



#1 BUILDING PARTY INFRASTRUCTURE

SUMMARY:
Creating parties is a major challenge for building party infrastructure, but these challenges make strong infrastructure all the more important.
To become more resilient, parties must create organizations and leaders, a network of local chapters, a strong central committee, and a broad grassroots membership.
However, these challenges create more vulnerabilities. Parties can work to build a resilient infrastructure that can withstand setbacks and setbacks and setbacks.

Example Problem Statement: in CLOSING SPACE
Political parties are often fragmented and heterogeneous. This can limit opportunities to engage local constituencies and make the party more vulnerable to being seen as a narrow elite. Parties need to engage local constituencies and make the party more vulnerable to being seen as a narrow elite.

PROGRAM APPROACHES:

1. Support the development of strategic plans and internal structures.
2. Provide training on secure communications, financial management, and other skills, especially for party leaders and staff.
3. Develop party-wide, women's organizations, and youth wings.

Example Outcome Indicators:

- Number of parties with strategic plans established
- Number of parties with secure communications systems in place
- Number of parties with women's organizations established
- Number of parties with youth wings established

SCENARIO: BALANCE OF POWER

STATUS:
In a balance of power scenario, political parties may alternate between being the most powerful and the least powerful in the political arena.

Depending on the effectiveness of closing space tactics, these changes in power can occur every 10-15 years. Political parties may experience a "balance of power" scenario, in that the number of parties with the most power will increase, and the number of parties with the least power will decrease.

When Power Shifts
When power shifts, political parties may experience a "balance of power" scenario, in that the number of parties with the most power will increase, and the number of parties with the least power will decrease.

Resilience Strategies
Building coalitions between opposition parties. To increase transparency and accountability, parties should consider the following strategies:

- Using strategies on the "back of the hand" to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Having regulatory bodies monitor and enforce rules and ensure transparency in the time to process these.
- Building coalitions between opposition parties.
- Changing the constitution to ensure the interests of the opposition in the legislature.

Project Background

Closing space – increasing restrictions on civil society, independent media, and multi-party political competition – continues to be a challenge across countries and global regions. Free and fair electoral competition between democratic and policy-based parties is crucial to maintaining and expanding democratic space generally. However, due to electoral pressures, political parties may have an incentive to close or open the political space depending on whether they are in or out of power.

This toolkit is intended to support democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) practitioners in designing and implementing political party assistance programs, given this dual incentive in closing space contexts. The toolkit includes three sets of products – a program guide, a set of program approach infographics, and a set of closing space “scenarios.”

Product Descriptions

The program guide uses a comic book or “graphic storytelling” format to illustrate dynamics of closing space and democratic functions of political parties in an accessible way. This guide feeds into a “decision tree” for DRG practitioners considering party assistance programs. The program approach infographics provide a deeper dive into program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation by providing example problem statements, theories of change, and suggested indicators for six common approaches to party assistance programs. The “scenarios” are composite case studies based on several real-world examples of political party resilience in closing space conditions.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Taken together, the program guide, approach infographics, and scenarios inform a set of general recommendations for DRG practitioners considering political party assistance programs in closing space conditions:

- Medium- to long-term support for internal party organization, internal party democracy, inclusion, and policy and platform development can help de-personalize parties, making them both more resilient to closing space, and more likely to capitalize on openings.
- Support for networking and coalition-building among political parties in closing space should focus developing group rules and procedures to set common agendas and priorities, to reach consensus decisions, and to adjudicate disputes between members.
- Support for political parties in closing space should encourage ongoing consultations and networking with civic leaders to avoid delegitimizing protest movements or alienating allies.
- Party resilience to closing space may be as much a matter of de-escalation as protection, defense, and response. Support for cross-party dialogues, pacts, working groups, and similar programs can provide ongoing fora for cooperation between competitive parties.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN CLOSING SPACE TOOLKIT

How Assistance Programs Can Support Resilience