

Visitors Elections Programme 2003 - Report

At the occasion of the Dutch General Elections of January 22nd, 2003

"Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

-Reinhold Niebuhr

Summary

In the week of January the 19th till January the 24th, the Institute for Multiparty Democracy had the pleasure of hosting 35 visitors from Guatemala, Bolivia, Tanzania, Mozambique and Ghana. The visitors were invited to get insights in the evolution of the political system in The Netherlands, to share information about campaigning strategies and techniques, the party political system, the functioning of parliament and general information about the current policy priorities of The Netherlands, and to strengthen the relations between IMD and its partners in the programme countries.

Opening

The official opening of the Visitors Election Programme took place on Sunday evening. The opening proved to be a good opportunity to meet the other guests and staff from the IMD.

The Vice-President of the IMD, Mr J.J.A.M. van Gennip, addressed the visitors with an overview of the recent evolution of the Dutch political system and the challenges for the Dutch democracy. He gave insight in the 'compartmentalization' or pillarization of the traditional Dutch institutional structures and and the collapse of the pillarization in the past two decades due to the transformations in Dutch society.



Mr Van Gennip, Vice President of IMD

Of course, the Dutch policy of 'gedogen' – to tolerate – was one of the issues in Mr Van Gennips speech. The dissatisfaction of the electorate about this policy of tolerance was probably one of the main reasons that caused the political earthquake in 2002, which gave rise to Mr Fortuyns party the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF). At the time of the opening of the Visitors Election Programme, the influences of the media and the polls on the upcoming elections were discussed by Mr van Gennip as well. Especially the rising amount of 'floating' voters (voters who are not sure about their political preferences and can be strongly influenced by the media) is of great concern to the political parties and can have an impact on the functioning of the democratic system itself.

Mr Van Gennips complete speech will be published here soon.

Campaigning Day

On the Campaigning Day the visitors got the opportunity to join one of the political parties on their final campaigning day. The visitors were divided into five groups, which were appointed to the Christian Democrats ([CDA](#)), the Labour Party ([PvdA](#)), the Liberals ([VVD](#)), the Greens ([GroenLinks](#)) and the Christian Union ([ChristenUnie](#)).



Campaigning Day

Read more about the campaigning days at the end of this document.

The Dutch Parliament and the Electoral Council

On this day the visitors had the opportunity to share information about the Dutch Parliamentary system and to gain insights in the particular challenges on the agenda of the Dutch Parliament. The visitors were welcomed by the Secretary General of the House of Representatives Mr De Beaufort and the Clerk of the House of Representatives Mr Van Dijk.



The escalator in the House of Parliament



The House of Representatives

Mr De Beaufort gave an introduction into the functioning of the Parliament. He addressed facts about party structures, the roles of government and opposition in the Parliament, the roles of the Clerk and the Secretary General, the facilities offered to the parties and the salary that members of the Parliament receive. Also the formation of government coalitions was mentioned, a process that can last over 200 days. During that time-period the previous government still controls the country, but isn't allowed to make far-reaching decisions.



Visitors discuss the functioning of the Parliament



Lunch, hosted by Mr Weisglas

Tour de Parliament

This tour led the visitors through the different old and new buildings, including the former and the present House of Representatives, the old library, the Binnenhof and ended in the restaurant of the Parliament. The visitors were offered a lunch hosted by the President of the House of Representatives, Mr Frans Weisglas, who addressed the visitors with historical facts and recent political developments.

Dutch Electoral System

The Dutch Electoral System was explained by Mrs Clarisse and Mr Van Schagen of the Dutch Electoral Council. They told about the formation procedure of the Electoral Council, about the role of the mayors in the formation of the staffing at the polling stations and the appointment of supervisors. They also briefly elaborated on the voting procedures in general: For example the relationship with the civic population registry to make sure that each voter casts one vote and the security of the voting machines and voting collection at the end of the day. The unofficial election results are released on the same day of the elections, the official results follows three days later when all electronic votes are counted for.

Municipality of The Hague

In the City Hall of The Hague, Mrs Goudsmit, Head of Public Relations Civic Affairs and Mr Mos, Chef de Cabinet addressed the visitors about the local procedures ranging from very practical issues (the municipality must for example possess a certain stock of salt and sand for slippery pavements on the winter day) to the number of voters that are allowed per polling station (between 1300 and 1600). In The Hague, there are 253 polling stations in total. The Hague is also responsible for the collection of votes of Dutch civilians residing abroad. This day was concluded by a supper and informal meeting in the hotel Corona.



The City Hall of The Hague

Election Day

This exciting day offered the visitors the opportunity to have a unique 'glimpse behind the scenes' when it comes down to the elections itself. In Vlaardingen, the visitors observed the Minister for Development Cooperation, Mrs Agnes van Ardenne cast her vote. Mrs Monique Wilschut, Head of Public Affairs of Vlaardingen, addressed the visitors about local and practical issues related to the voting process. In the polling station, the visitors had the opportunity to have a close look at the electronic voting machine and the voting procedure itself. The visit to the polling station was mentioned in several major Dutch newspapers: 'NRC Handelsblad' (top story on the front page), 'de Volkskrant' and 'het Parool'. The voting with Mrs Van Ardenne was also reported by the Dutch news broadcasting service, Radio 1.



Mrs Van Ardenne casts her vote



Visitors at Voting District 21

Foreign policy

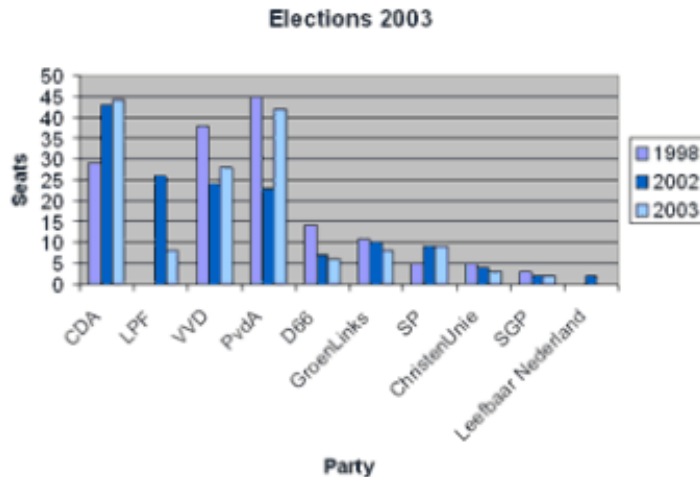
Back in The Hague, the visitors were introduced to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Mr Berteling, Director of the Human Rights and Peace building Department. Mr Berteling introduced the Dutch foreign policy in support of Governance and Peace building.

The visitors were accompanied by Mr Arie C.A. van der Wiel, the Royal Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana, Mr Bernard Berendsen, the Royal Netherlands Ambassador to Tanzania, Mrs Lidia Remmerswaal, the Royal Netherlands Ambassador to Mozambique and the Chargé d'Affaires to Guatemala, Mr Arend Pieper.

Party financing

Then Mr Koole, Chairman of the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) addressed the visitors about political party financing. Most of the Dutch political parties get their financial resources from party members. The government also supports the parties with financial means. During campaigns, most of the parties raise surplus money through public donations. Until recently, parties received no substantial donations of CEO's or businesses in general, but that changed with the List Pim Fortuyn in which a small group of wealthy individuals paid for all expenses. Mr Koole is an advocate of the idea that parties should be transparent in their cash flows to the public, so parties should announce all (substantial) donations and their source.

The visitors were invited to join one of the political parties in the election night, during which the results were announced. The group that joined the PvdA witnessed a true 'come back' of a party that lost a very substantial part of its electorate just one year ago. The PvdA reclaimed almost 20 seats in Parliament, ending up as the second major party in Parliament. That fact was celebrated by the enthusiastic party members.



Analysis of the election results

Mr Van Opstal of the [CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Analysis](#) introduced the visitors to the methodology of the assessment of financial implications of party programmes. The analysis of the CPB has a strong focus on quantitative economic effects. Certainly, election platforms also contain many policy proposals that "don't fit in the model". Moreover, the CPB has no established method to assess the (long-term) benefits of more government spending on, a specific subject for example, education and health care. CPB tries to fill some of these gaps by adding separate analyses on environmental issues and on the plans for restructuring the health insurance system (which will be carried out in the next cabinet period). Yet the analysis is necessarily incomplete. But, as Mr Van Opstal mentioned, what is preferable? A solid analysis of the most important (economic) planks of the election platforms, or no comparative analysis at all? (more information: ['analysing election platforms'](#))

After Mr Van Opstal's introduction, the Election results were discussed by a panel consisting of Mr Veldhuis, Director of the [Dutch Centre for Political Participation](#), Mr Irwin, Professor of Political Science and Mr Foekema, Executive Director of the market research institute [NIPO](#). Mr Veldhuis told about the voting indicator ('[Stemwijzer](#)') that gave over 2 million advices to the so-called 'floating voters'. That raised questions about the reliability and value of such voting indicators.

Mr Veldhuis noticed that 'personality' had become more important than 'content' in the past election campaign. Millions of people watched the television debates, but those debates only focussed on a limited number of topics: safety, health care, economic growth and infrastructure. Mr Veldhuis showed some interesting figures on trust in parties and governance in general: the trust in parties is low in The Netherlands, but very low in the European Union. The trust in government and Parliament is good in The Netherlands, but average in the European Union.

Mr Veldhuis also spoke about the 'information overload' during the elections. Special election websites were introduced, the debates got lots of media attention (free publicity for the parties) and the polls dominated the political scene for weeks. The membership of political parties also started to rise, after years of decline. Right now, about 310.000 people that are over 18 years old are members of a party. The voting turnout was even higher than last year, almost 80%. Striking fact is that about one tenth of the voters decided what to vote in the last three days, another one tenth decided on the Election Day itself and 4% on the very last moment in the voting machine.

Changing the political agenda

Professor Irwin did not agree on the widely accepted opinion that the voters made a shift to the right in 2002.

Voter's attitudes are stable and are not subjected to change. According to Mr Irwin, 'changing the agenda' was all that Mr Fortuyn did in 2002. In this campaign, Wouter Bos successfully changed the agenda back, so campaigns do really count. Bos repeated the traditional labour issues, but Mr Zalm (Liberal Party, VVD) had to lose because he 'pulled the plug'. Mr Irwin also mentioned the fact that the parties didn't pay for their campaigns, the television networks did – simply because they spent hours and hours of broadcasting time on the campaigns.

Mr Foekema of NIPO told about the long history of polling since World War II. He addressed a number of technical issues regarding polling methodology. The different polling organisations use different polling methods. Some of them use a fixed panel of respondents; other organisations reach people through the Internet. The role of polls is getting more important, since people started to vote 'strategically' – according to Mr Foekema, people 'wanted to vote for winners'.

Mr Irwin did not agree on that conclusion. According to Mr Irwin, the biggest problem right now is that people want to influence the government, but the system doesn't allow them to do so. The big issue for the next cabinet will be the organization of the dialogue between citizens and politicians.

Mr Duursma, Deputy General of the [Social Economic Council](#) (SER) gave a brief introduction to the model that the SER uses. The SER advises the government about a wide range of social economic issues. The SER organises an ongoing process of dialogue and negotiation between government, employers and labour unions.

Closing dinner

All things come to an end, and that was also the case for the Visitors Election Programme. The week was concluded with a dinner in the Pulchri Studios in The Hague, hosted by Prof. J.A. van Kemenade, President of IMD. Representatives of all the programme countries expressed their gratitude for this week and requested our attention for specific issues in each country. Mr Roel von Meijenfeldt, Director of IMD closed the week and bid everyone farewell.



Mr Van Kemenade, President of IMD



Mr Von Meijenfeldt, Director of IMD

Evaluation

At the end of the week, we asked our visitors for feedback about the way in which the programme was organized and carried out. The visitors were very optimistic about the Visitors Programme.

Campaigning day – ChristianUnion

Participants:

Mr. H. C. Jaffu (Tanzania Labour Party)
Mr. C. P.C. Hinju, (Cha Chama Mapinduzu, Tanzania)
Mr. R. Morales (Partido Socialista Democrático, Bolivia)
Mr. Y.N. Sibindy (Partido Independente de Mozambique)
Mr. J. M. Ríos (Frente Republicano Guatemalteco)

Head office

In the morning of the 20th of January the delegation met Mr. Peter van der Bijl (director of the head office), Mr. Joël Voordewind (head of training and education centre), Mr. Erik van Dijk (interim executive Research Institute), Mrs. Ilse Smit (training and education centre). After a mutual acquaintance we discussed about the function of a head office and the research institute. The head office plans different kind of courses for members of the party, like

- introduction course ChristianUnion: parties vision on society and the role of our party within it, how to combine faith and politics
- councillor course: how to become a good member of the council
- courses about the specific areas like finances, public order and safety, education and welfare etc.
- debating

The head office also gives advice to the members of local and districts governments. Furthermore we try to promote our party, not only during the election time. It is always good to meet people, to hand out magazines, flyers etc. and to have personal contact. People can ask questions about our party and we ask them whom they will vote. At the same time we can explain where we stand for etc. By promotion we want to win voters and members.

The research institute publish articles and studies about different issues. General items like Europe or governments, but also more specific, poverty or environmental policy. The main objectives of the research institute are to inform the party and help the representatives of the party to formulate their policy.

Board of the ChristianUnion

Mr. Thijs van Daalen (National Chairman) and Mr. Gerard Geijtenbeek (International Secretary) explained the historical background of the party. The ChristianUnion is a union between two smaller Christian political parties since January 2000. The party has about 220 local departments with a local board throughout the whole country. These local departments are independent. The members of the party in that particular surrounding area elect the local board. The local board is responsible for local party affairs, like local party programme, local campaign, local candidates, etc. The national board has no mandate to interfere with these subjects.

The national board gets in mandate from the Union Congress, a congress of delegations of all local departments. They elect the members of the national board, decide about the programme of the party and candidates for the national elections, etc. The head office is responsible for the organisation of this meeting, which is twice a year.

Campaign strategy

The delegation of the campaign team showed us an example of new means of communication. The local department of the ChristianUnion of Amsterdam presented themselves on videotape. The tape was used in meetings in different churches to mobilise people to vote for the party and promote the party in their neighbourhood.

Since the last elections took place in May 2002, there was no time to save funds. Therefore the party had no funds to organise a campaign for the national elections of 2003. All members of the party were asked via telemarketing, to give a donation. Within two months the almost 30.000 members donated about € 350.000. With this budget we could finance the campaign.

The campaign consists of two mayor objectives, strengthen the relation with the grassroots and try to gain new voters. We have organised almost 60 rallies in all parts of the country, send to all local departments campaign materials, like flyers, posters, pamphlets, manifestos, etc. They used this to promote the party on local markets. Furthermore the party leader and other candidates have attended many symposia and debate sessions. Finally, many television programmes asked the party leader to participate in their broadcasting programmes. For a small political party as the ChristianUnion it is very important to have a good contact with journalists and producers of broadcasting organisations, for example via the spokesman of the party leader.

Local government

After an introduction to the mayor of Ermelo, Mr. W.T. Omta, Mr. Ruud van Eijle, alderman on behalf on the ChristianUnion, answered questions about the mandate of a local council towards the national and provincial government. The municipal executive, mayor and alderman, govern the district council, the councillors control them. In elections a local government is also responsible for the voters registration.

Campaign activity

After a delicious dinner we attended to an election meeting in Apeldoorn, a medium-sized city of 153.000 inhabitants. Unfortunately we missed the speech of Arie Slob, nr. 2 on the list of candidates and member of the parliament. We have witnessed the answering of questions and discussions with the public.

Visitors Elections Programme 2003 - GroenLinks

NIMD Visit to the Party of GroenLinks

20 January 2003



Visitors:

Mr. James MBATIA (NCCR Mageuzi, Tanzania)
Mr. Alberto AGUILAR (Movimiento al Socialismo, Bolivia)
Mr. Gabriel PWAMANG (Peoples National Convention, Ghana)
Mr. Roberto CACERES (La Organizacion Verde, Guatemala)

Hosts:

Mrs. Mirjam DE RIJK (President)
Mr. Leo PLATVOET (Senator)
Ms. Marije CORNELISSEN (Interim International Secretary)
Mrs. Bea STOLTE (Vice-Pres. of the Council of Recommendation of the NIMD)
Mrs. Adriënne NIJENHUIS (Chef de Bureau)
Mr. Ben BUSKES (Campaign Co-ordinator of GroenLinks Utrecht)
Mr. Robert GIESBERS (Councillor for the Green Party in Utrecht)
Mr. Peter VAN CORLER (Secretary of the Green Party in Utrecht)
Mr. Anne DE BOER (Chef of the International Committee)
Mr. Karim BEROUD (Co-worker International Committee)

A Brief History of the Dutch Green Party

The party of GroenLinks was constituted in the year 1990 by four parties, three of which were represented in the national parliament. Those parties were the Communist Party, the Evangelical Peoples Party, the Political Radical Party and the Pacifist Socialist Party.

National election results

1994 5
1998 11
2002 10
2003 8

Mrs. Mirjam de Rijk, president of the party, expresses her content with the new elections. The present Government is very rightist, things can only turn for the better, she expects.

The Functioning of the Party.

The leadership of the party is divided between the parliamentary fractions and the Executive Committee, the latter being in charge of the functioning of the party. The organisation of Congresses and Councils meetings, the "bureau for research", the support to the local departments and the international relations, are amongst its core responsibilities.

The Board consists of 15 members, five of which form the Daily Board: a president, a treasurer, a party secretary, an international secretary and a publicity secretary. Due to a certain overlap of the tasks of the publicity secretary of the Board and those of the publicity secretaries of the parliamentary groups, good co-ordination and co-operation of policy is necessary. The same accounts for the "bureau for research" and the assistants of the representatives. The president is the sole paid member of the Executive.

The Congress is held at least once a year. It decides on the political program, the electoral lists for the Congress, the Senate, the European Parliament and the Executive Committee. All 20,000 party members have the right to

attend the Congress, to vote and to propose amendments to the Political Platform and resolutions. It's the Congress that decides on the Statutes. An average of 700 members attend the Congress. Although 60 percent of the party members is female, only 40 percent of the visitors to the Congress are woman.

The Council, which assembles six times per year, consists of 80 representatives of the local departments and working groups. It expresses its opinion on the policy of the Board and the parliamentary groups.

There are several working groups that aim to bring together people with a common interest: North-South issues, agriculture, peace and security, gender issues, and so forth.

The party of GroenLinks is a founding member of the European Federation of Green Parties, which acts as a forum and aims to bring closer the different Green parties. At the moment, the main discussion concentrates on a common electoral manifesto for the European Parliament elections of May 2004, on one hand, and the revision of the statutes and the question of whether to form an EU or European Green party, on the other. The EFGP holds a Council meeting twice per year. Every three years a Congress is held. Mr. Anne de Boer is in charge of the support program for Eastern European Green parties (the Green East West Dialogue).

There are 489 local departments out of a total of 1,250 municipalities. They can decide upon their own structure and political views. At the moment, there are 568 Green councillors, 90 aldermen, six mayors, 77 provincial alderman and one governor ("Commissioner of the Queen").

The Bureau

At the party office, in the city of Utrecht, there are working about 40 employees. Besides for the previously mentioned organs of the party (International Commission, support team for local parties, the PR department, etc.) there are a web master, a book keeper, receptionists, etc. The fraction in the European Parliament has two persons working at the Bureau, who represent them in the Netherlands.

The membership fee varies along with the income of the members. Their contributions add up to a 40 percent of the total budget. Forty percent is being accounted for by the representatives and another 20 percent is being donated by the central government.

There is a monthly magazine which is send to all of our members. The editors of the magazine are independent from the party Board, which allows for the opportunity to express a critical view that may be opposed to the official policy.

The Election Campaign

For the past elections, the electoral program was not revised, because of a lack of necessity and time. In stead, a manifesto was adopted by the Congress as a supplement to the program.

The main differences between the campaign of March/ May 2002 and the past one, are the emphasis on the media, in particular television, and a stronger presence of campaigners in the neighbourhoods. The campaign for the May 2002 elections was to introvert, i.e., potential voters were hardly reached. The people that visited the party meetings would vote GroenLinks anyway.

Since there is a high media attention, there was no need to buy costly broadcasting minutes, be it for television or radio. The former political leader, Mr. Paul Rosenmöller, announced only an eight weeks before the election day, he would withdraw his candidacy for the party leadership (...). All attention, therefore, was to be concentrated on the newly elected party leader, in order to raise the number of voters that knew Ms. Femke Halsema.

No less than 5.4 million "news papers" were distributed both by a commercial company and by the local departments. They briefly explained the ten main issues GroenLinks wants to change. The Greens issues, the stand against the expected war against Iraq and the social issues (education, social welfare and health care) were highlighted. For both campaigns, the budget was of 600.000 euros.

The department of Utrecht (1000 members) has used various means to try to get to the potential voter. The focus of their campaign was in the neighbourhoods where the party lost during the previous elections. Two hundred volunteers have been distributing the "news paper" and other kinds of materials. An add was shown in several cinema's urging the potential voters to use their vote wisely. Also, the web site was used intensively.

The Green fraction, which consists out of eight councillors, is the second largest party in the city.

The ideology

The party has a number of issues that constitute the ideology of the party:

- 1 Environment and Nature
- 2 Social Justice and Welfare Society
- 3 Emancipation of Women and Minorities
- 4 International Solidarity
- 5 Transparency and Good Governance
- 6 Human Rights
- 7 Decentralisation of Public Administration

Out of the above seven topics, mister Leo Platvoet, member of the Senate, highlights the top four.

- Ad. 1 a) Transport must be reduced whenever possible. Public transport is to be stimulated.
- b) The agricultural sector must be reformed. EU agricultural policy must be reformed in order to stimulate ecological production. Export subsidies are to be abolished a.s.a.p. Small scale farmers must receive relatively more subsidies than the large ones. Food security must be safeguarded.
- c) Energy use must be reduced. There must be a shift in the use of carbonic fuels to sustainable energy sources, like solar energy and wind-generated electricity. Nuclear energy is to be banned completely.
- d) Nature and landscape must be protected by the Government.

- Ad. 2 a) The GNP must be re-distributed justly through a progressive tax system.
- b) Good labour conditions must be guaranteed.
- c) Housing, health care and education are social rights. Therefore, they must be provided for by the state for a price that's affordable for all.

Ad.3 a) Xenophobia is a threat to all of society. All sorts of discrimination must be combated.

- Ad. 4 a) The European Unión must be expanded. Turkey must be offered the possibility to become a member state of the EU.
- b) Fair trade must be obtained by abolishing import tariffs for ecologically and socially sustainable products.
- c) The World Bank and the IMF must be thoroughly reformed.
- d) Prevention of (international) conflicts must be among the prime objectives of Foreign Policy. In order to achieve this, improvement of social-economical conditions must be a priority.
- e) The EU must aim to gain international independency of the USA.
- f) The quantity of arms in the world must be reduced drastically. Weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, must be banned from the face of the Earth.

Visitors Elections Programme 2003 - PvdA

Campaigning Day - PvdA

The visitors were expected in Amsterdam, at the main office of the PvdA. Paul Kalma, director of the Scientific Institute, the Wiardi Beckman Foundation of the PvdA gave a brief outline about the crisis in the PvdA after the elections of 2002.

The PvdA lost 22 of the 45 seats in those elections (in a parliament of 150 seats) to right-wing parties, mainly to the LPF. Mr Kalma also told the visitors about the history of protestant and catholic movements and the social democratic tradition in Holland. According to this speaker, a multiparty system is indirect in its nature. In the end that might lead to a 'kaasstolp' (glass cheese cover), as Mr Kalma put it, a culture in which all governors lost contact with the outside world – including the voters. You can see through, but you cannot communicate.



The 'PvdA rose'

The next speaker was Mr Wim van Gelder, former parliamentarian of the PvdA and member of the Advisory Committee on Nominations for the elections of 2002 and 2003. Mr van Gelder addressed the issue of list formation and candidate screening. Since 1992 PvdA uses one list for the Netherlands, on which male and female candidates are alternated.

The assignment by the board of the PvdA includes several demands: the list should represent regional candidates and candidates from immigrant backgrounds. In general 1/3 of the list has to be renewed and candidates should not stay longer than 8 or 12 years in parliament. Vacancies are printed in public newspapers and everyone can apply. After several selection rounds and a short presentation it is up to a committee to decide whether a candidate is suitable for the list or not.

Campaign management

Then the PvdA campaign manager, Mrs Rineke Klijsma, addressed the visitors. Since there was not much time to campaign and the PvdA was short in money, she decided to skip most of the research. Instead, she organized lots of 'old fashion' (telephone) meetings in which the key players had the opportunity to exchange ideas quite fast and efficient. The PvdA also wanted to travel through the country and have personal contact in the streets with the electorate, because one of the reasons that the PvdA lost so many voters in 2002 was the lost of contact with the people. The PvdA party and staff members and parliamentarians were brought by buses and each day the bus staff had to evaluate the activities of that particular day.

The PvdA website also played a big role in this feedback process to the staff and the Dutch audience. The non-centralized staff could find day-to-day information about the campaign in a special section on the site. The electorate could find reports about campaigning activities and read about the issues that were discussed out on the streets.

To see the role of the bureau in the campaign, the visitors were invited for a tour through the building. It was interesting to see the campaigning room, the real nerve centre of the campaign, the different party organizations, the scientific bureau and the youth department.

Info management en rapid response

After this tour Jeroen Beekman gave a short presentation about the information management of the campaign. Every day all the news by the newspapers, television and radio are summarized to give the party leader and the campaign team input for their reaction. According to Mr Beekman, information management is a pro-active exercise. The party has to reply on their own social issues and should not just react to everything in the news. It is important for a party to seek a balance in reacting in one hand and maintaining the own message in the other hand. But if the party decides to react it should be in one day.

One final task of the information manager is to detect and correct false statements in the media.

Knowledge management

The discipline of knowledge management is further extended and supported by the staff members of the so called 'knowledge centers' of the PvdA. Mr Beckers and Mrs Oudenhuijzen told the visitors about fact sheets and debate

preparation on selected issues belonging to the profile of the PvdA. The PvdA introduced one feature named 'Message of the day' – each day the campaigners would discuss a that new topic on the streets or in a debate.

Campaign activities

Mrs Annelies Spork, director of the Educational and Party organization - department, but during the campaign responsible for the activities in the country, explained that this campaign was meant to be a simple one, without too much attention to the party leader.

The accent was on direct dialogue by visiting cities to speak with the electorate – the old fashion type of campaign. In addition, the party also focussed on the new media. Besides the visits to 50 selected cities, there were only three big rallies, mostly visited by party members.

The next destination was Rotterdam, where the visitors were invited to join the final campaign rally of the PvdA. Wouter Bos spoke to the public and several prominent PvdA members and parliamentarians addressed the public about the PvdA viewpoints and manifest.

Visitors Elections Programme 2003 - VVD

Campaigning Day - VVD

Participants: Mr. A.J. Nzugille (UDP), Mr. A.B. Hamad (CUF), Mr. D. Botwe (NPP), Mr. M.L. Bilal (PALMO), Mr. M. Daniel (PRD), Mr. L. Mendoza (PAN), Mr. I. Sanchez (MNR)



Campaign Strategy

In the morning the VVD campaign leader Hans van Baalen held a presentation about how the VVD set up her campaign for the 2003 elections. First he gave his view on the May 2002 elections and the impact it had on the VVD. Important was that the party lost more than a third of her votes mostly to the populist Fortuynist Party. This loss forced the party to act modest during the formation period of a new coalition. It expected to be in opposition, but the big winners of these elections, the Christian-Democrats and Fortuynists, urged the VVD to join the creation of a centre-right coalition.

During this period in this very fragile government and of course the collapse of this cabinet after only 87 days, the VVD was not able to restore the confidence of their lost voters. With our new party-leader Gerrit Zalm, former minister of Finance, the VVD started a campaign to win back the votes lost to the Fortuynist Party. The strategy was focussed on generating as much media attention for the party-leader as possible, while the other VVD candidates were responsible for their own campaign. The main reason for this was the lack of time and money due to the unexpected short time between elections.

As being a specialist on financial-economic affairs and with the growing concern among the people about the imminent economic recession, the VVD chose financial-economic stability as the main issue for her campaign. Further it was very open in her wish that it would like to continue governing with the Christian-Democrats, only without the squabbling Fortuynists.

Campaign Organisation

Member of the Executive Board of the VVD Marc Harbers led a discussion with the participants about the internal organisation and the organisation around the campaign. After a short introduction of the VVD organisation a discussion started around party funding and campaign financing. The VVD acquires state funding, but those can't be used for campaigning. For this campaign the VVD spend 550.000 euro, which was brought up mainly out of equity capital and membership fees. Last elections the VVD experimented with sponsorship, but did not do it on this occasion due to lack of time and relatively low return on investment.

Another discussion was about the dualist model within political parties. While in some countries the chairman and party leader can be the same person, in most parties in the Netherlands these functions are separated. The Chairman and the party are looking after the interests of the members, while the party leader and all other representatives on different administrative levels are in their position thanks to the voters with the task realizing the ideas of the party and supporting different groups within society.

These differences were countered by some African participants that they could support the members and the voters at the same time due to the constituency system, which is common in Africa. In the Netherlands there is no district representation, but operates a list proportional representation system. The only exception is that people with more than app. 15.000 votes can be elected through preferential votes for Parliament.

MP on Campaign

During lunch Mr. Jan Rijpstra MP held a speech about the individual campaigns every VVD parliamentary candidate has to conduct during this election. The individual candidates focussed on the area he/she came from. Mr. Rijpstra comes from the north so campaigned most of the times in this area. This system of individual campaign organisation is not only along the lines of the liberal principle of individual responsibility, but also strengthening the regional and local involvement and accountability of the parliamentarians.

Campaign Manifestation

After a nice boat tour through Amsterdam the delegation met with vice-mayor and alderman for the VVD in Amsterdam, Marc van der Horst and former secretary-general of the Liberal International, Jan Weijers. The discussions concerned as well local politics and bilateral city ties as the use of an international party network. This meeting followed with an attending an election manifestation of the VVD in Amsterdam. Regardless of the

fact there were more than 500 people, some participants were of the opinion that this meeting was 'low-key'. There were only two speeches and one discussion forum. This was of course incomparable with the huge rallies organised in some African and South American countries. On the other side the VVD focussed during this campaign mainly on the media and the only purpose of this kind of gathering that the party leader makes one or two political statements in his speech which convince – two days before the election – floating voters to cast their vote for the VVD.

About the IMD

In line with the Dutch government's development cooperation policy and in response to requests for support from foreign political parties and groups, seven Dutch political parties decided in 2000 to establish a new joint organisation, the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (IMD). The founding members were the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA), Liberal Party (VVD), Christian Democratic Party (CDA), Democratic Party (D66), Green Party (GroenLinks), Christian Union (ChristenUnie) and Reformed Party (SGP). The Institute was formally inaugurated as a foundation on 18 April 2000.

The primary objective of the IMD is to support the process of democratisation in young democracies by reinforcing political parties as a fundamental component of parliamentary democracy. In so doing, the Institute endeavours to help bring about a properly functioning, sustainable and pluralistic party political system. It also supports the activities of groups which, through their principles and objectives, have a relevant role to play in a multi-party democracy even though they do not fall within a formal party structure.

The IMD works with parties in countries which receive support under the Dutch government's development cooperation policy. Since the Dutch political parties already run an effective programme in support of their counterparts in the new and restored democracies of Eastern Europe, the IMD has resolved to concentrate upon potential cooperation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy

Korte Vijverberg 2

2513 AB The Hague

The Netherlands

T: +31 (0)70 311 5464

F: +31 (0)70 311 5465

E: info@nimd.org

www.nimd.org