



Constituency Dialogues and Citizen Engagement in Cambodia:

Findings from a mixed methods impact evaluation

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The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

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The Institute's work upholds the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also promotes the development of institutionalized channels of communications among citizens, political institutions and elected officials, and strengthens their ability to improve the quality of life for all citizens. For more information about NDI, please visit www.ndi.org.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
I. Background	7
Political Context	7
NDI Programs in Cambodia	7
Evaluation Context	8
Evaluation Team Composition	9
II. Evaluation Methodology	10
Development Hypothesis	10
Evaluation Questions	12
Methodological Approach	12
III. Summary of Key Findings	19
Constituency Dialogues	19
Deliberative Sessions	22
Deliberative Session Gender Dynamics	23
IV. Conclusions	25
Program Design and Implementation	25
Evaluation Design and Implementation	27
ANNEX I Executive Summary of Quantitative Findings	29
ANNEX II Executive Summary of Qualitative Findings	31

Executive Summary

Background. The National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) was chosen to participate in a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) pilot program to evaluate the impact of democracy and governance programs in Cambodia. An impact evaluation measures change caused by a program and also measures what would have happened if the program had not taken place. In such a study, participants are randomly assigned to participate in all, some, or none of the program activities, and data are collected before and after these activities to compare any changes across these groups. This report summarizes the impact evaluation conducted to measure the effect of the Institute's program on Cambodians' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and participation in political and civic life. Two companion reports present the different data sets, analyses and findings in greater detail, both of which are summarized in annexes to this report.

Political context. While Cambodia has made some progress in its transition to democracy, the country remains under semi-authoritarian rule. The ruling party gained a supermajority in the 2008 National Assembly elections, and opposition parties are marginalized from legislative and other political activities. There is little interaction between Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and citizens. Government officials have publicly threatened not to serve citizens who support opposition parties.

Program context. Since 2004, NDI and its local civil society partners have organized and facilitated constituency dialogues (CDs) in rural villages across twelve provinces that bring together MNAs from different parties to hear constituents' concerns in a town-hall setting. This evaluation focused on three provinces to study the existing CD program as well as a citizen deliberation program component introduced for this evaluation.

Deliberative sessions¹ were comprised of small groups of citizens, similar to focus group discussions, convened the day prior to the CD. Deliberative sessions are different from focus groups in that participants used a standardized matrix-ranking grid to discuss and vote on priority community problems and proposed solutions to these problems.² NDI trained facilitators to help participants use the matrix-ranking grid and to document the group's discussion. Adding the deliberative sessions allowed NDI to study an innovative activity and to answer additional evaluation questions related to the study's focus on citizen engagement.

Evaluation context. The Institute incorporated an impact evaluation into its existing program design and budget. The evaluation design underwent various revisions in consultation with USAID. NDI received preliminary technical assistance from USAID during the evaluation design process and then managed the conclusion of the design process, implementation and analysis with its own evaluation team. Using a practitioner-academic

¹ This program component was inspired by existing Participatory Action Research approaches and was designed for low-literacy populations to reflect, learn and plan action together.

² For each problem deliberative session participants identified two solutions – one internal solution that required community action, and one external solution that required action by an MNA.

research model, the evaluation team was comprised of NDI staff, a Yale University professor, and a Cambodian research firm.

Development hypothesis. The CD program is based on the theory of change that when citizens are provided a forum to engage with and voice their concerns to their elected representatives, these representatives will become more responsive and accountable to constituents. The development hypothesis is that participation in the CD positively affects both the supply (MNA) and demand (citizen) sides of this accountability relationship. This study focused on the citizen demand side of that hypothesis. NDI expected that the deliberative sessions would have an additional positive effect on citizens. Specifically, NDI examined two steps in this results chain: that a CD (and a deliberative session) increases participants' understanding of their roles in political and civic life and that multiple political perspectives exist (step 1), which in turn leads citizens to demand that MNAs address their concerns (step 2).

Mixed methods design. The evaluation design placed individuals into one of three categories for comparison: those who were not invited to any program activity; those who were invited to attend a CD; and those who were invited to participate in a deliberative session and a CD. Deliberative session participants were then randomly assigned to all-male, all-female or mixed gender groups. In many mixed methods evaluations, qualitative data (such as focus groups) are used only to describe programmatic context as a supplement to survey or other quantitative findings. A unique feature of this mixed methods design was that both survey and deliberative session data were used to study effects caused by the program; other data describe the programmatic context.

Evaluation questions and key findings. The Institute posed four main questions to answer through the impact study. Experimental findings describe changes or effects caused by the CD or the deliberative session. Descriptive findings illustrate the context in which the program occurred or describe the content of program activities.

1. Does the constituency dialogue change individual attitudes, knowledge and behavior?

Experimental findings. A CD caused increases in knowledge of the political process and self-reported engagement in civic and political behaviors among individuals invited to attend a CD.³ Respondents were significantly more likely to report a personal interest in politics after a CD was conducted in their village. These individuals were also more likely to report that their MNAs communicated with and conducted activities on behalf of their communities. On average, the CD was not found to have positive or negative effects on surveyed individuals' confidence about politics in Cambodia or their role in the political process. However, women in CD villages were more likely than women in control villages to report positive attitudes about the political process and their role as voters after a CD was held in their village.

³ Women in CD villages were more likely than men to self-report some civic and political behaviors, such as filing a case in court or supporting a citizen petition.

Descriptive findings. Participating MNAs generally adhered to the standard code of conduct implemented by NDI staff at all CDs that establishes protocols for civil conduct toward other MNAs and citizens. A balance of ruling and opposition party supporters was observed in CD audiences. Heavy police presence was observed at one third of the CDs within the study, and in some cases, CD attendees appeared to be nervous or intimidated by the police.

2. Does participation in a deliberative session before the constituency dialogue change individual attitudes, knowledge, behavior, or priority issues?

Experimental findings. The deliberative session had few detectable effects on individuals' responses to survey questions about political and civic knowledge, attitudes, reported behavior, or priority issues. These findings are limited by the fact that fewer individuals than expected acted on the deliberative session invitation, which greatly diminished the sample size available for this analysis.

Descriptive findings. Small groups' discussions demonstrated that priority problems varied by province and commune; however, groups across communes identified corruption as a multi-faceted problem affecting their individual, family, and community experiences. Land seizure was acutely noted in one third of the communes, where participants associated this problem with detrimental environmental and health effects and instances of violent retribution or imprisonment for citizens who mobilized in protest.

Additional descriptive findings showed that deliberative session participants were more active at the CD than other CD attendees. Deliberative session participants raised their hands and spoke at a CD more than twice as often as CD participants who had not attended a deliberative session.

3. Does the gender of the facilitator or gender composition of deliberative sessions differentially impact participant attitudes, knowledge, or behavior?

Experimental findings. The facilitator's gender and the gender composition of the group had few detectable effects on participant responses to survey questions about their knowledge of, attitudes toward, and participation in political and civic life. These findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small percentage of surveyed individuals who accepted the deliberative session invitation and were considered in this analysis.

Additional experimental findings demonstrate that the facilitator's gender affected participant voting patterns for priority solutions. Male-facilitated deliberative groups were significantly more likely than female-facilitated groups to vote in consensus, "clustering" their votes for single solutions as well as among their top-ranked solutions.⁴ These effects are statistically significant but based on measures piloted in

⁴ Deliberative session facilitators recorded participant vote totals for the priority solutions on each group's matrix-ranking grid. Several measures were used to analyze the degree to which participants distributed

this study. Understanding the meaning of these findings for measuring deliberation – whether positive or negative – requires further study.

4. Does the facilitator gender or gender composition of deliberative sessions differentially impact participant priority issues?

Experimental findings. Both the facilitator's gender and the group's gender composition influenced how groups ranked their priority problems. The facilitator's gender also affected groups' vote preference for priority solutions. On average, all groups tended to prioritize external solutions (those that required MNA action) over internal solutions (those that required citizen action) to resolve their identified problems. However, male-facilitated groups were significantly more likely than all other group types to prioritize external solutions, whereas female-facilitated groups were significantly more likely to prioritize internal solutions compared to all other group types.

Conclusions. These conclusions are intended to contribute to NDI's current and future work, as well as to the ongoing program design and evaluation dialogue within the international democracy assistance community of practitioners, donor agencies, and academics.

Programmatic conclusions:

- This study showed that a CD caused positive change in individual knowledge levels and self-reported engagement in some civic and political behaviors, but did not detect evidence of the program causing citizens to demand that MNAs address their concerns.

Lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that there is not a link between the CD program and citizen demand in Cambodia, and certain factors beyond the scope of this study could help to better understand this linkage. Data could be collected over a longer period of time to capture medium- or long-term changes, beyond the period immediately after a CD. The study relied on measures of self-reported political and civic behavior, but measures of observed behavior could show different outcomes in actual practice (see evaluation conclusion on behavior indicators below). Data was collected after a single CD (or deliberative session), but participation in multiple program activities could have a positive effect on citizen demand. Finally, the additional program support could be provided to include more explicit civic education or citizen engagement content than the CD events alone.

- The deliberative session pilot effort generated reliable qualitative data within a randomized impact evaluation and demonstrated the differences in men's and women's voices as well as the risks Cambodians face in speaking out about such issues as corruption.

A single deliberative session is unlikely to support sustainable solutions to the problems discussed and could even put participants at risk by encouraging the discussion of such

their votes, or not, across all possible solutions and between internal (requiring citizen action) or external (requiring MNA action) solutions.

topics. Rather than a stand-alone program activity, deliberative sessions should be considered part of a broader programmatic approach to support citizen engagement and demand for greater responsiveness and accountability of their elected officials.

- The mixed methods approach of this impact study highlighted positive changes in individuals' knowledge caused by the program as well as the contextual challenges and risks of greater citizen engagement in Cambodia.

While the CD caused some positive changes for individuals, data from the deliberative sessions captured participants' experiences – beyond the context of the CD – with corruption, land seizure, intimidation and sometimes violence. Together, the different data sets provide a fuller picture of citizen engagement in the Cambodian context than any of the data sets do alone. These findings point to the need for further study of the conditions related to and consequences of greater citizen demand in a closed political system.

- The scope of this evaluation did not study the effects caused by this program among MNAs, and many questions remain regarding changes in their accountability to citizens.

Since the CD program started in 2004, MNAs have been the target program audience prior to the impact study. In the Cambodian context, it would not be feasible to randomize MNA participation in the program. Similar to the questions noted above about citizen demand, more systematic information is needed to understand program effects for MNAs. Program staff has collected information that demonstrates anecdotes of both citizen demands for action and MNA initiatives to address citizen demands, and this non-experimental data could contribute to evaluation efforts around MNAs.

Evaluation conclusions:

- The academic-practitioner partnership strengthened the evaluation team and the quality of the impact study, and this model should be considered when feasible for future impact studies in the democracy and governance sector.

This partnership merged practitioner and academic expertise on equal footing. It was critical in exploring evaluation design options, troubleshooting implementation challenges and analyzing the complex body of data while preserving the study's rigor.

- The evaluation team considered various indicators to measure change in individual's behavior in the evaluation design, but few of these measures proved viable in practice.

The evaluation team attempted to incorporate measures of observed citizen behavior outside of the program activities, but ultimately relied on survey respondents' self-reported behavior and observation of participants' behavior at the CD. The social and political context and practices rendered other measures of citizen behavior unfeasible (e.g. commune council meeting attendance records are not consistently maintained) or potentially harmful for participants (e.g. citizen petitions could draw negative attention to organizers). These measurement challenges were shaped by the Cambodian political

context, but similar issues are likely to be encountered across democracy and governance programs in other countries.

- The deliberative session matrix ranking measures were effective in capturing reliable qualitative data within a randomized impact evaluation but may be cost prohibitive for many programs.

As noted above in the programmatic conclusions, deliberative sessions should not be considered as stand-alone or one-time program activities. Deliberative session data collection produced a large volume of data, and both the collection and analysis process required significant staff and program resources. This study was limited by the fact that fewer than expected individuals acted on the deliberative session invitation, which resulted in a smaller sample size for analysis. Future work with deliberative sessions should take these factors into account for program design and cost planning.

I. Background

Political Context

Since the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 and the administration of the United Nations Transitional Authority, Cambodia has made progress in its shift to democracy, particularly in developing an increasingly robust civil society and a decline in election violence. However, the overwhelming dominance of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) in all facets of government has kept the country under semi-authoritarian rule marked by patronage, rampant corruption and lack of accountability among government and elected officials.

While Cambodia has little tradition of political rivals participating in a constructive contest of ideas, the role of the opposition was further limited after the National Assembly elections in 2008. The CPP gained 17 additional seats and, with 90 of the 123 seats in the assembly, a two-thirds supermajority that can be used to monopolize legislative debate. Opposition parties such as the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) and the Human Rights Party (HRP) hold 26 and 3 seats respectively, but these seats are distributed in only 12 of the country's 24 provinces. The opposition does not hold any seats in the nine parliamentary commissions. The two other parties represented in the National Assembly – the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (known by its acronym in French, FUNCINPEC) and the Norodom Ranariddh Party (briefly known as the National Party), once a strong royalist party – now hold only two seats each. Ruling party leaders have openly questioned the right of opposition members to comment on the government's legislative agenda, and government officials have threatened not to serve those citizens who support the opposition.

A centralized decision-making process, concentrated almost exclusively within the executive branch, has left Cambodia's legislature a weak and opaque institution. The National Assembly does not conduct legislative hearings nor does it have a formalized public consultation process. Bill drafting is conducted by the executive, and information on the process is carefully guarded; the public cannot access transcripts of policy deliberations. Assembly members do not exercise any oversight function of the government. In addition, little interaction exists between Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and their constituents. Members are elected by party-list system with a proportional distribution of seats by province, allowing an MNA to be elected without interacting with constituents before or after an election. This system provides limited channels for citizens to be included in public policy development or to hold elected officials accountable for use of public resources. Few MNAs have made sustained efforts to conduct independent outreach activities through their political parties, and some lack a clear understanding of their official role as legislators. Based on prior NDI focus groups with citizens, the public also has little understanding of the legislative function of the National Assembly and tends to look to MNAs as providers of material goods, services and money.

NDI Programs in Cambodia

NDI has aided democratic activists in Cambodia since 1992 to attain more open and inclusive political processes. NDI's programming seeks to promote a more level political

playing field by improving the access of all political parties and civil society to the media, promoting women's political engagement, and enhancing the capabilities of political parties to participate more equitably in elections. To this end, NDI has organized public debates among candidates from different political parties contesting seats in commune councils and the National Assembly. The Institute has supported local election monitoring organizations and citizen volunteers to increase transparency in the electoral process and to identify needed reforms to the electoral framework through systematic voter registration and election observation efforts and voter registry audits. At the grassroots level, the Institute has assisted civil society groups across Cambodia in engaging their communities and elected representatives on issues of common concern.

Constituency dialogues. Since 2004, NDI and its local civil society partners have conducted more than 200 constituency dialogues across 12 provinces that bring together MNAs from different parties to hear constituents' concerns in a town-hall setting.⁵ The dialogues are moderated by NDI staff according to a standard agenda and code of conduct. Members of the audience can pose questions to the MNAs during two open microphone periods. MNAs are each allotted equal time increments to make comments and respond to citizen questions. Citizen efforts to hold MNAs to account have included expressing concerns to MNAs directly about conflicts over land, public services that were not delivered and cases of local authorities abusing their power. There have been instances of MNA or other government official action take after some dialogues, including: the construction of canals and pathways; the reinstatement of compensation for rural school teachers; the return of land to its rightful owners; and the investigation of local officials.⁶

Evaluation Context

Evaluation purpose

Following the release of the USAID-commissioned 2008 National Academy of Sciences study, *Improving Democracy Assistance: Building Knowledge through Evaluations and Research*,⁷ USAID sought to strengthen the quantity and quality of its evaluations. As part of this effort, USAID selected NDI's program in Cambodia to participate in a 2009 pilot effort to evaluate the impact of democracy and governance programs. As part of USAID's program description requirements, the Institute incorporated an impact evaluation into its overall program design and budget proposal.

The initial focus of the evaluation was to conduct an impact evaluation of a democracy and governance program. NDI managed the evaluation design process, including the definition of the evaluation questions, with some preliminary technical assistance from USAID.

⁵ This program is implemented with USAID funding through the *Cambodia: Accountability in Governance and Politics* (AGAP) program.

⁶ NDI program information and past CD reports can be found at <http://www.ndi.org/content/cambodia>.

⁷ National Research Council 2008.

Evaluation design development

NDI originally submitted to USAID a proposed impact evaluation design to include all CDs to be implemented over the course of the program's five year timeline to study the effect of the program on both citizens and MNAs. The scope of this evaluation design would have required more resources than the funding available; therefore, NDI narrowed its scope. USAID provided short-term technical assistance⁸ to support NDI's development of this revised design, which focused on the impact of the program on citizens. NDI faced the implementation challenge of integrating the evaluation design into a long-standing program. Since 2004, CDs had been conducted in villages in many of the communes, or villages in surrounding communes, that were being considered for the study. As a result, NDI mapped out a smaller number of provinces with a sufficient number of villages where CDs had not been conducted previously. NDI further refined the evaluation design with feedback from USAID evaluation experts and academics affiliated with the Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP) network.⁹

Evaluation Team Composition

NDI found the EGAP network to be a valuable space for peer review of the evaluation design and for the formation of an academic-practitioner partnership with the Principal Investigator for the duration of the evaluation. The evaluation team was built around this partnership and was comprised of NDI staff in the Cambodia and Washington, DC offices, a political science professor from Yale University, a field researcher, and a local research firm. Evaluation team members and their roles included:

- **Principal Investigator.** Dr. Susan D Hyde¹⁰ contributed to the EGAP peer review of the evaluation design and then served as the principal investigator for the remainder of the evaluation. She provided technical assistance during the transition from design to implementation and led the quantitative analysis and drafting of those findings.
- **NDI Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.** Linda Stern designed the evaluation and served as the technical advisor on the deliberative session methods, including the design and piloting of the discussion guide and protocol for facilitation and data collection. She led the qualitative analysis and drafting of those findings.
- **NDI Evaluation Manager.** Alison Miranda contributed to the evaluation design process and managed team resources and communication through the analysis and reporting phase, including authoring this report.

⁸ The funding mechanism that supported this technical assistance expired prior to the implementation phase of the evaluation.

⁹ EGAP is a network of academic researchers and development practitioners working on experimental analyses of governance and politics. Both NDI and USAID are members of the network. Among other resources, EGAP offers a peer review process for member-submitted impact evaluation designs (<http://e-gap.org/>).

¹⁰ Hyde is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at Yale University. She served as a *pro bono* advisor on this project.

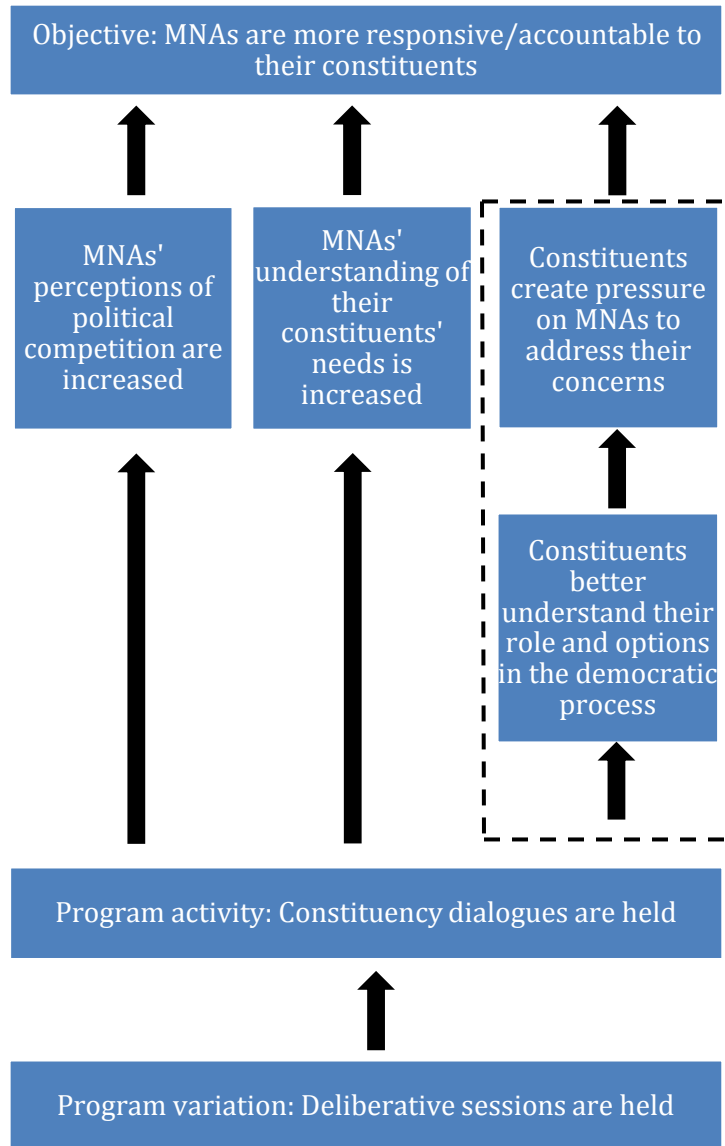
- **NDI Program Managers.** Marjan Ehsassi and Christina Costello managed evaluation team consultant agreements, the overall program budget, including impact evaluation resources, and contributed to this report.
- **NDI Senior Resident Director.** Laura Thornton is based in Cambodia and manages all aspects of NDI's programmatic activities in the country, including oversight of program implementation and supervision of office operations and personnel. She provided management support of field-based evaluation team members.
- **Field Researcher.** Emily Lamb and Molly Watts were each based in Cambodia to manage the overall data flow from collection through translation, and ensure the integrity and quality of the quantitative and qualitative data sets.
- **NDI Senior Program Officer.** Kimsrun Chhiv coordinated the deliberative session facilitators, provided them support in the field, and liaised between the Field Researcher and facilitators, as needed.
- **Research Firm.** Cambodian research organization the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) supported survey pilot efforts, and managed survey field administration and enumeration.
- **NDI Qualitative Analyst.** Ornanong Maneerattana managed the qualitative data inventory and contributed to final data analysis with the NDI Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.
- **NDI Quantitative Analyst.** Transitioning from the Field Researcher role, Molly Watts managed the quantitative data inventory and contributed to final data analysis with the Principal Investigator.

II. Evaluation Methodology

Development Hypothesis

Constituency dialogues bring together MNAs from different parties to hear constituents' concerns in a town-hall setting. Such a public forum can help to level the playing field between governing and opposition parties and raise MNA's awareness of their political competition and of constituents' needs. For citizens, this is a forum to publicly voice their concerns, better understand elected officials' roles and responsibilities, and hear from multiple political perspectives. NDI's hypothesis is that, over time, these factors will lead citizens to demand more responsiveness and accountability from their MNAs, and ultimately, for MNAs to be more responsive to their constituents (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 CD Program Development Hypothesis



NDI implemented a field experiment – that is, a randomized evaluation conducted in the field rather than through desktop research – in three provinces, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang and Kratie, to evaluate the impact of the program on Cambodians’ knowledge of, attitudes toward, and participation in political and civic life. The evaluation design placed individuals into one of three categories for comparison: those who received no program activities at all; those who were invited to attend a CD held in their village of residence; and those who were invited to participate in a deliberative session and a CD, both of which took place in their village of residence.

NDI varied the CD program by introducing a deliberative session conducted one day prior to the CD. The deliberative sessions were not an existing component of the CD program but

did contribute to the study's focus on the impact of the program on citizens. NDI's experience in other countries and regions suggested that a smaller forum for citizens to discuss issues – especially in politically uncertain environments – is a pre-condition for change in individual and/or collective behavior such as pressuring representatives to address concerns. NDI introduced this activity after narrowing the evaluation design to include three provinces. Adding the deliberative sessions allowed NDI to study an innovative activity and to answer additional evaluation questions.

Comprised of three to five individuals, the deliberative sessions were small group meetings designed for low-literacy populations to reflect, learn and plan action together. This program component was inspired by, and utilized tools adapted from the existing body of participatory action research approaches. Trained facilitators oversaw the deliberative sessions, but the sessions were structured for group participants to largely self-facilitate their identification of three local problems and six potential solutions (represented by pictures) using a matrix-ranking tool (a large paper grid). For each of the three priority problems identified, participants brainstormed and agreed on two solutions – one internal solution that required community action, and one external solution that required action by an MNA. Finally, participants voted for the priority solutions and closed the session with a brief discussion of the outcomes.

Building on the above results chain outlined by a dashed line in Figure 1, NDI further assumed that participation in a deliberative session and a CD – rather than participation in a CD alone – would increase the likelihood of a positive effect on citizen attitudes, knowledge and behavior. In addition, NDI postulated that the CD and the deliberative session would have different effects on men and women.

Evaluation Questions

The Institute posed four main evaluation questions to answer through the field experiment:

1. Does the constituency dialogue change individual attitudes, knowledge and behavior?
2. Does participation in a deliberative session before the constituency dialogue change individual attitudes, knowledge, behavior, or priority issues?
3. Does the facilitator gender or gender composition of deliberative sessions differentially impact participant attitudes, knowledge, or behavior?
4. Does the facilitator gender or gender composition of deliberative sessions differentially impact participant priority issues?

These questions were broken down into eight more specific research questions for analysis. The companion reports summarized in annexes I and II reference and analyze the eight questions.

Methodological Approach

The evaluation team applied three levels of randomization to form the following groups:

- Type 1 (in villages where no CD was conducted): individuals not invited to any program activity;
- Type 2 (in villages where a CD was conducted): individuals invited to attend a CD; and
- Type 3 (in villages where a CD was conducted): individuals invited to attend both a deliberative session and a CD.

Random assignment

1: Village assignment. Since 2004, NDI has collaborated with local partner organizations to identify and select CD village locations, handle local logistics for the CD event, and contribute to the management of relations with local authorities in a given province. In an effort to minimize modifications to the standard program implementation practice, NDI continued to engage local partner organizations in the selection of rural villages where CDs were to be conducted during the field experiment. At least one month prior to the target CD implementation date, local partner organizations identified potential pairs of villages in their respective provinces in which to conduct a CD. Selected villages had to be rural but accessible by road and not have been the site of a CD before. Based on local partner organizations' knowledge, villages with ongoing contentious community conflicts or high levels of political tension were not selected. Flipping a coin, NDI assigned one village to receive no program activity (Type 1, control village) and one village to have a CD (treatment village).

NDI conducted one CD in each of nine treatment villages during the field experiment, along with pre- and post-CD surveys (see Table 1 below). Among the nine villages that did not receive any program activity, only six villages were surveyed. Thus, for the survey data analyses of the effects of the CD, the sample includes only six pairs of treatment and control villages.

Table 1 Village Assignment for CD

Province	District	Commune	Village	CD / No CD	Survey / No Survey
Kampong Cham	Memot	Chaom Ta Mau	Bos Ta Oem	CD	Survey
		Kravean	Satum	No CD	Survey
	Chamkar Leu	Ta Prok	Rumcheck	CD	Survey
		Cheyyou	Cheyyou	No CD	Survey
	Kaoh Soutin	Kampong Reab	Kampong Sdei Kraom	CD	Survey
		Pongro	Pongro Kaeut	No CD	No survey
Kampong	Baribour	Pech Chanvar	Tang Trapeang	CD	Survey

Province	District	Commune	Village	CD / No CD	Survey / No Survey
Chhnang		Trapeang Chan	Trapeang Chan	No CD	Survey
	Kampong Tralach	Ta Ches	La Peang	CD	Survey
		Longveaek	Boeng Kak	No CD	Survey
	Rolea B'ier	Krang Leav	Krang Leav	CD	Survey
		Tuek Hout	Kouk Sdau	No CD	No survey
Kratie	Sambo	Koh Khnhaer	Svay Chek	CD	Survey
		Ou Krieng	Ou Krieng	No CD	Survey
	Chit Borey	Thmar Andaeuk	Chuor Krouch	CD	Survey
		Thmei	Chronorl	No CD	Survey
	Kratie Town	Sangkat Orussey	Sre Sdao	CD	Survey
		Sangkat Kaoh Trong	Dem Koh	No CD	No survey

2: Individual assignment. Within each village assigned to have a CD, NDI used the pre-CD survey to randomize invitation to the deliberative session. CAS survey enumerators administered the baseline survey one week prior to the CD. They randomly selected a household for the first survey using a map of village households. The survey enumerators then interviewed one adult in each household, flipping a coin to determine whether they interviewed a man or woman. At the conclusion of every baseline survey in villages assigned to have a CD, the respondent was invited to attend the upcoming CD (Type 2). A subset of randomly selected survey respondents living in CD villages were also issued a non-transferable invitation to participate in a deliberative session the day before the CD (Type 3). Survey respondents in control villages were not invited to attend any event. A follow up survey was conducted with the same respondents one week after the CD.¹¹ For the survey data analyses of the effects of the deliberative sessions, the sample included the nine villages where a CD was conducted.

3: Deliberative session assignment. To examine the effect of gender on the deliberative sessions, NDI created four different deliberative group types among participants:

¹¹ Control village baseline and follow-up surveys were administered on a timeline comparable to the survey timeline of the CD treatment village in the same district.

Table 2 Deliberative Session Gender Variations

Facilitator	Female facilitators	Male facilitators
Group composition		
All female participants	Type A	NONE
All male participants	NONE	Type B
Mixed participants	Type C	Type D

Prior to each deliberative session, the field researcher randomly assigned ten trained facilitators to work with a specific group type, taking into account the facilitators' gender and the desired group gender composition. When participants arrived for the session, the field researcher randomly assigned individuals to a group composition type that corresponded to the participant's gender.

All groups used a matrix-ranking tool to record their priority problems and solutions. The pictures representing their top three problems were placed vertically on the left hand side of the matrix grid. The six solutions – one internal and one external solution for each problem – were placed horizontally across the top of the matrix grid. Participants used buttons to cast votes for their priority problems and solutions, and the facilitator recorded the vote totals on the matrix during the session. Facilitators monitored the discussion around the identification of priority issues and solutions and the voting outcomes for each deliberative session and recorded the information on forms for later analysis. The facilitator notes and the deliberative groups' matrix voting patterns were used as data sets as noted below.

Mixed methods approach

This study used a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the program context and answer the four main impact evaluation questions about the effect of CDs and deliberative sessions on citizen attitudes, knowledge, behavior, and priority issues. NDI used a mixed methods approach to 1) collect experimental data (data that can answer questions about causal effects) about the program components; 2) collect descriptive data (data that does not answer questions of causality) about the program components and the broader context in which they occurred; and 3) use multiple data sets to examine specific elements of the program (triangulation), such as individuals' priority issues. In many mixed methods evaluations, qualitative data (such as focus groups) are used only to describe the context in which the program occurs as a supplement to survey or other experimental findings. A unique feature of this mixed methods design was that survey and deliberative session data sets were used to study effects caused by the program; additional data from deliberative sessions and the CDs were used to describe the programmatic context as well. Quantitative and qualitative data collection included:

- CAS fielded pre- and post-surveys to collect baseline and outcome data in CD and control villages.
- Deliberative session participants generated and ranked priority problems and then used a matrix-ranking grid to vote on their priority community problems and solutions; the evaluation team analyzed the groups' matrix priorities and matrix voting patterns.
- The facilitators used a form to record notes from the deliberative group's discussion of the problems and solutions identified for each session they facilitated.
- The facilitators used a CD observation form to record their deliberative session participants' attendance and behavior at the CD and the behavior of police, local authorizes and MNAs at the CD event.
- Facilitators also recorded their personal reflections after each session they facilitated to assess perceived changes on a series of standardized questions, including their facilitation ability and the group dynamics, among other factors.
- Finally, NDI staff and representatives of its local partner organizations monitored follow-up by MNAs and local authorities on the issues raised at each CD. The issue monitoring forms were used in both the CD villages and the control villages.¹²

For the purposes of this report, the evaluation team prioritized the analysis of some of the available data sets to identify key findings.

Samples for analysis

This study drew on several of the data sources noted above to conduct various levels of analyses. The findings presented consider the following comparison groups:

- Type 1: individuals not invited to any program activities;
- Type 2: individuals invited to attend a CD;
- Type 3: individuals invited to attend both a deliberative session and a CD; and
 - Among deliberative session participants:
 - Group type A: Female facilitator with all female participants
 - Group type B: Male facilitator with all male participants; and
 - Group type C/D: Mixed participants with either a female or a male facilitator.¹³

A more detailed discussion of the survey analyses and findings is available in the report referenced in annex I, and the matrix voting pattern analyses are discussed in the reports referenced in annexes I and II.

CD analysis. The CD analysis compared experimental survey data among individuals in control villages (Type 1) and individuals in CD villages (Type 2) (see Table 3 below). At baseline, individuals in villages selected for CDs were slightly more likely to have attended

¹² The issue monitoring forms were not analyzed for this report or the findings presented in the qualitative and quantitative companion reports.

¹³ For analysis purposes, mixed participant deliberative session groups were considered one type, whether the group was facilitated by a male or female, and compared to the other single-gender group types.

a prior CD and much more likely to report having heard a CD broadcast on the radio before, compared to individuals in control villages. It is unlikely but unclear whether prior CD attendance or radio exposure caused any substantive differences in the CD effects reported below. Among those individuals who completed the endline survey across all treatment villages, 56% of respondents reported having attended a CD. No respondents in the control villages reported having attended a CD.

Table 3 Sample for CD Analysis

	Control villages	CD villages
Villages	6 villages (2 villages x 3 provinces)	6 villages (2 villages x 3 provinces)
Baseline survey respondents	720 baseline respondents (120 respondents x 6 villages)	720 baseline respondents (120 respondents x 6 villages)
Endline survey respondents	661 endline respondents (92% of baseline respondents)	655 endline respondents (91% of baseline respondents)

Deliberative session analysis. The deliberative session analysis examined experimental survey data within a CD village, comparing individuals who were invited to attend both a CD and a deliberative session (Type 3) with those individuals who were invited to attend a CD only (Type 2) (see Table 4 below). Of the survey respondents invited to attend a deliberative session, 46% reported that they actually attended. Among survey respondents invited to attend a CD only, 7% reported that they attended a deliberative session.

The evaluation team also conducted an extensive analysis of citizen priorities across provinces and communes using descriptive qualitative data. These findings are based on deliberative group matrix-identified priority problems and solutions, facilitator documentation of both the deliberative session discussions and the CD environment, and facilitator CD observational data.

Table 4 Sample for Deliberative Session Analysis

	CD villages	
Villages	9 villages (3 villages x 3 provinces)	
Baseline survey respondents	1,080 total baseline respondents (120 respondents x 9 villages)	
Treatment	CD only	Deliberative session + CD
Baseline survey respondents	540 respondents invited (60 respondents x 9 villages)	540 respondents invited (60 respondents x 9 villages)
Endline survey respondents	498 endline respondents (92% of baseline respondents)	499 endline respondents (92% of baseline respondents)

Deliberative session gender analysis. As a sub-set of the deliberative session analyses, the evaluation team explored whether the gender composition of the group or facilitator gender had an impact on deliberative session participants' attitudes, knowledge, behavior, or priority issues. The total number of groups formed during the study is presented in

Table 5 below. These analyses compare each group’s gender composition to the other possible group composition types. Similarly, the effect of having a male facilitator is compared to that of having a female facilitator.

These questions were analyzed using survey data among individuals who were invited to attend a deliberative session. However, as noted above, fewer than expected individuals completed both surveys and attended a deliberative session. The limited findings presented should be interpreted with caution. Additional experimental findings presented were drawn from the analysis of the matrix voting patterns generated by the deliberative groups. These experimental findings are discussed in both companion reports, and the specific measures are described in detail in the qualitative findings report.

Table 5 Sample for Deliberative Session Gender Analysis

	CD villages			
Villages	9 villages (3 villages x 3 provinces)			
Treatment	Deliberative session			
Deliberative session participants	322 total participants			
Group type	A. All female group	B. All male group	C. Mixed group Female facilitator	D. Mixed group Male facilitator
	24 groups	24 groups	16 groups	16 groups

Data limitations

There are several known limitations to the data collected, which should be taken into consideration in interpreting the findings presented and in exploring the possibility of future data collection related to this study.

Survey sample. The survey sample is stratified on gender, which means that a sufficient number of male and female survey respondents were chosen to allow for comparison of effects between these two sectors of the population. In consultation with CAS, NDI determined that it would not stratify the survey sample by age, in part because of budget considerations (more surveys would have been required to compare effects by age group). The findings cannot be generalized to the broader village or country population. Within each gender, the survey respondents are representative of the village population that is most likely to be exposed to the CD.

Survey timeline. The two week period between the pre- and post-survey is a relatively short time horizon. Surveys were administered on a rolling basis, depending on the date of the CD. This plan allowed for the same data collection timeline relative to each CD; however, CDs were conducted over a nine month period, spanning seasons that require the population to travel for agricultural work. With input from local research firm CAS, NDI chose this data collection timeline to minimize the challenge anticipated in locating the same individuals for the second survey. While this data does not address the sustainability of any changes caused by the program activities, a subsequent survey in the target villages

would reveal whether these findings persist at the village level – rather than the individual level.

Compliance rates. Compliance rate refers to an individual's completion of the steps related to the treatment group to which s/he was assigned. For example, an individual assigned to receive no treatment (Type 1) was to complete a pre- and post-survey without attending any program events between these surveys. An individual invited to attend a deliberative session (Type 3) was to complete a baseline survey, attend a deliberative session, then attend a CD, and finally complete an endline survey. There are many factors that could have prevented individuals from complying with each of the desired steps in their assigned treatment group. In anticipation of this, the evaluation team invited more individuals to attend the deliberative session than were anticipated to act on the invitation. In this study, not all survey respondents in CD villages actually attended the CD. Similarly, far fewer individuals invited to the deliberative sessions actually attended, and other un-invited individuals attended the sessions. The findings presented almost certainly underestimate the effects – positive or negative – that would have been measured if all survey respondents had participated in their assigned program treatment(s).

New measures. During the deliberative session, facilitators recorded participants' priority problems and vote totals for their priority solutions on each group's matrix-ranking grid. For this study, the evaluation team piloted new measures based on these matrix voting patterns. Several variables recorded how closely (or not) participants' votes were distributed across all solutions or on a specific solution. Another variable recorded the proportion of votes cast for internal solutions (requiring citizen action) versus external solutions (requiring action by an MP or other official). These measures were used to understand how facilitator gender and group gender composition affected participant behavior and voting patterns during the deliberative session. The analysis of statistical significance was valuable in identifying gender as a factor in deliberative session outcomes; however, the meaning of these voting measures as indicators of deliberation is not entirely clear. These data confirm that creating a separate space for women to deliberate with other women leads to different outcomes than mixed-gender or all-male groups. It is less clear whether certain voting patterns are indicative of "better" deliberative outcomes.

III. Summary of Key Findings

A summary of key findings based on descriptive and experimental data collected during the impact study of constituency dialogues and deliberative sessions is presented below. Detailed descriptions of the analyses and discussions of findings for the qualitative and quantitative data sets are included in the companion reports referenced in annexes I and II.

Constituency Dialogues

Experimental findings

Holding a CD had statistically significant positive effects for individuals in treatment villages on indicators of knowledge of the political process and self-reported engagement in civic and political behaviors. The effect of a CD on individual attitudes towards politics,

the political process and citizens' role in that process is not consistently positive or negative or statistically significant for most of the relevant survey indicators. There are some differences in how men and women responded to the CD across knowledge, attitudes and reported behavior indicators.

CD effect on knowledge. The survey included open-ended and closed questions (that offered fixed or multiple choice options) about the roles and responsibilities of the National Assembly and MNAs and individuals' right to talk to MNAs about their concerns.

- The baseline data alone demonstrated the stark difference between men and women in political knowledge. Women had significantly lower survey scores than men, which would indicate that women in villages served by the CD program have, on average, much less political knowledge than men.
- After a CD was held, respondents in treatment villages were significantly more likely than respondents in control villages to provide any response to various open-ended questions and to answer closed questions correctly. On several questions, the positive effect is either greater or exclusively among men.

CD effect on attitudes. To assess individuals' confidence in and attitudes towards the political process, the survey included a series of questions about respondents' general interest in politics, their individual role in solving problems at the community and country levels, the role of opposition parties in a democracy, the meaning of voting in elections, and perceived MNA responsiveness to respondents' communities.

- Compared to individuals in control villages, respondents in CD villages were 5.6% more likely to report being "very interested" in politics and 8.7% less likely to report being "not interested" in politics after the CD was conducted.
- Across other attitudinal questions, there were not consistent and statistically significant effects of the CD, either positive or negative, on confidence in the political process or citizens' role in that process.
- Although respondents' attitudes did not change overall, women in CD villages were more likely (than women in control villages) to agree with the following statements because of the CD: "It is good for democracy in Cambodia to have opposition parties," and "I can choose who represents me in government."
- The CD caused survey respondents in treatment villages to be 27% more likely to agree that "MNAs communicate with [my] community about what they are doing in parliament", and 15% more likely to report being aware of specific activities MNAs had conducted on behalf of their communities.

CD effect on behavior. To assess the effect of a CD on behavior, the survey included a series of questions on self-reported membership in community associations and groups,

engagement or willingness to engage in specific [legal] civic or political actions, and engagement or willingness to engage specific political actors or officials.

- The CD had significant positive effects on treatment village respondents' self-reported membership to two out of the nine types of groups or neighborhood associations listed. Individuals living in CD villages were 6.3% more likely to report belonging to a political party and 9.5% more likely to report belonging to a "self-help" group after the CD took place, compared to individuals in control villages. The latter effect was more pronounced for women (10.9%) than for men (8.3%).
- A series of 12 civic and political actions were combined into an index for survey analysis. The index included actions other than voting, such as attending a political party event or commune council meeting, filing a case in court, or distributing information on political issues. On this index of citizen engagement, the CD caused an average of a 6.3% increase in the probability that respondents in CD treatment villages said they "already had" or "would" take some kind of action. The CD effect was significant and positive for 10 of the 12 specific actions, ranging from a 4% to 15% increase in the likelihood that respondents said they "already had" or "would" engage in those behaviors. Results for some of the specific actions on this index are noted below.
- Among the commune-level actions, the CD caused a 4% increase in respondents reporting that they "already have" or "would" attend a commune council meeting. The findings are not significant for the related actions of speaking at a commune council meeting or filing a complaint with the commune council. The CD caused women, relative to men, to be more likely to report specific actions, including filing a case in court, participating in a peaceful demonstration, participating in a strike in the workplace, signing or thumb-printing a petition, and writing a letter or contacting an MNA.
- Finally, the CD caused an increase in the frequency with which respondents reported talking about politics with other people, such as friends or neighbors. The CD did not have a significant effect, positive or negative, on whether respondents would have a hard time discussing controversial issues with friends or neighbors.

Descriptive findings

Opposition and ruling party supporters were both present at all nine CDs in generally balanced numbers. Participating MNAs respected the CD code of conduct most of the time. The CD environment varied by commune with a strong police presence observed at three of the nine CDs. At some of these CDs, police were perceived to be attempting to intimidate CD participants who raised concerns.

Deliberative Sessions

Experimental findings

The deliberative session had few detectable effects on participant knowledge, attitudes, behavior, or priority issues as measured by the same survey questions summarized in the CD findings section. As noted in the data limitations discussion above, and in the companion quantitative report, these findings should be interpreted cautiously as fewer survey respondents acted on their deliberative session invitations than anticipated. There is some survey evidence that the deliberative sessions affected men and women differently, and sometimes in opposite ways.

Deliberative session effect on knowledge. The survey did not detect any significant effects – positive or negative – of the deliberative sessions on participant knowledge of the political process. There is one exception among women.

- The deliberative sessions caused a 6.6% increase in the probability that women correctly responded that “giving gifts,” one of the options for a survey question, was not a responsibility of MNAs.

Deliberative session effect on attitudes. The deliberative sessions had no effect on survey respondents’ reported interest in politics and no average effect across men and women on questions about confidence in the political process. However, there is some evidence that deliberative sessions affected attitudes among men and women differently.

- Among men invited to attend a deliberative session, significantly fewer agreed with the statement, “None of the MNAs from my province are aware of issues facing the local people.” Among women, significantly fewer agreed with the statement, “It does not matter how I vote, nothing will change.”

Deliberative session effect on behavior. The deliberative sessions had no average effects detected on the survey across men and women on self-reported civic and political behavior. There are some differences between men and women around specific behaviors.

- Contrary to the evaluation team’s expectations, the deliberative sessions did not affect the frequency with which respondents reported talking about politics with other people, such as friends or neighbors, or whether respondents would have a hard time discussing controversial issues with friends or neighbors.
- The deliberative sessions caused male respondents to be 2.3% more likely to join an NGO and 1.1% more likely to join a fisher’s association. These changes are statistically significant but are small shifts, and less meaningful, in actual practice.
- The deliberative sessions caused women to be 6.5% more likely to say they would write a letter or complaint to a government authority. While this change is not statistically significant, it could be a meaningful change in actual citizen practice.

Deliberative session effect on priority issues. The survey included a list of priority issues from which respondents could choose the top three issues they personally considered most important. The deliberative session had no significant effects on individuals' priority issues, as detected in the survey.

Descriptive findings

Systematic observation at the CD showed that deliberative session participants were more active at the CD than other CD attendees. This observational data compares deliberative session participants to other CD-only participants. The deliberative session participants included some individuals who were not randomly selected to be invited to these sessions, and this data includes many self-selected individuals; therefore, these are descriptive findings. Across all deliberative sessions, 65.7% of participants attended a CD the following day. Among these individuals, deliberative session participants raised their hands and spoke at a CD more than twice as often as CD participants who had not attended a deliberative session. This was true for both male and female deliberative session participants: women spoke at a CD one and a half times more often than CD-only female participants; and men spoke two and a half times more often than CD-only male participants.

Further descriptive findings provide context to the priority issues identified by deliberative session groups – many of which are similar to, but ranked somewhat differently than those listed on the survey. These findings are based on descriptive qualitative data from 80 deliberative sessions and nine CDs conducted during this study.

- The issues identified through the deliberative session group ranking process highlighted the interrelated nature of problems faced by the participants. The groups' discussions demonstrated that the problems raised had wide-reaching effects on their families, community politics, the local economy, and the natural environment.
- The priority issues identified through the deliberative sessions varied by province and commune; however, corruption was a common theme across communes. The corruption experienced by participants took many forms, affecting service delivery, distribution of humanitarian aid, and land concessions. Land seizure was acutely noted in a third of the communes. Participants associated this issue with other problems, including dispossession of land and infringement of legal rights, detrimental environmental and health effects, and violent retribution or imprisonment for citizens who mobilized in protest.

Deliberative Session Gender Dynamics

Experimental findings

Experimental survey data were used to examine the effects of deliberative session gender variations on participant attitudes, knowledge and behavior. Experimental matrix-ranking

data were used to examine the effects of facilitator gender and group composition on priority problems and solution ranking.

Deliberative session participant attitudes and knowledge. The deliberative session facilitator's gender and the gender composition of the group had few detectable effects on participant responses to survey questions about their knowledge of, attitudes toward, and participation in political and civic life. This analysis is limited to the participants who attended the deliberative session and could be matched to a pre- and post-survey. The significant findings could be due to chance rather than an effect caused by the program.

Deliberative session participant behavior. There are few survey findings on deliberative session effect on respondents' reported behavior. For example, participants in all-female groups were more likely (than participants in other group gender compositions) to report a willingness to vote in the 2012 commune council elections. Again, these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small percentage of surveyed individuals who accepted the deliberative session invitation and were considered in this analysis.

The evaluation team considered the deliberative session voting results recorded on the group matrices as an observed behavior among deliberative session participants. These effects are based on measures piloted in this study, which suggest that the facilitator gender and group composition affected participant behavior. While the findings are statistically significant for gender, understanding their meaning for measuring deliberation – whether positive or negative – requires further study.

- Facilitator gender affected how deliberative session groups distributed votes across their matrices. Male-facilitated groups were significantly more likely than female-facilitated groups to vote in consensus, “clustering” their votes for single solutions as well as among their top three out of six priority solutions.

Deliberative session participant priority issues. As noted above, the deliberative session had no significant effects on individuals' priority issues, as detected in the survey. However, some differences were detected in the analysis of deliberative session qualitative data and matrix voting patterns.

- The gender composition influenced how groups ranked their priority problems. All-male groups placed a higher priority on the lack of infrastructure and were less likely (compared to other group types) to rank corruption as one of the top three priorities. Mixed-gender groups were more likely than other group types to identify a lack of health clinics among the top three priorities.
- The facilitator gender also caused a difference in how deliberative groups ranked their priority problems. Male-facilitated groups were more likely than female-facilitated groups to vote for lack of infrastructure. They were less likely than female-facilitated groups to vote for high cost of living and access to markets among the top priority issues.

- Facilitator gender also affected the types of solutions for which groups voted. All groups tended to identify external solutions – those that required MNA action – over internal solutions – those that required citizen action. However, male-facilitated groups were significantly more likely to prioritize external solutions compared to the other group composition types. Female-facilitated groups were significantly more likely to prioritize internal solutions compared to other group types.

IV. Conclusions

The findings from NDI’s mixed-methods impact evaluation will contribute to the current CD program and to similar future programming in Cambodia and other countries. The findings of this study are also relevant to ongoing program design and evaluation dialogue within the broader community of international democracy assistance practitioners, donor agencies and academics. Conclusions are presented below, first those related to the program followed by considerations for future evaluation initiatives.

Program Design and Implementation

- This study showed that a CD caused positive change at the individual knowledge levels and self-reported engagement in some civic and political behaviors, but did not detect evidence of the program causing greater citizen demand of their MNAs.

The survey data demonstrated that a CD caused an increase in basic civic and political knowledge among individuals, which is the first step in the results chain examined by this study. However, the evaluation team did not detect evidence that individuals were more likely to put pressure on MNAs to address their concerns, which is the subsequent step in the results chain. Lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that there is not a link between the CD program and citizen demand in Cambodia. Among others, certain factors merit further study to understand the linkage between citizens’ increased political knowledge and awareness and more active citizen demand for MNA responsiveness, including:

- a. expanding the data collection timeline beyond the period immediately following a CD to allow time for medium- or longer-term changes in citizen behavior to take place and to assess the sustainability of effects;
 - b. identifying measures of observed, rather than self-reported behavior change, to study outcomes in actual practice (see the evaluation conclusion on behavior indicators below);
 - c. determining the “dosage” – or the quantity of program events– needed to affect citizen demand beyond a single CD or deliberative session; and
 - d. exploring additional program support for citizen engagement, such as the addition of an explicit civic education or citizen participation component to the CD.
- The deliberative session pilot effort generated reliable qualitative data within a randomized impact evaluation and demonstrated the differences in men and women’s voices as well as the risks Cambodians face in speaking out about issues like corruption.

While the experimental survey data did not detect any changes caused by the deliberative sessions, the experimental matrix voting pattern data did show that the facilitator's gender and group gender composition caused groups to reach different outcomes. These findings underscore the differences in men and women's voices. These discussions also demonstrated the risks that Cambodians face in speaking out about issues like corruption. A single deliberative session is unlikely to support sustainable solutions to the problems discussed and could even put participants at risk by encouraging the discussion of such topics. Rather than a stand-alone program activity, deliberative sessions should be considered part of a broader programmatic approach to support citizen engagement and demand for greater responsiveness and accountability of their elected officials.

- The mixed methods approach of this impact study highlighted positive changes in individuals' knowledge caused by the program as well as contextual challenges and risks of greater citizen engagement in Cambodia.

Together, the different data sets provide a fuller picture of citizen engagement in the context of this program than any of the data sets do alone. Descriptive observational data from the nine CDs showed that the participating MNAs generally adhered to the code of conduct, and that the CDs were inclusive of both the ruling and opposition party MNAs and their supporters in the audience. Experimental survey data showed that the CD caused a positive effect on individuals' knowledge; however, this data did not show a clear or statistically significant effect of the CD or the deliberative session on individuals' confidence in the political process or system. The descriptive deliberative session data highlighted participants' experiences – beyond the context of the CD – with intimidation, corruption, land seizure, and sometimes violent retribution against individuals who spoke out against local problems. These findings point to the need for further study of the conditions related to and consequences of greater citizen demand for individuals in a closed political system.

- The scope of this evaluation did not include the “supply” side of the program theory of change, and many questions remain regarding how the program may change MNA behavior.

Since the CD program began in 2004, most of the programmatic inputs (prior to the introduction of the deliberative sessions) have focused on MNAs and the supply side of the theory of change. The program has collected descriptive qualitative data that demonstrate anecdotes of both citizen demands for action and MNA initiatives to address citizen demands. Similar to the questions noted above about citizen demand, more systematic information is needed to understand the extent to which the program contributes to or causes positive or negative change in MNAs' perception of political competition and their understanding of constituents' needs. There are challenges to studying the program effect on MNAs. In the Cambodian context, it would not be feasible to randomize MNA participation in the program or even to randomly assign MNAs to different phases of a delayed program roll-out. Non-experimental data could help to explore programmatic contribution to MNA's understanding of and action on constituent needs.

Evaluation Design and Implementation

- The academic-practitioner partnership strengthened the evaluation team and the quality of the impact study, and this model should be considered when feasible for future impact studies in the democracy and governance sector.

This partnership merged practitioner and academic expertise on equal footing, which enabled the evaluation team to mitigate anticipated risks and effectively troubleshoot challenges that arose during implementation and to collect and analyze a range of quantitative and qualitative data sets. The practitioners' relationships and country experience proved critical for understanding the political and programmatic contexts. This perspective served to represent the original program purpose in the midst of evolving evaluation design options and to inform the development of data collection tools and their translation into Khmer. The academic perspective was invaluable in exploring evaluation design options and preserving the rigor of the impact evaluation design as challenges arose during implementation. This expertise was essential for exploring analysis options for the complex body of quantitative and qualitative data sets. Finally, the extension of the academic-practitioner partnership into the analysis phase of the evaluation ensured that evaluative findings have utility for a broader audience, including program implementers, policymakers as well as the academic community.

- The evaluation team considered various indicators to measure change in individual's behavior, but few of these measures proved viable in practice.

This evaluation included several measures of individual behavior, including survey questions on participant-reported action or intent of future action, and systematic observation of deliberative session participants' behavior at the CD. The social and political context and practices rendered other measures unfeasible or potentially harmful to participants. The evaluation team explored the use of commune council meeting records and other means of tracking individual actions (letter campaigns, citizen petitions, SMS messages, citizen visits to an MNA's office) in the months following the deliberative sessions and CDs. Commune council meeting records are not regularly maintained nor made publicly available. MNA records of constituent contact are not systematically maintained, if they exist at all. Citizen action through written formats would exclude large parts of the target program population, which has high illiteracy rates. The more visible measures of citizen behavior expose individuals to scrutiny and possible retaliation from government or other state officials. These measurement challenges were shaped by the Cambodian political context and are likely to be encountered across most democracy and governance programs.

- The deliberative session matrix-ranking measures were effective in capturing reliable qualitative data within a randomized impact evaluation. However, collecting and analyzing this qualitative data may be cost prohibitive for many programs.

The introduction of the deliberative session was a valuable pilot effort both for this impact evaluation and to assess a potential citizen engagement program activity. As noted above in

the programmatic conclusions, deliberative sessions should not be considered as stand-alone or one-time program activities. The volume of qualitative data collected and analyzed through the 80 deliberative sessions conducted for this study required significant staff and program resources. These costs should be considered against the broader program design and available resources and may be prohibitive for many programs to absorb. Future program design and evaluation work around this program component should also take into consideration challenges faced with high levels of participant attrition. The study was limited by invited participants not acting on the deliberative session invitation as frequently as anticipated. The participant attrition resulted in a diminished sample size for analysis, which may not have detected actual effects.

ANNEX I Executive Summary of Quantitative Findings

The excerpt below is drawn from the February 2013 *Evaluation Report: The Constituency Dialogue Program in Cambodia* authored by Susan D Hyde, Associate Professor with the Department of Political Science at Yale University.¹⁴

The constituency dialogue (CD) program in Cambodia is a multi-year democracy promotion effort implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which brings elected members of the National Assembly (MNAs) to rural villages in their province in order to participate in a multi-party town hall meeting. The evaluation team conducted a randomized evaluation of the program to better understand some of the effects of participation in a CD, as well as the effects of small group meetings, or deliberative sessions, held before the CD. This document provides a detailed description of the study design and the quantitative results, primarily based on survey evidence but also including quantitative evidence collected during the deliberative sessions. In a companion document authored by Linda Stern of NDI, the qualitative results from the same study are presented.

The central questions in the study focus on how rural Cambodians were influenced by attending a CD, as well as how participants were influenced by an additional deliberative session held before the CD on problems facing their community and possible solutions to those problems. Before this evaluation, program staff had little systematic knowledge about the population of citizens that are typically served by the program, nor strong predictions about the effects the program has on citizens.¹⁵ This study focused on the hypothesis that if rural citizens attended a CD, their political knowledge, attitudes toward democracy, and reported political behavior would change in a manner that would make them more aware of democratic institutions, more willing to discuss issues facing their community, more aware of their rights as citizens, and by extension, more likely to hold their elected officials accountable.

The second component of this study was the addition of deliberative sessions held the day before the CD took place, where a small group of participants discussed problems facing their community, proposed solutions to those problems, and voted on their preferred solution to each of three priority problems within their group. These groups were varied by gender composition of participants and facilitator gender. This component of the study explored the general expectations that the deliberative sessions would also influence attitudes, knowledge, and behavior, and have effects on what citizens outline as priority

¹⁴ The views expressed represent only the views of the author, and do not reflect the views of NDI or its staff. The author served as a pro-bono consultant on the project, acting as the principal investigator during the implementation and analysis phases in exchange for access to the data. Travel to Cambodia, lodging, and per diem were paid for the researcher by NDI. Molly Watts and Emily Lamb served as field researchers and provided excellent support in implementation and analysis of this study. All errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the author.

¹⁵ Prior to the evaluation, program staff had stronger beliefs about the likely effect of the CD program on participating MNAs. In planning the evaluation design, program staff articulated a theory of change that encompassed this belief as well as the “bottom up” effect of changing citizen demands on MNAs. This is described in greater detail in the companion qualitative report and summary report.

issues for their community. NDI also was interested in whether the effects of the program varied by gender.

In interpreting these results, it is important to note that the evaluation focused on change among citizens and did not test the effect of the program on MNA behavior. In this case, MNAs were not randomly assigned to participate in a CD event for a variety of logistical reasons; therefore, the evaluation focused primarily on citizen-level or “bottom-up” change.¹⁶ Citizens in treatment and control villages were surveyed before and after the CD. Quantitative data collected during the deliberative session voting processes were also used to test for facilitator and group composition gender effects on the outcomes of the deliberative process. Overall the study found:

1. Participation in a CD had positive and significant effects on citizen knowledge of the political process, self-reported engagement with the political process, familiarity with politics, and perceptions of MNA responsiveness.
2. Citizens exposed to the CD were also more likely to have reported voting in the last election, more likely to say they would vote in the next election, and more likely to say they belonged to a political party or “self-help” group.
3. Contrary to expectations, the CD does not consistently change citizen confidence in the political process.
4. The deliberative sessions overall had few detectable effects on knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, as measured in the average effects on survey responses.
5. There is some evidence that men and women were affected differently by the additional deliberative sessions.
6. The gender compositions of the deliberative group’s participants and the facilitator’s gender have consistent effects on deliberative session voting behavior.

Note that null effects should be interpreted with care, as they indicate that the study, as designed and implemented, did not detect consistent effects of the program. Null results can occur because there is no effect of the program; however, they can also occur for a variety of other reasons, such as problems with the implementation of the study, or if the effects of the program were not captured by measures used.

¹⁶ Note that as part of the evaluation, NDI’s local partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) did collect data on whether MNAs had followed up on any of their promises in both the treatment and control villages. But, because MNAs were not randomly assigned to participate in the CD event, the causal effect of the CD on MNA behavior is difficult to tease out.

ANNEX II Executive Summary of Qualitative Findings

The excerpt below is drawn from the February 2013 *NDI Cambodia: Qualitative Findings from a Random Control Trial* authored by Linda Stern, Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning at NDI.

In 2009 NDI had the opportunity to design and implement a random control trial of its long-standing *Multiparty Constituency Dialogue* (CD) program in Cambodia. The CD program was based on a *theory of change* which posits that the creation of new and competitive political space, where citizens can voice their concerns, will inform policy and increase accountability between constituents and their representatives. Along with understanding the effects of the CD attendance on citizens attitudes and knowledge, NDI wanted to know what would happen if rural citizens had more time and space before the constituency dialogue to formulate their concerns, deliberate on solutions and build consensus and confidence with their peers on the issues that should be brought to the attention of the MNAs. To that end NDI varied the program so that some citizens would participate only in the CD and others would participate in an additional deliberative session before the CD. NDI used a mixed-methods approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data within the experimental framework.

The field experiment used a survey to test four of the eight hypothesis questions posed in the study, the results of which are covered in the companion report authored by Dr. Susan Hyde. The qualitative findings in this companion report draw on data from the deliberative sessions to address three of the eight hypothesis questions (#3, 5 and 7) posed in the random control trial. It should be noted that the qualitative data under hypothesis question three serve as descriptive data on citizens' priorities and cannot be considered experimental. However, because qualitative data were collected experimentally on all deliberative groups that participated in the program variation, these data do speak to the experimental findings on the effects of gender, group composition and facilitator under hypothesis questions 5 and 7. In this way the qualitative report provides a context for the quantitative findings – particularly for citizen priorities – lends insight into NDI's program innovation in citizen deliberation; and speaks to the broader program hypothesis and *theory of change* for constituency dialogue programs.

Based on results from 80 deliberative sessions; observational data from nine CD events; and facilitator documentation of both the CDs and deliberative groups, the following offers a summary of findings and their implications:

Hypothesis Question #3: How did participation in a deliberative session before the CD impact citizens' priorities?

1. Priority issues for citizens who participated in the deliberative session before the CD were: *lack of infrastructure, land seizures, corruption, high cost of living, water and sanitation and health clinics*. Many of the same issues were ranked among citizens' top priorities on the baseline survey (e.g., *lack of infrastructure, land seizure, corruption, high cost of living*). However, when asked to deliberate with their peers citizens placed

lesser importance on some priorities (e.g., *Vietnamese immigration, illegal logging and fishing*); placed more emphasis on other priorities (e.g., *education*); identified new priorities (e.g., *water and sanitation, health clinics inter alia*); and omitted other priorities altogether (e.g., *leaders don't represent citizens; political party platforms don't fight poverty*).

2. The issues identified through the collaborative, matrix-ranking process used during the deliberative sessions revealed the interrelated nature of citizens' problems. The qualitative data illuminated the way in which these issues impact rural Cambodian's lives, livelihoods, families, communities and the natural environment.
3. Matrix-identified priorities from the deliberative sessions varied slightly by province and commune, but serious corruption cut across communes and took many forms – corruption in service delivery, in distribution of humanitarian aid and in land concessions. Of particular note were those communes where land seizure was an issue. In these deliberative sessions citizens recounted dispossession of rural families by private companies, clear cutting of forests, killing of livestock, chemical pollution of water, and violent retribution and imprisonment for citizens who mobilized in protest – all with the support of local authorities.

Hypothesis Question #5: How did the gender composition of the deliberative groups differentially impact the priority issues of the participants?

4. The gender composition of the deliberative sessions influenced how groups prioritized three of the 19 problems identified using a matrix. During deliberation all-male groups tended to place a higher priority on the *lack of infrastructure* and were less likely than all other groups to rank *corruption* as a top priority. Mixed groups were also more likely than any other group types to identify *lack of health clinics* among their top priorities.

Hypothesis Question #7: Did the gender of the facilitator differentially influence the priority issues of participants?

5. The gender of the facilitator also caused a difference in the way in which a deliberative group ranked three of the 19 problems identified using a matrix, with male-facilitated groups more likely than female-facilitated groups to vote for *lack of infrastructure*; and less likely to vote for *high cost of living* and *access to markets* as a top priority. The gender of the facilitator also influenced how groups voted on solutions to problems. While all groups tended to identify *external* solutions – those that required MNA action – over *internal* solutions – those that required citizen action – groups facilitated by a male tended to identify *external* priorities more often than other groups. Moreover, when compared to female-facilitated groups, male-facilitated groups tended to vote in consensus, “clustering” their votes for single solutions to individual problems, as well as for their top three priority solutions.

How did the deliberative group participants behave at the CD?

6. Most deliberative groups agreed that they would raise their priorities with their MNAs at the CD event the next day. Although only 65% of those citizens were able to attend their CDs, the evaluation team found that on the day of the Constituency Dialogue those

citizens who had participated in the deliberative sessions were more active than the citizens who had not participated in a deliberative session. Deliberative session participants raised their hands and spoke at their CD events more than twice as often as citizens who had not participated in a deliberative session. Women who had participated in deliberative sessions spoke at their CDs one and a half times more often than their female counterparts; and male participants in deliberative sessions raised their hands and spoke at their CD events two and half times more often than men who had not attended a deliberative session before the CD. These findings cannot be considered experimental since deliberative session participants self-selected their attendance at the deliberative session and the CD. However, the observational data suggest that participation in the deliberative sessions contributed to differences in citizen engagement at the constituency dialogue the next day.

What was the environment at the CD event?

7. In general there was a healthy balance between opposition and ruling party at all nine CDs and for the most part MNAs respected the a code of conduct to interact civilly at the CD. However, the CD environment varied by commune and mapped with many of the issues identified during the deliberative sessions. Of particular note was the strong police presence at three of the nine CDs, and in many cases their active attempts to intimidate attendees who raised concerns. In all three of these communes corruption was ranked among the deliberative groups' highest matrix priorities and were related to land seize and/or service delivery.

Implications of Findings:

The USAID-sponsored random control trial provided NDI with the opportunity to test a programmatic innovation in its long-standing constituency dialogue program. Together the analysis of the descriptive and causal data provide insights into micro-level democratic processes and the ways in which the context as well as gender inform and influence citizens' deliberations, as well as their subsequent participation in the constituency dialogues. In this way the findings contribute to NDI's understanding of: a) democratic deliberation; and b) the broader program hypothesis and *theory of change* for constituency dialogue programs.

a) Program Innovation – Citizen Deliberation

Proponents of deliberative democracy posit that public reasoning and debate not only enhance social cohesion, but create outcomes of better citizens, better decisions and better or more legitimate systems. In contrast to aggregative democracy in which preferences are formed in private and then expressed and added together in public through polling, focus groups and elections, deliberative democracy provides a fair and transparent forum for citizens to identify and solve concrete problems despite their differences. Moreover, experiments in deliberative polling in 15 countries have demonstrated that citizen deliberation enhances citizen knowledge of issues and politics; strengthens their ability to formulate opinions; and stabilizes opinions on issues once they are formulated. At the same time, other experiments in citizen deliberation have demonstrated that deliberative processes can be influenced by gender norms and inequities, while deliberative outcomes can be influenced by moderators of deliberative forums.

Unlike experiments in deliberative polling, this study's survey results did not find that deliberative session participants improved participants' knowledge of issues, politics or confidence beyond the effect created by participation in the constituency dialogue alone (see companion report). However, the qualitative details from the deliberative sessions did align with the proposition that purposeful peer discussion and analysis is substantively different than polls and focus groups that measure citizens' opinions of the issues. Rather, the deliberative sessions yielded outcomes that reflected citizen *judgment* of their priorities after careful reflection and discussions of the issues and their solutions. Moreover, the experimental findings demonstrated the importance of creating deliberative space for marginalized groups within the population so that social norms and inequities such as gender do not unduly influence the deliberative process or its outcomes. Lastly, the difference in activity level at the CDs between deliberative session participants and non-participants, although not experimental, underscored the value-added of citizen deliberation before the CD.

These findings have implications for future programming designed to strengthen the demand side of the democracy equation. Future investment in citizen engagement should move beyond simply extracting information from citizens via focus groups and/or opinion polls to more purposefully investing in citizens' capacity to formulate their concerns in the public sphere. While deliberative sessions would enhance the quality and reliability of information on citizens' priorities, they should not be used as a stand-alone program or as an appendage to the current program. Given the risks that citizens run in discussing issues like corruption and intimidation, it would not be prudent to simply extract information from citizens through deliberative session or focus groups. Rather the deliberative process should be seen as a foundation for bolstering and supporting citizen voice, agency and empowerment to re-negotiate relationships of power within and outside their communities. Indeed, the deliberative sessions, when structured along gender lines, have an intrinsic value of strengthening the public voice of women and men within their communities. As such, support for citizen deliberation should be considered a starting point for strengthening the demand side of the democracy equation in Cambodia, and not simply to serve the informational needs of MNAs involved in NDI's CD program.

b) Program Hypothesis – Constituency Dialogues

The broader experimental study was meant to better understand the demand side of the constituency dialogue program's results chain – if constituents better understand their roles and options within the democratic process; and if constituents create pressure on MNAs to address their concerns; then constituents will contribute to more responsive and accountable MNAs. The random control trial demonstrated that participation in the CD did indeed improve constituents' understanding of their roles and option in the democratic process – the first link in the demand side of the program's results chain. However, the experiment did not demonstrate that this new knowledge and shift in attitudes were linked to citizens putting additional demands on their MNAs to address their concerns – the next link in the results chain. The deliberative sessions were a relatively modest program activity and the descriptive findings suggest that providing time and space for citizens to discuss and come to consensus on their concerns may increase their activity during the CD event. However, these findings were not experimental – as participation in the CD event

was self-selected and not randomized – and therefore not conclusive. Further data are needed to explore a) whether changes in knowledge and attitudes are sustainable beyond the study's timeline; and b) whether differences in citizen activities at the CD are due to citizen deliberation or some other variable.

In addition, the broader context of the program and its variation is important to take into account. While the nine CD events presented a picture of healthy political competition in which ruling and opposition parties adhered to a code of civility, the details from the deliberative sessions documented a context of corruption, intimidation and sometimes violent retribution for citizens who raised their voices at the local level. The deliberative sessions and the CDs create temporary space for citizens to voice their concerns, but individuals do so at great personal risk. Even when forums are hosted by an international entity such as NDI or USAID, a third of the constituency dialogues in this study had a heavy police presence where observers documented the attempts of the police to intimidate the attendees. During the deliberative sessions a number of facilitators also documented veiled intimidation by local officials during the small group sessions. The program's critical assumption that citizens improved understanding of democracy will lead to increased pressure on MNAs did not seem to hold true in the study.

The CD program is creating increased knowledge, along with temporary space and opportunity for citizens' voices to emerge. However the broader program strategy should be reviewed to identify ways to strengthen accountability between citizens and their local and/or national representatives where feasible in the Cambodian context. Although the CD program records and tracks the promises of MNAs to their constituents during the CDs – and some positive outcomes have emerged from this process – the lines of accountability are between the MNAs and NDI and not between MNAs, local officials and their constituents. While the 'thin edge of the wedge' strategy to creating new political space and increased accountability is an effective entry point for a new program, the strategy is not sustainable and temporary gains in accountability and voice may be at risk of disappearing at the end of the life of the program. In the long run the public performance of political competition and debate may contribute to a change in public discourse, citizen expectations and socio-political norms. However, against a backdrop of state capture, systemic corruption and intimidation, and no real mechanisms for accountability between citizens and their representatives, or public officials and the judiciary, the improved public performance of the MNAs and citizen participation may not be contributing to real or lasting change.