TOWARD MORE SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION AND PVT

Systematic Election Observation and Preconditions for Conducting a PVT

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Overview

- Advantages of systematic observation
- Challenges of systematic observation
- Designing forms for systematic observation
- Collecting and analyzing observer data
- Statements
- Preconditions for conducting a PVT

Systematic Observation

- Proportional and strategic deployment based on % of polling stations in each region as % of all polling stations

- Rapid data collection from all observers and effective data analysis

Proportional Deployment Example

Region	Polling Stations	% of All Polling Stations	Observers (800)	% of All Observers
Bishkek City	270	14%	112	14%
Osh City	140	7%	56	7%
Chui	260	13%	104	13%
Naryn	220	11%	88	11%
Osh oblast	300	15%	120	15%
Batken	110	5%	40	5%
Jalal-Abad	240	12%	96	12%
Talas	220	11%	88	11%
Issyk-Kul	240	12%	96	12%
Total	**2,000**	**100%**	**800**	**100%**

Advantages of Systematic Observation

- More credible, reliable and objective findings
- Improved national perspective
- Detect fraud more effectively
- Long-term organizational capacity building
  - Builds a nationwide network of well-trained observers
  - Institutionalizes the use of rapid response mechanisms and data collection
  - Improved quality of data collected: quality over quantity
  - Builds capacity for conducting PVT

Organizational Preparation

Central Office Data Management

- Need to have communication systems for more rapid observer reporting
- Need more data clerks at the central level
- Need central data collection center **and** staffing for back-up network of data collection
- Establish centralized database of all observers

Organizational Preparation

- More regional/county coordinators
  - Ratio of 20 observers to 1 regional coordinator is recommended
- Capacity to train each observer effectively
- More observers must report on election day/night
- This requires a lot more data clerks, more phones, more computers
- Fundraising early on

Observer Forms – Simpler the Better

- Each question adds more work and time for observers, data collection and analysis
  - Fewer questions on forms means fewer errors
  - Succinct forms means easier reporting
  - Clear and consistent data means easier and better analysis

- Only include questions that are absolutely necessary
  - What are the top electoral problems you want to capture?
  - How can you collect other qualitative information that isn't on the form?

Designing Forms

Criteria for each question:

- ✓Why is this question critical?
- ✓Does it accurately measure the underlying concept?
- ✓Is it clearly worded to avoid different responses or confusion?
- ✓Do the response categories cover all possible range of responses; and do they not overlap with each other?

- Allow for scale and scope (how many or how much, not just did it happen); but keep response categories to the minimum necessary
- No open-ended questions
- Include detailed explanation of each question in manual

Forms: Example 1

Did the polling station open on time on election morning?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Forms: Example 2

When did the first voter cast a ballot at the polling station?

- ☐ Before 7:00
- ☐ Between 7:00 and 8:00
- ☐ After 8:00
- ☐ Did not open

Observer Form -- Samples

- Review example form
- Remember the “do’s and don’ts” criteria
- What would you change?

Collecting Data - Communication

- Develop plan as early as possible
- Maximize speed, efficiency and accuracy
- Minimize layers of reporting between observer and central office
- Design plan based on estimated peak times of information flow
- Train observers on importance of reporting back and give them clear, simple instructions
- Develop back-up communication plans

Collecting Data

✓*Consider how quickly each type of information is needed*

Needed Immediately (emergency calls)

- Are observers in polling stations (blocked?)
- Critical incidents (violence, closure)

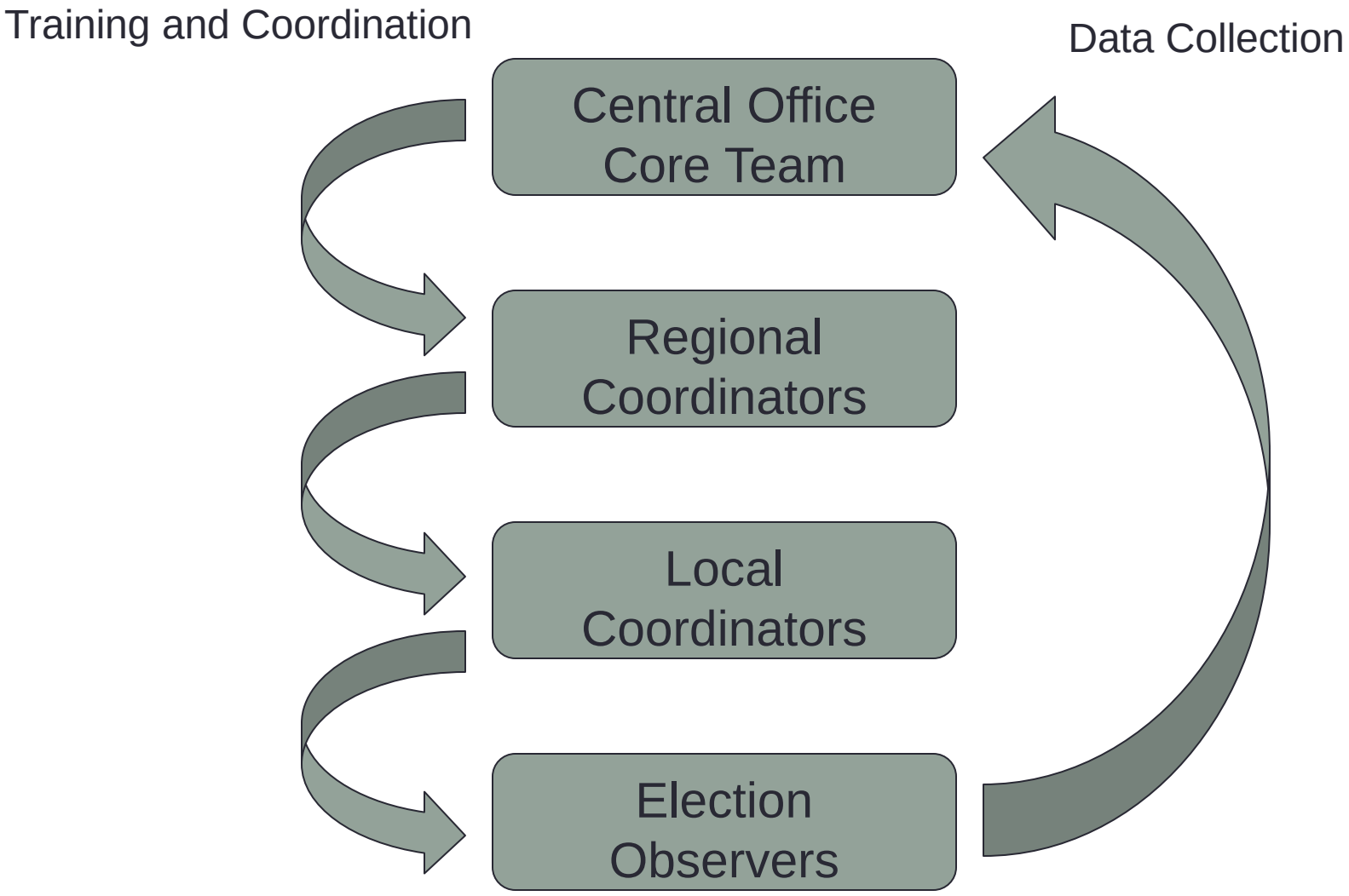
Needed Quickly (scheduled calls)

- Form data: turnout, processes, violation data

Needed After E-Day (later calls or hard-copy)

- Stories and details of violations and incidents

Collecting Data – Sample Flow Chart



Collecting Data: Methods

Identify the most appropriate methods for rapid transmission of findings

- SMS
- Hand delivery of forms
- Phone call (mobile or landline)
- Fax
- Scan/Email or Web-based forms

Telephone Systems

- Cascade system
- One number/one line system

Managing Data

- One central call center
- Assign one large team of call receivers (data clerks) and a second smaller team of people making follow-up calls to receive incident reports and to follow-up on missing forms
- Be prepared for peak call times
- How to estimate number of call receivers needed?

$$\left[\frac{\text{\# of Observers} \times \text{Minutes per call}}{\text{Target \# of minutes for processing all calls}}\right] = \text{\# of Call Receivers Needed}$$

Analyzing Data

- Get data from all observers
- Emphasize numbers over single incidents
- Focus on broad trends
- Look at subnational trends

Analyzing Data

Which finding is more significant?

- 95% of polling stations observed opened on time
- 3 polling stations opened two hours late

Analyzing Data

Which finding is more significant?

- Ballot box stuffing was observed in 100 polling stations
- Ballot box stuffing occurred in 5% of polling stations observed, but in 40% of stations observed in Lofa county

Framing Findings in Public Statements for Systematic (but not PVT) Observation

- *What we <u>can't</u> say:*
  - We cannot say that we are deploying observers to a statistically-sound sample.
  - We cannot say that findings are representative of the country or any region (i.e., don't say that 30% of polling stations in Liberia opened late)
  - We cannot project voting results.
- *What we <u>can</u> say:*
  - Observers are deployed in a geographically proportionate way (more credibility than ad-hoc deployment)
  - Only give findings as a percentage of "polling stations observed" (i.e., 30% of all polling stations observed opened late).

PVT Definition

- The use of rapidly transmitted quantitative and qualitative observer data from a statistically-based, representative random sample of polling stations to produce a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the election day process and to project results.

- Other names: Statistically-based Observation (SBO); Quick Count; Swift Count
- PVT is not just method of projecting election results

PVT Preconditions - External

- Election System
  - Single, nationwide constituency
- Top Electoral Concerns
  - Tabulation and e-day process?
- Access to All Aspects of Process
  - Especially polling station-level results
- Political Situation
  - Perception of group; hostile environment?
- List of Polling Stations
  - Accurate and released in advance

PVT Preconditions - Internal

Geographic Coverage

- Must be able to cover any polling station in the country
- Must be confident that all observers will go to assigned station

Organization and Leadership

- Top leadership must understand and commit to PVT
- Network of groups can be challenging
- Need to reduce not increase number of observers and levels of organization
- Need statistician and IT specialists
- Need more time to prepare

Access to Technical Assistance

- Especially the first time, assistance needed well in advance

Adequate Funding – more expensive

PVT Alternatives

Conduct only a PVT

Develop representative deployment plan

Combine PVT with traditional observation

- Assign PVTs to a random sample, and remaining observers to “problem areas”
- SBO provides sound analysis; traditional observers provide more details and context about incidents

Merci!

Thank you!