making authority. With some activities, it appeared that there was a lack of buy-in on the part of the political leadership of these beneficiary institutions/organizations. Where this occurred, there was a disconnect between the needs (as perceived by the implementing partners) and what the leadership of the beneficiary institution considered its wants.
- ▶ **Institutional learning and program design:** Some of the funded activities benefited from past design assessments and performance evaluations, either conducted by the implementing partners themselves or commissioned by USAID. Recommendations to remedy deficiencies outlined in reports or other documents appeared not to have been consulted by succeeding staff. For example, assessments and/or evaluations were conducted of some beneficiary institutions and a list of steps to remedy deficiencies was developed. However, there was an observable gap in follow-up actions to improve on the areas of weaknesses. The result is that either corrective measures came tardily or they were never taken.
- ▶ **Capacity strengthening and the ‘training drain’:** The departure of beneficiaries of training programs from their respective organizations, constitutes a net skill loss for the organizations with implications for the return on investments in capacity strengthening. This was particularly true of the legislative strengthening activity where there was a high turn-over during the last elections. Certain types of capacity strengthening should be aimed at the organization rather than individuals because individual skills that do not translate into improved organizational performance have limited returns and a limited lifespan.
- ▶ **Capacity building technique:** The evaluation team received numerous testimonials that training had been helpful and appreciated. However, the benefits of training should not be from what individuals or organizations learn but from what they do; there was little

³⁷ Assistance that is considered as a ‘means to an end’ is short-term in nature and aimed at achieving a credible and valid election. Long-term assistance takes into consideration that a strong and credible election is not achieved with a single election, and therefore, that institutional support must be consistent.

evidence of improvements or changes that resulted from most training. Proving that individuals have acquired skills is thus only partially relevant for USAID's DG program: more relevant is evidence of change or enhanced performance of beneficiary organizations.

- ▶ **Performance enhancement and environmental factors:** Performance enhancement implies taking into consideration, *a priori*, whether the environment is enabling for application of the skills acquired; it also means that the design of the capacity strengthening activity should consider whether the tools will be available for those trained to put their new skills to use. The evaluation team observed that some training sessions were designed with less consideration of factors within the environment and of tools that could enable or constrain performance. Consequently, beneficiaries could not apply the skills acquired and the purpose of the assistance was defeated.

- ▶ **Performance monitoring systems are management tools:** The implementing partners may have developed performance monitoring plans (PMP) and complimentary monitoring systems, but there was little evidence to suggest that their use substantively impacted the overall achievement of goals. Good program monitoring procedures would have assisted the partners, and the Mission, in testing whether the achievement of planned outputs would lead to achievement of the project purpose and of a sustainable outcome. Absent the use of monitoring systems, it was difficult to detect plausible linkages (individually and cumulatively) that demonstrated causality and consistency in the impact or performance of the provided assistance. Recognizing that achievement of results in the DG sector takes a longer time to be evident and are often more qualitative than quantitative, this makes monitoring the more imperative, so as to have records of changes or improvements to meet the results reporting requirements of USAID.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Assistance should depend upon what difference can be made*

As the Mission moves from transition to development strategy, it will have to confront the critical issue of the relevance of its assistance: what difference USAID's investment can make in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, support to Nigeria's democratic development is in the U.S. national interest strategically, politically, and economically. However, with competing demands for dwindling resources, there are strategic choices that will have to be made on areas that have the greatest potential for yielding 'bang for the buck.'

2. *Grow with winners or start small and scale up*

Given the need for consolidating democracy in Nigeria and the scarce resources to meet all the development needs, the Mission should focus its future activities by doing fewer things very well. An approach to achieving this is by recognizing that not all that is important is feasible and not all that is feasible is doable. The Mission can opt to "grow with its winners" by building upon its successes of the last four years, or to deepen the knowledge of the recipients of its on-going assistance. Another recommended approach, should there be reason to abandon some of the on-going activities, is to start small and scale up.

3. *Cross-sectoral synergies work and need to be expanded.*

Cross-sectoral synergies amongst Mission SOs and implementing partners need to be expanded. The work done in the area of HIV/AIDS by the Democracy and Governance and Health offices at USAID should be expanded. This work has achieved results and had an impact on the national dialogue. A more cohesive strategy for this cross-sectoral work is recommended. Strategies need to be further integrated to maximize the positive results.

4. *Successful programming requires complementary interventions*

It is important to recognize that a successful program may require complementary political or diplomatic interventions. For example, after implementing partners have had consultations, discussions, and agreements with their technical counterparts, the Mission may have to follow up with a policy dialogue with the leadership of the targeted beneficiary institutions. It may even be necessary to call on the support of the Embassy in such an effort.

5. *“Substantial involvement” authority needs to be better exercised*

The Mission needs to better exercise its “substantial involvement” authority by committing to measure performance and using frequent reviews of performance measures to guide program management. Crucial to monitoring are setting realistic performance indicators and establishing baseline data against which to measure progress. It should be noted that performance measurement does not work as an afterthought, so systems must be established for collecting data while developing a new strategy and before starting implementation of new activities. Had there been systems in place over the last four years, it is possible that program adjustments could have been made and greater impact could have been achieved.

6. *Partners’ performance reporting requires standardization*

Reporting by implementing partners varied in quality. The SO Team should work towards developing parameters for quarterly and annual reports for the purpose of standardization so that the required information can be adequately and accurately captured in a simple manner.

7. *Project management experience needs to complement technical abilities*

The Chiefs of Party for the Mission’s implementing partners have relevant and impressive professional backgrounds and technical experience. However, if such backgrounds and experience are not matched by relevant project management experience, especially in a developing country context such as Nigeria’s, the overall achievement of project goals and objectives may be reduced. In approving key personnel, it is recommended that in addition to technical experience, the Mission require project management experience in environments similar to Nigeria’s.

8. *Institutional capacity-building should be targeted at institutional performance*

Activities that are aimed at institutional development should necessarily differentiate between institutional **capability** (trained staff, budget, equipment, system, and procedures) and institutional **performance** (delivery of service or goods). Future institutional development efforts

should be premised on an analysis of whether all the variables of capability are being addressed and whether a weakness of any of the variables could affect the goal of performance enhancement. It is insufficient to train staff if the procedures within the institution limit their ability to apply the skills acquired; at the same time, even if there were an enabling environment, if there is a shortage of tools and equipment, performance would still not be improved. Furthermore, future capacity building activities should seek ways to make individual knowledge and skills contribute to the organization's knowledge and skill base.

9. *Accountable and responsive political institutions require a push*

Achievement of accountable and responsive political institutions requires a push from citizens and their interest groups. Civil society advocacy should be a major focus at the same time that political institution-strengthening activities are being conducted. Our impression is that the emphasis of current Mission activities has been heavily "top down" on the "supply" side of the political system. While this is understandable, given that most other donors concentrate largely on the "demand" side, efforts should be made to balance the equation. A possible approach, given declining resources, is to intensify donor collaboration and coordination so that USAID's supply-side assistance can complement or piggy-back on another donor's demand-side programs.

10. *Buy-ins by local stakeholders and partners are needed*

Recommendations from local program stakeholders and partners need to receive greater attention by the Mission. In order to achieve greater ownership that fosters sustainability, a systematic process needs to be developed to receive periodic feedback from local stakeholders. A possible approach is to establish a local stakeholder forum in which ideas can be presented directly to the Mission. This forum should consist of people with a degree of authority within their respective organizations so that feedback and possible recommendations for action can have the commitment of the organization.

ANNEXES

Annex A. List of People ContactedA-1

Annex B. Scope of WorkB-1

ANNEX A

LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED

1. Vic Duarte, Desk Officer for Nigeria, USAID/Washington
2. Mike Karbelling, Desk Officer for Nigeria, USAID/Washington
3. Dan Epstein, Desk Officer for Nigeria, State Department
4. Dawn Liberi, Mission Director, USAID/Nigeria
5. Minnie Wright, DG Team Leader, USAID/Nigeria
6. Liz Hart, DG Advisor, USAID/Nigeria
7. Victor Adetula, Senior DG Program Specialist, USAID/Nigeria
8. Adamu Igoche, DG Program Specialist, USAID/Nigeria
9. Thomas L. Hutcheson, Macroeconomic Advisor, USAID/Nigeria
10. Brian Brown, Political Counselor, US Embassy
11. Tom Bayer, Regional Director for Africa, IFES/Washington
12. Judite Registre, Program Officer, IFES/Washington
13. Indunil Ranaviraja, Program Assistant, IFES/Washingto
14. Chris Fomunyoh, Regional Director, Central & West Africa, NDI/Washington
15. Barrie Hofmann, Deputy Regional Director, Central & West Africa, NDI/Washington
16. Mary Markowicz, Director, Program Coordination, NDI/Washington
17. Marla Zometsky, Regional Coordinator, Central & West Africa, NDI/Washington
18. Ally Mack, Executive Director, MCID/Jackson, MS
19. Vic Butler, Country Director, IFES/Nigeria
20. Bolanle Asimolowo, Program Officer, IFES
21. Ibeto Amadi-Obe, Project Administrative Officer, IFES
22. Dr. Abel Guobadia, Chairman, INEC
23. E.A. Johnson, Director, Administration & State Coordination, INEC
24. A.A. Kagara, Director, Operations, INEC
25. Steve Osemeke, Director, Public Affairs, INEC
26. Tunji Adesina, Director, IT, INEC
27. Chidi Nwafor, Assistant Director, Communications, INEC
28. Ena Isiavwe, Assistant Director, Electoral Training Unit, INEC
29. Kunle Orisumbare, Chief Field Services Officer, INEC
30. E.C. Ikpe, Chief Field Services Officer, INEC
31. Lateef Yakubu, Electoral Officer, INEC
32. Tokunbo George-Coker, Program Manager, EU
33. Professor Abdulhameed Ujo, former Resident Electoral Commissioner, Kaduna State
34. Yahaya Salihu Dukku, State Independent Electoral Commissioner, Gombe State
35. Clement Wasah, Executive Director, CAPP
36. Emeka Ononamadu, Accountant, CAPP
37. Jonathan Aderonmu, Researcher, AFRIGOV
38. Kunle Animashaun, Program Officer, AFRIGOV
39. Habiba Muda Lawal, Director, National Center for Women Development
40. Hauwa Shekarau, Chairperson, FIDA/Nigeria
41. Hajiya Laraba Shuaibu, Vice Chair, FIDA
42. Christie Kolo, Treasurer, FIDA
43. Roseline Tasha, PRO, FIDA

44. Ibrahim Jibril, Executive Director, International Human Rights Law Group
45. Phebian Okoye, Program Officer, IHRLG
46. Godwin Odo, Program Officer, IHRLG
47. Victoria Nwogu, Program Officer, IHRLG
48. Mary Angelini, Country Director, IRI/Nigeria
49. Ted Lavasseur, Program Officer, IRI/Nigeria
50. Alhaji A.A. Abdulkadir, National Chairman, AD
51. Sani Ahmed Kaura, National Director of Organization, PDP
52. Chinwe Nnorom, National Senior Officer, PDP
53. Josephine Anenih, National Woman Leader, PDP
54. Muinat Obalowu, National Woman Leader, ANPP
55. Antonia Ashieda, Political Consultant, PDP
56. Sani Abdullahi Shinkafi, National Secretary, APGA
57. Mr. Ukeje, National Administrative Secretary, APGA
58. Goddy Idaminabo, National Secretary, UNPP
59. Air Cmdr. I. Nkanga, National Secretary, NDP
60. Senator Peter Adeyemo
61. Senator O. Osunbor
62. Alh. Lawal Usman, Assistant Director of Computer Services, National Assembly
63. Alh. Nasiru Arab, Deputy Clerk, National Assembly
64. Alh. Sulieman Kabir, Director Research and Statistics, National Assembly
65. Bala Yabani, Staff, Nigerian National Assembly
66. Uju OkagdueTV Journalist-TV MINAJ
67. Yinka Lawal, Constitutional Rights Project
68. Fatimah Shagari, Pathfinder International
69. Dr. Arabs, Pathfinder International
70. Pamela D. Moore, Country Director, MCID
71. Khulekani Sitole, Southern Africa Regional Director, MCID
72. Philip Ikita, Program Officer, MCID
73. Anthony Ubani, Program Officer, MCID
74. Alh. Buhari Mohammed, Permanent Secretary and Clerk, Niger State Legislature
75. Idris Adamu Kuta, Principal Legislative Officer, Niger State Legislature
76. Tafida Yakubu Pandogar, Deputy Director of Research, Niger State Legislature
77. Shehu Mohammed, Principal Official Reporter, Niger State Legislature
78. Honorable Samson Osagie, State Legislator, Edo State
79. Zakari Tanko Muhammad, Attache/Intern, Niger State Legislature
80. Buhari Abdualli, Attache/Intern, Niger State Legislature
81. Faroul Umar Isah, Attache/Intern, Niger State Legislature
82. Wayne Probst, Country Director, NDI/Nigeria
83. Akeem Jagun, IT Program Officer, NDI
84. Deji Olaore, Program Officer, NDI
85. Christine Owre, Senior Technical Advisor, NDI
86. Francesta Farmer, Resident Senior Technical Advisor, NDI
87. Bodurin Adebo, Program Assistant, NDI
88. Sandra Ilema Omali, Senior Program Assistant, NDI
89. Ibrahim Kalapo, Intern/Attache, National Assembly

90. Onu Okorie, Intern/Attache, National Assembly
91. Emmanuel Adeleke, Intern/Attache, National Assembly
92. Lami Attah Ahmed, Intern/Attache, National Assembly

ANNEX B

SCOPE OF WORK

EVALUATION OF SUPPORT FOR ELECTORAL PROCESSES, POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT AND LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING IN NIGERIA

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this contract is to:

- (i) Evaluate past and existing USAID/Nigeria election assistance that is implemented by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the support for political strengthening implemented by the International Republican Institute (IRI)³⁸, and the legislative strengthening assistance programs of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID)³⁹;
- (ii) Assess the contribution of the four programs to the Mission's democracy strategic objective and intermediate results; and
- (iii) Provide suggestions for future USAID assistance in support of Nigeria's political evolution toward to democratic governance.

II. BACKGROUND

The timing of this evaluation coincides with the end of USAID/Nigeria's current Transition Strategy in December 2003 and the development of a new five-year strategic plan. In preparation for developing a new strategy, USAID/Nigeria's Democracy and Governance (DG) Office requires a set of recommendations regarding the best opportunities for assisting the continued consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, USAID is the largest bilateral donor in the democracy and governance sector. The goal of Agency's Transition Strategy is to "assist Nigeria's transition to economic, social and political stability" through the sub-goal of "restoring public confidence in civilian-led democratic governance". The DG Office's mandate, outlined in Strategic Objective One (SO1), is to ensure that "transition to democratic civilian governance is sustained". Specifically, SO1 focuses on assisting Nigeria in the following areas:

- ▶ Transparency and responsiveness of government institutions
- ▶ Establishing the foundations for fair and competitive electoral system

³⁸ IRI and IFES programs are implemented under the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS) cooperative agreement (DGC-A-00-01-00004).

³⁹ NDI and MCID programs are implemented under cooperative agreement XX.

- ▶ Mitigating potentially destabilizing forces
- ▶ Increasing participation by civil society in public deliberations and oversight of government.

In pursuit of the objective to establish the foundation for a fair and competitive electoral system, USAID/Nigeria is implementing two programs: (1) election administration assistance; and (2) political party strengthening. These two programs have been implemented since 1999. USAID assistance for election administration is channeled through IFES to support the strengthening of electoral administration and electoral process in Nigeria. Assistance for political party strengthening is implemented by IRI.

Also, to accomplish the sub goal of establishing transparency and responsiveness of government institutions, NDI and MCID received separate grants to enhance the capacity of national and state legislatures. NDI is working with the National Assembly while MCID works with state legislatures, legislators, staffers and executive branch officials.

III. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Contractor shall produce a report that analyzes USAID/Nigeria assistance programs in support of Nigeria's electoral administration, political party development, and legislative strengthening. The evaluative report shall provide USAID/Nigeria with a clear analysis of achievements, challenges, and realistic opportunities for future political development assistance to Nigeria.

This evaluation shall include responses to the following guiding questions. This is not an exhaustive list.

- ▶ Did these programs achieve their stated results?
- ▶ What was the impact of these achievements on the relevant DG IRs and SO?
- ▶ What explains the successes and/or failures?
- ▶ How could the programs have done better?

Specifically, the Contractor will:

- (i) Provide a brief assessment of the political environment in Nigeria, including a discussion of the enabling environment for and the constraints to providing technical assistance in the areas of legislative strengthening and electoral and political processes;
- (ii) Summarize and describe activities and strategies employed for achieving results, with particular emphasis on how actual activities compared to planned activities as defined in the agreements (proposals) and work plans;
- (iii) Describe the results or outcomes of the programs, and compare them with the objectives and indicators set forth in their contracts and/or cooperative agreement, work plans and performance monitoring plans;

- (iv) Describe the assumptions implicit in the IFES, IRI, NDI and MCID chosen implementation strategies, and an assessment of the appropriateness and strengths of the chosen implementation strategies and activities;
- (v) Describe the impact of the programs on women's participation in political processes;
- (vi) Describe and evaluate the role of local partners (governmental or non-governmental) and other donor assistance in achieving results;
- (vii) Summarize lessons learned; and
- (viii) Assess the cost-benefit of program activities to determine if programs constitute viable areas of investment for USAID in the future, and make programmatic recommendations for activities with defensible potential for measurable impact on the promotion of USAID/Nigeria's SOI. The recommendations should be forward-looking, with an emphasis on what should be done over the next few years and should be specific to Nigeria. The report should identify any areas in which the team concludes that USAID should not be involved for any reason.

IV. TEAM COMPOSITION

The Contractor shall provide two consultants to evaluate the aforementioned programs. Consultants must be knowledgeable about Nigerian politics and possess excellent writing skills. Experience in election, political party and legislative work in the United States or elsewhere is required. Both members of the team are expected to contribute, write and submit the required draft and final reports. These reports must incorporate USAID comments.

V. METHODOLOGY

Prior to departure for Nigeria

The team shall review the following:

- ▶ Program Descriptions, proposals and work plans for the four programs
- ▶ Quarterly and annual reports
- ▶ Reports of assessments carried out by the implementing partners
- ▶ Performance Monitoring Plans
- ▶ Any other documents that the Consultants and/or the DG team consider relevant for successful implementation of this assignment.
- ▶ USAID Transition Strategy for Nigeria
- ▶ Other background reading

In addition, the team shall conduct interviews with appropriate AID/W staff and appropriate persons at IFES, IRI, NDI and MCID.

While in Nigeria

The team shall conduct interviews and meetings with USAID and US Embassy representatives; with field office staff of IFES, IRI, NDI and MCID; and with field staff of other relevant assistance implementers and donors. The team shall present preliminary findings to USAID prior to departing Nigeria. Copies of the draft report shall be left with the USAID Mission for review and comments.

VI. SCHEDULE/TIMEFRAME⁴⁰

Three days will be required of the Consultants in Washington, D.C. prior to departure for collection and review of documents, meetings with relevant persons at USAID, IFES, IRI, NDI, MCID and other organizations in Washington. Two days will be required of the Consultants to interact with the staff of the USAID/Nigeria DG Office and review the scope of work and the draft itinerary. The Consultants shall meet with USAID and representatives of IFES, IRI, NDI and MCID in Abuja, Nigeria upon arrival to agree on the itinerary and come to a common understanding of the scope of work. The field evaluation will require a minimum of ten workdays. The team shall draft a summary of preliminary findings, and a draft outline of the report, prior to leaving Nigeria. At least two days shall take place at USAID/Nigeria in order to prepare the draft report and debrief the USAID Mission.

Fieldwork shall begin as early as April 21, 2003, but no later than May 1, 2003. Upon return to the United States, up to four workdays may be required, after receipt of USAID's comments, in order to finalize the report. USAID shall have the final report by June 10, 2003.

VII. WORKWEEK

A six-day workweek is authorized with no premium pay.

VIII. LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

USAID/Nigeria will provide logistical support during the team's stay in Nigeria. All other logistical support shall be provided and arranged for by the Contractor, unless otherwise specified (e.g., country clearance cable).

IX. DELIVERABLES

A. The Consultant shall produce a final report which will include:

- 1. Executive Summary.** A summary, not to exceed four single-spaced pages, should list, in order of priority the major findings and lessons learned from the evaluation and recommendations for future programming.

⁴⁰ The team's schedule and LOE was subsequently modified by agreement between the Mission and Development Associates.

2. **Body of the Report**, not to exceed 40 pages. Generally, the report should be organized to describe the impact of the activities being evaluated, major findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for future programming.
3. **Annexes.** Additional material should be submitted as Annexes, as appropriate (e.g., Statement of Work, bibliography of documents reviewed, list of agencies and individuals interviewed, etc.).

B. Reporting Procedures:

1. **Draft Report.** The draft report will reflect the joint conclusions of the consultant team. Consultants will be responsible for writing the first draft. One copy of the draft report will be left with USAID/Nigeria, and one will be submitted to USAID/DCHA/DG and USAID/AFR/WA.
2. **Final Report.** USAID shall provide comments on the draft report to the Consultants within seven working days of receipt. The Consultants will review the comments together and come to agreement with each other on the nature of the changes and revisions to be made in the body of the report, and which to respond to separately. The final report, incorporating responses to all comments, shall be submitted to USAID/Nigeria via electronic mail. In addition, five copies of the report—four bound and one loose leaf—shall be delivered to USAID/DCHA/DG for distribution.

X. TECHNICAL DIRECTION

The Director of the Office of Democratic Transition, or her designee, shall provide technical direction during the performance of this task order.