

Burma Program Summary

The International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked to support activists and groups who are dedicated to the nonviolent struggle towards freedom and democracy in Burma since 1992. IRI and the Institute's partners conduct programming on a variety of subject matter, including political party organizing, communications and outreach, and good governance principles.

Political Parties: Organization & Governance

IRI provides training and consultative advice on political campaign tactics and strategies to partners who conduct work inside the country, as well as from exile. Topics include strategic planning, volunteer and membership recruitment and local level mobilization using issue-based political platforms. Throughout 2010, IRI programs predominantly focused on the November parliamentary elections. IRI's partners worked with political activists to provide skills they used to galvanize support for an election boycott campaign, the pro-democracy movement's only path of recourse to elections which were internationally denounced as neither free nor fair.

IRI is also working to conduct trainings in good governance for ethnic political organizations at the local level. During more than a half-century of civil war in Burma, a number of stalemates in Burma's ethnic states have left ethnic political organizations with some degree of autonomy over the practical administration of government, even as Naypyidaw retains nominal authority. By training political actors in the administrative mechanisms that provide services in these ethnic regions, there is an opportunity to improve local-level services for their constituents, and in so doing improve the governing capacity of activists who are likely to occupy positions of authority in a federally democratic Burma.

Communication Strategies and Information Technology

IRI has also dedicated great efforts to helping democracy movement activists develop communication skills. Since 1992, IRI has held trainings to teach activists how to conduct media outreach, increase the flow of communication among activists and their supporters and develop content and messaging for radio and print materials for international and domestic audiences. In doing this, IRI aims to help partners to provide more accurate, useful information to international media as well as increase the amount of uncensored information penetrating the country.