



CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION TOOLKIT



**"ENHANCING EQUITABLE AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION
IN ELECTIONS IN LIBERIA"**



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ACRONYMS

MOE	Ministry of Education
ECC	Election Coordination Committee
FLY	Federation of Liberia Youths
LINSU	Liberia National Student Union
CENTAL	Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia
PUL	Press Union of Liberia
KAICT	Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation
CJPC	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
NEC	National Elections Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
EU	European Union
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association
CEDE	Center for Democratic Empowerment
WONGOSOL	Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia
NCEC	National Center for Excellence and Creativity
CEMPS	Center for Media and Peace Studies
NMCL	National Muslim Council of Liberia
LMC	Liberia Media Center
NAYMOTE	National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections
LCP	Liberia Crusaders for Peace
PUL	Press Union of Liberia
LIWOMAC	Liberia women Media Action Committee
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
NDI	National Democratic Institute
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic and Voter Education (CVE) constitute a critical element in electoral processes. Sustained and effective civic and voter education mechanism and delivery fosters ‘equitable and increased participation’ of both candidates and voters. CVE is a key element that engenders peaceful elections.

However, studies across sub-Saharan Africa have shown that most elections are often attended by low turnouts or participation. Liberia’s post-war democratization process is a unique example of low voter turnout or participation. The trend of voter apathy has been somewhat consistent especially with legislative elections, the latest experience being the 2014 Special Senatorial Election which recorded a turnout of 25.2%. Although flare of Ebola epidemic in West Africa region contributed largely to the low turnout at the polls, however, the lack of a national civic education mechanism and high rates of illiteracy among voters are considered some of the major factors that contribute to low voters turnout and participation in elections. This is further compounded by harsh economic realities and limited resources required.

To surmount these challenges and put in place an effective CVE mechanism, the National Elections Commission (NEC) with support from UNDP in 2014 undertook a baseline study for the first time in the country’s post-war democratic process, with the aim to establish a broader understanding of issues affecting ‘equitable and increased participation’ of candidates and voters in electoral processes. A key recommendation from the baseline exercise is the development of a standard CVE toolkit comprising messages and strategies for an effective and robust civic and voters’ education outreach campaigns in Liberia.

Developing a standard toolkit for Civic and Voters Education in Liberia” is based on the theory that if candidates and voters are reached through the use of a toolkit that exposes strategies and provides messages to properly educate candidates and voters on the significance of elections and electoral processes, there will be equal voting participation of people of voting age, equal participation of both men and women (gender sensitivity), and the maximization of the voters themselves (increase participation).¹

The formulation of this standard CVE toolkit for electoral processes in Liberia is a very important initiative in support to the National Elections Commission that need to address outreach gaps that have long existed in its CVE approach.

This toolkit is the first step in the redesigning of the CVE program of the NEC and will serve as a national standard and model from which all CVE related activities will be planned, designed, and carried out in Liberia. The NEC will work with all stakeholders involved in CVE related activities to ensure that all CVE activities are planned and conducted within the scope of this standard toolkit.

¹ The importance of civic and voters education in Liberia. <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ve/vea/vea03>

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been portioned into seven parts called ‘chapters’. The first chapter is an introductory part that explains the rationale for the toolkit. The second chapter outlines strategies for the design and the use of CVE messages through various channels such as seminar, symposium, workshop, consultation, town hall meeting, etc. It underscores the roles of stakeholders, institutions and organizations involved in the dissemination of CVE messages. Chapter Three highlights various strategies for directly engaging the public through outreach activities. Chapter four discusses different strategies for mainstreaming gender in elections and enhancing equitable participation. Chapter five outlines strategies for engaging the physically challenged and minority groups. Chapter six highlights strategies for the use of media in civic and voter education with emphasis on the print, electronic and social media. Chapter Seven basically discusses the strategy for the production and use of print materials in CVE.

This toolkit has been significantly enriched by team of experts and resource persons versed in electoral processes, with requisite know-how of strategies and mechanisms needed to ensure ‘equitable and increased participation’ of citizens’ in elections.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In every electioneering process, civic and voter education are major outreach initiatives aimed to ensure that constituents—voters and candidates—understand their rights, their political system, the contests they are being asked to decide, including how and where to vote. For an election to be successful and democratic, voters must understand their rights and responsibilities; they must be sufficiently knowledgeable and well informed to cast ballots that are legally valid; and, to participate meaningfully in the voting process. Civic and voter education are even more critical in post-conflict countries, where political situation may be volatile and where elections may have an unprecedented impact on the country's future.²

This standardized toolkit is driven by the finding that across sub-Saharan Africa, studies have shown that most elections are often depicted by low turnout or participation of the voter population. In the case of Liberia, the past two general and presidential elections (2005 and 2011), and the recent special senatorial election held at the end of 2014, were attended by lesser voter population in comparison to would be voters in the country. Statistics show that the special senatorial election held in 2014 carried only 25.2%³ of eligible registered voters, just about a quarter of eligible registered voters in the country.

Although the recent Ebola epidemic in Liberia can be attributed as a major factor for low voters turn out in that election, lack of national civic education mechanism, high rates of illiteracy, harsh economic realities and limited resources are major factors that contribute to low voters turn out and participation in elections. Voter education remains effective in addressing this challenge and building a generation of young citizens and voters actively and consistently engaging the electoral process to ensure credible, free and fair elections.⁴

The National Elections Commission (NEC) of Liberia with funding from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with support from the European Union (EU) has sponsored the development of this standard toolkit aimed to ensure that candidates and the voter population in Liberia will 'equitably and increasingly participate' in electoral processes. The development of this Toolkit for Civic and Voters Education in Liberia" is based on the theory that if candidates and voters are outreached through the use of a toolkit that exposes strategies and provides messages to properly educate candidates and voters on the significance of elections and electoral processes, there will be equal voting participation of people of voting age, equal participation of both men and women (gender sensitivity), and the maximization of the voters themselves (increase participation).

The project aims to impact the electoral process in Liberia by influencing satisfactory turnout of electorates at the polls; influencing majority and minority populations to participate as a result of attractive civic and voters education campaigns; reducing occurrence of violence during elections; dispelling negative sentiments about voting organizers; encouraging broad-based participation and gender mainstreaming; and legitimizing the outcomes of elections. Effective use of the CVE toolkit will contribute to building a network of young people who will engage the electoral process

² The importance of civic and voters education. <https://aceproject.org/ace-evotern/topics/ve/vea/vea03>

³ Development of a Standard Toolkit for Civic and Voter Education in Liberia, NEC

⁴ Voter Education toolkit, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement

as volunteers or active citizens. In that regard, this project anticipates reduction in electoral violence usually caused by young people.

The effective use of the CVE toolkit will contribute immensely to reduction in the number of invalid votes during election time, hence promoting peaceful and credible elections in the Liberia electoral processes.

GOAL

The goal of this toolkit is to promote ‘equitable and increased participation’ of candidates and voters in electoral processes in Liberia. In this regard, the CVE toolkit explores the following:

1. Understanding the principles and meaning of voter education, voter information, and civic education in the electoral process
2. Explore themes around elections and democratic practices
3. Understanding the roles, rights, and responsibilities of voters
4. Criteria for designing and implementing civic and voter educational campaign
5. Define target audience and types of messages to include in the campaign
6. Outlining clear objectives for campaigning
7. Channels for messages dissemination
8. Adapt the appropriate methodologies and mechanism for implementing voter education programs;
9. Design activities and communication strategies to be used in voter education programs;
10. Design of voter education campaigns for effective dissemination of voter information and voter education in Liberia;
11. Information required for voter education messages;
12. Educate voters on democratic principles and practices;
13. Educate voters on the electoral system;
14. Educate voters on voting procedures; and
15. Promote issue based voter education.

CHAPTER TWO: STRATEGY FOR THE DESIGN AND USE OF CVE MESSAGES

This chapter tries to explain the definitions and differences between civic education, voter education and voter information. Understanding these terms and their applications helps the National Elections Commission and partners to engage other stakeholders and communities in attaining maximum voter outreach.

Very often the terms voter information, voter education and civic education can be used interchangeably. There are, however, important distinctions in the use of these terms, depending on the timing, duration and scope of the program, including the entities involved.

Voter Information

Voter information programs take place just before an electoral event. Usually voter information is a one-off event. Voter information aims to provide factual information to facilitate the voting process to citizens. Such information includes: date, time, and place of voting, the type of election, identification necessary to establish eligibility, registration requirements and mechanisms for voting. These constitute basic facts about an election and do not require the explanation of concepts. Messages should be developed for each new election. These activities can usually be implemented quickly (although sufficient planning is still required). Election authorities are typically required to provide this type of information, although contestants and parties in the election and civil society organizations will also do so in keeping with laws and regulations promulgated by the NEC.

Voter Education

Voter education programs typically address voters' motivation and preparedness to participate fully in elections. They aim to address relatively more complex types of information about voting and the electoral process and are concerned with concepts such as the link between basic human rights and voting rights, the role, responsibilities and rights of voters, the relationship between elections and democracy and the conditions necessary for democratic elections, and how votes translate into seats. These concepts involve explanation and exploration by the participants, not just a statement of facts. Voter education requires more preparation time for implementation than voter information and, ideally, should be undertaken on an on-going basis, carried out by elections authorities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the electoral process.

The purpose of voter education is to make information available and accessible to all constituents. Voter education campaigns should seek to achieve universal coverage of the electorate. To do this effectively requires reaching out to disadvantaged groups as well as mainstream voters. For example, voter education should take into account factors such as high rates of illiteracy or the use of different languages in a country, even if there is only one official language. Minority groups, internally displaced persons and other marginalized segments of society should be specially targeted. Young adults eligible to vote for the first time may need special messages explaining how to register and cast a ballot. Voter education should also include publicity encouraging people to vote. Voter education should specifically target women as well as men. It should make clear

that suffrage is universal and should help create a culture in which women are encouraged to participate and are welcomed into the electoral process.⁵

Civic Education

Civic Education deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interest groups, the mass media, and the business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections. It emphasizes not only citizen awareness but also citizen participation in all aspects of democratic society. Civic education is a continual process, not tied to the electoral cycle. Voter information and voter education, however, may be part of larger civic education endeavors. Civic education may be carried out through the school and university system, through civil society organizations, and perhaps by relevant state agencies, although not necessarily the election authority.⁶

Key Themes

For each component of the electoral process, citizens need access to specific information if they are to participate effectively. Therefore, from the outset of your campaign, you will identify key themes that will be the focus of your voter education campaign. Themes are based on a particular component of the electoral process that is taking place and include four key components that all voter education campaigns should promote. They include:

1. **Elections and Democracy:** That the space will be conducive for individuals to choose the candidate or party of their choice in an election or proposition of their choice in a referendum.
2. **Roles, Rights and Responsibilities Of Voters:** Rights foster participation and set the framework to hold an elected government accountable. Right to participate in a free and fair election.
3. **Your Vote is Important and Will make the Difference:** Apart from the number game, each vote cast establishes a relationship between the voter and the candidate.
4. **Your Vote is your Secret:** Voters are assured that they are protected from intimidation and fear of subsequent political and personal consequences that may arise after the elections

Principles of Voter Education

Voter Education is not political information. It is the dissemination of information with no political influence or bias. In developing voter education message there are certain principles that should not be forgotten.⁷ These principles include.

⁵ Voter Education toolkit, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

Principle 1: Clarity

This means that voter education messages must be:

1. Easy to understand
2. Not capable of double meaning (unambiguous)
3. Targeted at the right audience
4. Timely

Principle 2: Impartiality or Non-Partisanship

Voter education messages should:

1. Focus on the processes of election not comment on elections candidates or parties
2. Provide education on the electoral system and opportunities for credible election
3. Not promote any political party or candidates irrespective of political affiliations

Principle 3: Creativity

Voter education messages should have:

1. Visual appeal: call out to its audience
2. Credible content
3. Issues prioritized to fit the purpose

Principle 4: Universality

The specific voter education can be universal in addressing different social categories and social groups, like messages for:

1. Young people
2. Women
3. Physically Challenged
4. Urban community
5. Rural community

Criteria for Designing and Implementing Civic and Voter Educational Campaign

In order to design and implement an effective CVE campaign, certain criteria must be met:

1. Understanding your community
2. Identify the target groups of those who will participate in the dissemination of the campaign as well as those who the campaign is intended for
3. Outline clear objectives
4. Identify the types of messages to include in the campaign

5. Select a dissemination strategy and materials
6. Monitor implementation and evaluation of the entire process

Before you commence a CVE campaign, it is necessary to clearly outline the purpose of the campaign. For example you want to conduct a voter education campaign to inform voters or electorates about an upcoming elections and you want them to participate in the process and how to go about casting their ballots, this must be clearly stated as an objective.

I. Understanding your Community⁸

An effective CVE awareness will be based on clear understanding of the community/or environment in which you want to operate. In order to understand your environment, there are three steps to follow:

1. It is also important to understand the demographics of the community and their needs. That is why, it is important to conduct a need assessment to know the needs of the people so that you will prioritize them. The need assessment will help you with the basis for planning activities around those needs and how to mobilize people to act on their needs and get them involve on issues that affect them.
2. Another way to understand your community is to assess the social and political environment of the community in terms of previous voter participation in order to address levels of consciousness of the importance of voter involvement. This would involve identifying levels of knowledge and understanding amongst the electorate (what people know or think they know), attitudes about elections and voting, and the issues that are of most concern to them.
3. It is also important to assess what resources are available to support the campaign – both human and material resources.

A needs assessment is a systematic analysis of an audience to identify particular aspects of a community or of individual knowledge, skills, interests, attitudes and/or abilities relevant to a particular issue or objective. Needs are gaps – the space between what currently exists and should exist in relation to the above. Conducting a needs assessment is two-fold; you will first identify the needs of the community, and then what the voter education facilitators need to know in terms of relating and interacting with the target audience. It is important to accurately assess the situation in your community group or organization in order to make decisions about how to allocate the necessary resources. Needs assessments can demonstrate and document a known community need and have an added benefit of involving the public in problem solving and goal setting.⁹

⁸ www.extension.iastate.edu

⁹ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/...

The result of the assessment will give you a clear picture of the next step. If, for example, voter participation is low, you need to understand the underlying causes for these phenomena, whether they be:

1. A lack of information
2. A lack of motivation
3. A lack of interest
4. A lack of electoral competition
5. A lack of access to polling centers

Each of the phenomena above is important and should be measured. If for example motivation or lack of information it is identified as a key factor in the causes of low voter turnout, the focus should be on a clear understanding of the target audience in terms of rectifying this.

To ensure that your campaign recognizes and addresses these needs, you need to have a broad understanding of the nature of the target audience in terms of the following.

1. **Knowledge** - What understanding does the target audience have of electoral issues and events that are related to them? What level of knowledge of parties and candidates?
2. **Experience** - Do they have experience of election?
3. **Tools and Techniques** - What type of prior experience or skills does the population have related to the issues?
4. **Benefits** - What are the personal benefits to the population in learning about relevant voter education?
5. **Attitudes and Prejudices**
 1. What attitudes and prejudices does the audience have towards the issue i.e. the electoral process?
 2. How does the population feel about voter education opportunities or any changes required in tools/techniques?
 3. What voter education methods will work best for this audience
4. **Ability to attend or Access-** Are there any factors that affect the ability to access, attend or utilize the voter education campaigns or tools
5. **Communities** - Are there any community-specific

When conducting your needs assessment it is necessary to define what questions should be asked and how this information will be used. You will also confirm what resources are available to carry out this assessment.

Concepts that will be explored with an aim to better understand your target audience should include the following:

1. Recognizing diversity among voters factors such as education, religion, experiences etc., among others create differences within the same population

2. Given the diversity of voters, you will consider how to access information to help understand their priorities and knowledge of the electoral system.¹⁰
3. Understanding the level of knowledge, expectations and general moods of voter toward electoral processes is important
4. Understanding peoples' motives for voting - why do people vote the way they do?
5. Voter turnout – look at levels of participation, especially amongst gender, age groups, and seek to understand the causes for not voting
6. Learning about what the voters know and assessing what voters still need to know in order to participate in an electoral process
7. Learning how voters receive information and what are the best methods to disseminate information
8. Who or what influences their decisions - teachers, family members, etc. Who do they trust or who they see their role-models, and what are their preoccupations and interests?
9. What is the best time to reach them?

Key to any successful needs assessment is the gathering of complete and accurate data and information regarding your target audience. There are several methods of undertaking a needs assessment, each having its own advantages and disadvantages. Depending on time, logistical and financial issues, needs assessment can be undertaken using any of the following techniques:

1. **Existing Data Approach** - already existing data is used to obtain insights about the disposition and attitudes of people
2. **Attitude Survey Approach**- information is gathered from a representative sample of community residents. Data is collected by personal interviews, telephone surveys, questionnaires etc
3. **Key Informant Approach** - identify community leaders and decisions makers who are knowledgeable about the community and can accurately identify priority needs, and concerns
4. **Community Forum** - public meetings are held during which time the participants discuss what some of the needs facing the community are, what are the priority needs and what can be done about these priority needs
5. **Focus Group Interview** - a group of people selected for their particular skills, experience and position are asked a series of questions about the relevant topics or issues to gather their opinions

¹⁰ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

II. Define the Target Audience of the Campaign¹¹

1. Targets

- Primary
- Secondary

2. Who should be involved in disseminating CVE messages?

Those who should be involved in the CVE process may include, but are not limited to:

1. Students
2. Political parties
3. Candidates
4. CSOs/CBOs/village organization members, including men, women, people with disabilities, minorities, etc.
5. Media representatives and press clubs
6. Representatives of Religious organizations
7. Associations
8. Trade Union representatives
9. Representatives of Traditional leaders
10. Youths
11. Celebrities

B. Who do you want to reach?

Voter education traditionally has aspired to reach a broad range of audiences. Target audiences can include categories such as:

1. Youth and first time voters
2. Groups that did not participate in previous elections
3. Women groups
4. Urban youth
5. Rural populations
6. Students
7. Political parties
8. Candidates
9. CSOs/CBOs/village organization members, including men, women, people with disabilities, minorities, etc.
10. Media
11. Religious organizations
12. Associations
13. Trade Unions

¹¹ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

Groups that have special needs can also determine target audiences. These can include:

1. Illiterate people
2. Residents of rural areas
3. People with special needs/disabilities
4. Specific ethnic groups
5. Minorities

Once you have identified and prioritized the target audience (s), you will explore the level of awareness, interest, knowledge, perception (negative/positive), and potential participation as related to the coming electoral events and the institutions to be elected. This will help you define the themes that you will explore with this specific audience, and the messages best suited to them.

You will also need to study your audience(s) and understand the following key elements.¹²

1. Where do they get their information from?
2. Who or what influences their decisions?
3. Who do they trust?
4. What are their preoccupations and interests?
5. What is the best time and the best place to reach them?

In most cases, you can answer these questions by drawing on your organization's knowledge and the prior experience of your staff with the target group. You can also refer back to your original needs assessment. It is also advisable to complete and verify this with simple baseline surveys, questionnaires or small focus groups. Such activities do not necessarily require large budgets and resources.

Once all the information is collected and you have mapped the areas (number and location of prospective voters), then you will determine how to reach the audiences and how many people you want to reach. This will determine the number and placement of voter education facilitators for each given area. You can never reach everyone but can plan a campaign based on the multiplier effect – you will target x number of people who will pass the message onto y number of people.

By understanding the target audience, you can also determine the type and quantities of posters, leaflets and other materials that you will need in order to inform your target audience

III. Outlining clear Objectives of your Campaign.¹³

In developing objectives for voter education programs, it is important for the dialogue between voter education facilitators and target audiences to be balanced between the intentions of the voter education facilitators and the expectations of the target audience. While preference will be given to joint objective settings in small group learning events, this is not always possible. Therefore

¹² Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

¹³ Ibid

objectives set must endeavor to be reflective of the best possible understanding of the needs of the target audience.

Once identified, these objectives must be:

1. **Specific** – the objective should specify what they want to achieve
2. **Measurable** - You should be able to measure whether you are meeting the objectives or not
3. **Achievable** - the objectives you set are achievable and attainable
4. **Realistic** - Can you realistically achieve the objectives with the resources you have
5. **Time Bounded** – when do you want to achieve the set of objectives

Unless you are conducting a voter education campaign and will have access to all the voting statistics, you will not be able to measure the increase in voter participation. Beneath are examples of objectives:

1. To mobilize 5000 voters between the ages of 20 and 30 to have obtained registration cards by the end of the upcoming registration process
2. To provide 60,000 youth in the targeted community with all the necessary technical information they require to enable them to exercise their right to vote

IV. Identify the types of Messages to include in your Campaign

The message is the platform for raising awareness about a problem or issue, educating your audience and motivating them to take action. To achieve this, messages need to be developed in a manner that not only engages your audience, but also turn concepts, laws and duties into meaningful ideas and realities that they can identify with and feel have an impact on their daily life.

Messages are a combination of factual and motivation information. All factual information is based on the constitution, laws, regulations and other legal documents. The factual /informational messages should explain the facts and emphasize how the facts relate to the individual voter. Factual information requires that you respect the official documents and ensure all your information is correct.

The motivational messages should be designed to create an emotional appeal that will motivate the target audience to produce the desired result. There should be specific messages for each target audience. There should also be general messages for all the target audiences. Depending upon availability of funds and length of the campaign, the messages should create a variety of interest. Therefore, all messages should create interest for participation.

It is important to remember when developing messages for the campaign that education is related to change, not only about sending messages into the community. Bringing about a change in knowledge, behavior or attitude is the challenge to effective message development.¹⁴

Understand the Target Audience

Based on your understanding of the target audience you will need to develop messages, which are appropriate to bring about a desired change in behavior and attitude. In developing messages, it is important to recognize what resonates with your intended audience. Messages should be developed for specific target audiences and not the general public.

Content should rely on both rational and emotional appeals as effective modes of persuasion towards the desired behavior.

For a message to be effective the content and tone should:

1. **Command Attention** - Get noticed
2. **Clarity** - Keep it simple and direct. It will not be remembered if it is not understood
3. **Communicate Benefit** - Do not make assumptions about what your audience knows. Tell them what is in it for them. People do not merely absorb information – they „buy“ the message in relation to having their expectation realized
4. **Repetition Counts** - People learn by repetition. Speak with one voice and say the same thing over and over in all forms of media channels/formats etc.
5. **Cater for The Heart And Head** - Effective communication does more than present practical reasons, it offers real emotional values
6. **Create Trust** - People will only “buy” your ideas if they trust you. You must speak with authority
7. **Call to Action** - Ask people to do something

Sensitivity to specific community needs should be considered in the development of messages. Insensitive or inflammatory language can jeopardies the message.

Campaign Strands

When developing messages there are three basic campaign strands to guide message development. They include:

1. **What is This About?** - This will concentrate on informative and educational messages and the explanation of the election law, accountability, and the elections outcome.
2. **Why is This Happening?** - To motivate the population to participate in the electoral process, these messages will concentrate on motivational information and the explanation of issues, benefits and the process as a whole.

¹⁴ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

3. **How will it take place?** - This will concentrate on the technical information necessary to explain how the voting system works (proportional representation, open list, etc.) and how people actually vote.

Message Development should not be done in a Vacuum. The target audience must be able to identify and relate to the message. It is important to ensure this direct relationship between the needs that have been identified and the message that is prepared in order to ensure that it has significance or meaning to the target audience.

Never assume the voter knows what you know. Further, the same message can be delivered in a variety of ways. For example, if the needs assessment identifies lack of information on the voter registration process, the message concept may include a visual explanation on how to register, as well as a mock registration scene where the participants will be required to register.

Timelines and Messages

For each theme you will develop messages. For example, during the registration period, one of your key messages is to encourage citizens to obtain their voting card during the voter¹⁵ registration period. An example message: “If you don’t have a voting card then you will not be able to vote.”

As you get closer to Election Day, the messages you develop will change from broad voter education messages to specific voter information messages. However, throughout the campaign there are cross cutting messages that will be repeated. For example, an ongoing message is „your vote is secret, no one will know who you voted for“.

Test Messages and Materials

Once messages have been developed it is important for the user to test them. Message testing is designed to determine whether the message is appropriate, effective, and understood by the target audience before you produce and distribute these in their final form.

Testing Determines:

1. To what extent the message is clear and unambiguous
2. To what extent the message is engaging
3. To what extent it can be understood by the target audience and communicated by voter education facilitators

Testing will also:

1. Increase the chances that the message will work as intended
2. Provide opportunity to develop products that are aesthetically appealing
3. Get feedback on drafts of ideas and messages from representative’s

¹⁵ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

4. Help reduce the barrier between those involved in the process of developing the message and the intended audience.

How to Test Messages and Materials?

You can test messages and materials in a number of ways; the most common way is through focus groups. Focus groups can vary from strictly controlled formal settings to informal ones where testing can take place in the office, with friends or neighbors.

You should test your messages and materials several times over the course of the design of messages and materials. All voter education timeframes should build in sufficient time for testing of materials. Testing messages and materials will potentially prevent you from making mistakes or producing messages that are not suitable.¹⁶

Channels for Message Dissemination

There are several ways through which messages can be disseminated. Some of the channels include, but not limited to:

- Booklets
- Brochures and posters
- Hoardings (Billboards, placards, signs etc.)
- Banners
- Web banners for websites
- Stickers, etc.
- Caps, t-shirts, buttons, badges, lapel pins, mugs, key chains, bags
- ID card covers, stationery items
- TV, radio, telecom companies
- SMS services
- Advertisements
- Commercials
- Songs, jingles, talk shows, plays
- Social media such as blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.
- Online media (Radio, news and TV)
- Traditional means of communication
- SMS/MMS
- Educational and professional institutions
- CSOs, CBOs and FBOs
- Celebrities

¹⁶ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

CHAPTER THREE: STRATEGY FOR DIRECT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (PUBLIC OUTREACH)

In civic and voter education program, the target audience plays a very important role in determining the content to be used. It is important to:

- Define a target audience
- Conduct a target audience research
- Develop a message that the people can relate with and persuade them to participate in the electoral process
- Identify resources available
- Develop channels and tools for communicating the information developed
- Identify the period of time in the electoral cycle (the timeframe)
- Identify the particular electoral event for which the voter education is targeted at and for each event, ensure the message is created to address a need, an information deficit

This Civic and Voter Education Toolkit uses a variety of means to approach and educate different categories of stakeholders. It introduces people centered approach, which endeavors to build a direct relationship between the National Elections Commission and the voters. The toolkit also provide a two way dialogue that can take place between the NEC and different stakeholders, to share views, plans and updates, as well as to design and implement comprehensive civic and voter education activities. The categories of stakeholders can include but does not have to be limited to the following:

1. Policy Makers:

The role of policy makers in an election process is very crucial in enhancing the electoral process. They should make the right policies and put in place the rightful mechanisms and structure to ensure peaceful electoral environment.

- Election Coordinating Committee (ECC)
- The Civic and Voter Education Section of the National Elections Commission
- County and District Election Coordinators
- Representatives of political parties
- Representatives of the Educational Institutions
- Representatives of landline ministries and agencies
- Representative of the legislative branch of government
- Representative of the judiciary
- The military and paramilitary
- Trade union representatives
- Media
- Associations/Organizations

2. Local Authorities

- Superintendents
- Mayors
- District commissioners

- Council of Chiefs (paramount chief, town chief, etc.)
- Youth leaders
- Women leaders
- Tribal leaders
- Landlords
- Traditional leaders
- Herbalists, etc.

3. Religious Leaders

- Churches
- Mosques
- Shrines

In addition to the above, civic and voter education may be extended to other stakeholders and potential partners in their respective responsibilities and region, who may be invited to join the CVE campaign. They may include but are not limited to:

- Celebrities (musicians, athletes, comedians, actors, etc.)
- Educational institutions (universities, colleges, technical and vocational schools)
- Civic Society Organizations (CBOs, NGOs, youth, women, minorities and people with disabilities)
- School teachers and college/university lecturers
- Members of the press
- Different Associations
- Labor congress

Direct Outreach Activities

The tool for public engagement is at the heart of every civic and voter education campaign and without these tools, the message is incomplete and will be ineffective. There are strategies employed to attain the quality, timing and delivery of the voter education messages. Some of these strategies include:

1. **Community Meetings** - community meetings are very vital to civic and voter education, especially in rural areas. Elections workers and civic and voter stakeholders can arrange such meetings at the village level in collaboration with local authorities to share information, educate voters on electoral processes and disseminate VE materials. Separate meetings may be arranged for women and men, depending on locally acceptable customs. All categories of eligible voters can be invited to these meetings.
2. **Debates** - These activities may most easily be conducted in collaboration with educational institutes. Stakeholders involved with the business of CVE can send them a request to allow and select students to design and participate in the events. To spread awareness to the broader public, community members may be invited to attend these events at the premises of the institution or students could venture out to conduct the activities at venues frequented by eligible voters from the community, such community centers, town hall, government

offices, clubs and associations, etc. Representative from the CVE section or other CVE volunteer may facilitate the events by providing educational material, banners, honorary prizes and certificates, etc. Sample topics for the activities include:

- Significance of the right to vote
- Why have elections
- The value of inclusion of marginalized groups including women in electoral processes
- Need to accept elections results peacefully

3. **Interactive Forum and Q &A Sessions on Electoral Processes:** For this activity, CVE workers will have to visit sites frequented by eligible voters to provide information on electoral processes and answer related questions from the community. CVE staff members and other stakeholders may help organize and deliver these presentations. Target groups cover all eligible voters, particularly those from historically marginalized groups within the community. The presentations may be oral or conducted with the aid of multimedia facilities (where such facilities are available). Sample topics for the presentations may include:

- The role of the NEC in administering elections;
- Steps taken by the NEC to ensure free, fair and transparent elections;
- Codes of Conduct;
- The CVE activities (for that election);
- Stages of elections, especially emphasizing the voter
- Registration process in the period before the announcement of elections;
- Voter eligibility criteria for men and women;
- Rights and responsibilities of voters;
- Importance of the vote;
- The voting process at polling stations;
- Secrecy of the vote; Request to vote (from the NEC to voters);
- Accepting elections results peacefully.¹⁷

4. **Face-to-Face Activities** - such activities should comprise of 10 – 15 participants in the form of focus group (FG) and be facilitated by trained voter education facilitators. In most cases, NGO voter education facilitator will use a flipchart to assist in delivering a presentation, and a question and answer period will follow. This helps participants to learn actively through talking and sharing with others, rather than merely listening to the facilitator. Face-to-face activities are highly effective for rural and less educated voters, as well as for those with limited electoral experience.

Visual tools such as leaflets, posters, and stickers carrying key messages should complement the messages disseminated in the outreach worker's presentation. A more ideal campaign will allow for several activities with the same target audience. For example, one activity to discuss voter registration, and as the electoral calendar unfolds, follow up

¹⁷ Handbook on voter education and outreach, Elections Commission of Pakistan

activities to discuss candidate nomination, polling and the count process.¹⁸

5. **On-the-Spot Activities** - These are "improvised" activities that take place at public gatherings such as entertainment centers, video clubs, market places, etc. They aim to remind all eligible voters where, when, and how to register and vote. These allow for the quick dissemination of voter information, especially as one moves closer to Election Day. Such activities also allow for an opportunity for the distribution of materials.¹⁹
6. **Briefings, Seminars, and Lectures** - These activities usually target the more educated audience. They are used to convey specific information and/or background material concerning a subject, decision or policy. It does not require much interaction between the speakers and the participants. It is characterized by a short format, the distribution of handouts or other written materials, and a question and answer period.
7. **Door-to-door campaign** - For a door-to-door campaign, the CVE educator must be polite, informed and energetic. People do not naturally appreciate being barged into, so this engagement must be brief, polite and lively. Also education materials should be used to further elicit interest. The idea is to have a foot in before the door is shut in your face.²⁰
8. **Town Hall** - Town halls are usually useful in bringing together people of different orientation to discuss issues of voter education. Town Halls provide the basic information and often cover different topics of discussion.
9. **Traditional Outlets** - direct public engagement through various traditional outlets such as Town Criers, Village square meetings, folktales, utilizing the expertise of traditional leaders to use different traditional groups women groups, men groups, elders etc. can be effective in civil and voter education processes.
10. **Religious/Community Based Organizations Meetings/Events** - Religious meetings provide opportunity for community/religious leaders to convey important voter information messages through the churches, mosques,
11. **Neighborhood Civic Groups** - For example, women's neighborhood association - activities conducted as a face-to-face activity.
12. **Micro-finance Institutions** – Micro-finance institutions attract a large sector of the medium and low-income generation groups seeking micro-finance opportunities to improve their lives. Such institutions can be effective in civil and voter education process e.g. Village Saving Loan, which serves as village, banks upon which the large section of the community is engaged.
13. **Arts and Cultural Events** - There are many different kinds of art and cultural events that are effective voter education strategies such as:
 - Dramas, theatre specifically designed to spread voter education messages

¹⁸ Voter and civic education, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter5.htm>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ The ACE Encyclopedia: Civic and Voter Education

- Festivals/ music events
- Mobile theatre and cinema
- Sport events
- Art competitions - murals etc.
- Quizzes

CHAPTER FOUR: STRATEGY FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ELECTIONS (ENHANCING EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION)

Taking into account the opinions and priorities of both women and men in the democratic process, and ensuring that both benefit equally from social change, economic growth and political inclusion are all essential to enhancing the success of civic and voters education.

Gender mainstreaming in election is one of the surest ways of promoting gender equality, which is in line with the international human rights instruments that Liberia is a signatory to, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified in 2003. The NEC is particularly concerned with increasing female participation in the electoral processes as voters, candidates, electoral administrators, poll workers, observers and other service providers. In order to achieve, the NEC established a Unit to address specific gender issues with the aim of mainstreaming gender in electioneering processes in Liberia. Hence the Gender Unit came into existence in 2010, and has been engaged in promoting female participation in electoral processes.

In implementing gender activities for all civic and voter education, the NEC and its partners have worked together externally and internally with all departments, including the Gender Unit the CVE section to disseminate gender sensitive information. In terms of external collaboration, joint coordination efforts have been made over the years to work with all stakeholders including CSOs, CBOs, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the media, educational institutions, among other stakeholders.

This section of the toolkit is designed to assist CVE practitioners in identifying and addressing some of the different needs and priorities of women, facilitating their full participation at every stage of the CVE process, and contributing to equitable and increase participation of women in electoral processes in Liberia. It also provides a platform to involve all stakeholders to create awareness on the importance of women's participation. The toolkit does not only target messages for female voters, but ensures that gender is taken into account in all of the messaging in order to promote a gender responsive voter education approach. This is intended to promote inclusiveness and transparency in the electoral processes, and to safeguard the fundamental rights of women.

Using this toolkit will enable practitioners to:

- Understand why gender mainstreaming should be pursued in Civic and Voter Education
- Be aware of the barriers to women's participation that may be encountered
- Identify and implement strategies for addressing women's concerns throughout the CVE

Some key Concepts

It is important to distinguish between two key terms – sex and gender – that are used in this toolkit.

1. **Sex** refers to biological males and females, the two major groups of individuals that occur in many species and are distinguished on the basis of their reproductive organs. Sex is relatively unchanging over time, or from culture to culture. For example, regardless of country, culture or era in history, it is females who give birth.

2. **Gender** is social, not biological. Gender refers to the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities assigned to males and females by social constructs. Gender changes significantly over time, place and context. While we find both sexes (females and males) in all societies, their assigned gender roles, and therefore their access to opportunities and resources, can be very different. The social and economic roles of women in Sri Lanka are different from women in Argentina. The social and economic roles of women in rural Liberia are different than those of Urban Liberian women in the capital city. Gender roles are socially constructed, and thus change over time and place. Education and class also heavily influence gender roles. Often, the gender roles assigned to men and women discriminate against women and can inhibit their participation in democratic processes.

Other key Concepts include

1. **Gender Relations** describe the power balance or imbalance between men and women that define the formal and informal rules of interaction.
2. **Gender Analysis** is a systematic process of identifying the differences between women and men, and examining their related needs, roles, statuses, positions and privileges. This analysis is based on the premise that gender is a critical variable in the development process.
3. **Gender Mainstreaming** is a strategy for promoting equality by ensuring that a gender analysis is conducted at every stage of civic and voter education to ensure that gender equality is considered in the implementation of all activities.²¹

“Mainstreaming is not about adding a “woman’s component” or even a “gender equality component” into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women’s participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda. It may entail identifying the need for changes in that agenda. It may require changes in goals, strategies, and actions so that both women and men can influence, participate in, and benefit from development processes. The goal of mainstreaming gender equality is thus the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women.”²²

Recruitment of Civic and Voter Education Service Providers

Gender mainstreaming is crucial to ensuring equal participation of gender in CVE programs. One of the most effective ways to ensure women are part of a CVE process is to require that there is a gender balance or inclusion of a certain proportion of women in CVE activities. The effectiveness of such systems, however, depends very much on the details of their implementation. For example, a requirement that staff list of an organization include 50 per cent women will not be effective if women are all placed at the bottom of the lists. Participation of women should be considered in terms of positions or roles they play in the process. This will promote a sense of equal participation.

²¹ Gender Assessment Report: Counterpart International Promoting Elections, Accountability and Civic Engagement in Chad (PEACE) Program, January 31, 2011

²² Gender Mainstreaming in Local Economic Development Strategies - A guide – ILO Bureau for Gender Equality

An organization, which staff include both women and men at equal level of positions and responsibilities provide the best prospects for an effective civic and voter education.

Civil Society Organizations

As a requirement for an effective civil and voter education, all civil society participating in a CVE process should be required to do the following:

1. Conduct gender analysis during the CVE design phase so as to better target both women and men with services.
2. Identify and encourage women willing to run for public office;
3. Use and disseminate standard that guarantee women's right to participation in democratic processes and decision-making positions, such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325. Display these documents in offices, share them with partners – and simplify, translate, and disseminate to beneficiaries
4. Ensure that all staff members not just the gender focus person are trained in gender analysis skills so that they can design and implement programs that promote women participation and do not entrench existing disparities.
5. Provide training and other types of support for women candidates;
6. Ensure that issues of special concern to women are addressed in party platforms;
7. Disseminate gender-sensitive messages for voter and civic education;
8. Advocate for an improved media coverage of women's issues and women candidates;
9. Persuade international donors to support projects aimed at advancing women's political participation.

Accessibility

1. Voter Registration.

In most electoral process, voters must be registered and appear on voter lists to be eligible to participate in elections. The accuracy and inclusiveness of the lists are central elements in ensuring women's full participation. In order to enhance women participation in a voter registration process, a number of special measures should be taken to ensure women are able to register to vote. These measures included:

- Create an exclusive lines or queues for women voters during registration and polling;
- Involve more women on registration teams for the registration of women to ensure that women are fully registered;
- Women should be given the opportunity to choose between a photograph and a fingerprint for identification purposes; Conducting targeted civic education campaigns for women carried out by women;
- Involve more women to train the trainers for voter registration and civic education, conveying targeted messages explaining why it was important to allow women to register.

- Preferential voting for pregnant women, lactating mothers and others in such category.
2. **Polling Station/Center** - Women voters may be at a greater disadvantage than men if polling stations are established at inconvenient locations or at long distances. In order to enhance increased participation of women at polling station, there is a need for polling staff to treat women preferentially in order to provide them with an opportunity to vote in an environment free of intimidation and pressure and thereby increase the likelihood of their participation.
 3. **Overseeing Voting.** Election officials at the polling station must take care to ensure the secrecy of the ballot and to prevent family voting as a critical element in ensuring that women can cast confidential and independent ballots.
 4. **Preventing Intimidation.** Intimidation during the election campaign and at the polls may be a problem, especially in post-conflict countries. In some circumstances women voters and candidates may be more likely than their male counterparts to experience intimidation. Providing adequate security at polling stations is one-step election management bodies can take to address this issue. More generally, however, they should work to foster a peaceful campaign environment.
 5. **Ensuring Level Playing field for all Candidates.** Creating equal conditions for all candidates is typically a key function of election management bodies. While this is usually seen in terms of equal treatment for contesting political parties, it applies equally to men and women candidates. High campaign spending limits work to the benefit of the richest candidates, who are usually men. Failure to prevent incumbents from unfairly using public resources for their campaigns can disadvantage women, since incumbents are most often men (to be refined by Gender). Weak or vague media regulations may mean that women candidates do not get equal access to or treatment in the mass media.
 6. **Counting Ballots.** Even the process of counting ballots may disadvantage women in certain circumstances. As a rule, ballots should be accepted as valid if the intent of the voter is clear. The adoption of overly strict rules for determining the validity of ballots for example, requiring that a ballot with a check mark rather than a cross next to the chosen candidate be disqualified can work against illiterate or poorly educated voters, including women.
 7. **Adjudicating Complaints and Appeals.** Election officials should ensure that complaint and appeals procedures are clear and easy to use so as to enhance women confident if there is any irregularities
 8. **Planning for Future Elections.** To the extent possible, election official should collect sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration and

voter participation, in order to highlight any discrepancies or weaknesses that might require attention.

General Recommendations²³

In post-conflict electoral processes all actors including governmental, international and civil society organizations should be guided by the following recommendations and best practices for enhancing women's participation:

1. Adhere to international standards for the protection of women's civil and political rights. Include women as members of delegations to peace negotiations and in bodies created for the implementation of peace accords, including those responsible for the development of new electoral processes;
2. Carefully design and implement new laws and electoral processes to ensure and enhance women's participation and to effectively increase the possibility of women being elected;
3. Make certain that the practical aspects and details of the electoral process do not indirectly discriminate against women;
4. Consider adopting temporary special measures such as quotas; require or encourage political parties to nominate and support women candidates, in part by placing them high enough on their candidate lists to be elected;
5. Ensure that illiterate and rural women enjoy the right to vote;
6. Create platforms to ensure women's voices and concerns are heard;
7. Design and conduct voter registration and education campaigns targeting women.

Relation to the Press/Media²⁴

The media, and particularly electronic media, play a crucial role in shaping voter interest in and attitudes about an election. The way the media portray women, how they deal with issues of special concern to women, and whether they convey effectual voter education messages can have a major impact on women's participation in an election.

In general, election laws and media laws create a framework for the role of the media in elections. In most instances the formal rules governing media coverage of candidates appear gender-neutral. In reality, however, media regulations and practices may indirectly disadvantage women. For example, in societies with very limited controls or very lax rules for the media, as is sometimes the case in post-conflict countries, women may face informal discrimination manifested in their inability to get on the air at all.

²³ Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

²⁴ Ibid

Even when airtime is carefully regulated, the price of advertising may be beyond the reach of women candidates. Women are most likely to receive equal broadcasting time in countries that provide the same amount of free airtime to all candidates and place limits on paid political advertising. Some countries even provide extra airtime as an incentive for political parties to nominate and support women candidates

The Media should:

1. Provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders;
2. Provide women candidates with at least as much airtime and print space as that given to men;
3. Focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming;
4. Undertake voter and civic education programs aimed specifically at women.

Political Participation

Participation in electoral processes involves much more than just voting. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. Under international standards, men and women have an equal right to participate fully in all aspects of the political process. In practice, however, it is often harder for women to exercise this right. Most time there are frequently extra barriers to women's participation, and special care is required to ensure their rights are respected in this regard.²⁵

Political parties are among the most important institutions affecting women's political participation. In most countries, parties determine which candidates are nominated and elected and which issues achieve national prominence. The role of women in political parties is therefore a key determinant of their prospects for political empowerment, particularly at the national level. Because political parties are so influential in shaping women's political prospects, Governments and international and civil society organizations seeking to advance the participation of women in elections justifiably tend to focus on the role of political parties. Political participation extends beyond parties, however. Women can also become involved in certain aspects of the electoral process through independent action particularly at the local level and by joining civil society organizations. Women's networks, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and the media can all provide avenues for women's political participation.

The most common route to elected office is through political parties. Most candidates depend on parties for their nomination, their base of electoral support, help during the election campaign, financial resources, and continued assistance after their election. While some candidates run for office independently of political parties, it is far more difficult to win election without the backing of a political organization, especially at the national level. Hence, women seeking an entry into politics are encouraged to turn to political parties. Political parties vary greatly in the extent to which they seek to promote women into leadership positions and to recruit women as party

²⁵ Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

candidates, as well as in the extent to which they address political, economic and social issues of special concern to women. Since political parties often tend to be more open to nominating women as candidates for local elections, women may find it easier to start at this level and use it as a stepping-stone to national office.

Promoting Women's Participation in Majoritarian Systems. One of the most effective ways to ensure women are elected to office is to require that party candidate lists be gender balanced or include a certain proportion of women. The effectiveness of such systems, however, depends very much on the details of their implementation. For example, a requirement that candidate lists include 50 per cent women will not be effective if the women are all placed at the bottom of the lists. Women can have no realistic expectation of success in proportional systems unless they are placed high enough on the candidate lists to be elected if the party wins seats in the legislature²⁶.

Platforms. Another indication of political party commitment to the advancement of women is its platform. By addressing gender equality and other issues of special concern to women, parties can increase their relevance to women voters and provide a greater incentive for women to become involved in the political process. Political parties should encourage women's participation by taking gender-sensitive positions on such issues as family reunification, violence against women, female unemployment, housing, education, and social issues such as family planning and reproductive health.²⁷

Non-Governmental Organizations

Although political party affiliation may represent women's most obvious entry into politics, it is not the only option. One of the best ways for women to enter the political arena is through involvement in national women's movements. Participation in women's advocacy organization may provide women with the credentials needed to become a party leader or a candidate. Women's Advocacy organizations can also influence political party platforms and help ensure that all parties address issues of special interest to women seriously. More broadly, non-governmental organizations, including women's human rights and community groups, labor unions, and other civil society institutions, can contribute in various ways to the advancement of women's political participation. Priorities should include identifying women to stand as candidates, providing training on dealing with the media and other issues, developing networks to advance women in politics both within the party and across party.²⁸

Advancing women's political participation requires determined efforts not only by women themselves, but also by Governments, the international community and civil society. Action by political parties is particularly important. Some steps that can be taken by each of these groups are listed below.²⁹

Political Parties should:

1. Adopt internal democratic structures;
2. Place women contenders high enough on the candidate lists to ensure they will be elected, and consider voluntary quotas or targets for women candidates;

²⁶ Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

3. Establish voluntary targets or quotas to ensure a specified minimum number of women are put forward as candidates;
4. Provide support and resources to ensure the election of women candidates;
5. Make certain that women are fully represented in party leadership and policy committees;
6. Clearly identify the advancement of women and issues of special concern to women as priorities in their platforms.³⁰

Government Actors should:

1. Ensure that political party laws and other election- related legislations do not indirectly disadvantage women;
2. Consider legislation requiring political parties to adopt democratic procedures for their internal operations;
3. Consider temporary special measures requiring political parties to include a substantial proportion of women high on their candidate lists;
4. Provide incentives for political parties to promote women candidates, including resources, training and increased access to broadcast time.
5. Provide increased airtime for women in politics between elections could also advance women’s participation by enabling voters to make informed assessments at election time of the overall performance of political parties, including their support of women who have been elected as representatives³¹
6. Remove obstacles and barriers that limit or prevent women’s participation.

International Actors should:

1. Provide advice on legislation, electoral systems and best practices that can advance women’s participation in the electoral process;
2. Assist in the training of women candidates;
3. Provide training to political parties, journalists, security forces and others to convey the importance of women’s political participation and gender sensitivity;
4. Help establish and support cross-party cooperation among women;
5. Provide support and training to women who have been elected to office to enable them to function more effectively in their new roles.

Civil Society Actors should:

1. Identify women willing to run for office;
2. Provide training and other types of support for women candidates;
3. Lobby to ensure issues of special concern to women are addressed in party platforms;
4. Lobby for legislative changes to advance women’s empowerment;
5. Develop cross-party networks of women;
6. Develop and disseminate gender-sensitive messages for voter and civic education;
7. Advocate improved media coverage of women’s issues and women candidates;
8. Persuade international donors to support projects aimed at advancing women’s political participation³²

³⁰ Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

³¹ Ibid

³² Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

The Media should:

1. Provide gender-sensitive coverage of elections, avoiding negative stereotypes and presenting positive images of women as leaders;
2. Provide women candidates with at least as much airtime and print space as that given to men;
3. Focus attention on issues of special concern to women in news programming;
4. Undertake voter and civic education programs aimed specifically at women.

Election Administration

The practical aspects of administering an election can have an important impact on women's participation. Election management bodies should operate independently, impartially and transparently. Boards at all levels should include women as part of their membership and leadership. Where necessary, special training might be made available for women to ensure that they are qualified to assume such positions. Election management bodies should develop a clear policy on advancing women's electoral participation. They should take gender considerations into account in all aspects of their work and should strive to facilitate and increase women's participation.

Election administrators can enhance overall voter participation and that of women in particular by developing effective voter education campaigns, instituting simple procedures for voter registration, ensuring easy access to polling stations, establishing convenient polling hours, providing adequate security at polling locations, preventing intimidation, designing ballots and voting procedures that are clear and simple, making certain each person's vote is cast secretly, and providing balloting facilities for illiterate voters. To the extent possible, election management bodies should collect sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration and voter turnout, in order to identify any discrepancies or weaknesses that might require attention.³³

Election Observation

Election observation is a valuable tool for enhancing the transparency of the electoral process and increasing public confidence in election results. The presence of observers can serve as a deterrent to fraud and malpractice. International organizations, civil society organizations or both may carry out observation. In general, international observers should be able to impartially assess the quality of elections and to provide suggestions on how practices can be improved.

Observation methodology should take into account how various aspects of the electoral process can have a different impact on women than they do on men. Observers should carefully assess the way in which the legal framework, political parties, election administration and other factors affect women's participation. Ideally, observer groups, and particularly civil society organization should include equal numbers of women and men. Specialized election observation efforts can be designed to focus exclusively on the role of women in elections.³⁴

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Women and Elections – guide to promoting the participation of women in elections

CHAPTER FIVE: STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED AND MINORITY GROUPS

This chapter of the toolkit provides strategies and tools for strengthening the participation of physically challenged person in elections and political processes. Drawing on experiences of international best practices and cite some of the experiences of these two organizations), this toolkit acknowledges the essential role political participation plays in helping physically challenged persons influence policies that affect their lives and establish a foundation for inclusion in all aspects of society.

Definition of key Terms³⁵

1. **Reasonable Accommodation** - Provision of materials or environment that allow physically challenged persons to participate and contribute on an equal basis with others;
Example: A tactile ballot guide is a reasonable accommodation because it gives voters who are visually impaired or have low vision the same opportunity to vote in secret and with- out assistance.
1. **Accessible** - A site, facility, work environment, service or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in and/or use safely, independently and with dignity by physically challenged persons.
Example: A polling station where a voter who uses a wheelchair can maneuver unaided
1. **A Tactile Ballot** – a device that can be fixed onto a ballot paper to enable visually impaired people to mark their ballot paper in secret. The device consists of a number of flaps.
2. **Accessible Formats** - Print, audio or visual information that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
Example: Braille, tactile, large print, sign language, easy-to-read
1. **Assistive Tool** - A device that aids completion of a task or other function that might otherwise be difficult or impossible
Example: Tactile ballot guide or magnifying glass
1. **Braille** - Writing system comprised of raised dots used by people who are blind or have low vision.
1. **Twin-Track Approach** - Includes mainstreaming physically challenged throughout activities and policies, as well as providing physically challenged-specific programming. This is USAID’s preferred approach to physically challenged inclusive development.
2. **Example:** Featuring persons with disabilities in voter education materials, as well as developing voter education materials targeted solely at physically challenged persons.

³⁵ Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes

What is physically challenged?³⁶

This toolkit uses the definition found in Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): Physically challenged include those persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.³⁷

There are several different approaches to addressing physically challenged, from antiquated charity and medical views to more contemporary social and rights-based models. The models help describe social attitudes toward physically challenged and are not mutually exclusive. A concise description of each approach.³⁸

1. **Charity Model** – assumes physically challenged persons are unable to be full participants in society and need help. Physically challenged persons are pitied.
2. **Medical Model** – physically challenged persons are treated as though their physical challenge is the cause of all barriers. In this model, physically challenged persons are encouraged to adjust to their environments, rather than the other way around.
3. **Social Model** – describes physically challenged as a result of a person’s interaction with their environment. The pre-amble of the CRPD says, “Physically challenged results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”
4. **Rights Model** – emphasis is shifted from dependence to empowerment. Physically challenged persons have the same basic human rights as all other citizens and governments should guarantee rights and be held accountable for protection.

Voter Education for physically challenged persons

A twin-track approach should be used for voter education; that is, there should be voter education specifically targeted toward physically challenged persons, as well as inclusion of physically challenged persons in mainstream voter education efforts. CVE practitioners conducting CVE activities should conduct voter education campaigns targeting physically challenged persons. This is especially relevant if specific training is required, such as on how to use a tactile ballot guide and other instruments used for physically challenged persons.

CVE materials should be clear, accessible and user-friendly for people with disabilities. Below are list of various instruments and their intended audience:

1. **Audio** – are used for blind or those with low vision and people with low literacy
2. **Braille** - Are blind or those who have low vision
3. **Captions** – are used for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
4. **Easy To Read** – are used for those with intellectual disabilities and low literacy

³⁶ Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

5. **Electronic text used with Screen Reading Software** - are for those who are blind or have low vision; have intellectual or learning disabilities or low literacy
6. **Large Print (16-20 font size)** - are used for those who have low vision
7. **Picture** - are for those with Have intellectual disabilities, low literacy or are non-native speakers of the language
8. **Sign Language** – are for the deaf or hard-of-hearing
9. **Tactile** - Are used for the blind or have low vision but do not know Braille and people who are deaf-blind

Registration and Polling Centers

Registration is very crucial to an inclusive process of elections, especially for people who are physically challenge. In order to enhance the ability of the physically challenge in an electoral process, technical support should be given to them to register. If voters with disabilities are not registered, they will not be able to take advantage of any access provisions on Election Day. Another issue that affect the physically challenge is inaccessible information and locations, which can be a barrier to their registration. An inclusive voter registration process should have the following characteristics:

1. Physically accessible registration locations
2. Easy-to-understand information distributed in accessible formats
3. Benefits and drawbacks of collecting physically challenged-specific information are clearly defined and assessed
4. Decisions on whether to collect physically challenged-specific information are made in a collaborative way

Polling Centers

Most polling is held in public buildings, such as schools and community centers. These buildings should already be accessible to physically challenged persons. However, in many instances, this often is not the case. Election workers should be trained how to identify barriers in polling centers and make improvements to ensure buildings are more accessible. These barriers can sometimes be low lighting inside the building or stairs as the only means to enter the facility.

Use of relevant Languages, including Braille

To the greatest extent possible, materials should be developed, and outreach activities should be planned, using the appropriate language of the various communities (e.g., outreach to illiterate communities should be done both in the Vernaculars of the people). Although not many visually impaired read Braille, Braille materials can be used to train visually impaired trainers in the content of the CVE materials.

Sign Language

Civic and voter education materials prepared for television audiences should include sign language interpretation for those with access to television. For those without access television, locally appropriate strategies should be carried out. Such strategies would be include door-to-door awareness, community mobilization, performance at worship places, etc.

Strategies to include Physically Challenged into CVE Activities

Organizations and individuals conducting civil and voter education should deliver the following:

1. To work closely with political parties, government and disability organizations to raise awareness on the importance of diverse representation including physically challenged people
2. Provide training and development opportunities aimed at supporting physically challenged people through the route to political participation
3. Establish an Access to registration and polling centers to support physically challenged
4. Work with political parties to analyze their existing physically challenged access policies and promote good practice
5. Promote and explain legal obligations that apply to political parties e.g. produce a short guide to support political parties in fulfilling their duties in compliance with the Equality Act 2010

CHAPTER SIX: DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF MEDIA IN CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

One of the most effective means of reaching out to a large number of voters is through the media. Regular media engagement serves as an avenue for the flow of information between the National Elections Commission and the general public.

The NEC can establish partnership with media groups comprising of credible and trustworthy contacts that they can share updates with and disseminate CVE messages through.

Who should be included in the Media group?

Target members of the media group may include but are not limited to:

1. Selected members of various community radio stations around the country
2. Independent journalists
3. Representative of from community media networks
4. Representative of national and international newspapers, magazines, television channels, and radio stations, Internet based news sources and blogs, etc.
5. Representative of TV and radio stations

Engagement Process

The NEC and its partners can use the steps outlined below to form and maintain the media group:

1. Map all media agencies, forums and journalists available in the various region where the NEC operates
2. Strengthen and improve relations with media agencies through designated focal persons from the NEC
3. Send a letter of introduction to media agencies, forums and journalists in the region, briefly explaining the CVE process, inviting them to designate a representative to join the media group and specifying a date for an initial meeting of the group
4. Decide the group's working norms (frequency of meetings, type of information to be shared, etc.) during the first meeting
5. Request the group to develop and broadcast public service announcements through their various outlets for voters free of cost
6. Request the group to share articles, footage, etc., of any news on the NEC so that the Commission remains well informed, may respond whenever needed and can maintain news archives
7. The focal person within the NEC office should maintain records of the number and proportion of positive, neutral and negative stories in the press with respect to the NEC and its CVE process. This database should be shared with the Secretariat of the Election Coordinating Committee on a regular basis so that appropriate steps may be taken at the regional and national levels, to improve the working of the Commission and build a more positive image
8. The PUL is a key partner in this process of strengthening and improving relations with the media

Training of Media Groups

Training of media groups is a key component in CVE process. Media practitioners should be familiar with the information and have the necessary skills and approach in interacting with the audience and keeping them motivated and interested. They should be well trained on how to collect and report on CVE information. If media practitioners disseminate incorrect information or are not prepared, they can undermine the credibility of the entire CVE process. A media practitioner who lack knowledge and/or inspiration and fail report on factual thing, jeopardize the process of enhancing increased and equitable participation in the democratic process.

Electronic/Indirect Media

The electronic media is mostly indirect but effective strategies in disseminating voter education messages. TV and radio, in particular, are especially important to provide information to illiterate populations, a significant proportion of which are usually comprised of marginalized groups. Radio and Television air public Service Announcements, host round, table debates, talk shows, quizzes, air the performance of dramas, live events, weekly programs, advertisements etc.,

Radio and TV should be considered as a medium capable of conveying complex messages with a positive enthusiastic attitude to large audiences. Radio and TV capture the largest target audiences. It can reach members of large and varied audiences simultaneously (community Radio, TV, public radio).

Print Media

The print media is also indirect just like the electronic media. It helps in the dissemination of civic and voter education messages mostly to a reading audience. Examples of print media are Newspaper and magazines. They sometimes contain cartoons, articles in daily, weekly and monthly magazines and newspapers to portray CVE messages.

Social Media: social networking, which is a type of new media, provides a viable platform for interaction and also provides a means of assessing reach. Social Media Platform like Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp can also be used.

Bulk SMS: while social media can be effective to reach out to a large number of persons; Internet literacy population is still low thus the need to complement with text messaging for as many that lack access to the internet, the SMS will reach out to them.

Display Media – are billboards, banners, and murals, etc.

Modern Technologies as toll-free call center to answer election related questions

Other Outlets of Media include Audiocassettes, CDs and DVDs. They can also be used as vehicles to disseminate information related to elections through songs, poems, and messages etc.

Strategies for selecting the type of Media for CVE

The target audiences will determine the strategy or strategies to use in a CVE campaign. The strategy should be credible to the intended audience as people are obviously more receptive to

strategies/mediums they can understand and trust. Below are key factors to observe in selecting which media outlet to use for a CVE:

1. Literacy levels of your audience
2. Community specific sensitivities
3. Age and gender appropriateness
4. Cultural sensitivity; etc.
5. Religious sensitivity
6. Language sensitivity
7. Physically challenged sensitivity

It is essential that for each target audience one needs to confirm that the strategy selected is the most appropriate way to engage with them. For example, selecting strategies and tools for youth may be through sports events, music, websites, SMS etc., while strategies for a rural illiterate community may require face-to-face meetings using a visual flipchart and tools to facilitate the activity.

All these methods are effective for CVE awareness and education, but they have their own advantages and disadvantages depending on the environment and the target audience.

Electronic/Indirect/Media

Advantages of Electronic/indirect media include:

1. Radio and TV reach a large segment of the voters
2. Illiteracy is not a barrier
3. Allow for immediate advertising
4. Quick and easy way to disseminate voter information on when, how and where to vote
Allows for the same message to be disseminated in a various media forms
5. Jingles (music brands) are effective ways to catch the attention of listeners and viewers

Disadvantages include³⁹

1. Mostly a one-way communication strategy. However, some activities like call in shows, round table debates do allow for two-way communication
2. Production and broadcast of media products is expensive, especially if broadcast during prime viewing or listening hours. Also radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) need to be broadcast at least 4 to 6 times a day to have an impact on the listener
3. Access to radio may be limited
4. Access TV is extremely limited

³⁹ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/...

Print Materials/Media

Advantages include:

1. Visual tools such as posters, stickers etc. can provide useful information for semi-literate and illiterate tools
2. Disseminate key messages and information at mass
3. Text materials - disseminate key voter information for literate community, especially people not able to participate in meetings
4. Multiplier effect - participants in direct activities can distribute materials to friends and family, etc.
5. Use as reference

Disadvantages include:

1. One way communication strategy
2. Specific materials needed to be developed for specific audiences
3. If not user tested, materials may not reflect the intended message or be too confusing for participants to understand
4. Should be viewed as a compliment to direct activities and not as a campaign on its own
5. Require a good distribution plan. Excess materials can mean posters; flyers are piled in offices unless accompanied with a good distribution plan
6. Poor readership and lack of interest

CHAPTER SEVEN: STRATEGY FOR THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF PRINT MATERIALS IN CVE

Print materials used to support CVE activities vary from visual tools to text heavy information to support the education of both literate and illiterate communities.

Visual Materials

Visual materials used for CVE activities include:

- 1. Brochures**
Brochures are advertising pieces containing pictures and information about a product or service. They are used to disseminate CVE information to the public/or target audience.
- 2. Posters**
Posters should disseminate one short message. The visual should explain the message as they mostly target illiterate or semi-literate audiences. You should be able to read the message within 10 to 30 seconds of looking at the poster.
- 3. Pamphlets/Flyers**
Flyers are a good medium for specific target audiences. For example, flyers for women or youth. Depending on literacy levels they can be a combination of both visuals and text.
- 4. Stickers**
Stickers are good for short messages and should be attractive, catchy and gimmicky.
- 5. Banners**
Banners play a similar role as posters, although normally produced on fabric. Banners can be used for larger signs and in more outdoor placement.
- 6. Bookmarks**
Bookmarks with slogans and messages can be distributed through public libraries, reading rooms, bookstores, schools, universities etc.
- 7. Calendars**
Calendars are a good means to disseminate voter education messages- they can be pocket size or a wall hanging variety.
- 8. Fact Sheets**
A fact sheet is not motivational but explains a law or regulation in a reader friendly language. Several fact sheets can be developed for your campaign, based on regulations and laws. For example, fact sheets on the election commission, candidates (who and how), agents and observers, voter registration, Election Day procedures, count process, how to lodge a complaint etc.

9. Books/Booklets

They remain the most effective medium for communicating complex messages. However, booklets should be appropriate for the target audience and not just a repeat of laws and regulations.

10. Flipchart/Manual

The flipchart is a visual tool, which contains detailed illustrations (images) and key messages to be discussed in face-to-face meeting. Simple instructions/ manuals should accompany the flipchart to facilitators on how to present the information and field the questions.

11. T-Shirts, Caps and Jackets

T-shirts, caps and jackets with slogans and messages can also be distributed at public places including school campuses, market places, bus stations, etc.

The Best Strategies for selecting the type of Print Materials for CVE

While it is true that radio and TV can reach the largest segment of target audiences rapidly and simultaneously, research indicates that participatory methods are the most effective tools for imparting knowledge about democratic processes and values. A combination of strategies can have the most influence. For example, when conducting direct face-to-face activities with the community, the distribution of materials such as posters, leaflets, stickers etc. should complement the activity and reinforce the key messages being disseminated. Plays or theatre events can be followed with a question and answer period and the distribution of print materials. A combination of activities reinforces the notion that information is best integrated when repeated and received from a variety of sources.⁴⁰

Graphic Design

The design of graphic is important for the dissemination of CVE. A graphic design is not only needed to ensure that the message is clear, but also that product is attractive and captures the attention of the audience. Graphic design and visual products should be developed with target audiences in mind.

If the target audience is predominantly illiterate, then you should ensure that all visuals display the message without words. If the target audience is youth, it should ensure that the visuals are appealing and appropriate for youth. The location or posting of materials will also determine the message and style of the material.⁴¹

Brand Identity

CVE materials are always stronger and have a greater impact if there is a campaign identity to the product. This is often created through developing a slogan, a logo, and specific visuals. Your logo and slogan should be your brand and included on all communications to create awareness among the public about your organization. It is important for the brand identity to be linked to the voter

⁴⁰ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁴¹ Ibid

process. For example, some successful slogan are “your vote, your future”, “every vote makes a difference”.⁴²

Process of Developing a Product⁴³

The process of developing CVE materials requires time and skills. Hence, the development of every material should involve the following steps:

1. Create a general idea about the material you want to produce
2. Think about specific message that is of importance to our audience
3. Artwork for the message
4. User testing of both message and artwork
5. Finalizing of each material
6. Production of the material and
7. Distribution of the material

It is therefore importance that the development of materials should not be done at the last minute.

It is important to remember that they should:

1. Conform to appropriate standards in regard to content and performance
2. Be designed against the set objectives of the program and it should be ensured that they are able/appropriate to achieve these objectives
3. Be appropriate for target audience, for use in the field⁴⁴

When developing specific materials for CVE activities the following factors need to be considered:

1. Cost of production (time, money and people)
2. Cost of distribution (time, money and people)
3. Geographical coverage
4. Language and literacy
5. Ease of distribution
6. Frequency of exposure of voters to the message (how often will the voter see or hear the message)
7. Target audience
8. What resources (human and materials) are needed? Does your organization have access to these resources⁴⁵

To ensure that all CVE materials have been developed appropriately, you should ask the following questions about each material:

1. Who is the target audience?
2. What is the key message?
3. Is the message clear?
4. Is the message attractive to the target audience?
5. Does this poster/ flipchart, etc. get the message across effectively?

⁴² Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid

6. What devices were used to deliver this message?
7. Does it meet the principals of universality and neutrality?⁴⁶

Delivery Method⁴⁷

Key factors to be considered in setting up the delivery of the CVE

1. Budgeting
2. Staffing
3. Training
4. Design and procurement of the materials needed to support the CVE activities
5. Storage and distribution of materials

Budgeting⁴⁸

CVE programs require money, so much think technical how much each activity will cost. Before consideration can be given to ways of financing the CVE process, a budget has to be prepared. Preparing a budget for voter education campaign requires some understanding of the campaign that is to be implemented. Budgeting wisely involves knowing who you are targeting, not only for the purposes of the communication tools you will select, but also the size of your target audience. The number of people targeted, along with the methodology you use in your approach, will significantly impact how much a CVE process will cost. A typical budget will cover:

1. Staffing
2. Training events
3. Meetings (face-to-face meetings, seminars etc.)
4. Print materials (cost of production and distribution)
5. Media coverage materials (cost of production and distribution)
6. Transportation

When planning a budget, the following are some guidelines that should be used:

1. **Comprehensive** - has to cover all training financial activities (income and expenses)
2. **Realistic** - able to estimate financial allocation for training activity planning in one period. This principle supports the effectiveness and efficiency of the budget
3. **Contestable**: every budget must be able to be re-examined and re-evaluated in order to optimize training activity
4. **Transparent** - all information must be provided and accessible by all parties, in order to know the goals, results, benefits and any impacts of the budget allocated
5. **Specific time period**: planning and implementation, which covers a certain period, so the budget can be measured by reasonable targets
6. **Accountable**: financial controllers in organizations must be accountable to the organization and ultimately to the general public
7. **Participatory**: it is important to involve all CVE stakeholders in the budget management process, from planning to justification

⁴⁶ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

Staffing for Voter Education⁴⁹

In planning for CVE activities, the first step is the establishment of a staff team, no matter how small the project is. Where CVE activities are implemented, it is necessary to employ staff at short notice, for short periods of time, and to build a team out of a widely diversified group of individuals. The team is likely to be built around a small group of existing CVE facilitators. To overcome potential problems and to ensure that the staff is up and running as quickly as possible, there has to be a careful definition of job descriptions and choice of suitable candidates. Recruitment procedures and trainings on materials will have to be well planned. The teams created are likely to consist of full-time, temporary, and voluntary staff, who require strong management and supervision. Staffing for the program: staff / voter education facilitators can either be drawn from the NGO, or be recruited.⁵⁰

When recruiting ensure that the following components are covered:

1. Know the available budget
2. Know the positions to be filled, numbers needed to be recruited
3. Timetable for the recruitment process
4. Cultural and linguistic prerequisite for each position
5. Gender policy to be considered

Staff should include

1. Administrative staff (including monitors)
2. Materials development team
3. Creative team for design of CVE materials (all CVE practitioners involved with the production of materials should hire professional graphic artists to do quality job)
4. NEC should establish a graphic design contest among students to produce CVE materials with inspiring messages. This will enhance the ability of students and open up their knowledge based about CVE program in Liberia
5. CVE facilitators to implement outreach activities
6. Media experts

A key factor in establishing a team is the consideration of the most suitable persons for the various positions in terms of being appropriate to the target audience. Experts and academics are not necessarily the best voter education facilitators.

Training of CVE Facilitators⁵¹

The training of facilitators is a key component in the CVE process. Facilitators should be familiar with the information and have the necessary skills and approach in interacting with the audience and keeping them motivated and interested. They should be well trained on the use of the education materials, namely flipcharts and manuals, etc.

⁴⁹ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

Well-prepared and detailed training is essential. If CVE facilitators disseminate incorrect information or are not prepared, they can compromise the credibility of the campaign. CVE facilitators who lack knowledge and/or inspiration and fail to engage their target audiences have little success in transmitting information about democratic processes and in encouraging people to participate effectively in the election process.

Production and Procurement of Materials⁵²

The design and production of materials needs to be carefully planned and implemented. For example, flipcharts and manuals need to be designed; user tested, finalized and printed by the time CVE facilitators start their face-to-face campaign.

All stages of material development need to be included in the operational plan. These include the following:

1. Planning – what messages and materials
2. Design - preparing the actual messages and visuals (followed by user testing)
3. Production - preparation by printers
4. Storage - Complete
5. Distribution - Complete
6. Bidding

Factors to consider when designing and producing materials include:

1. Varieties and quantities of print and media products needed. This should be determined by the target audience, the strategy, the budget, etc.
2. Deadline date for the design and production
3. What facilities are accessible for the production of print and media materials, will they be done internally or commissioned.
4. Identifying printers and media production houses. This includes preparation of contracts and timelines from contracting to production of final product.

Production of materials requires preparing contracts with printers. When entering into contracts, a letter of agreement that includes the following should cover all commissions:

1. The terms of the agreement
2. The product specs
3. The deadlines that must be adhered to
4. The manner in which any disputes and faults will be attended to
5. Quality of materials

Storage and Distribution of Materials⁵³

There must be a distribution plan for each product produced. Also, sufficient time must be allocated for the delivery and distribution of materials. The emphasis tends to be focused on the production phases and the project. If materials do not arrive in time for the specific occasion, then

⁵² Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁵³ Ibid

the entire undertaking has been for nothing. The amount of time required for distribution will depend upon the challenges associated with getting materials to their ultimate destination, the number of materials to be distributed, and the number of people assisting in the distribution process.

Effective distribution plans will prevent the possibility of materials accumulating in a warehouse or in an office and ensure sufficient material for the entire campaign. The distribution plan must also ensure that messages and materials are disseminated at the appropriate time of the campaign.⁵⁴

Developing an Operational Plan and Timeline⁵⁵

The Operational Plan

All voter education campaigns need to be carefully planned and implemented in a timely and efficient manner. In order to do this an operational plan is needed which presents the various components of the campaign within a logical and chronological framework.

Following the development of the main operational plan, it is recommended to develop more specific operational or project plans for each aspect of the program. Project plans will determine:

1. What needs to be done?
2. Who has to do it?
3. When does it need to be done?
4. How much does it cost?
5. Where will it be done?

Timelines⁵⁶

Every election has a timetable. While CVE program may be an ongoing process, there will be an occasion when an election is declared and a date set. All stakeholders in the CVE process should have a calendar of election milestones and tailor their program to accommodate these dates. With this in mind, it is important to plan the content of your activities to be in line with the time available for voter education. This requires good planning and preparation in advance of the start of your actual CVE process which include activities such as recruitment, training, material preparation and direct outreach activities etc. Ideally, the election calendar should be fixed prior to the initiation of the voter education program; this will not always be possible.

Timelines should include the following steps:

1. Design of the program
2. Recruiting of staff
3. Training of staff
4. Design of messages and materials
5. User-test sample messages and materials
6. Production of finalized materials - both print and media products
7. Distribution of print and media products
8. Implementing of CVE activities according to phases.

⁵⁴ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

Once the overall voter education strategic plan is in place, delivery mechanisms to implement the campaign need to be established.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the CVE Program⁵⁷

In order to assess whether the CVE process has achieved its intended outcomes, a monitoring and evaluation program is needed. By implementing monitoring plans and evaluating outcomes you can:

1. Determine if messages and strategies have had the desired impact and were able to produce results
2. Determine what strategies and messages were effective and which were not
3. Ensure accountability to stakeholders through achieving desired indicators
4. Learn from disciplined reflection on the experience of the program on what further work may be necessary

However, monitoring and evaluation should not be left to the end of your campaign. Built in ongoing monitoring that will enable you to confirm voter education facilitators are:

1. Conducting activities according to the plan
2. Using the content of the materials
3. Maintaining the standards of impartiality and neutrality in their activities
4. Able to adapt the messages to specific target audiences
5. Using the participatory method of communication
6. Distributing print materials
7. It also enables you to assess if voters and participants are interested and understand the materials, and messages, and take them home with them after an activity. One should assess if voters feel that they have received sufficient information

It is also recommended, that after each face-to-face activity, the CVE facilitator asks the participants to complete an evaluation form. This form will assess the performance of the CVE facilitator and provide information on the understanding and effectiveness of the activity.

For effective monitoring and evaluation to take place, you need to:

1. Set clear objectives
2. Ensure that monitoring and evaluation systems, including impact assessment indicators, are agreed upon and introduced in the early stages of program
3. Be aware of the need for the CVE facilitators to see and value the benefits of conducting impact assessment. Otherwise, there is a real danger of simply adding another evaluation burden onto voter education facilitators
4. Ensure that a commitment to learning and practice improvement guides the process
5. Ensure that there is a mix of qualitative and quantitative information
6. Commit to viewing the monitoring and assessment process as part of CVE, ensuring that the knowledge that is acquired benefits both the CVE program and the donors

⁵⁷ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

Monitoring does not take place in a vacuum. Integral to it is ongoing and regular reporting. Reporting is important to:

1. Monitor and record progress of the project
2. Evaluate the level of the performance of the staff
3. Ensure costs are in line with the budget
4. Keep track of output and results – e.g. number of participants taught
5. Serve as a source of information for future projects and grants
6. Ensure the highest quality of voter education facilitator’s performance
7. Create a system of checks and balances to ensure fairness
8. Provide the donor with an update on how funds are being used
9. Highlight achievements and share lessons learned

In order for effective reporting to take place, specific reporting templates must be designed. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will enable you to highlight best practices and lessons learned. At the end of the CVE, and part of your final report, you should always make recommendations for a future CVE process.

Finally, remember it is important to archive all your materials in an organized and user-friendly manner⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ Voter education toolkit, www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Secimler/3/Dosyalar/

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