

VOICE International

A Quarterly Global Magazine for Voter Information, Communication & Education

A VoICE.NET Publication

Global Knowledge Network on Voter Education ... *Learning from each other*

Best Practices Innovations and Initiatives for **ENHANCING VOTER PARTICIPATION**



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MESSAGE

Election Commission of India is delighted to place into your hands the ninth issue of 'VoICE International', whose launch happily coincides with the 4th General Assembly of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) being held in Bengaluru, India.

Democratic form of government has over the centuries evolved into **THE** system of governance in the world, with around two third of humanity living under democratic order. Around 68 percent countries numbering 112 today are electoral democracies. The day might not be far off when the entire civilized world is covered by this form of government. To achieve that end, the existing democratic nations should play a crucial role in carrying the torch of democratic ethos to the left out parts of the world.

The most common factor that distinguishes a democracy from an autocracy is the occurrences of free, fair and popular elections at regular intervals. Over a period of time, Election Management today has become a multifaceted discipline requiring sound domain knowledge, imaginative initiatives and multilevel interventions.

The 'VoICE International' quarterly and VoICE Net portal (voicenet.in), grew out of the New Delhi Declaration (2016) adopted by 25 Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and multilateral organizations at an international conference held on October 19-21, 2016. At present, it has 30 active members and numerous associates across the world including EMBs and reputed international organizations. It acts as a repository of information, ideas, expertise and experience pertaining to electoral management.

It is hoped that this publication (portal) evolves as the magazine of entire A-WEB community, and become a dynamic idea-exchange platform on domain knowledge, expertise and experience on elections in order to strengthen democratic ethos.

I also congratulate Mr Umesh Sinha, Editor-in-Chief of VoICE International and Executive Secretary VoICE.NET and his entire team, Mr S D Sharma, Senior Fellow at the ECI and Adviser, Dr. Aarti Aggarwal, Associate Editor, the entire Editorial Board and the Advisory Board of VoICE International from the Member Countries and International Expert Organisations.

Sunil Arora

Chief Election Commissioner
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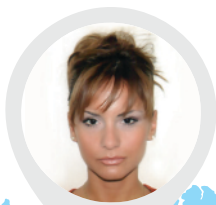
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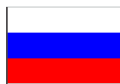
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KINGDOM
OF TONGA



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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

It is a matter of great pride that VoICE International is being released during the General Assembly of A-WEB conference being hosted by Election Commission of India. At present VoICE International is progressing ahead in the third year of its journey on the path of global experience and knowledge sharing in voter education. This Issue brings to you innovation, initiatives and 'Best Practices for Enhancing Voter Participation' from different EMBs and international institutions of excellence from across the world.

Universal adult suffrage, inclusion of all categories of voters; free, fair and transparent elections are the basic features that determine the health of a democracy. Expanding democracy through maximization of elector registration, healthy and clean electoral rolls followed by deepening of democracy through informed, inclusive and ethical participation in the poll are the key elements of an electoral process. But the process faces barriers expressed in terms of issues and challenges that vary. Election Management Bodies in different democracies have addressed these challenges through voter education, innovation, new initiatives including integration of state-of-the-art technology, development of tried, tested and accepted best practices for enhancing voter participation. International institutions of excellence have supported and strengthened this innovation through continued research and value addition.

The Issue brings to you a very rich experience on the subject from different countries such as Georgia, Russia, IFES (Ukraine), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Nepal, Tunisia and other countries. We, in India, have recently conducted General Election 2019. Marked with robust innovation, new initiatives and state-of-the-art technologies, it is my privilege to share this experience with you through a set of comprehensive articles in the Issue. Further, the Issue also brings to you election updates and several other related readings of interest from across the world. I am sure the readers would gain from this experience and knowledge sharing and find them relevant for addressing the issues and challenges in fulfillment of their mandate for free and fair elections. I take this opportunity to convey my special thanks to Hon'ble Mr. Branko Petrić, President, Central Election Commission of the BiH for sparing his valuable time and sharing his thoughts on issues and challenges in conduct of elections in the form of an interview. I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors from member EMBs and international organizations for their active support.

I dedicate this issue to the cause of 'Strengthening of Electoral Democracies' through continued innovation, initiatives and best practices'.

Lastly, through this issue, I would also like to announce that the next issue to be launched in the month of December, 2019 is focused on the topic 'Innovative Methods for Registration of all Categories of Voters' and look forward to early contributions on the subject.

Best Wishes,

Umesh Sinha,

Executive Secretary, VoICE.NET and
Editor-in-Chief, VoICE International

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Dear Readers...

Bhutan

Thanks for sharing VoICE International Vol.III with the members including Election Commission of Bhutan. We are learning so much from the experiences, innovations and initiatives taken by different member countries and the improvement brought by these methods to the system and of course to the voters at large. Though we could not contribute any experiences in this forum, we are doing every possible initiatives within the electoral laws. We would sincerely like to thank you for sharing every new experiences and innovations with us.

I would like to suggest you that if there is any possibility of ECI, organizing a meeting/seminar for the members who are new to orient them how to go about. I am a new person taking up this responsibility from my organization; don't feel comfortable when I could not contribute anything to this noble imitative. Therefore, I look forward to attending a seminar/ workshop on this.

Phub Dorji
Head of Department
Department of Civic and Electoral Training

Ecuador

Thank you very much for your email. I take this opportunity to inform you that Ms. Nubia Villacís no longer presides over the CNE, and Mr. Diego Zambrano has been designated as the new member secretary. I will send you his picture along with the contribution for the next issue of the magazine.

Malawi

Thank you for the invitation. I wish to inform you that the head of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) is Sammy Alfandika, Chief Elections Officer. You should therefore send the invitation letter accordingly. We look forward to joining the two global knowledge networks.

Sammy Alfandika
Chief Elections Officer

Republic of Korea

My name is Luke Butcher from the National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea.

Firstly thank you for both the kind invitation to be part of VoICE International and to be part of IIIDEM programs.

As you may well know, the A-WEB General Assembly is being held in Begaluru by the ECI in September, we are excited to be participating. Our Chairperson will be attending, and after the meeting he will fly to New Delhi to meet with the Korean embassy about overseas voting.

I wondered if he could also visit the IIIDEM while he was in New Delhi? I think it would be appropriate to discuss our possible future membership in VoICE international and to learn about IIIDEM programs as well. He could visit the IIIDEM offices on September 6th morning (Friday). Would that be possible? We would be very grateful and I think it could help build a future partnership with ourselves and IIIDEM and VoICE.

Luke Butcher

*Administration and International Affairs Division
National Election Commission (NEC) of the
Republic of Korea*

Palestine

Many thanks for your email and our apology for the late reply.

We look forward to be a member of VoICE.NET and I can be the coordinator for this.

Looking forward to seeing you in the upcoming A-WEB General Assembly.

All the best,

Ashraf
Deputy CEO

Timor-Leste

The National Commission for Elections (CNE) of Timor-Leste send warm greetings to the members of Elections Commission of India and Voice.NET team. We hope find you well with this email. Regarding to the invitation letter from Mr/Mrs. Aarti Aggarwal; Associate Editor, VoICE. International, Elections Commission of India to CNE Timor-Leste, received 2 August 2019 by email, we would like to inform that we from National Commission for Election of Timor-Leste accept to become a new members of VoICE.NET, according to the decision of CNE members meeting today, 7 August 2019.

CNE Timor-Leste pleased to joint and involved as a member of VoICE.NET activities in the present and prior, as a form to enrich Electoral Democracy activities in Asia and the beyond. For this reason, we send details of the CNE Timor-Leste Chairman, H.E. Mr. Alcino de Araujo Baris, and please send the official letters as soon as possible with the complete details information of VoICE.NET to H.E. Chairman of CNE Timor-Leste. Thank you for your kind cooperation and Collaboration.

Evangelino de Jesus Fatima

*National Director of CNE, for Public Relation,
Cooperation and Plenary Affairs*

Kingdom of Tonga

Yesterday at a Meeting of the Electoral Commission of the Kingdom of Tonga it was RESOLVED that our Commission accept membership of VoICE NET and VoICE INTERNATIONAL and a very senior member of our staff Mrs Vake BLAKE was directed to be our secretariat for co-ordination with VoICE.

Rt. Hon. Lord Dalgety Q.C.
*Chairman
Electoral Commission
Kingdom of Tonga*

Best Practices, Innovations and Initiatives for Enhancing Voter Participation

The field of elections is not a fixed area but rather subject to changes and transformations especially for countries in transition. This field is being constantly advanced, enriched with new tools and techniques thanks to modern technologies, though, also due to modern technologies, its integrity is being compromised in some ways in some countries by different actors.

In fact, adopting innovations require certain level of openness, expertise, cooperation with key electoral stakeholders and readiness to take risk and try out different possibilities which advanced technology or simply promotional event may bring. Therefore with regard to being proactive and innovative, Election Administration (EA) of Georgia has been at the forefront of it, pushing forward and running various campaigns and projects to reach out to Georgian citizens in the country and outside its boundaries.

By running a number of projects and initiatives through the use of modern technologies and not limited to, the Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) gradually has been targeting different segments and boosting its number and the degree of its involvement. One of the successful innovative projects promoting voter participation in the electoral process due to its unique angle and approaches to attract people among different age groups and of different cultural backgrounds residing in different parts of Georgia, is discussed thoroughly below.



Electoral Development School

*Electoral Development School*

As youth's disengagement in the elections remained a prevalent issue which was also frequently reported in many surveys, the EA decided to address it. As a result of hard work, the EA was given International Electoral Award 2013 by International Center for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) for the information-educational project 'First Voter' implemented for the development of young voters' electoral culture.

Since then, EA wanted to establish a center solely focused on elections by bringing together many young people from every corner of Georgia. This wish came true after launching one of the most successful and

innovative educational projects 'Electoral Development School' in 2015. Though the project was launched in 2015, it has been expanding and gradually occupying the whole country.

So what exactly this school is about? First of all, it targets the youth aged 18-24 including the first-time voters and familiarizes them with key topics in the field of elections. Then, its scale covering the whole country and the involvement of ethnic minorities and internally displaced people, as well as people living in border regions/municipalities along with the rest of people are worth underlining.

Further, it not only raises youth awareness about the elections but also helps successful graduates to be hired at CEC and DEC. By doing so, CEC motivates young people to become active citizens, possibly get hired by EA or other electoral stakeholders as it was the case or simply make an informed choice.

Moreover, EA set a goal to reach out to all voters and ensure citizen engagement in elections throughout Georgia. To do so, the CEC launched the initiative in 2017, which aimed at removing any barriers between EA and voters and receiving first hand information from people about their needs

*Electoral Development School*

and ideas something was never done before. This time, voters could approach and talk to EA representatives about urgent electoral matters, procedures, learn more about upcoming elections, its specifics, and also fill up opinion card collected then by EA to consider them for improvements. The EA representatives discussed thoroughly with people about electoral rights, the role of voters in the electoral process, the specifics of elections and handed out informational cards. It comes as no surprise that CEC has received International Electoral Award 2017 in Citizen Engagement for this very innovative project 'Talk to Voters'. Here again, the EA did not stop at it, and in 2018 widened the scope and area of implementation by reaching out to Georgian citizens residing abroad. Through 'Talk to Voters', out-of-country voters received information about Election of President of Georgia 2018 and innovative services EA applies to simplify electoral procedures.

As part of 'Talk to Voters' project, a promotional event 'Find Yourself – Find Your Polling Station' held in Tbilisi and in regions, is worth mentioning. EA representatives helped voters to verify their personal data in the Unified List of Voters including locations of their polling stations using various gadgets. And precisely in 2018, for the first time, a new initiative was introduced. The first-time voters received a letter from the CEC Chairperson sent to their registration address to motivate them to vote, as well as inform them about electoral rights and the importance of each vote.

When we speak about all voters, services targeting Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are worth noting. Over the years, EA has worked closely with key electoral stakeholders locally and globally to ensure effective and successful services.

So what are the services available to PwDs in all polling stations:

- for blind voters – tactile ballot guide
- for visually impaired voters – magnifying sheet
- for deaf, hearing impaired and beneficiaries of support - poster displaying voting procedures
- for voters with limited mobility (wheelchair users) – special polling booth at adapted polling stations.

And importantly, CEC Call Center Operators can provide election-related information to deaf and hearing impaired voters in sign language through a video call, a significant addition since 2018. The CEC website was among the first if not the first institution to adapt its website to the needs of blind and visually impaired people in Georgia.

In 2019, CEC workers' hard work and openness to innovations paid off and CEC received Innovative Practice 2019 Award, a major victory among organizations focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. More precisely, in the framework of initiative (the Zero Project) of the Austrian organization - Essl Foundation, the CEC was



Blind Voter Entering Polling Station

awarded the nomination in 'Innovative Practice' for implementation of a successful policy in the Election Administration of Georgia, namely, for the introduction of tactile ballot guide for blind voters.

There are other projects and campaigns to name but when it comes to innovations and voter participation, the ones noted above deserve special mentioning as they have been recognized as change-makers internationally and locally.

In fact, the voter awareness is best achieved when it starts at young age prompting the youth to make an informed choice. Moreover, the inclusion of all groups including PwDs indicates that everybody participates in the democratic process. Also, it is widespread when different government agencies loose contact with their electorate at times, though, EA is an independent body operating in line with Constitution of Georgia and Election Code, yet, it is still part of huge government machinery which means building bridges between the institution and people is essential for any country and especially in countries still being in the midst of democratic transition.

In this light, Election Administration is and will continuously act innovatively and develop initiatives oriented toward the improvement of the electoral environment by engaging all members of Georgian society in the elections. And by doing so, it will draw voters of all ages and cultural backgrounds, and support growing a new generation of active and highly responsible citizens precisely through the projects outlined above.



Kristina Tolordava
CEC, Georgia

Promo event - Ambrolauri



Promo event - Borjomi



Promo event-Mestia





Best Practices, Initiatives, Innovations for Enhancing Voter Participation : An Overview of Indian Experience

General Elections 2019 in world's largest democracy by electorate concluded on time with declaration of results to the 17th Lok Sabha (The House of People) of India in last week of May 2019. The election that engaged about 910 million electorate at over 1.036 million polling stations across the country, was delivered to the nation in seven phases from 18th March to 19th May, 2019 with a voter turnout of 67.47%, the highest ever turnout for the Lok Sabha election in India. Termed as a 'Mega Festival of Democracy' the election goes into the history as the largest electoral exercise in the world.

What was unique about the General Election (GE) 2019, was a quantum jump in electoral participation. In all 76 million additional electors had registered, almost 100,000 new polling stations were added and 613 million voters cast their vote in comparison with the General Election 2014 that had 834 million electors spread over 0.93 million polling stations in the country and a voter turnout at 66.44%.

More than the achievement in terms of numbers; efficiency, and efficacy of electoral delivery systems for enhanced participation was the focus. Targeted interventions for all categories of voters through multimedia under Systematic Voter Education and electoral Participation (SVEEP), new



initiatives, innovation, including integration of technology helped us at the ECI to move on the right track for fulfillment of cherished twin goal as per ECI's premise 'No Voter to be Left Behind', 'Every Vote Counts' in line with the constitutional mandate.

In this article, I would like to share the Best Practices, Initiatives, and Innovations developed, adopted and used by us at the ECI, for enhancing voter participation in GE2019.

Mapping of Electoral Roll

Ensuring a healthy Electoral Roll is the very bedrock of our Election Process.

Commission's ERONET brings in seamless processing of forms, structured easy handling of the databases, regular and simpler way of monitoring the ERs activities to maintain the ERs health.

The system is IT driven and has three major components:

Unified National Photo Electoral Roll (UNPER)

It is a combination of demographical information, personal particulars and a photograph of Elector for the entire nation and includes a mechanism to remove multiple entries by braining it to the knowledge of appropriate authority.

National Voter Service Portal (NVSP) provides single window services

ECI launched IT driven powerful National Voters' Service Portal (NVSP) on January 25, 2015 as a single window service to electors at <http://www.nvsp.in>. Entire electoral roll data of the country for about 910 million voters along with over one million Polling stations has been brought under this umbrella portal to provide user friendly services to citizens. Users can click on the NVSP link for the following services:

- Search the name in Electoral List
- Apply online in English/ Hindi Language for new registration.
- Apply online for corrections, if any.
- User can view details of his Polling booth, Assembly Constituency and Parliamentary constituency.
- User can get the contact details of Booth Level officer, Electoral Registration Officer and other Election officer.
- Users can get link to CEO offices websites
- Users can view audio visual short films to get educated about election processes. Audio Visual scripts are also available for getting to know about the polling processes.

Photo Electoral Rolls and Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPIC)



The country had gone to polls with Photo Electoral Rolls for the first time in 2009. By now, all the States and UTs have Photo Electoral Rolls (PERs). Photographs of 99.72% electors stand included in the rolls. With the intention of preventing impersonation at polls, the Commission provides Electoral Photo Identity cards (EPICs) to all electors. EPIC contains particulars of the elector like name, father's/mother's/husband's name, date of birth/ age on the qualifying date, sex, address and most importantly, the photograph of the elector. EPIC serves as a valid I card –cum- address proof and valid identity to vote in elections as well.

Distribution of Photo Voter Slips to voters

Official voter's slip bearing the Photograph of the elector were distributed prior to the date of poll to all voters. A close monitoring of the distribution process was done by the DEO and General Observer. Voter slips are in the languages in which electoral roll is published for an Assembly Constituency. The Commission has laid special emphasis on systematic, efficient and timely distribution of the Photo Voter Slips through Booth Level Officers. A well designed system of distribution and monitoring thereof has also been brought in place to obviate any misuse.

Providing Online Service voter registration and ETPBS facility

Online voter registration facility was provided for enhancing voter registration especially from service voters. ETPBS was used for transmitting postal ballot electronically for service voters to facilitate their participation.

Initiatives and Best Practices for Enhancing Inclusive Participation

Drawing support from the constitutional mandate and legislative framework, ECI, works on the premise of 'No Voter to be Left



Braille Voter Slip - Model Polling Station- Machilipatnam (Hyny High School)
Date: 11- 04- 2019
Time: 03: 26 PM

Behind': a perfect intent for inclusive and accessible elections. ECI's commitment to free, fair and credible elections with integral features such as universal suffrage, inclusive, accessible, informed and ethical participation has driven innovation and new initiatives right from inception. Some of the important initiatives are discussed herein.

A comprehensive program for Voter Awareness & Education

Systematic Voter Education and Participation (SVEEP), the flagship voter education programme of ECI, that started as an exercise for information, motivation and facilitation campaign in 2009, has evolved into is a multi-intervention mega programme that reaches out to 910 million voters of the country.

SVEEP ensures targeted interventions for enhancing 'Inclusion' in voter registration and participation among all sections of society in pursuit of ECI's premise of 'No Voter to be Left Behind'. Focus areas include voter awareness, motivation, facilitation; voter apathy and electoral literacy for enhancing participation of women, PwD's, senior citizens, new and future voters, besides persons on duty etc.

Initiatives for Future and New Voters **Interactive School Engagement (ISE) Programme Developed**

The Interactive School Engagement (ISE) programme was developed and launched to target the future voters in schools to sensitize them about the electoral process in general and about the registration and voting procedure in particular. It was carried out as a part of run-up to the National Voters' Day 2017 which had the theme 'Empowering Young and Future Voters'. Total of more than 5.7 million students in 28 thousand schools were covered.

National Elections Quiz (NEQ) 2018 Organized

As part of ECI's theme for the year 2017- 'Empowering Young and Future Electors', we organized the National Elections Quiz, a knowledge outreach venture for the youth (school students of classes IX to XII) on elections and electoral processes. The Quiz started with the District Round followed by the State Round (organized by the CEOs) and the Zonal and National Finals. NEQ covered themes including- Elections in India, History of Democracies and Elections, Voting Processes, Voter education and literacy, National Voters' Day to Electoral Technology, Model Code of Conduct. NEQ 2018 witnessed a participation of about 1.4 million students from over 38,000 schools across the country staking a claim to being the World's Largest Quiz on Elections.

Setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs in Schools, Colleges & Communities

“ Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”
- Benjamin Franklin

Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through curricular and extracurricular interventions

in schools and colleges has been an important agenda under Strategic Action Plan for enhancing participation among new voters and preparing the future voters. ELC project has been launched on the eve of NVD 2018 and envisages setting up of ELCs in all schools as per following categories:

- ELC Future Voters or Classes IX to XII
- ELC New Voters College, University and all other Educational Institutions.
- Chunav Pathshala: ELC in Communities for youth not covered under formal education system

Resources have been developed and made available to all CEOs for translation (in vernacular wherever required) and making available to Trainers/Educational Institutions etc.

Entire Programme is nonpartisan and neutral in nature. 488,000 ELCs including 44,194 VAFs have been already opened.

Setting up Voter Awareness Forums in every Government/ Non-Government organization

Voter Awareness Forums have been launched for voter education in organizations, institutions, Government offices for creating electoral awareness among employees. Resources have been developed for all these programmes, training, capacity building and monitoring are important areas for enhancing the outcomes. All these programmes have evoked keen interest among new and future voters.

Initiatives to Enhance Gender Participation

Gender equality is one of the important areas of attention in the electoral participation. Voter education programmes have focused at removal of gender gap in electoral participation. Based on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices survey targeted interventions are designed with a roadmap for intervention



down to the polling station level. Women specific campaigns for registration, cultural interventions, BLOs sensitization, women self help groups including government programmes infrastructure are involved for encouraging, motivating and facilitating women in enrollment and participation. Women specific cultural events, women icons at all levels as strategies are also included. Facilitation for women at polling stations has been enhanced to include inter alia separate queues for women and All Women Polling Stations.

Inclusion of PwDs for Accessible Elections

The subject was selected by the Commission as the National Voters' Day theme for 2018. The activities started with an International Conference on 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Electoral Processes' on January 24, 2018. National Consultation for Accessible Elections was organized with the stakeholders. Strategic Framework for Accessible Elections was presented and immediate facilitation measures such as Braille Printed EPICs, Disability data base in electoral rolls and linkage to transport facility and special facilitation for PwDs on polling day etc., were declared. 6.2 million PwD electors were identified and suitable arrangements made for their transport and comfortable access to the polling stations in General Elections 2019.

National Multi-Media Campaign reaches out

National Multi-Media campaign has been launched during the General Elections 2019 to strengthen the impact of SVEEP. The Campaign operated through national electronic media, both TV and Radio, social and digital media, major newspapers, cinema halls, outdoor media at airports and major railway stations. The campaign focuses on essential topics such as registration, voter verification, voter helpline, informed and ethical voting, inclusion, gender, service voters, overseas electors besides motivational messages.

National Voters' Day celebrated widely

NVD connects citizens with electoral processes down to the polling station level across the country. Started as a new initiative in 2011 on the eve of Diamond Jubilee celebrations, ECI dedicated its Foundation Day, January 25, to the cause of voters of the country especially the young and future voters. The day is celebrated as National Voters' Day. A rigorous exercise is taken up every year (i) to identify all eligible voters attaining the age of 18 as on ensuing January 1, in each polling station area of the country (ii) enroll them and (iii) hand over their Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) on NVD that is January 25. The initiative, aims at providing youth a sense of citizenship, empowerment and pride in electoral participation as also to inspire them for exercise of newly acquired franchise. Freshly eligible and registered voters are given a badge with slogan **"Proud to be a Voter – Ready to Vote"** and participants are administered a Pledge.

Community Radio Program connects all

ECI tried expanding its outreach by leveraging NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) Community Radio through a

series named **'Mat Evam Matdan, Karen Loktantra Ka Nirman'** from June to November 2017. This series on elections was a joint initiative of ECI and NIOS-CR where different aspects of elections and the election processes would be explored. Each of the one-hour episodes was aired monthly and incorporated interviews/ panel discussion with expert(s) along with small snippets of different creatives developed by ECI to spread awareness on importance of elections such as songs, jingles, audio/ video plays, statements by icons, advertisements etc.

VoICE.NET: A Knowledge Sharing Platform

Voter Information, Communication, Education Network(VoICE.NET) is a global network for sharing knowledge, resources and expertise on Voter Education. VoICE.NET was launched on October 20, 2016 at the International Conference on Voter Education for Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation held at New Delhi. The global knowledge network is a part of the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the Conference by the 25 Election Management Bodies and reputed international organizations like UNDP, International IDEA, IFES etc. At present it has 32 active members that include EMBs and reputed international organizations as also numerous associated across the world.

VoICE.NET has powerful global features such as Resources, Best Practices, Announcements and Calendar of Events as also the quarterly magazine 'VoICE International' and various Conference Readers with continuous updates on innovation and initiatives from across the world especially on voter education. VoICE.NET hosts a number of ongoing events, activities and publications also. VoICE.NET contents

are provided by the member EMBs/ Organisations, in-house research and practice.

Photographs of Candidates on Electronic Voting Machine (Ballot Paper)

Election symbols have been in vogue in elections right from the first election of 1951-52 in India. Symbols facilitate identification of candidates by the electors. The Commission observed that there are many cases where candidates with same or identical names contest in a constituency. This is rather confusing to the electors, notwithstanding the fact that the candidates would have different election symbols. It is also not unusual for persons with names similar to names of the leading candidates to enter the election fray to create confusion. The Commission decided and directed for addition of a photograph of all the candidates on the ballot papers in the year 2015.

Assured Minimum Facilities at Polling Stations (AMF)

Every polling station was equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) such as drinking water, shade, toilet, and ramp for PwDs, medical kit, adequate lighting, proper signage and a standard voting compartment etc.

Special Facilitation at Polling Stations

Facilitation centers were set up for voters near polling stations. Special Facilities were provided for PwDs, senior citizens and women to enhance their participation. It was ECI's endeavor to make voting a memorable experience for every voter.

Ensuring EVM and VVPAT Sensitisation

In all, 2.3 million Ballot Units, 1.6 million Control Units and 1.7 million VVPAT machines were deployed during 2019 GE.

Deployment of the machines is done under multilevel randomization through sophisticated software. Security protocols are scrupulously followed and closely monitored at all levels. A comprehensive voter education and awareness programme on use of EVM with VVPAT in all States/UTs was launched. Mobile vans were deployed to cover each and every village/hamlet to demonstrate and conduct mock polls using EVMs and VVPATs by the voters themselves.

Randomization in Deployment of Personnel

About 1.2 million personnel were deployed for managing elections across the country. The deployment is subjected to multilevel randomization through specially designed software for transparency.

Empowering Citizens and Stakeholders through ICT

ECI developed and operated a number of IT/ICT (Information and Communication Technology) driven services to enhance the speed and quality of electoral processes by using cloud technology, innovative user friendly interfaces and strong data bases. ECI operates numerous dynamic portals for various stakeholders - EROs, ECI officers, election observers, EVM managers, Presiding Officers, media and the people of this country.

Service to Voters only One Call Away

The Commission established a universal toll free Helpline number 1950 for the country for providing information related to elections, voting dates, EPIC, electoral roll, online registration or lodge a complaint. Voter education and voter awareness was also disseminated through this number. Voter Helpline App and PwD App (for Persons with Disabilities) were launched to provide comprehensive voter services through mobile phones.

cVIGIL

By using the cVIGIL app, citizens can record and promptly report violation of Model Code of Conduct, incidents of intimidation or inducement within minutes of having witnessed them. All one has to do is to simply click a picture or make a video and briefly describe the activity and upload it on the cVIGIL mobile app. cVIGIL provides time-stamped evidentiary proof of violation. The District Control Room allocates cVIGIL cases to the Flying Squads etc. through GIS-based platform. Flying Squads investigate the matter and the Returning Officer takes the decision. The status of complaint is shared with the complainant on App within 100 minutes.

Voter Helpline Mobile app: Provides convenience to all Citizens of finding names in the electoral roll, submitting online forms, checking the status of the application, filing complaints and receiving the reply on their mobile app. All forms, results, candidate affidavit, press notes, Voter awareness and important instructions are available through the mobile app. This popular app is available on Google Play Store.

PwD App: Eligible citizens/citizens in the category of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) can request for new registration, change in address, change in particulars and mark themselves as PwD through the use of the mobile application. By simply entering their contact details, a Booth Level Officer is assigned to provide doorstep facility to them. PwDs can also request for a wheelchair during polling. The app is available on Google Play Store.

Suvidha Candidate App: Contesting candidates can log on to the website

<https://suvidha.eci.gov.in> and request for permissions. Upon successful registration, an Android based Mobile app is available for tracking the status of nomination, status of their permission requests. The candidates will be able to download the application from Google Play store and with their registered mobile number will be able to log on and keep track of their applications.

Samadhan: ECI has designed an integrated web portal for registering and resolving citizen Information, suggestion, feedback and complaints (IFSC). The website can be accessed at <https://eci-citizenservices.eci.nic.in/>. The universal portal is available for election as well as non-election period, and any citizen can also use the facility from the convenience of their mobile phone to lodge a grievance using 'Voter Helpline' Mobile App. All the EROs, DEO, CEO and ECI Officials are connected into the Samadhan Portal and the complaint lodged in the Samadhan directly connects to concerned official. There is an escalation matrix configured into the system and if within a time frame the matter is not addressed by ERO, it gets escalated to the next level.

Voter Helpline Contact Centre: Now a citizen can call universal toll-free helpline number of Election Commission of India i.e. 1950 to connect directly to District Contact Centre. All Districts & CEO Office across all States / UTs have established Contact Centre to provide Information and register Feedback, Suggestions and Complaints. Any user can call 1950 and obtain information about his Voter details in the electoral roll, check for the status of his enrollment application and also lodge grievance.

IT APPs For Election Officials:

Observer App: Observer mobile app aids Observers in real-time to get all information about the Parliamentary / Assembly Constituency and send observation reports to ECI instantly and securely. All cVIGIL cases reported in their jurisdiction are available to General Observers, Expenditure and Police Observers and they can supervise and give their inputs too from the place of citing of cVIGIL incidence.

Suvidha: The application provides a robust single interface for candidates and political parties to apply and get permission for all campaign related activities in time bound manner and for ROs, DEOs, and CEOs for effective management and monitoring of Candidate Nomination, Candidate Affidavit filing, candidate/political parties permissions management, counting, and results display. New Suvidha also has complete decision support system for Returning Officers which includes Electoral Roll, Observers deployment plan, Polling Station details, Voter Slip distribution statistics and an interface to handle all complaints.

Sugam: The Election Commission of India has been using this application for Vehicle Management with the facility of Issuance of requisition letters for vehicles, Capturing of vehicle details with address, mobile number and bank details of Owner & Driver, Transfer of vehicles from one district to another district etc. It is to be used by CEOs as per requirements.

EVM Management System (EMS): One of the important modes to ensure a fair and transparent process in EVM management is the administrative protocol of randomization

of the machines before they are deployed in the Polling stations. This whole process is done in the presence of Political Parties'/Candidates representatives. The New EVM Management System will be used for randomization in addition to end to end inventory management.

Election Monitoring Dashboard: The online system for reporting the poll turnout in the parliamentary constituency and assembly constituency and incidents at the polling booth level. This will bring a single source of truth across the full managerial network across the Election Commission of India. The data is entered by the Returning Officer.

One-way Electronically Transmitted Postal

Ballot for Service Voters: All registered Service Voters are delivered e-postal ballot of their respective constituency through electronically transmitted postal ballot (ETPBS), which will be printed and after casting the vote will be sent back to Returning Officer by post.

EVM Tracking System

EVM Tracking entry application is developed for creating a centralized database for CU and BUs distributed across 36 states and UTs of India. It allows tracking of Control Unit and Ballot Unit and their location. This application has the facility to create and enter the warehouse details and stock entry of CU and BU. Transfer of CU and BU once entered will not require re-entry of data. It also keeps the check of duplicate entry of CU and BU in all the warehouses across the country.

General Election 2019 to 17th Lok Sabha

ECIs initiatives and innovation have provided rich dividend in terms of a quantum jump in electoral participation in the country from all

categories of voters in General Elections 2019. Let me share some of the areas of achievement as follows:

- At 67.47% voter turnout, General Election 2019 for 17th Lok Sabha witnessed the highest voter participation in the history of India. It eclipsed the previous turnout records of 66.44 % in 2014 and 58.19% in 2009.
- 613 million approximately Voters cast their vote in GE 2019, an increase of 58.9 million voters over GE 2014.
- The size of national electorate has grown to 909 million in 2019 from 834 million in 2014. This is an addition of over 74.6 million electors, of these 40.7 million are women and 33 million men electors.
- Targeted SVEEP interventions over these years have resulted in tremendous increase in female voter turnout as well. Women turnout stands at 66.79% as against 65.5% in 2014.
- Gender gap in GE 2019 has been

reduced to just 0.1 percentage point (Male TO at 66.89%) from 1.46 percentage point in 2014.

- 18 States/UT recorded higher women turnout percentage than men.
- 6.2 million Persons with Disabilities (PwD) electors were identified and suitable arrangements made for their transport and comfortable access inside polling station.
- Total postal ballots cast in 2019 are unprecedented 2.3 million.

Initiatives, innovations and integration of technology for enhancing electoral participation is a continuous process and we at the ECI are at it with our commitment to the mandate for 'No Voter to be Left Behind'.



Umesh Sinha

Senior Deputy Election Commissioner, ECI
Editor-in Chief VoICE International and
Executive Secretary, VoICE.NET

Indian Elections 2019 - Creatives



* Interim Data as on 30-05-2019



Assistive Digital Technologies in Russian Elections: Application Practices and Development Prospects

According to the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, about 11 percent (11.3 million) of citizens with active suffrage have a disability. More than a million of them require special facilities to exercise their voting rights. Attitude towards people with disabilities is the most important indicator of the maturity of a society, its consolidation, and vitality. I note that for many people with disabilities, participation in the election campaign is, unfortunately, one of the rarest opportunities so far to demonstrate not only their attitude to the political life of society, but also to take an immediate part in the formation of public authorities.

In this regard, the CEC of Russia is focused on the integrated complex development of assistive technologies in the electoral process as the basis of the electoral future. Over many years, only the problem of accessibility for the disabled persons to the surrounding physical environment was considered relevant. But today, the problem of the accessibility of the information environment is no less significant.



In recent years, the CEC of Russia has made great efforts to ensure the electoral rights of citizens with disabilities. It was an extremely difficult, but at the same time, a very useful experience for us. Its social significance is substantiated by statistics, according to which in the Russian Federation, in addition to citizens with disabilities, almost 30 million elderly citizens have hearing and vision impairments. Moreover, more than 2.5 million people with disabilities do not speak Russian.

In view of this, our electoral system is facing the challenge of finding new effective solutions to ensure the electoral rights of citizens with disabilities and to improve quality of the electoral process as a whole, including within the framework of the key tendency of modern world development - the widespread use of digital technologies in all social areas. The practice of using modern assistive digital technologies in the elections was no exception. I can say that today in Russia these technologies are already actively used in the electoral process within the framework of a number of projects (Mobile Voter, Environment without Borders, Accessible Environment, Road to the Polling Station), which are aimed at solving urgent implementation of the electoral rights of citizens with disabilities.



In 2017, in 20 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the Mobile Voter project was tested, which for the first time provided citizens with the opportunity to choose the most convenient polling station for voting within their region. In 2018, in the election of the President of Russia, the voter got the opportunity to choose a convenient polling station already throughout the country and even abroad. This mechanism was used by 7 million citizens. No doubt, Mobile Voter project was a significant step in creating a publicly accessible barrier-free space and allowed citizens with disabilities to choose the most convenient and accessible polling station to exercise their voting rights in a comfortable manner.

In the spring of the current year, the State Duma of the Russian Federation approved a bill on conducting an experiment on the organization and implementation of remote electronic voting, which will be implemented on September 8, 2019 at the elections of deputies of the Moscow City Duma.

According to the bill, the experiment is aimed at "expanding the possibilities of using active suffrage, increasing the degree of citizens' interest in participating in elections, as well as creating the most effective remote voting mechanisms." From a practical point of view, the experiment on organizing remote voting will allow the voter to vote remotely using a special online

service created at the regional portal MOS.RU, without using a paper ballot. Such a vote will be held in 3 out of 45 constituencies in Moscow.

At the same time, the traditional procedure in these voting districts during the experiment will also be preserved. I think that electronic voting can become an effective tool for the implementation of suffrage for citizens with disabilities, and the results of the experiment will help to identify prospects for further work on improving the electoral law and further development of digital technologies in the electoral process. This innovation is especially important for such a vast country as the Russian Federation. Thanks to the development of an accessible digital environment in elections, we have a unique opportunity to take into account the needs of various categories of voters - especially people with limited mobility and those with disabilities.

Speaking specifically about assistive digital technologies, it is worth noting that we have developed a whole line of specialized equipment and software, which is currently already used to build a digital electoral environment in elections. I would like to mention just a few examples of the development of assistive digital technologies in elections in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation:



- At the elections in the Novosibirsk region, an interactive information stand is used at polling stations, that are designed for citizens with hearing and vision impairment and wheelchair users. This device is unique in that it is adapted for three categories of people with disabilities. Information is available for deaf citizens in Russian sign language - a computer translation is carried out by an animated doll, and it is duplicated with subtitles; for blind and visually impaired persons - with the help of text read out loudly and of overlays made in Braille. A deaf-and-blind person can connect to a Braille display, and those who use hearing aids will receive information through an induction loop, which can also be connected to the device. The module is also suitable for wheelchair users - the height of the monitor and the angle of the screen are adjustable.
- In addition, tactile audio-visual modules are used at a number of polling stations in the Novosibirsk Region, in which two functional schemes are combined (a polling station and a special stencil for filling out the ballot paper by voters with visual impairment); and relief-graphic, large-font formats (with elements of full-color flat and 3D printing). The module is equipped with an induction loop (for voters with hearing impairment). A source of constant light is laid around the perimeter of the module, providing additional diffused lighting.
- In a number of election commissions (for example, in the Volgograd region, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug - Ugra), polling stations used online sign language services, which were provided remotely using mobile communications



and Internet technologies. In the Kaliningrad region, online hearing services were used by people with hearing impairments who visited Multifunctional Centers for the Provision of State and Municipal Services to submit applications for voting at the location (as part of the Mobile Voter project). This practice demonstrated its effectiveness and was highly appreciated by deaf voters.

- At elections in the Yaroslavl region, in St. Petersburg, and in a number of other constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the Talking Polling Station project was implemented. The voting room was provided with special equipment for the blind. During their stay at the polling station, a visually impaired or blind person received a special device - a radio informant, which provided sound accompaniment that helps to navigate to the location of members of the election commission, booths and ballot boxes. Due to this assistive technology, the visually impaired persons obtained the opportunity not only to reach the polling station, but also to correctly find the entrance to the building, navigate inside the building, and receive a ballot using voice prompts on the radio informant.

Thanks to the tactile marking, the visually impaired persons could independently find the voting booth, while the audiovisual devices and Braille tactile means allowed themselves to vote for the candidate and then leave the premises.

In the future, we plan to develop specialized digital services not only for voters with disabilities but also people with limited mobility. The digital environment of the future will be able to combine individual information platforms designed for each of the groups of participants in the electoral process - for voters, election commission staff, candidates, observers, volunteers - through the developed multimodal cloud platform. In particular, with the use of a dynamic QR code to encrypt information, it is already possible to produce appropriate posters, invitations, video clips about elections, taking into account needs of our voters.

Equally urgent is the work on equipping polling stations with specialized multifunctional information terminals for people with disabilities, equipped with a tactile keyboard for audio and sign-navigation through digital content about the elections, as well as with the possibility of video communication with dispatch centers, a built-in induction loop, secure WiFi space and dynamic QR codes.

It is worth re-stating that the electoral sphere seems no less important and significant than other spheres of the life of our voters, especially those with health restrictions. Moreover, these areas should be considered comprehensively, purposefully developing them not in isolation, but the whole rehabilitation industry on the basis of



assistive digital technologies. For example, it is necessary to think through in detail the functionalities that may be useful to voters with disabilities in the elections, as well as to look for technological possibilities to combine them with those functionalities that will be useful to them in their daily life.

Each person with a disability should be able to take advantage of a number of tools: to directly vote at a polling station, outside the polling station, or using new information technologies.

A multifunctional voting system will expand the capabilities of citizens with disabilities in the exercise of their voting rights.

Thus, the electoral system of the Russian Federation continues to be in constant technological search for new effective solutions that should ensure inclusive voting and availability of digital environment in the era of the progressive development of information technologies.



Nikolay Levichev
Central Election Commission
Russian Federation



Young Ukrainian Leaders Educate Peers about the Electoral Process

According to public opinion surveys conducted by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in Ukraine, less than half (47 percent) of young Ukrainians say they have enough practical knowledge about the electoral process. This information gap includes a lack of knowledge on how and where to vote as well as critical information about voter registration. To address this challenge and encourage more youth participation in elections, in early March 2019, IFES launched a voter education campaign targeting young Ukrainians with a focus on first-time voters. Before the presidential election, 16 student coordinators participated in a comprehensive two-day training that equipped them with the knowledge, skills and tools to organize voter education activities for their peers. Led by electoral and

civic education experts, student coordinators learned how to conduct interactive lectures, mock election exercises and quiz games for their fellow students ahead of the 2019 presidential election in Ukraine. The coordinators were selected from partner universities that implement IFES' innovative, semester-long civic education course, Democracy: From Theory to Practice.

"When I stood in front of the audience and said we were going to have a lecture on the electoral process, everyone thought that it would be something boring," said Volodymyr Kapusta, a student coordinator at Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University of Kharkiv. "But when you start a lecture, brain ring [interactive quiz game] or mock election exercise, and people get involved in the process, start interacting with you... You see



Student coordinators received comprehensive training to organize interactive voter education activities in their cities.



Fifteen student coordinators representing six regions of Ukraine attended a lessons-learned event in Kyiv.

how their facial expressions change; they look interested in what is happening. I think this is the most important change we have achieved."

In the 25 days before the presidential election, the student coordinators held 114 educational events, familiarizing students from 20 universities with voter registration and election procedures. Participants learned about the mandates and functions of election management, including Precinct Election Commissions, District Election Commissions, the Central Election Commission and other electoral authorities in Ukraine. They analyzed the candidates' programs and learned how to spot electoral fraud. Student coordinators also distributed more than 30,000 targeted informational brochures to students in their cities.

"I am proud that my country's citizens are interested in issues such as the election process and are ready to spend their time to learn more about it."

"Before the project started, I thought that people would not be interested in the information we presented to them and the materials we distributed," said Viktoriia Karpa, a student coordinator at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. "But they approached us by themselves and asked us for the brochures. My attitude toward this issue has changed. I am proud that my country's citizens are interested in issues such as the election process and are ready to spend their time to learn more about it."

Thanks to the work of Volodymyr and his fellow student coordinators, the campaign has reached over 3,100 young people to date, with a new campaign in advance of the July 21 parliamentary elections underway. Inspired by the previous campaign's success in the spring, student coordinators are initiating interactive lectures and mock election exercises to help young Ukrainians make informed electoral choices.

"I am happy to see that we, as student coordinators, have an important job, helping our peers to make their choice independently and responsibly."

"Previously, I thought that young people

participating in elections ... did not fully understand what they were experiencing," said Bohdana Kostiuk, who is currently conducting educational activities in Sumy. "I am happy to see that we, as student coordinators, have an important job, helping our peers to make their choice independently and responsibly."



More than 3,100 students from nine Ukrainian cities participated in interactive voter education activities.

Student coordinators have also become a part of the IFES-supported voter education campaign, **"I have a right to vote."** This campaign covers traditional and new media tools and face-to-face outreach. As part of this campaign, pages on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, share voter education information with Ukrainian citizens. So far, the campaign's social media content has reached over 10 million people, with over 13.5 million reactions to date. 47 percent of the audience engaged were young women between 18 to 34 years old; overall, the audience was 79 percent women and 21 percent men.

This initiative is part of IFES' broader efforts to strengthen democratic progress in Ukraine through the support of the United States Agency for International Development, Global Affairs Canada and UK aid.



All participants of the electoral process should contribute to raise voters' confidence in elections

Q: *Mr. Petrić, you have been a member of the BiH Central Election Commission for the last 15 years, and for the third time you have been the president of the BiH Central Election Commission, so I would like to ask you to give us, based on your electoral experience, an assessment of the last General Elections in BiH, held in October last year?*



Branko Petrić: From the aspect of the technical organization of the elections and based on the activities carried out by the BiH Central Election Commission and the municipal/city election commissions, the elections have been organized well and conducted, as stipulated by the constitution and the law. Due to the fact that they are composed of political parties' representatives the polling station committees have always been and were again this time the weakest link in the sense that some irregularities have been noted in their work, which due to the timely and good reaction of municipal/city election

commissions and the BiH CEC could not endanger election process and influence the electoral outcome. This is from the point of view of the election management bodies' work. And when it comes to other participants in the electoral process in BiH, the last General Elections were probably the most challenging so far. Although we all need to contribute to increasing the voters' confidence in the elections, many political parties, non-governmental organizations, and some political analysts have run, at least it seems so, an organized campaign against primarily the BiH Central Election Commission without arguments and facts. They entirely unsubstantially presented their views to the public and thus making the work of the EMBs in a complex electoral system increasingly difficult. The report of the ODIHR observation mission reads that the legal framework in BiH is detailed and mostly suitable for democratic elections, but I agree that there is also a lack of political will to address essential constitutional and electoral reforms concerning primarily right of candidacy, i.e. the elimination of certain discriminatory provisions from the constitution and the law.

Q: *The BiH Central Election Commission faced many challenges, but are there any you would like to particularly mention here?*



Branko Petrić: The elections were announced in May 2018, but significant activities began early in the year. Prior to the announcement of the elections all regulations passed by the BiH CEC are reviewed and updated, public procurement procedures are prepared and conducted, and special preparations are conducted regarding the voter information campaign, especially for the voters living outside BiH and are still subject of active registration. The challenges for the CEC of BiH have started to line up and often to overlap even at the beginning of 2018. The EMBs are facing great volume of work, and at the same time a significant number of political parties are founding their campaign not on informing the voters about their programmes, but with fabricated accusations concerning the BiH CEC's work. In such difficult circumstances the EMBs have organized and conducted the elections. However, I would point out the fact that the elections were announced having the issue of filling the seats in the House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament not solved. Namely, the provisions of the Election Law of BiH have after the decision of the Constitutional Court of BiH been put out of force, and they related to the indirect elections that are being conducted immediately after the publication of the election results of direct elections. The legislator failed to pass amendments to the Election Law of BiH so that the only solution was that the BiH CEC takes action in order to be able to implement the election results and establish the bodies of authority in BiH.

We have solved that problem in almost impossible work conditions because the obstructions and accusations were coming from all sides, just to have the Constitutional Court of BiH confirming the legitimate conduct of the BiH CEC at the end.

Q: *A big step was made by the BiH Central Election Commission when it resolved the problem of filling the seats in the House of Peoples of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I particularly emphasize the word "filling" because thanks to the regulations of the BiH Central Election Commission, that House was first filled with all 58 delegates. How do you comment reaction of the public before and after this activity of the BiH Central Election Commission?*



Branko Petrić: That is right, apart from regulating the way for filling in the seats in the House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament through a regulation, in this regulation we had assumed the responsibility to complete Caucuses later on, if they remained incomplete, since the Serb People Caucus in the FBiH Parliament was incomplete until the last elections. This time, with the efforts of the CEC BiH, the House of Peoples of the PFBiH counts 58 delegates, as it is prescribed by the Constitution of the FBiH. Regarding the reactions, they were dramatic until the decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They even accused the BiH Central Election Commission and its members of the 'coup d'état' and that they were 'a joint criminal organization'.

“ Additional efforts must be made aimed at improving accuracy of voters' registration as part of the introduction of new technologies in the electoral process ”

Q: *As a member of the BiH Central Election Commission, you are engaged in the Inter-departmental Working Group for changes to electoral legislation. Although the Working group has not held a meeting for a long time due to the current political situation in BiH, what are in your opinion priorities, i.e. in what segments should the BiH electoral process be improved?*

Branko Petrić: What I would put as one of the priorities in the work to change electoral legislation is the integrity and voter registration, which was especially pointed out by international observers. It would contribute to greater voters' confidence in the electoral process and, consequently, to greater voter turnout. Additional efforts are needed to improve voter registration accuracy. All this in the context of the generally accepted need for introducing new advanced technologies in the BiH electoral process. A detailed feasibility study and a pilot phase should be carried out as part of the introduction of new technologies, and a detailed discussion on procurement issues, security and other important issues should be conducted in an inclusive manner before the elections.

Q: *It is well known that the CEC BiH used translucent ballot boxes at the 2018 General Elections. Do you feel that they have contributed to the greater voters' confidence in the electoral process in BiH?*

Thanks to BiH Central Election Commission and our friends, the donors, translucent ballot boxes were used in the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the first time. A total of 10,000 new ballot boxes have been secured for around 5,000 polling stations. Special security seals for boxes (60,000 seals) were also provided. The translucent ballot boxes increase voters' confidence everywhere in the world, as well as in BiH, but they also increase confidence of candidates and observers, as well as the media in the correct implementation of electoral rules and regulations on the Election Day. Former metal boxes were heavy and old, impractical for transportation and the use in general.

Q: And finally, within your 15-year membership in the BiH Central Election Commission, are you satisfied with the achieved international cooperation of the BiH Central Election Commission and how much this cooperation contributes to the improvement of the electoral process in BiH?

Branko Petrić: Since its establishment the BiH Central Election Commission has given great importance to international cooperation and primarily to the exchange of



election experiences, which certainly contributes to the improvement of the electoral process. We are exchanging the most significant experiences in the segment of education, information and motivation of voters. The BiH CEC has signed many agreements and memorandums both with international organizations and the election commissions of other states. At the annual conference of the Association of European

Election Officials – ACEEO, which was held in Albania in 2004, the BiH Central Election Commission was officially accepted as a full member of this significant international association. The BiH CEC is a member of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) since 2013.

Interview done by:

Zehra Tepić and Maksida Pirić, voter information and PR officers of BiH CEC

Indian Election 2019 - Creatives

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Election Commission of India

READY TO VOTE IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTION 2019?

I AM GOING TO GET INKED

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

YOUTHFUL DEMOCRACY

My Vote Matters

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7 THINGS A VOTER MUST KNOW

- 1. If you are 18 years or above as of 1st of January 2019, you are eligible to be a voter!**
- 2. REGISTER TODAY**
Online: Log on to www.nvsp.in
OFFLINE - Contact Booth Level Officer/ Electoral Registration Officer
- 3. HOW TO REGISTER**
Fill Form 6 and attach:
✓ A passport size photograph
✓ Proof of age (10-21 years)
✓ Proof of residence
- 4. NO VOTES**
Log on to www.nvsp.in
Call Helpline number 1950
- 5. HOW TO VOTE**
Check your name in voter list in advance
✓ Location of polling station
✓ Poll timings
✓ Know your candidate by the information available on CEC's website www.eci.gov.in
- 6. CAST YOUR VOTE**
✓ Carry EPIC or other valid identity proof to polling station
✓ No mobile phones allowed in polling booth
✓ Assured Minimum Facilities and Special Facilities for PwDs provided at each polling station
- 7. MAINTAIN THE SECRECY OF YOUR VOTE**
Press the button on EVM next to the candidate of your choice
You will see a red light glow and hear a beep sound once you have cast your vote
Verify your vote - check slip of chosen candidate displayed for about 7 seconds on EVM screen

UPHOLD THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY

Best Practices, Innovations and Initiatives in Engaging Students and Communities in Electoral Process

Importance of developing the practice of citizenship is vital to investment in future of democracy and its sustenance. Citizenship development in this context would mean developing inter alia effective voter education, electoral engagement, participation, capacity building for informed choices and ethical ballot decisions. Therefore one of the important goals of society is to support an active democratic citizenry empowered through an integrated civic and voter education besides carefully inculcating the habit of meaningful electoral participation right from a young age.

The young and future voters demonstratedly form a sizeable part of democratic polity and its future. Voter apathy among the young people is something which cannot be ignored. In this context it is necessary that young peoples' voices are heard, their concerns noted and given due recognition, their interests for electoral participation understood and encouraged. This can be done through careful examination of

challenges and barriers in engaging young people and a robust research on the issues involved, followed by strategic investment for obliterating any voter apathy or perceived civic deficit. Investment focusing on educating, engaging and empowering them through well designed strategic interventions would help in preparing a citizenry capable of voluntary, confident, comfortable and robust electoral participation besides exercising informed and ethical ballot decisions.

While today's youth is the most connected in history, their potential in creating electoral awareness and educating and engaging the communities, peer group and future generations needs to be appreciated and harnessed for citizenship development. In this background, this article aims to visit the Best Practices, Innovations and Initiatives developed by some of the democratic countries across the world for engaging students and communities in electoral process.

Initiatives in the United States

The Electoral Assistance Commission (EAC) of the US has developed technology driven, focused educational and electoral engagement resources for the young people under programs such as 'Mock Vote' at schools and 'Help America Vote College Program' at colleges and universities. Supported by the specific provisions of the Help America Vote Act 2002 (HAVA), the programs receive appropriate state financial assistance. The programs are briefly discussed as follows:

National Student and Parent Mock Election

The EAC awards grants to the National Student and Parent Mock Election, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan

organization that works to promote voter participation in American elections to enable it to carry out voter education activities for students and their parents. Such activities may include simulated national elections before the actual election that permit participation by students and parents from each of the 50 States in the United States and US schools overseas. These elections include:

- (i) School forums and local cable call-in shows on the national issues to be voted upon in an 'issues forum';
- (ii) Speeches and debates before students and parents by local candidates or stand-ins for such candidates;
- (iii) Quiz team competitions, mock press conferences, and speech writing competitions;
- (iv) Weekly meetings to follow the course of the campaign;
- (v) School and neighborhood campaigns to increase voter turnout, including newsletters, posters, telephone chains, and transportation.

The National Student and Parent Mock Election also presents awards to outstanding student and parent mock election projects. The program is supported by the provisions of HAVA specifically under Sec 295.

Help America Vote College Program (HAVCP)

HAVCP was established by the EAC under express provisions of the HAVA for engaging students in electoral process. The program is supported through grants from EAC to encourage student participation as poll workers or assistants, to foster student interest and education in the election process, and to encourage state and local governments to use students as poll workers.

Aims and Objects of HAVCP

The main objectives of the Help America Vote College Program are to:

- ❖ Encourage students enrolled at institutions of higher education (including community colleges) to assist State and local governments in the administration of elections by serving as poll workers or assistants;
- ❖ Encourage college students to become familiar with election process and civic education; and to assist in smooth administration of elections in their community; and
- ❖ Encourage state and local governments for using the services of students participating in the program.

EAC is particularly interested in supporting programs that propose partnerships between various student and other university organizations besides local election officials in order to maximize college student interest in elections and create meaningful activities for them as the Election Day approaches.

Grants for HAVCP

EAC administers several grant programs designed to promote improvements to the administration of elections for federal office and increase awareness of elections by addressing critical issues such as research into voting technology, improvements that ensure accessibility for voters with disabilities, the shortage of poll workers and teaching young people about election processes and the importance of civic responsibility. EAC seeks proposals from colleges (including community colleges), universities, and nonprofit organizations to assist EAC in implementing the HAVCP.

EAC encourages applicants to propose development of curriculum, training guides,

and best practices associated with both recruiting poll workers with disabilities and making polling places more welcoming PwDs. EAC also encourages applicants to recruit student poll workers that speak foreign languages to assist with language accessibility challenges at the polling place. Materials developed by grantees are made widely available to other organizations through the EAC clearinghouse and other distribution mechanisms. The entire program operates on essential premise of 'Non Partisan Approach'.

Coordination with Institutions of Higher Learning

EAC encourages institutions of higher education (including community colleges) to participate in the Programme, and is expected to make all necessary materials and other assistance (including materials and assistance to enable the institution to hold workshops and poll worker training sessions) available without charge to any institution which desires to participate in the program. Many states and counties are organizing Voter Education Weeks for benefit of school children and their parents.

California High School Voter Education Weeks

Best Practices Shared by County Elections Offices

Below are ideas that have been shared by counties to promote civic engagement in high schools around California. These projects have been used and proved to be successful. **Political Party and Candidate Forum in a Mock Election Atmosphere (Placer County)**

- Select a school or schools that would like to encourage their staff and students to become more civically engaged.

- Contact representatives of political parties and invite them to come make a short presentation to the school about their party and its platform (set boundaries on subject matter).
- Invite local candidates that may have been elected recently and encourage them to tell their story. Have them explain the process and experience from the time they decided to run for office to the day they were elected (set boundaries on subject matter). Encourage a question and answer period where the students can inquire about the process of a working democracy.
- Allow teachers and students eligible to register to vote, to apply on site.
- Create a mock election ballot and give attendees the opportunity to cast their ballot, just as they would on Election Day.

Conduct a Mock Election (Sacramento County)

- Select a school that is enthusiastic about giving students the opportunity to encourage their students to become involved in their democracy.
- Create a mock election ballot with issues relevant to high school students.
- Work with school to provide a 'polling place' on campus. Bring voting equipment that students can use to simulate an actual election day.
- Use this time to encourage students to become poll workers on Election Day.

Host a Voter Registration Drive on Campus (Plumas County)

- Select a high school with a Government teacher who is passionate about democracy. 'Elections 101'. Present a

slide show to Government classes giving the basics of participating in a democracy.

- How to Register.
- Am I eligible to register to vote?
- What to expect after you're registered to vote.
- What the County Election Office does.
- How does the county know which contest I get to vote on?
- Where can I find information on what I am voting for?
- Coordinate a Voter Registration Drive on campus.

Assist High School with Student Body Elections (Plumas County)

- Select a high school with an upcoming student body election.
- Create a schedule with the Student Leadership Instructor, school administration and select a location on campus for the polling place.
- Work with a local ballot printer to have ballots donated to school.
- Provide poll worker training class to Senior class volunteers (these students were selected because they were not voting on student body officers for the upcoming year).
- Election Day! Set up a polling place Provide the roster, badges, voting booths, ballot boxes, polling place signage, 'I Voted' stickers and of course the American flag to make it identifiable.
- Allow student poll workers to announce results at school assembly/rally.

Help America Vote Foundation

Section 601 of HAVA provides for establishing the Help America Vote Foundation as a charitable and nonprofit organization. The aims and objects of the foundation are to:

- (i) Mobilize secondary school students in the US to participate in the election process in a nonpartisan manner as poll workers or assistants.
- (ii) Place secondary school students as nonpartisan poll workers or assistants to local election officials in polling places across the US.
- (iii) Establish cooperative efforts with State and local election officials, local educational agencies, superintendents and principals of public and private secondary schools, and other appropriate nonprofit charitable and educational organizations exempt from taxation.

Partnerships with non-partisans and non-profits

EAC encourages partnerships with non-partisans and non-profits for implementation of its program. Necessary funds are also provided. A large number of such organizations are working for voter education and collaborate with educational institutions, election offices. Standards and the guidelines of EAC and use of technology tools are vital to the partnerships besides non partisan approach. Some illustration of such partnerships are voter education program of National Education Association of America for school children, Campus Election Engagement Project, League of Women Voters, New America Foundation and like that a large number of organizations.

Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)

CEEP is a national nonpartisan voter-engagement project that helps colleges and universities in the US to use their institutional resources to get as many of their 20 million students as possible to motivate and engage them in the electoral process that is to register, volunteer in campaigns, educate themselves on candidates and issues, and turn out to vote at the polls. The project was launched in 14 key states in 2008 and by 2014 they worked with 280 campuses enrolling 3.2 million students with additional coverage of 580 schools through its partners and maximized its engagement coverage during 2016 elections. The project operates through a network of its established and reputed allies and partners. It has developed a powerful reservoir of highly analytical engagement resources, bank of best practices including online and other technology tools to achieve its aims and objects. The project is funded through tax free voluntary contributions and its matching core contribution.

Strategy

As an overall strategy, the project combines its engagement resource and the resources from its allies and partners with resources drawn from colleges and universities throughout the country for engaging students in campuses in the US. The process of electoral engagement is achieved by guiding campuses through well designed, structured interactive and engaging programs, action plans, exposure to best practices, analytical tools including high technology driven processes on utilization of these resources to navigate students through ever-changing barriers to registering, voting and overall electoral engagement.

Seven Key Ways to Act

The strategy of getting the nonpartisan campus engagement includes easy-to-follow roadmap with Seven Key Ways to Act. This roadmap for fully engaging any campus includes contributions from organizers and campus leaders in every state this program has been taken up since 2008 and has over 250 successful approaches that can be adopted. The seven key ways are briefly stated as follows:

- 1. Build a Team:** No one can engage an entire campus, so create a core group to coordinate engagement efforts, divide up the work and ensure that the key stakeholders communicate.
- 2. Register Students to Vote:** It is the first step to student electoral participation. Set campus-wide goals and plan ways to implement them.
- 3. Educate Students on Issues and Candidates:** Offer clear information on where candidates stand, so students can make informed choices.
- 4. Help Students to Volunteer with Partisan or Nonpartisan Campaign of Their Choice:** Early civic involvement patterns tend to sustain, and this makes further participation more likely.
- 5. Build Election Excitement and Visibility Leading up to Election Day:** Use every appropriate channel for this purpose
- 6. Get out the Vote:** Make sure students know where to vote, when to vote and what to bring. Combine face-to-face and online technologies to engage all eligible students.
- 7. Measure the Impact:** Document the work done in a continued manner so as to judge what works and what does not work, monitor the progress and build a base for the future.

Helping Students Surmount Political Cynicism: 'MY VOTE DOES NOT MATTER.'

Defining the Problem

One of the interesting areas addressed by CEEP relates to the political cynicism amongst the students emanating out of complex outcomes of political engagement. Reactions such as 'My Vote does not matter' or the complaint that politicians are 'all the same and all corrupt' are expressions of cynical resignation to political engagement. CEEP initiative attempts to address this problem in an analytical manner and engaging students through resources developed by them with a view to encourage students to register and vote despite their conviction of cynicism to political engagement.

Survey Based Analysis Reports

CEEP has looked at different survey reports in this regard. 'Rock the Vote Survey' shortly before the 2010 election reveals that 59% of students said they were more cynical than two years before, 63 per cent of those who doubted they had vote justified their likely withdrawal by agreeing that "no matter who wins, corporate interests will still have too much power and prevent real change". The CIRCLE youth research center reported that four million fewer students participated in 2010 elections as compared to 2008 elections. Youth electoral participation rates then dropped 17% more in 2014, reaching the lowest levels since 18 year olds got the vote.

CEEP engagement for increase in voter confidence

CEEP initiative in handling this problem includes inter alia the following action areas:

- Engage the students in registering and

elections especially in non presidential years, organize debates, discussion forums to improve credulity of election engagement and make them realize that their vote does matter.

- Make classrooms and campuses venues for thoughtful debate, reflection, and discussion, bending over backwards to ensure students of all political perspectives feel welcomed.
- Full participation requires creation of a common platforms where the students can reflect on issues and candidates, and providing them a rationale for why their involvement matters.
- Familiarize students with the tool box of social change; explore the way they can reach out on issues they care about and build broad coalitions.

CEEP Media Strategies for Engaging Students

Student Social Media Reporting

CEEP recognizes that media coverage through peer groups can be used as an important tool for attracting students pay attention to important elections, especially in a non-presidential year. Student newspapers can do a lot to make elections salient, giving students clear information on how to participate and help them sort through candidate positions and claims. The students, particularly from journalism, communications, and political science streams, can also create valuable coverage through other channels, like social media.

Student Newspapers and the Elections

Students may not read mainstream newspapers, but they do read campus papers, which at most schools can set the tone for campus discussions. If you address issues well enough, students are far more likely listen, respond, and participate at the polls.

Non Partisan Candidate Guides

CEEP's nonpartisan candidate guides are derived from trusted sources like *votesmart.org*, *factcheck.org*, *ontheissues.com*, and *public candidate stands*. These guides help students and other team members under campus engagement team. CEEP has created a guide to how to most effectively distribute these guides and why they matter for students. CEEP has also produced 2014 Social Media Guide which carries sample tweets and more. These guides can help students and other team members under campus engagement team. CEEP has created a guide to how to most effectively distribute these guides and why they matter for students. CEEP has also produced 2014 Social Media Guide which carries sample tweets and more.

Kenya

Public Forums on Voter Education

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries commission (IEBC) organizes Voter Education Forums in a well designed manner and with comprehensive and relevant content and as per a specific timeframe in each County Assembly Ward on specified venues through Constituency Election Coordinator Office. Wide publicity is given to the program for information of the electorate and all the Voter Education Providers are directed to follow the program carefully. The climax of the forums is marked by the simulation of the voting process in designated venues at respective CAWs countrywide. Entry to these forums is free and open to all.

Voter Education Weeks (AVEW)

As one of the strategic initiatives IEBC has started Annual Voter Education weeks ahead of elections. The voter education

weeks are organised in consultation and in collaboration with all the stakeholders. The first ever Annual Voter Education Week was held countrywide from May 18-22, 2015.

During this week, IEBC sensitizes the citizens on importance of participation in the electoral process as well boost the continuous voter registration process. This is part of the IEBC mandate of conducting continuous voter education as set out in Article 88(4)(g) of the Constitution. Other highlights in the Voter Education week cover inclusion and mainstreaming, party lists, political tolerance, dispute resolution mechanisms, electoral technology among others.

The voter education week is implemented nationwide through outreach programmes to schools, electoral technology exhibition, media campaigns, onsite service delivery, open stakeholders' forum and town hall meetings.

The Commission observed the Annual Voter Education Week (AVEW) across all the 47 Counties and 290 constituencies countrywide from June 10-16, 2019. The event provided the IEBC an opportunity to listen and address concerns from the members of the public on all electoral gadgets, tools, policies, activities, processes and procedures.

The National launch of AVEW 2019 commenced with a walk dubbed: '**Walk for Peaceful Election**'. IEBC staff and stakeholders participated and distributed voter education materials along the route to Uhuru Park Grounds. The walk was flagged off by IEBC Chairman Wafula Chebukati, Commissioners Prof. Abdi Guliye and Boya Molu and Ag.CS/CEO Marjan H. Marjan at Anniversary Towers. The Walk terminated at Uhuru Park Grounds where the IEBC Chairman delivered his key note address and officially launch AVEW.

During his address, The IEBC Chairman urged the entire nation to fully participate in all the planned AVEW activities, encouraging them to, 'Karibu tujadiliane' with IEBC Staff across the 47 Counties and 290 constituencies.

AVEW 2019: 'Walk for Peaceful Election'.



At the County Level, County Elections Managers (CEMs) customized their launches to appeal to the local people and fit the environment in their respective Counties. They undertook various activities including tree planting, Barazas, community gatherings, town hall meetings, school visits, face to face conversations while undertaking voter registration among others.

Australia

National Electoral Education Centre

The National Electoral Education Centre in Canberra offers education programs about the federal electoral system. It is an important institution for imparting Civics and Citizenship education and provides the programmes free, though advance reservation for the visit is essential.

Experience at the NEEC

The programme involves experiential learning to engage and inform. AEC's educators guide the participants through a 90 minute programme which includes:

- A multi-media presentation that explores the history of Australian democracy,
- Hands-on activities which help students to understand enrolment, voting and representation; and
- Voting in a simulated election followed by counting of votes to generate a result.

The programme content can be customised to suit different learning levels and different areas of interest. In particular, the extension programmes can be requested for secondary level students of politics or legal studies. The requirements of customisation need to be discussed in advance at the time of registering the request.

National Indigenous Youth Parliament

The National Indigenous Youth Parliament (NIYP) is a week-long unique learning program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the age group of 16 to 25 years and interested in learning about Australia's democracy and to have a say in Australia's future.

NIYP brings together the future Indigenous leaders from around Australia to discuss and deliberate the issues affecting their communities. The participants interact with law makers, gain hands on experience in functioning of the Parliament especially the legislative process.



Glimpses of NIYP 2017.

The first Indigenous youth parliament was held in 2012 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of granting the right to vote to Indigenous Australians in federal elections. 50 'parliamentarians' in the 2012 NIYP were selected from a field of more than 180 applicants; 35% came from remote communities, 45% from regional centers and 20% from urban communities.

Participation and the Programme

NIYP is organized by the Indigenous Electoral Participation Program of the Australian Electoral Commission in partnership with the Museum of Australian Democracy and the YMCA at Old Parliament House in Canberra.

Fifty young Indigenous people from different parts of the country participate in this week-long leadership program which promotes youth advocacy, active community leadership and a commitment to democracy and its processes.

The participants are chosen on the basis of their community leadership activities, nature and relevance of their deliberative contribution to the event and the learning experience they carry with themselves back to their communities. Six people are chosen from each state and territory, and two from the Torres Strait Islands.

The program includes expert training in how government functions, the legislative process, debating on different issues and dealing with the media. Participants get an opportunity to interact with and learn from the nation's leaders, members of Parliament, dignitaries, the parliamentary press gallery, Indigenous community leaders, senior public servants and academics.

One of the important components of the program is a two-day simulation of the parliament at work. This event is organized

at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, where participants debate bills and important issues of relevance to their communities.

NIYP provides a unique opportunity for young Indigenous Australians to build networks and meet other young Indigenous Australians from remote, rural, regional and urban settings. It is an opportunity to talk about community issues, to develop awareness about the matters that affect their everyday lives and to make their voice heard. Former youth parliamentarians support and mentor the participants.

UK Youth Parliament

Introduction

The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) provides a unique opportunity to the young people of age group 11-18 years in the United Kingdom a firsthand experience of democracy in operation where they use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

The idea for a youth parliament originated from young people in 1996. Andrew Rowe, a Member of Parliament championed the cause of the UKYP. He was later described as 'Founding Father' of the UKYP. From 1998 to 2000, a steering group of young people and organizations chaired by James Moody (a young person), established the organization and conducted the 1st Annual Sitting of UKYP in January 2001.

Members of youth parliament are elected in youth elections throughout the UK. Once elected, MYPs attend and organize events and projects, run campaigns and help decision makers on the issues that matter to young people.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of UKYP include inter alia, giving a voice to the young people of

the UK on relevant issues for due consideration by:

- Local, regional and national government
- Providers of services for young people
- Other agencies with interest in the views and needs of young people

Key Features of the UKYP

- Comprises representatives of young people in age group 11-18 years from across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Encourages participation from all young people and operates on a local level through Local Authorities (England only).
- Ensures that young people in the UK get a voice on issues that affect them (Reference Article 12 of the UN BYC Convention on the Rights of the Child.)
- Gives young people the opportunity to be involved in the democratic process at a national level.
- Empowers young people to take positive action within local communities.
- Solely issue based and a non-party political organisation, and as such, seeks to represent no party political voice.

Youth Parliament is for everyone

Youth parliament provides numerous opportunities to engage young people in electoral literacy, from supporting campaigns to debating in online forums, utilising social media and filling in ballot papers online. It also encourages young people to stand for elections.

Manifesto

The views of young people are reflected in the UK Youth Parliament Manifesto, which

contains statements on the issues MYPs think are most important. Manifesto may be seen at UKYP website:
www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

Representation

Each Local Authority across England represents one UKYP constituency. Each constituency is entitled to at least one Member of the youth parliament. The allocation of members to each constituency depends on the number of young people living in that constituency.

Role of the Youth Voice Programme

The youth parliament is managed by the British Youth Council, as a part of the Youth Voice programme. Day-to-day management is carried out by the BYC staff. The work across the regions and nations is overseen by a team of Youth Democracy Coordinators. Their role is to support the work of elected MYPs. They organise the induction meeting, BYC Conventions and support the work of the Procedures Group representative (PG) and Regional Secretary (RS).

The Procedure Group takes decisions that guide the development of UKYP. PG also makes requisite arrangements for the Annual Sitings and other sessions of the UKYP.

The Campaigns; 'Make Your Mark' consultations

'Make Your Mark' is the largest youth consultation of the UK. It is run by the British Youth Council with the topics as may be decided by the UKYP. At the House of Commons event, Members of Youth Parliament debate top 5 topics from 'Make Your Mark' and vote.

In view of the devolved nature of the UK democracy and to ensure proper representation of the issues from the all



nations, two priority campaigns (one on a devolved issue and the other on a reserved issue) are run every year.

Youth Parliament connect with Different Levels of Governance



There are various areas where Members of the youth parliament can have a positive impact as discussed below:

Local level

Members are elected in their respective constituency. At the point of their election, they may choose to work on local campaigns and raise a profile of young people's voice in their respective constituency.

Regional level, Devolved level

Members attend Youth Council Conventions. They get an opportunity to share best practices, network with other youth parliaments and youth councils as well as join forces on local campaigns at these forums. Their role is to speak to the group on behalf of the young people of their constituency. The PG representatives then take this to a national platform and make decisions in the Annual Sitting and the House of Commons event.

National level

There are two national events for UK youth parliament; the Annual Sitting and the House of Commons. The Annual Sitting takes place each summer, towards the end of July. Members of the youth parliament are expected to consult their constituents before attending this sitting for enabling themselves to amend the UKYP manifesto. After the manifesto has been voted upon, a national consultation is launched in a manner that every 11-18 year old in the UK can take part in called 'Make Your Mark' followed by the House of Commons debate in November.

At the House of Commons event MYPs decide the two priority campaigns for the coming year. They do this by debating the top five topics from the 'Make Your Mark' consultation. Based on these debates they cast two votes for their priority campaigns, one for a devolved (England only) issue and one for a reserved issue (UK wide). This is due to the devolved nature of the UK democracy and to ensure relevant representation of the issues from the all nations.

Code of Conduct and Commitment

A well structured Code of Conduct and Commitment has been defined for the

Members of the UK youth parliament. This code outlines the principles, conduct and commitment that are expected of the Members of the UKYP during their term of the office.

(Source: The UK Electoral Commission)

Epilogue

Tremendous amount of meaningful work has been done on the subject across the democracies of the world. Democracy Clubs of Bhutan, Voter Education curriculum in Kenya, Electoral Literacy Clubs in India, Democracy Clubs in the UK and the USA, Eleitor Do Futuro Program of Brazil, YES Project of AEC etc., provide further insight

into practice and experience to learn from.

The launch of VoICE.NET in Oct, 2016 at the New Delhi Conference on Voter Education provides a robust global platform for Knowledge sharing and learning from each other for the cause of investment in future of democracy.



S D Sharma
Senior Fellow
Election Commission of India

Indian Election 2019 - Creatives

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग

हमारे राष्ट्रीय निर्वाचन को
स्वतंत्र, निष्पक्ष, पारदर्शी, समावेशी, सुगम, नैतिक एवं सहभागी बनाने के लिए
इन सभी के प्रति आपार व्यक्त करता है:

- भारत के 61.30 करोड़ मतदाता *
- 29.24 करोड़ महिला मतदाता *
- 61.46 लाख डिजिटल मतदाता
- 19.05 लाख सेवा मतदाता
- सभी वरिष्ठ नागरिक एवं शतवर्षीय मतदाता
- सूक्ष्म लेवल अधिकारी एवं मतदान केंद्रों पर रैनात स्वयंसेवक
- निर्वाचन क्षेत्र के 12 मिलियन से अधिक कार्मिक
- मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी/जिला निर्वाचन अधिकारी/रिटर्निंग अधिकारी/पुलिस अधीक्षक और उनकी टीम
- भारत सरकार और राज्यों/केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों की सरकारों के सभी संबंधित वरिष्ठ अधिकारी
- राजनीतिक दल और अभ्यर्थीगण
- निर्वाचन आयोग के कार्मिक
- विशेष निर्वाचन प्रेक्षक
- प्रेक्षक - साधारण, पुलिस, व्यव एवं सुगमता
- पुष्पा बल - केन्द्रीय सारस्वत पुलिस बल, पुलिस एवं अन्य
- उड़न दस्ते एवं निगरानी दल
- इलेक्ट्रॉनिक वोटिंग मशीन और वीवीपीएटी पर तकनीकी विशेषज्ञ समिति, वीईएल और ईसीआईएल
- भारतीय रेल एवं डाक विभाग
- बिट, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक एवं चोशल मीडिया
- निर्वाचक साक्षरता स्तर, चुनाव पाठशाला एवं मतदाता जागरूकता सेवा
- निर्वाचन आयोग के साथ कार्यरत अन्य सभी हितधारक

* कृपया ध्यान दें: आयोग के अनुसार

READY TO VOTE IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTION 2019?

WHEN OUR COURAGE IS BORN OUT OF CONVICTION THEN YES, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Anandan Gunasekaran
Gold Medalist, National Para Athletics Championship

On election day, every booth will have some special arrangements for persons with disabilities so that voting is easy for all.
Come forward. Cast your vote

My Vote Matters

- Ramp & Wheel chair
- EVM with Braille
- Sign Language
- Special Volunteers
- Transport Facility
- Voter Helpline

NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

Election Commission of India
<https://eci.gov.in/> | www.nvsp.in
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Download **VOTER HELPLINE APP**

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Guatemalan Political Parties in 42 Municipalities Commit to Peaceful Electoral Process

On June 10 in Guatemala City, 9 mayoral candidates in the municipality of Mixco, Guatemala Department, came together, across party lines, to commit themselves and their parties to maintain a peaceful and respectful electoral process. Mixco became the 42nd municipality in Guatemala to initiate a 'Municipal Agreement for a Transparent, Ethical and Peaceful Electoral Process', the final one to adopt such an agreement ahead of Guatemala's June 16 general elections. It also served as witness of honor for 14 of the municipal agreements, with staff speaking at the signing ceremonies about promoting a culture of peace. The ceremonies were held in public spaces, making them truly open to the public, and well-attended. 'At every event people were very receptive', 'The party authorities and the other participants said that they had never before had this space for dialogue and participation', including for



youth, women's groups and indigenous populations. 'It was practically a civic festival'. The municipal agreements were not just a symbol but a true cooperative commitment among the political parties and candidates who signed electoral boards that organized the agreements, local civil society and international organizations that served as witnesses of honor and the Guatemalan



public. The 42 municipalities, of Guatemala's 340 total, were identified as the areas of highest risk for electoral violence. In March 2019, political parties signed the national 'Agreement for a Transparent, Ethical and Peaceful Electoral Process', with IFES serving as a witness of honor. In 2015, it collaborated with the TSE on a similar series of municipal agreements ahead of Guatemala's last general elections. The inclusion of sensitization in this year's process made it more meaningful to the entire community.



101 Innovations & Initiatives in Indian National Elections

India is a vast country and the largest democracy in the world with 908.7 million registered voters. The varied geographical and cultural typography of the country makes Indian elections a gigantic exercise indeed!

It has been the endeavor of the Election Commission of India to hold free, fair, peaceful, transparent, inclusive, accessible, ethical & participative elections. Elections are celebrated as the biggest festival of the country cutting across caste, creed, region and religion. In this context, the 17th General Election was aptly termed 'Desh Ka Maha Tyohar' or Festival of Festivals.

The Lok Sabha Election (Indian National Election) was conducted in seven phases spread across the period of two months between April – May, 2019 which witnessed the collective efforts of over 12 million election officials to ensure the successful conduct of the world's largest democratic exercise which saw the participation of 613 million voters resulting in the highest ever voter turnout of 67.47% as well as the lowest gender gap of 0.1% in the country.

Voter education has been an indispensable part of the entire process. The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program, better known as SVEEP, is the flagship program of the Election Commission of India for voter education,

spreading voter awareness and promoting electoral literacy in India. Institutionalized in 2009, SVEEP's primary goal has been to build a truly participative democracy in India by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections. The programme is based on multiple interventions (general as well as targeted), which are designed according to the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and demographic profile of the state as well as the history of electoral participation in previous rounds of elections.

In Lok Sabha Elections 2019, various novel practices in pursuit of the Election Commission of India's motto of 'No Voter to be Left Behind' were adopted by States/UTs of the country to conduct free, fair and accessible elections. Following are National (adopted all over India), Widespread (taken up in certain regions) and Distinctive (a specific state level activity) exemplary



Reaching out to young & future voters through ELCs

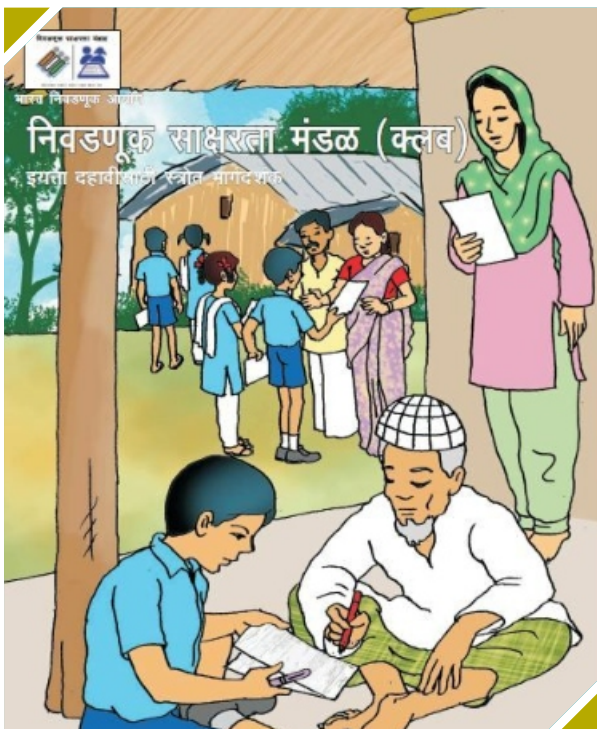
innovations & initiatives that contributed to making Lok Sabha election 2019 a great success!

1. Reaching out to young & future voters through ELCs

An Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC) is a platform to engage school students (IX th to XII th class) through interesting activities and hands-on experience to sensitize them on the electoral rights of citizen and familiarise them with the electoral process of registration and voting. The ELCs are also present in colleges, and rural communities and at Polling Station level where they are known as Chunav Pathshalas. Dedicated Officers have been appointed at District & State Level for proper functioning of ELCs and Chunav Pathshalas.

2. ELC resource materials in Regional languages

At Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs), learning meets fun. Resource Material has been developed with activities and games designed to stimulate and motivate students provoking them to think and ask questions. Through ELC, Election Commission of India aims at strengthening the culture of electoral participation among young and future voters. ELC resource materials were translated into local languages and contexts by different states to ensure that the stakeholders can understand and relate better to the study materials.



ELC resource materials in Regional languages



ELC Regional Resources

3. Committee for Accessible Elections at National & State Level

To make elections accessible & hassle free has been a priority of Election Commission of India. Committees has been set up at National as well as State level to work with the stakeholders at various levels, analyse the challenges and strategise on the way ahead to ensure due facilitation of PwD voters at the Polling Stations.



Committee for Accessible Elections at National & State Levels

4. Door to Door Registration for PwDs

To facilitate Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and motivate them to come out and participate in the electoral process, Booth Level Officer (BLO). Conducted door-to-door registration. As a result, 68.28 lakh PwDs were registered so far.



Dedicated Volunteers for PwDs

5. Assured Minimum Facilities at each Polling Station

Assured minimum facilities (AMF) constitutes provision for ramp, drinking water, adequate furniture, proper lighting, proper signage, helpdesk, and toilet. This effort was taken to ensure wholesome and constructive participation of each voter.

These measures ensured active engagement in the Electoral process especially for the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and senior citizens.

6. Sensitisation Training of Election Officials

Sensitization training of Election Officials regarding the special needs of Persons with Disabilities was conducted across Election Offices in the country. This included, basic sign Language Sensitization, Etiquette and manner training. Development of campaign material in accessible format was also discussed. In addition to this, Sign Language Interpreters were also deployed at Polling Stations for better facilitation of Voters' with Disabilities.

7. Merchandise

Merchandise items like T-Shirts, Mugs, Badges, Mouse Pads, Coasters, Pen Stands, Mobile Pop Ups and Key Chains were designed and distributed to spread motivational voting messages.

8. Voter Awareness on air

To reach out to the masses at rural and remote areas, Community Radio stations all over India worked in coordination with District Election Officers to spread information on elections at grassroots level.

In addition to that, Chunaav Ki Kahaniya, a series on motivational stories on elections were aired through All India Radio channels. Red FM, the official partner of Election

Commission of India, conducted on-air and ground activities throughout the Poll Campaign. Besides different kinds of programs and phone-in interviews, they also promoted mobile apps and played audio bytes of the Election icons to reach out to more people.

9. Pick & Drop Facilities for PwDs

Use of public transports to facilitate voters with disabilities on the poll day, free pick up and drop was provided to the polling station. The facility can also be availed through PwD App by Persons with Disabilities.



Pick & Drop Facilities for PwDs

10. Street Plays on Voter Awareness

Street Plays and Nukkad Nataks were organized to reach out to different sections of the society through street plays that spread message on importance of elections and made them aware of their electoral rights in rural as urban areas.

11. Henna Art on Elections

Mehendi is a popular art form in India in which decorative designs are created on a person's body mostly hands, using a henna paste. Mehendi Competitions were organized on various themes including democracy and right to vote with a view to engage more women in the SVEEP activities.



Heena Art

12. Rangoli colours appeal to Masses

Rangoli is an art form in which patterns are created on the floor or the ground using materials such as coloured rice, dry flour, coloured sand or flower petals on the eve of festivals. Therefore to mark the celebrations of the festival of democracy rangoli competition were organized in various parts of the country in schools, colleges as well as communities.



Rangoli

13. Human Chains involved thousands

With an aim to reach out to the common man on the street, Human Chains were created. These mobilized a large number of people around the city and varied from a long chain to forming shapes of Indian Flag, ECI logo, Accessible Elections Logo and Lok Sabha Elections Logo.



14. Volunteers to aid at Polling Station

Volunteers known as Matdata Mitra were engaged from NCC/NSS/Scout & Guides and deployed at the polling stations for Voters' facilitation, especially assisting Voters' with Disabilities (PwDs) and senior citizens to reach the Polling Station, offering drinking water and all kinds of assistance to Voters during polling.

15. Competitions Galore at Educational Institutions

- Painting Competitions were also organized on the themes of democracy, right to vote, importance of every vote, etc.
- Slogan writing competitions were organized to engage students at school & university level and other young voters in the community.
- Debates were organized in schools and colleges to sensitize young and future voters.

16. All Women Polling Station

Started as an innovative idea in West Bengal in the 2014 General Elections, all women managed polling booths have now become a

major highlight in the elections. For the first time in Lok Sabha Election 2019, all the women polling stations were set up in all constituencies of India where all the officers were women including the security personnel. This motivated women voters in rural as well as urban areas of the country.



17. Pledge Letter to appeal to Young & Future Voters

Sankalp Patras or Pledge Letter is issued to the family through the school students, who get it signed by their parents and adult family members pledging to vote in the upcoming election. They also pledge to motivate friends and neighbours to cast their vote.

The pledge letters carrying the signature of the parent are submitted back to the school who pass it on to the district administration. With the help of the pledge letters, the district administration is able to reach out to a large number of families ahead of polling.



Sankalp Patra

18. Reaching out through Election Icons

Numerous non-partisan famous personalities from different fields were nominated as Election Icons. These included sportsmen, cricketers, actors and singers as also accomplished persons from other arenas. They played a significant role in reaching out to the masses through different communication channels.

19. All services a click away

Election Commission of India launched various mobile apps for different purposes for the facilitation of voters.

- **Voter Helpline App** – To ease the registration process, changing of the constituency, checking the name in the electoral roll & facilitation of voters among other services
- **Mx. Democracy** – a digital game on electoral literacy provides crisp information regarding different aspects of electoral process in an interesting and playful manner
- **Cvigil App** – To report the violations of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and any other unethical behaviour during elections for the real time redressal of the complaint
- **PwD App** – For the ease of identification and registration of PwDs and availing the other services like pick & drop and wheel chair facility on the poll day
- **Voter Turnout App** – To check the real time turnout during the counting of votes and live updates on Election results.

20. Democracy Train

For the first time ever, Election Commission of India reached out to the masses through Indian Railways. Trains traversing length and breadth of country were vinyl wrapped with #GoVote and regional messages on

elections with coaches dedicated to different states as per the route.

These included Kerala Express, Himsagar Express, Gauwahti Express, Howrah Express, Jhelum Express, Konark Express, DikshaBhumi Express.

21. National Campaign on TV & Cinema

A national SVEEP campaign for Lok Sabha Election 2019 was taken up on different forms of media. Various electoral awareness video spots were telecast on 12 channels including private, news and general entertainment channels from March 10, 2019 to May 19, 2019. The video spots on various aspects of voter education were aired from February 2019 on DD National and DDNews for 110 days. Moreover, the spots were also being screened in theatres/multiplexes pan - India through Films Division since last 6 months.

22. Hoardings & Banners

Election Commission of India also launched the outdoor publicity campaign throughout India. These included Display Board in 22 cities, Airport Hoarding in 15 cities and other locations such as Bus Stands, Animation Display and Digital Display Boards etc.

23. Use of Social Media to reach out

A social media campaign was launched on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram as well as through Google posts for the tech savvy masses to connect them to elections.

24. Launch of Braille EPIC

During the National Consultation on Accessible Elections, Commission launched the facility of Braille EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card) for the blind voters. Ahead of Lok Sabha Elections 2019, Braille EPICs were distributed by the respective State Election Offices.

25. EVM & VVPAT Familiarisation Camps

EVM & VVPAT Familiarisation camps were conducted across the country to give hands on experience the voters ahead on Lok Sabha Polls. Such familiarisation camps were held at populated areas of the city/town/Village by the election officials which made it possible for the common man to clarify apprehensions regarding the use and reliability of the machine.

26. Priority Access/ separate queue during polling

Person with Disabilities and senior citizens were provided priority access/ separate queue at the polling station on the poll day. All possible steps were taken so as to ensure that PwDs/ senior citizens are not required to



Wall graffiti to motivate Youth

wait in the queue. Proper sitting arrangement too was provided.

27. Wall graffiti to motivate Youth

Numerous states created Wall graffiti to motivate the common man especially the youth for elections. Walls in the populated area of the cities were selected and painted with messages on elections. Numerous states also conducted Wall Graffiti competitions with school students and Art

college students.

28. School Elections to understand the voting process

Electoral Literacy Clubs educate regarding electoral processes through different kinds of entertaining activities. School Elections for choosing student representatives were conducted via Electoral Literacy Clubs to enable the students to understand the entire process of electing their representatives in schools at present and later for their nation.

29. Familiarizing students with the Parliamentary system

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) conducted a field visit of its members to the State Legislative Assembly. The field visit was conducted by states like Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya. Now many more states are organizing such visits to familiarize students from schools/ colleges with the Parliamentary system.

30. PwD managed Polling Station

In numerous states, PwD managed Polling stations were set up. This meant that entire election personnel staff at the polling booth included Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).



Youth Marathon for Voting

The aim is to empower PwD officials and encourage PwD electors to come out and participate in the electoral process in large numbers.

31. Youth Marathon for Voting

To counter urban apathy especially among youth, numerous states organized youth marathon with election theme. These youth Marathons were conducted in collaboration of Colleges, CSOs and NGOs working in the field of elections. Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and other states reached out to the youth through these marathons.

32. Divyang Sarathi and Divyang Dolis facilitate

Divyang Sarathi and Divyang Dolis were used to facilitate Person with Disabilities (PwDs) and also senior citizens in the hilly



areas of the country as the roads to the polling station are not accessible due to the mountainous terrain and other tough geographical conditions. Uttarakhand, Himachal, J&K among others facilitated PwDs and senior citizens through these.

33. Road shows & Rallies spread election messages

Various SVEEP activities such as Roadshows, Human rallies and Cycle rallies were organized to spread the information and messages on voting and also other relevant information for the poll day.

34. Adjustable furniture for accessible elections

With an aim to facilitate the PwD voters, Lok Sabha 2019 witnessed numerous new initiatives. In many states, adjustable furniture was used in numerous polling stations to make a way for the wheelchair and also a specific table height was used to ensure accessibility to EVM for Dwarf voters.

35. Voting Messages on Gas Cylinders & ATMs

All mediums were used to reach out to the voters. In numerous states, with an aim to reach out to the homemakers, voting messages were pasted on Gas Cylinders. Moreover, the ATMs at important junctions and banks in many states showed messages on elections to each user.

36. Third Gender motivates all to vote

Election Commission of India gives electors an option to register themselves as a Third Gender too. These elections witnessed higher participation of third gender persons.



In Maharashtra, not only did they cast their vote in large numbers but they also spread a message on value of each vote. In Delhi, a group of third gender appealed to masses through a rally, holding voting messages placards across the city.

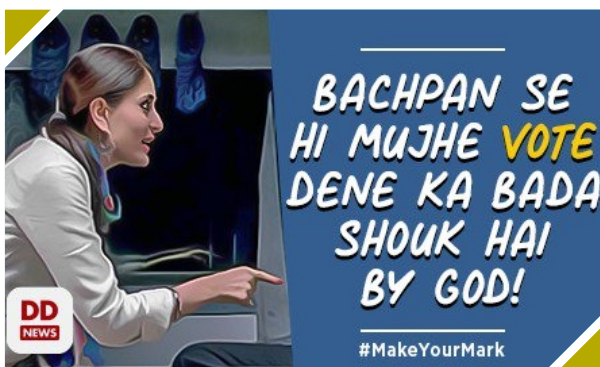
37. Radio Jingles to motivate voters

Radio Jingles attract all. Numerous radio jingles were prepared and aired through different mediums in many states. The radio jingle prepared by Delhi was aired on the FM Channels. It informed the listener regarding inclusion/amends in the electoral roll ahead of the poll dates in a musical manner.

38. Corporate Sector joins hand for Voter Awareness

Corporate Sector and Civil Society Organizations played a positive role in spreading awareness on elections, in many states. In Jharkhand, 43 corporate entities conducted SVEEP activities with their CSR fund.

39. Voter Festivals were organized for awareness



Voter Festivals and Democracy Concerts were organized to motivate voters and educate them via games, songs, dances and other interesting activities in many states and UTs. These festivals witnessed huge participation of all age groups.

40. Appeal through Memes

All kinds of media was used to reach out to the voters. Due to the wide publicity of the humorous contents on social media, Voting related memes were circulated by many States/UTs to catch the attention of youth and the tech savvy.

41. Voting becomes fashionable



Voting became a fashion statement with elections chosen as a theme for fashion shows. A ramp walk was organised for Ethical Voting in Kerala and the initiative was replicated by other states too like Chhattisgarh and Goa among others.

42. Eco Friendly Polling Stations

Many states/UTs propagated the idea of green elections where use of plastic was discouraged throughout the election period.



Plants and earthen pots were kept inside the polling stations.

43. Paintings on Road

In number of states, paintings of various kinds such as oil based /3D paintings on the roads gave messages on importance of voting. Busiest junctions of the cities were chosen and they caught the attention of all passing by.

44. Mascots on Voter Awareness

Mascots were created to spread voter awareness for many states/UTs. Mr. Bahanebaaz from Madhya Pradesh is shown as an apathetic voter, Shri Mat and Shri Matiis a voting couple from Gujarat and Rajasthan selected chiraya as their icon. All these proved to be a good source of attraction for the public.

45. Voting Messages on Milk Sachets

Elections were Omnipresent. Messages on elections were printed on Ponlait Milk Sachets in Puducherry and Paras Milk in Rajasthan among other states.

46. Sand Art on Elections

Different kinds of Sand Art were created on the beaches in different coastal states. They created a momentum on elections and connected the common man to the electoral process.

47. Signature Campaigns for Voting

A signature campaign to commit for voting was organised in different regions across the country on various occasions. People from all age groups and sections of society participated. The Campaign caught eyeballs as it was put up in the most populated areas of the City.

48. Appeal through Regional/Folk medium

In the Lok Sabha Election 2019, many states/UTs launched educational and motivational TV Commercials in regional languages to appeal to masses. Regional/folk songs spread awareness to the remotest corners of the country.

49. SMSs sent to Motivate Voters

Free awareness SMSs were sent by many states to voters reminding them about important dates as also informing on important documents and helpline numbers for election processes.

50. Crèche Facility

To facilitate new mothers, crèche were created in many polling stations across the country. This eased the voting process for the mothers as they left the child in the crèche whilst they voted comfortably.

51. Information Posters on Voting

Throughout the elections, informative posters were distributed to inform, educate and motivate voters to participate in the electoral processes. There were also circulated to all Gram Panchayats, Mahila-Mandals, Yuvak-Mandals, Self-Help Groups through Electoral Registration Officers, for wide publicity. They were also displayed in Government/private offices as also banks etc.



Signature Campaign

52. Launch of I-Help

With the aim to empower voters through digital electoral literacy, Assam launched project 'I-Help' in collaboration with a network of 3000 Common Services Centres (CSC) in the state. Under this, citizens received sensitization on the usage of mobile apps like Voter Helpline App, cVigil App, PwD App.

Apart from EVM-VVPAT familiarisation training and door to door outreach programs for Persons with Disabilities, Digital Electoral Literacy Drives were also organized to assist voters in getting information enabling active democratic participation.

53. Messages on Food Menus

In Bhilwada, Rajasthan, eateries had a special addition to their food menus! Voter Awareness Content was ingeniously placed and poll day related messaging was added to food menus of all eateries in town.

54. Regional Radio Channels Reach Out

Punjab collaborated with popular radio channels like MY FM and Big FM during the Lok Sabha Election. These radio partners conducted on-air promotion of on-field Voter Awareness activities.

55. Dandiya Raas Event organized

Dandiya Raas is a traditional folk dance form of the state of Gujarat and multiple cultural events were organized for the people.

Interestingly, EPIC card was substituted for entry passes and counters were set up to register those voters who had still not applied for Voter cards. There were even separate counters to check the names in Voter List and to get a demo of EVM and VVPAT machines.

56. Classes conducted for Conceptual Familiarisation

The state of Himachal Pradesh conducted classes for the conceptual familiarisation of students with Centre-State relations and 'First Past The Post' system to empower ELC members with knowledge on the basic functioning of the Parliamentary system.

57. Voting Tree in Bihar

This was a unique effort in Munger district in Bihar for voter awareness as well as environment awareness where one voting tree was planted in all 101 Gram Panchayats of Munger district. The idea behind the voting tree is to motivate electors in future as well.

58. Mat Disha, an educational game

An educational game on ethical voting called Mat Disha (Mat means Vote & Disha means Direction) was developed by Goa. The game was designed in English, Hindi and a regional language apart from being made in an inclusive format for PwDs. A child friendly



model of EVM was also designed with a cardboard dummy balloting unit to familiarise the ELC members with the functioning of EVMs.

59. 5-day Event in schools for ELC activities

A 5-day event was conducted across 1,500 schools in Buldhana district of Maharashtra

State where students from all the schools of the district participated in ELC activities for one hour every day.

60. Cabs Provide Free Pick & Drop

In the state of Karnataka and Chandigarh, transportation was provided free of cost to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in collaboration with cab companies like Ola & Uber to ensure better facilitation.

61. Festivities at the Highest Polling Station

At 15,256 ft, surrounded by the snow clad mountains, Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh is the world's highest polling station. The festival of democracy was celebrated with full enthusiasm in Tashigang where a Model Polling Station was established for 48 voters from two villages i.e. Tashigang and Gete. All the Poll Personnel as well as Voters were in their traditional attire singing folk songs and dancing.

62. Special training sessions for election officials

Sikkim organized special training sessions to sensitize all officials involved in the election process on the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to ensure a hassle free experience for the voters.

63. Sign Language App created

Punjab developed a Sign Language App –to facilitate polling for people with hearing disabilities. Essentially, the Voter Helpline App was re-created with video clips in sign language for better facilitation.

64. Vote Baraat & Satrangi Saptah from Rajasthan

Satrangi Saptah was a weeklong celebration where each day of the week was dedicated to a specific segment of the electorate. Activities like Deep Daan, Band Vadan along with pledge, Vote Baraat, Mahila March, Human Chain, Tri-cycle rally and Vote





Marathon were a part of Satrangi Saptah (Rainbow Week).

65. Sports Event & Wheel Chair rallies for PwDs

In the state of Chandigarh, a cricket match was organised for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) along with wheel chair rallies to boost the morale of voters with disabilities.

66. Awareness camps for PwDs

Multiple Voter Awareness camps were conducted in Telangana on important topics like Sign Language, Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at the polling booths etc. Moreover, campaign material developed in Braille language was distributed for the ease of PwD voters.

67. Training for the use of PwD App

In the state of Tripura, all District and AC level IT nodal officers were provided training on the PwD App in order to ensure effective use of the application.

68. Online Bookings for facilities at Polling Station

In Tamil Nadu, the facility of online wheelchair booking & queue management was made available through a website to facilitate voters with disabilities.

69. Voters' Park in Haryana

In the Gurugram Parliamentary Constituency of Haryana, the voters of Gurugram Metropolitan City have traditionally been less enthusiastic about voting on the poll day. Therefore, a first of its kind 'Voters' Park' was established to spread awareness among voters in Gurugram. The information display Boards/insignia-cum-entertainment features as well as selfie points in the Voters' Park were used to attract visitors & motivate them to head out to vote on the poll day.

70. Saksham Etawah-Logo

Uttar Pradesh created Saksham Etawah – a wheelchair logo using 35,000 thumb imprints of citizens! This was a great initiative to sensitise people towards the needs of PwDs.

71. BLO sensitisation workshop

In the state of Nagaland, a workshop by special educators was conducted to sensitize BLOs on all matters related to PwDs and further enhance their capabilities in identifying and facilitating PwDs.

72. Post card campaign by Telangana

To create awareness among voters in Telangana, a Post Card Campaign was launched wherein each household was sent a letter by the Chief Electoral Officer encouraging voters to cast their vote. It also provided important information related to electoral process. A total of 1 crore post cards were distributed, covering 83,03,612 households!

73. A record feat in Nizamabad

Telangana set a unique record with 175 farmers contesting for Member of Parliament seat in the General Elections 2019. To conduct a hassle free election - the FLC, mock poll and the commissioning of 25,000 Ballot Units, 2,000 Control Units and 2,000

VVPATs was completed involving 600 engineers and 2,000 personnel in a short time span of just 3 days! An army of vehicles was used for the movement of men and machines - all fitted with GPS tracking to monitor their movement. The management of election process in Nizamabad PC stands out as a role model for the entire country.

74. Magnifying Sheets available at Polling Booths

To make elections accessible and hassle free, Delhi made Magnifying Sheets available at every polling booth for better facilitation of electors with low vision.

75. Mapping of PwDs in consultation with BLOs

A joint initiative was taken up with the social welfare department of Assam to conduct comprehensive mapping of PwDs in consultation with Chandraprabha Baideus, Divyang Sarothis and BLOs in order to facilitate the voters with disabilities for a barrier-free and inclusive Accessible Election. Mapping included moral boosting, counselling, ethical and informed voting and escort services during the poll day etc.

76. Sugamya app for PwDs

Madhya Pradesh created an app called Sugamya for encouraging PwD voters, which helped in the registration of 4.5 lakhs PwD voters, 4.2 lakhs pregnant women and 5.05 lakhs old age voters through its portal. Queue-Jump Passes were distributed to all who registered through the app.

77. International Day of PwDs celebrated

Maharashtra celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with great enthusiasm in all districts. Various events, competitions and activities were organised and PwD voters came out in large numbers to celebrate.

78. Visually impaired music band as State Icons

'Light after Dark', Meghalaya's first visually impaired music band was identified and deployed as the State Icon, giving impetus to the participation of PwDs in the electoral process.

79. Targeted Taglines

In the state of Chandigarh, different taglines were developed to appeal to specific as well as targeted audiences. For example, 'Eat Pure, Vote for Sure' was the tagline used in Hotels in Chandigarh and 'Vote for a Healthy Democracy' was used for Doctors.

80. Dialogue with the young electors

In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, young electors were made aware of the importance of democracy and the right to vote by the traditional community elders/village captains through multiple dialogues and community discussions.

81. Aaideur Chora-A public sphere for women

The State of Assam launched 'Aaideur Chora' (a public sphere for Women) initiative to educate women voters about the SVEEP (Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation) Programme. More than 2 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were reached out to along with other government departments with an aim to sensitize rural women towards their electoral rights. Weekly discussions on the value of democracy, ethical voting and other voting related information were conducted. Apart from this, more than 2,870 Village Ambassadors distributed information leaflets in local languages amongst prospective voters especially women.

82. Dedicated Volunteers for PwDs

In the State of Delhi, volunteers for voter assistance were deployed in all polling stations. The volunteers comprised mainly of school children between the age group of 15 to 17 years.

83. Buses Spread Awareness

To reach a large number of people ahead of elections, DTC buses all over Delhi were wrapped with voter awareness messages and appeals to citizens to come out and vote on the poll day.

84. Metro trains attracts All

Five Metro trains of Delhi Metro were wrapped with voter awareness content along with the pictures of popular Election Icons to appeal to the young demographic and tackle urban apathy in the capital..

85. Stamps with voting messages

Stamps with messages on voting and important information were developed and stamped on bills, cinema tickets, receipts, postal envelopes & courier parcels, etc in the state of Gujarat during elections.

86. Educational Institutions ensure enrolment of new voters

In the state of Himachal Pradesh, the Heads



of Educational Institutions were roped in to ensure that all 18+ eligible youths enrolled in their college/university are registered as voters.

87. Taxi coupons were provided to PwD voters

In the state of Mizoram, Government vehicles were assigned for transportation of PwDs on Poll Day, and PwD voters were given the facility of Taxi Coupons for easier facilitation on Poll Day.

88. Voting messages through Food Delivery App

Rajasthan collaborated with popular food delivery App – Zomato to send Voting Messages to voters ahead of poll day.

89. Sensitised Ethnic Community Leaders spread awareness

In its effort to spread voter awareness down to the grass root level, Sikkim organized a sensitization program for the leaders of ethnic communities of the State and the NGOs working for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The main objective of this was to



disseminate correct information about election procedures and processes through community leaders so that there is no room for the spread of false information and rumours.

90. Green Election in Kerala

Following a ban on the use of flex and non-biodegradable materials during electioneering, the state of Kerala held a clean and green election.

A booklet was made explaining all the ways in which the green protocol can be adhered to and special events were organized by officials like cycle rallies, and processions by students.

Green protocol volunteers in different districts, signature campaign on cloth banners, street play on green election, flash mobs, beach run, sand art, quizzes, celebrity endorsements and messages from district SVEEP icons disseminated the message further. The public was also encouraged to come up and report any violations that were noticed anywhere in the state for immediate action from authorities.

91. PwD kit distributed

A PwD Kit with Voter Assistance Guides (regular as well as in Braille), Posters in Braille and Voter Slips (in Braille/ normal - as required) were distributed to Voters with Disabilities well before the Polling Day in Maharashtra.

92. Nothing holds back this PwD Anganwadi Worker

In Bihar, Lalti Devi of Buxar District is an anganwadi worker with locomotor disability. She is married to a Person with Disabilities

(PwDs) as well. Undaunted by her physical limitations, Lalti Devi earns her livelihood by serving the children at Anganwadi Centres in her village.



During elections she also visited each household to motivate voters to come out and exercise their right to vote.

93. Instagram Influencers to reach out to the Youth

Mizoram started a Young Voters Club where top 20 Instagram users with highest followers appealed to younger generations especially to those who were found to be indifferent to exercising their franchise.



Open Mic Meghalaya

Young Voters Fest was organized by Young Voters Club for college students with events like debates, slogan writing competition, elocution and music competitions.

94. Voter Interactive Session

An interactive session covering topics like Voter Awareness, Urban Apathy, Ethical Voting, Accessible Election and importance of voting was conducted in Uttarakhand for young & first time voters to inform them regarding their democratic right. More than 4,000 students from different colleges took part in this session.

95. Mobile polling Booth for monks

The Sangha Constituency in Sikkim established a unique mobile polling booth designed to cater to the wandering Buddhist monks of the state.

96. Polling Station for one voter

In the State of Gujarat, deep into the Gir Forest, full of lions, a polling station was set up for only one voter. Also, Malagaon in Andhra Pradesh had a single voter. This shows the commitment of polling officials to our motto 'No Voter to be Left Behind'.

97. Open Mic Café

In the state of Meghalaya, in order to tackle urban apathy, an Open Mic Café event was organized. Numerous artists reached out to the man on the streets, as they shared their belief in Indian electoral process through music.

98. Voter Awareness Programme for Tribals

A Voter Awareness Programme was conducted by students in the tribal hamlets of Attapadi in Kerala. After school hours and on holidays, the students, along with the teachers, visited each and every house in the tribal hamlets of Attappadi to educate the inhabitants on the importance of exercising their right to vote and distributed informational booklets and posters. The

residents also learnt to operate the EVM-VVPAT machines. Subsequently, due to the consistent efforts of the students and officials - about 98 % of the voters exercised their voting rights. This is probably the first time in India that polling rates improved in the remotest of tribal areas through the involvement of school students.

99. Selfie Points at Polling Stations

To make voting a memorable experience, selfie points were created at the polling booths decorated with voting messages. Millions of people clicked themselves at selfie points and uploaded their pictures online on different social media handles.



I voted for the nation

Selfie booths at polling station

100. Signature Campaigns for Voting

A signature campaign to commit for voting was organised across the country on various occasions during sweep activities. People of all age and sectors would come and sign on the flex put up in the populated area of the city to catch more eyeballs.

101. Vows for Democracy

Newly-weds were seen casting their votes on their wedding day across the country. Their commitment towards their right to vote inspired many.



Breaking Barriers, Building Access: Creating a Culture of Inclusion

“I had realized that inaccessibility is a major barrier that prevents people with disabilities from actively participating in social and economic activities in Kyrgyzstan. I joined “NazikKyz” because I believe that together, us women with disabilities can contribute to building an inclusive environment.”

In an effort to increase civic participation among marginalized groups in Kyrgyzstan, in February 2018, a contest for Persons with Disabilities was organised. The contest provided them with an opportunity to design a project or activity that will increase access to decision-making processes.

Aiperi, a participant from disabled people's organization NazikKyz (Tender Girl), has

taken an active role in addressing the entrenched social divides and stereotypes that negatively impact the rights of Kyrgyz women with disabilities. Her prize-winning project, called Jiger Kyzdar or Kind Girls in Kyrgyz, awarded her a small grant to make the project a reality.

Aiperi's story and initiative were noticed by a popular Kyrgyz news agency. Together, Aiperi and the news agency designed a social experiment in which she directly engages car owners who improperly park their cars on the sidewalk and in other ways that reduce the ability of persons with disabilities to travel throughout the city. Most often the experiment is a success, and the car owners call her. Aiperi then explains that there are no scratches on the car but that their actions have concrete consequences for Persons with Disabilities. Stories like Aiperi's underscore the importance of an inclusive approach to human rights. Her efforts are a testament to the impact that one individual can have on his or her community if given the opportunity. Aiperi's perseverance and leadership will continue to shape both the lives of other Bishkek citizens with disabilities and the city itself.

Source : www.ifes.org



Building Intersectional Coalitions to Address Discrimination and Violence

In Lebanon, IIR project - 'Identify, Interpret and Respond' was launched for Gender Equality. IIR will empower civil society organizations (CSOs) to address political discrimination and violence through coordinated action.

As a first step, Inclusion Advisor Virginia Atkinson and IFES Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa Ambar Zobairi collaborated with LUPD and ABAAD to conduct an assessment utilizing IFES' Intersectionality Assessment Framework methodology. The assessment identified intersectional barriers and opportunities related to political participation of people with multiple social identities, such as



disability, gender identity, sexual orientation and religion. The intersection of these and other identities are often complicated by sectarian divisions, compounding barriers to meaningful participation in political life. How such barriers manifest at individual and societal levels is not fully understood. The intersectionality assessment collected information through desk review, key informant interviews with government, security sector, and political and community leaders and focus groups. The focus group discussions included men, women and persons with disabilities drawn from different age, wealth and educational strata and an array of religious identities and geographic regions.

Source : www.ifes.org





'She Leads' Women's Leadership Program Piloted

Women must participate in all decision-making. And we shouldn't just participate; we should implement as well. We should advocate that women's rights are human rights. We should not just participate for the sake of participating; our participation should be meaningful." – Tara Kumari Sardar

Sanja Devi Paswan beams with pride as she sits down, having just spoken in front of her fellow 'She Leads' participants during the public speaking session. Sanja is one of 25 locally elected ward members participating in the recently launched 'She Leads Nepal' pilot program. Like most of the women participants, she has never had the confidence to speak in public before. "I am from a Dalit community. In this training, I have met other women from similar communities. If I do well, my people will be happy. This is the first time I have spoken in public. My heart was beating so hard, but I felt good."

Lack of confidence, skills and knowledge, including of the rules and functions of local government, are some of the key challenges faced by the 14,345 women elected in Nepal's 2017 local elections, the first to be held in 20 years. The record number of women elected – nearly 41 percent in total – is a result of legislative quotas, which mandated two of the five elected ward committee positions be reserved for women.

To support them in their leadership positions, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), in partnership with the Center for Dalit Women Nepal (CDWN), is introducing its flagship women's leadership program 'She Leads' to Nepal. The program will initially target 500 locally elected ward members in five districts in Province One in the far east of Nepal, one of seven provinces established as part of Nepal's new federal system. Over the next four years, through a modular training program, a diverse group of women from the mountainous hill regions to the tropical tera plains will develop the leadership and technical skills to help them fulfill their roles as elected representatives.

The Nepal program draws on extensive experience running similar 'She Leads' initiatives across Asia-Pacific. Tailored to the



needs and interests of these locally elected women, the program has been informed by research involving focus groups, interviews and a baseline survey. One particular challenge is the relatively high number of illiterate women in certain areas. This meant that the curriculum development focused on visual aids, tailored local examples and a highly interactive methodology.

To ensure that the 10 national trainers, including two former female members of Parliament, have the skills and knowledge to deliver the training and manage the mixed literacy groups, a rigorous five-day training-of-trainers (ToT) course was held in May 7-11 in Kathmandu.

This investment in the training team paid off. The pilot held from May 15-17 in Biratnagar, Morang district, was lively, positive and

proved a great success. In this first module, participants learned about a range of topics in addition to public speaking, including teamwork, leadership, identifying their strengths and weaknesses and building their confidence, as well as local governance and their key roles within local government. The women were highly motivated by the sessions on gender equality and women's participation, topics they will talk about in their communities as part of their Module One assignment.

Over the course of the three-day training, participants became increasingly confident, responding well to the facilitators, content and methodology, and keen to share experiences and work with each other going forward.

Source : www.ifes.org





Increasing Youth Political Participation in Nepal

Active engagement of young people in political processes is critical to ensure that governments are representative of youth segment and aware of their priorities. In Nepal, 'Youth for Good Governance' project, which aims to build the capacity of young Nepalis to engage with elected representatives and actively participate in political processes, was initiated. Promotes collaboration between a youth organizations and clubs across Nepal through joint projects, action plans and collective platforms that seek to increase youth representation in decision-making processes.

"We should create an environment where youth are engaged and excited about politics and are able to participate in policy development." – said a student leader in AYON civic education video.

According to Nepal's National Youth Strategic Plan, Youth Vision 2025, youth are defined as being between the ages of 16 and 40. Currently, 40 percent of Nepal's 29 million

citizens are in this age range. The association of youth organisation - Nepal (AYON), a national network of 92 youth led organisations in Nepal, with a younger population, it is imperative that the government of Nepal is responsive to the needs of its young citizens and that youth can make their voices heard through elections and active engagement with elected representatives. In Nepal's next elections, expected in 2022, over 3 million young Nepalis will be eligible to vote for the first time.

Through the 'Youth for Good Governance' project, AYON developed a social media strategy to encourage young people to become more actively engaged in Nepal's democracy. AYON produced and filmed a youth participation video, highlighting the importance of youth inclusion across political, social and economic sectors. Currently, AYON is using the video as the cornerstone of its social media campaign and is also developing a policy platform based on consultations with its youth networks, which will be shared and promoted through social media. The policy platform will be used by AYON and youth participants to advocate to government stakeholders on the identified priority areas.

Source : www.ifes.org





Sri Lankan Women Leaders Deliver Civic and Voter Education Outreach

Sri Lanka's women's federations, which are networks of community-based organizations established by the National Committee on Women (NCW), represent an important group of women

leaders who are well-placed to raise awareness about democratic rights and promote full female participation that equip local women leaders with the skills needed to lead their own voter and civic education sessions was conducted.

To date, these trainings have engaged 462 women from Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities who, in the months following the training programs, initiated 232 awareness programs reaching approximately 10,000 women. Such outreach consolidate the important role women leaders can play as voter and civic educators in future election cycles.

Source : www.ifes.org



Sharing Messages about Voting Rights and Women's Electoral Participation

Through the facilitators' trainings, hundreds of women gained the skills and confidence needed to educate their communities on the women's quota, Sri Lanka's voting process, and citizens' rights and responsibilities. These include women like Arunalatha Gamagedara, the treasurer of a women's organization in Anuradhapura, who ran a program for women in her organization that focused on voting procedures, the responsibility to vote and the duties of a local government representative. It also includes women like M.I.S. Ein from the Kegalle women's federation, who – in partnership with Muslim leaders – organized voter education programs in mosques to highlight the importance of women's representation. These examples underscore the impact that trained women leaders have on motivating other women to vote and be politically active.

"The women who were present agreed to approach local government representatives to ask for support for our community projects. I told the members that there are provisions available for us [voters] to approach the EC, too, if our rights are violated." – said a newly trained female leader who organized a session to raise awareness about citizens' rights Educating Marginalized Groups.

While democracies are strongest when all groups are able to participate in the electoral process, too often, historically marginalized groups do not receive the information they need to confidently exercise their political rights. The facilitators' trainings recruited women from all ethnic groups, as well as women with disabilities and young women, to participate in these capacity-building exercises. The curriculum also highlighted the importance of electoral inclusion and encouraged newly trained women to reach out to more marginalized groups in their communities. Following the training, women like Deepa Pushpakumari, a member of a women's group in Kurunegala, conducted door-to-door outreach to explain to families the provisions available for voters with disabilities.

Source : www.ifes.org

" The women who were present agreed to approach local government representatives to ask for support for our community projects. I told the members that there are provisions available for us [voters] to approach the EC, too, if our rights are violated "
- A newly trained female leader who organized a session to raise awareness about citizens' rights

Placing Tunisian Men at the Center of Promoting Gender Equality

Illiterate women living in rural areas in Tunisia face significant barriers to exercising their electoral rights. In addition to residing in remote, inaccessible areas and lacking the financial means to travel to register or vote, they are also confronted with male resistance to their participation in public affairs. According to the survey, it was found that 16 per cent of women who participated in a mobilization campaign ahead of the May 2018 municipal elections responded that men in their families did not allow them to vote in the elections. To begin to break down this barrier, a first-ever 'Male Allies for Leadership Equality' (MALE) training was piloted in Tunisia.

MALE training uses a systemic and practical approach to build an understanding among participants that gender equality and women's empowerment will only be achieved when both women and men work toward that goal together. The objective is to train men at the household and institutional levels to defend women's right to political participation. The MALE module includes male allies at the household level because supportive household environments are vital for women's leadership development. Engaging family members is critical to maximizing women's participation by eliminating basic barriers, such as household responsibilities and restrictions on the freedom of movement.

For the pilot MALE training in Tunisia in March 2019, a diverse group of 29 men from six southern governorates gathered, many of whom were relatives of women who had already participated in outreach activities. The men came from different backgrounds, professions and literacy levels, ranged in age from 18 to 70 years old, and most had low levels of education. Over the course of two days, facilitators created a space where the



men could have open, frank discussion on topics such as gender equality, the achievements of Tunisian women, principles of citizenship, and women's participation in elections.

The training was highly successful; however, at the beginning, the participants were reserved and voiced their reluctance to the concept of gender equality, saying, for example, that women are too emotional to participate in political and civic life, hold leadership positions or make decisions. Others invoked religious beliefs as a reason to limit women's participation. Trainers subsequently exposed participants to concepts of gender equality and presented accomplishments of Tunisian women. By the end of the first day of the training, participants began to feel more at ease, increasingly confident and more interactive, and by the end of the second day, the men were visibly transformed, actively engaging with the facilitators and concepts and debating constructively with each other. More importantly, they had become more receptive to the concepts they were being taught; some men even admitted to having wrong perceptions and ideas about women.

Focus groups held after the training revealed the true extent of the transformation: an increase in the participants' appreciation of the role of women in civic and political life and an evolved understanding of gender equality and women's right to vote. As one participant said, "if you educate a woman, you educate a nation. When a woman takes a leadership role whether in family or at work, she is very assertive and strict, she takes responsibilities very seriously. That is why it is very important to support her to be more independent in her choice when it comes to election as well as cultivating her knowledge



in politics." Others expressed their willingness to share what they learned during the workshop with other men in their localities. Some suggested recruiting men ambassadors to sensitize men from rural areas since most of rural men are unaware of the importance of women's participation in political and civic life. Many highlighted that this experience was unique and enriching and emphasized the importance of reaching out to more rural women and men.

"We need to spread the knowledge that we received in this workshop; we need to be ambassadors and spread it across our environment, be it with family members, neighbors or friends," said a participant from Medenine.

Source : www.ifes.org

Mobilizing Rural Women for Tunisia's Municipal Elections

Women in Tunisia, particularly rural women, face a number of challenges to civic and political participation. According to the National Institute of Statistics, 65 percent of Tunisian women living in rural areas drop out of school at an early age, contributing to an illiteracy rate of over 30 percent within this population. Illiteracy, along with other social and cultural barriers, leads to their low electoral participation and further marginalization. The initiative was taken up to train and deploy women ambassadors in governorates with the highest illiteracy rates to encourage women, especially illiterate women living in remote and hard-to-access



areas, to register and vote in the May 6, 2018, municipal elections and provided them with information on registration and voting procedures.

Over 7,000 rural women during the voter registration campaigns and over 27,000 rural women during the mobilization campaigns were reached. Based on a TU-MED survey of women reached during the campaigns, 69 percent reported that they participated in the municipal elections, which far exceeded the national average of 35 percent. Among the women who reported voting, over 25 percent declared that they voted against candidates who wanted to buy their vote those they do not trust. These results demonstrate the campaigns' impact – not only did the majority of women reached choose to participate in the elections, but the reasons many selected certain candidates also demonstrate an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as voters.

Not only did the activity encourage some women to vote, but it also inspired them to become more engaged in civic affairs and

gave them the confidence to be active citizens in their communities. Indeed, one rural woman said, “We actually want rural women to get out of their bubble and be active in politics. A woman, whatever her socioeconomic situation is, whatever her region or how cultivated she is, we want her to prove herself, to talk with the people in authority and contribute to making decisions to improve the situation in the rural areas.”

The ambassadors also found themselves transformed by the experience, honing their communication skills and becoming active figures in their regions. As one ambassador noted, “Field work is really different from the

theory of the training. On a personal level, it shaped my communication and negotiation skills, allowed me to know my potential and shaped my thinking when talking with rural women.” Another ambassador explained that this initiative led her to discover a passion for work in civic engagement, through which she met people she never expected to meet, built new relationships, discovered different ways of life and used this information to encourage them to become more civically engaged. She summed up the experience: “This is a lifetime experience that altered my purpose in life. Now I feel that I am making a difference in this world.”

Source : www.ifes.org





Young Ukrainian Leaders Educate Peers about the Electoral Process

According to public opinion surveys in Ukraine, less than half (47 percent) of young Ukrainians say they have enough practical knowledge about the electoral process. This information gap includes a lack of knowledge on how and where to vote as well as critical information about voter registration. To address this challenge and encourage more youth participation in elections, a voter education campaign was launched targeting young Ukrainians with a focus on first-time voters. Before the presidential election, 16 student coordinators participated in a comprehensive two-day training that equipped them with the knowledge, skills and tools to organize voter

education activities for their peers. Led by electoral and civic education experts, student coordinators learned how to conduct interactive lectures, mock election exercises and quiz games for their fellow students ahead of the 2019 presidential election in Ukraine. The coordinators were selected from partner universities that implement innovative, semester-long civic education course, Democracy: From Theory to Practice.

In the 25 days before the presidential election, the student coordinators held 114 educational events, familiarizing students from 20 universities with voter registration and election procedures. Participants learned about the mandates and functions of election management, including Precinct Election Commissions, District Election Commissions, the Central Election Commission and other electoral authorities in Ukraine. They analyzed the candidates' programs and learned how to spot electoral fraud. Student coordinators also distributed more than 30,000 targeted informational brochures to students in their cities.





The campaign has reached over 3,100 young people to date, with a new campaign in advance of the July 21 parliamentary elections underway. Inspired by the previous campaign's success in the spring, student coordinators are initiating interactive lectures and mock election exercises to help young Ukrainians make informed electoral choices. "I am happy to see that we, as student coordinators, have an important job, helping our peers to make their choice independently and responsibly."

"Previously, I thought that young people participating in elections ... did not fully understand what they were experiencing," said Bohdana Kostiuk, who is currently conducting educational activities in Sumy. "I am happy to see that we, as student coordinators, have an important job, helping our peers to make their choice independently and responsibly."

Student coordinators have also become a part of the voter education campaign, "I have a right to vote." This campaign covers traditional and new media tools and face-to-face outreach. As part of this campaign, pages on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, share voter education information with Ukrainian citizens. So far, the campaign's social media content has reached over 10 million people, with over 13.5 million reactions to date.



Workshop on Political Rights of Ukrainians with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities Held

Political inclusion of all citizens regardless of gender, race, disability, ethnicity or sexual orientation is a cornerstone of representative governance. The principle of one person, one vote is fundamental to genuine democracy. While there has been some progress in increasing political access for persons with disabilities around the world, much less progress has been made to remove barriers to participation for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. In fact, they often face legal and structural restrictions to their participation –

including the full denial of their fundamental right to vote – based solely on their disability or the fact that they are under guardianship.

Over the last decade, international and regional bodies such as the United Nations (UN), European Court of Human Rights and Council of Europe have taken positions supporting the political rights of all persons with disabilities, including individuals with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) upholds the equal political rights of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. These achievements are important frameworks under which countries can be urged to further recognize universal suffrage and remove legal and structural barriers to full participation.

This community faces significant obstacles to full and equal participation in Ukraine as well, despite the fact that the UN CRPD was ratified in Ukraine in 2010. In Ukraine, under Article 70 of the Constitution, persons who



have been deemed 'incapable' by a court are not allowed to vote or run for office. People with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities also face societal discrimination, and often do not have access to accessible and easy-to-read information on the political and electoral process.

"There are many reasons why people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are more likely to encounter barriers in exercising their political rights in Ukraine. Among them are imperfections of Ukrainian legislation, the lack of information in accessible formats, lack of awareness on these issues among the electoral stakeholders, and the stigma that still exists in our society." – Nataliia Skrypka, executive director, National Assembly of People with Disabilities.

With support from the United States Agency for International Development, UK Aid, and Global Affairs Canada, on April 4, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and partner organization the National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities brought together representatives from the disabled community to discuss obstacles that persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities face in accessing their political and electoral rights in Ukraine, plan for advocacy efforts to counter discrimination, and draft solutions that will remedy issues such as discrimination and

access to information. Participants highlighted the need for a clear legislative advocacy plan, increased training of election officials on inclusion and awareness, involving community members in addressing stigma, and developing easy-to-read formats for critical election information. Participants prepared themselves for advocacy using scenarios to counter exclusionary arguments, shared their experiences and planned for future engagement, education and action.

Participants shared information about regional and international best practices and planned to meet again after Ukraine's presidential run-off on April 21. The next meeting will focus on next steps, the intersectional nature of discrimination, internally displaced persons with disabilities and legal advocacy.

"[Until] now, thousands of people in Ukraine do not have a right to vote in the elections. We believe that IFES' activities in the sphere of inclusion promotion in Ukraine launched during the workshop are a starting point for enabling full participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the political life of the country." – Yuliia Sachuk, coordinator at the Ukrainian non-governmental organization Fight for Right, after the workshop.

Source : www.ifes.org

Denmark Elects Youngest Prime Minister

On June 5, Denmark voted to elect a new Folketing, as the unicameral Danish Parliament is known as. The Folketing has 179-seats including two each representing Greenland and Farao islands. The members are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote. Therefore, every political party secures seats in Folketing in proportion to its strength amongst the voters. The House has a term of four years unless dissolved prematurely. Notwithstanding its splintered political spectrum, Denmark has enjoyed stable governments with elections held once every three years on an average.

In the recent elections the Social Democrats secured 25.9 percent of the popular votes. The party could cobble a majority by allying with Social Liberals, Socialist People's Party,



the Red-Green Alliance, Faroese Social Democratic Party and Greenland's Siumut. As a result Mette Frederiksen (42), the leader of Social Democrats, became the youngest ever Danish Prime Minister. She is also the only second woman in the history of Denmark to occupy that top post. Denmark is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy.

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<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/da.html>

2.Mette Frederiksen becomes Denmark's youngest-ever Prime Minister by Bianca Britton (CNN, June 26, 2019)
<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/26/europe/mette-frederiksen-denmark-pm-intl/index.html>



New Democracy shines in Greece snap polls

After suffering a crushing defeat in the May, 2019 European Parliament Elections, the leftist Syriza party government in Greece called for snap polls. The elections to Greek Parliament were held on July 7. On expected lines the conservative New Democracy Party shone in the elections by bagging 158 seats out of total 300. Syriza emerged runners up with 86. The New Democracy Party secured 39.9 percent of the votes, whereas Syriza secured 31.5 percent. The rest of the vote was split amongst a medley of smaller parties, new challengers on the political spectrum.

Greece has a unicameral Parliament called Vouli ton Ellinon comprising 300 seats. Out of these 280 members are chosen from multi-seat constituencies, 12 members in a single

nationwide constituency directly elected through proportional representation on open party list, and eight members in a single seat constituency elected by simple majority votes. Only parties surpassing three percent threshold are entitled to have seats in Parliament. Parties need at least 10 seats to become formal parliamentary groups. Suffrage in Greece is universal and compulsory for 17 years and above. The term of Parliament is four years.

Following the election results, Kyriakos Mitsotakis took oath as the new Prime Minister on July 8.



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1. Anna Kyriazi, General Elections in Greece 2019, MIEDEM Research Centre, Dresden.
2. CIA Fact Book, Country Profile:Greece-
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gr.html>





Kazakhstan gets a new President

On June 9, 2019 Kazakhstan held an 'early' Presidential election. Kassym-Jomart Kemelyevich Tokayev of Nur Otan (Radiant Fatherland) party clinched the contest with 71 percent votes appx. Tokayev has already been President since March 20, when Nursultan Nazarbayev, resigned after being in the post since April, 1990. This central Asian nation is constitutionally a secular, democratic and unitary republic. The President of Kazakhstan is elected by simple majority popular votes for 5-year term, and eligible for two consecutive terms. But this



constitutional amendment is of recent origin. Previously, Nazarbayev has won presidential elections five times, including most recently in 2015. Kazakhstan has a bi-cameral Parliament. Kazakhstan, world's largest landlocked nation, was last of the Soviet Republic to declare independence when the USSR was the dissolved in 1991.

The newly elected President Tokayev is perceived as a seasoned diplomat with significant international exposure. He has earlier served as Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Speaker of the Senate in addition to a stint as UN Deputy Secretary General.

Reference:

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<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html>

1.70.96% of voters cast their ballots for Kassym-Jomart Tokayev - CEC announces election results (June 10, 2019- Kazinform)

https://www.inform.kz/en/70-96-of-voters-cast-their-ballots-for-kassym-jomart-tokayev-cec-announces-election-results_a3536602





Mauritania elects a new President

Mauritania, a part of Francophone Africa, recently achieved a peaceful transition of power through presidential election. Mohammed Ould Ghazouani was elected as the President of the north-west African nation in polls held on June 22, 2019. He secured 52 percent of the popular votes in the first round, thus obviating the need for a second. Biram Dah Ould Abeid and Sidi Mohammed Ould Boubachar, both independent candidates, came distant second and third respectively with around 18 percent vote each. Ghazouani succeeds General Ould Abdel Aziz as the President of the republic. General Abdel Aziz had come out power on August 8, 2008 through a military coup. The coup d'état had overthrown Mauritania's first democratically



swept by him. The 2014 election was held amidst boycott by opposition parties. A couple of years later General Abdel Aziz announced he did not intend to contest in the 2019 elections.

Ghazouani (62), formerly Defence Minister, in General Abdel Aziz's cabinet, has a reputation for tackling insurgency effectively. He began his 5 year term on August 1 with taking of oath, a ceremony attended by major African leaders. Mauritania has a unicameral Parliament called Barlemane, the election for which was first held in two rounds on September 1 and 15, 2018.



elected government in 20 years thus ousting Mohammed Ould Cheikh Abdellahi. Presidential elections were held twice in Mauritania during General Abdel Aziz's regime- in 2009 and 2014- both of which were

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- 1.CIA Factbook: Mauritania- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mr.html>
- 2.Mauritania: Mohamed Ould Ghazouani sworn in as new President (North Africa Post, August 2, 2019) <http://northafricapost.com/32957-mauritania-mohamed-ould-ghazouani-sworn-in-as-new-president.html>



Ukraine conducts snap Parliamentary polls

On July 21, Ukraine conducted snap polls to its Supreme Council or Verkhovna Rada. This was the third time in four months that Ukraine held democratic elections. The two rounds of Presidential elections held in March and April, 2019 was historic. Volodymyr Zelensky, a political newcomer, received 73 percent of the votes to become the President. Zelensky had announced the dissolution of the Supreme Council at his swearing in ceremony on May 20 thus necessitating the snap polls. Therefore the elections due in October had to be advanced to July.

Ukraine's Supreme Council is unicameral comprising 450 seats. While one half of its members are elected directly in single seat constituencies, by simple majority votes,

another half is elected in a single nationwide constituency by closed party list-through proportional representation vote. The members serve a five year term, unless the House is prematurely dissolved.

Of the nine political parties who participated in the elections, Servant of the People won 43.2 percent of popular votes. The Opposition



Platform for Life won 13.1 percent votes, while Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) and European Solidarity won 8.2 and 8.1 percent of votes respectively. As per preliminary computation Servant of the People won 254 seats, Platform for Life 43, whereas Batkivshchyna and European Solidarity won 26 and 25 seats respectively.

Voting was not held in Crimea and two Russian occupied eastern oblasts leaving 26 seats vacant. This, in effect, reduces the strength of Verkhovna Rada to 224 seats. However, Article 83 of the Constitution mentions that Parliamentary majority consists of 226 seats. The suffrage is universal for 18 years and above.

Reference:

- 1.Statement of the NDI Election Observation Mission to Ukraine's July 21, 2019 snap Parliamentary Elections.
- 2.CIA Factbook Country Profile: Ukraine-
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html>



Fortifying women candidacy in Bolivian elections

The Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission for Women (CIM), Bolivia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Plurinational Electoral Body (OEP) with the support of international agencies like International IDEA, organized a five day course between August 12 and 16, 2019 at La Paz, Bolivia aimed at training women who are contesting the Bolivian general elections scheduled for October 20. As per the list of contestants submitted by the various political parties on July 20, almost half the candidates put up for the country's two legislative houses are women. Bolivia has already achieved second highest rate of female legislative participation in Latin America at 51.8 percent, up from 30 percent before 2014 elections. It trails only behind Cuba where women participation in legislature is 53.2 percent.

However, it is necessary to impart proper orientation and training to women, many of whom are fresh to politics. The course comprised the following modules.

1. Regulatory Framework which encourages women's political participation;
2. The Law of Political Organizations for a Parity-based Democracy;
3. Law N° 243 against Political Harassment and Violence;
4. Exercise of Public Power and Governance with gender equality;
5. Joint responsibility of citizens;
6. Political Communication and vocal workshop for Women Leaders;
7. Horizons and guidelines to move towards a parity-based democracy and depatriarchalization; and
8. The challenge of transforming the political culture.



The women facilitators came from various institutions that are part of the network 'Coordinadora de la Mujer', with wide experience in the field of human rights especially women's rights.

María Fernanda Trigo, of the OAS School of Government, stressed that "achieving greater participation of women in politics is not simply a question of justice, it also strengthens a country's governance and democratic institutions".

"We know that most of women candidates have ample experience in organizational leadership and have a long and noteworthy track-record. This training process aims to further reinforce the strengths of women candidates in order to consolidate the parity achieved in the previous General Elections in 2014, thereby overcoming the historical exclusion suffered by women", points out Alfonso Ferrufino, Senior Adviser of International IDEA in Bolivia.

Almost 50 female deputies and senatorial candidates from various political organizations participated in the course. The course is in its fifth edition, and has already trained over 300 participants from countries such Panama, Peru, and Dominican Republic etc.



The world witnesses 17th Lok Sabha Elections

During the Lok Sabha Election 2019, more than 65 representatives from 20 Election Management Bodies came to India to witness the world's largest democratic exercise in action and observe various aspects of electioneering. An initiative under ECIs Election Visitors' Programme saw heads and representatives of EMBs from Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Fiji, Georgia, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Romania, Russia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

The conduct of elections in India is an exercise gigantic in scale and complexity. On the eve of elections to the sixth phase, the delegates visited various Parliamentary constituencies to get a glimpse of the poll preparedness activities, dispatch of polling parties and the massive logistic arrangements put in place to ensure a free, fair and festive elections. They also interacted with the ground level poll machinery.

On poll day, they witnessed conduct the of mock poll early in the morning at various polling stations in Dwarka, New Delhi and interacted with the polling officials to understand the procedures and processes that make our elections so credible and transparent.

The delegates visited various polling stations in North West Delhi, East Delhi, Chandni Chowk, South Delhi and Gurgaon to see the polling-in-action and its festive nature. With the objective of sharing experiences and exchanging best practices, the delegates interacted with senior ECI officials and highly appreciated the polling arrangements.





Preparatory meeting for A-WEB General Assembly held in India

A board delegation from A-WEB (Association of World Election Bodies) visited the Election Commission of India on July 4, 2019 to discuss issues related to holding of the upcoming 4th General Assembly of A-WEB and International Conference on in India September 3-4, 2019. The delegation



discussed at length the preparations for the upcoming A-WEB conference to be held in Bengaluru, India with team from Election Commission of India led by Umesh Sinha, Senior Deputy Election Commissioner.

The four member delegation led by Jone Jun Hui, Director, Planning Department, A-WEB called upon the Sunil Arora, Chief Election Commissioner of India.



8th Voter's Day Ceremony Held

The National Election Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Korea held a ceremony for the 8th Voter's Day at the Gwacheon City Hall on May 10.

The NEC was celebrating the anniversary of the first democratic elections held in Korea on May 10, 1948 and it was possible to share the meaning of this day together with the 8th Voter's Day.

The ceremony was attended by 370 participants including NEC officials and stakeholders such as Kwon Soon-il, Chairperson of the NEC, members of the Election Advisory Committee and experts and families in election cultural development, as well as voters from various



backgrounds including disabled voters, voters from multicultural families and future voters such as middle and high school students.

In his opening address, NEC Chairperson Kwon said that 'the Republic of Korea has grown to become a free and just nation by participating and working together, and we will continue to strive for a better Korea in which all people can live prosperously. I hope that today will be a meaningful time to recall the responsibilities and duties given to us, remembering the efforts and sacrifices of many people for the development of democracy in Korea.'

Source : www.ifes.org





Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation

Central Election Commission of Russian Federation held 207th meeting

On the nomination and registration of candidates for elections on the single voting day on September 8, 2019

Opening the meeting, the Deputy Chairperson of the CEC of Russia Nikolay Bulaev presented information on the progress of regional election campaigns. He recalled that the nomination of candidates for the by-elections of deputies of the State Duma started on June 18, 2019. The CEC of Russia is awaiting the documents from the candidates no later than 13 July. Candidates from the party must submit the documents on the nomination to the District Election Commissions no later than 23 July. "As of today, 7 political parties have officially notified the CEC of Russia on participation in the by-elections of deputies of the State Duma. 4 political parties have already held events to nominate candidates, which were attended by representatives of the Central Election Commission," – said Nikolay Bulaev.



136 candidates were nominated to participate in the elections of heads of regions. "Competition in the elections of governors and regional parliaments will be active. This can be clearly seen," said Nikolay Bulaev.

The CEC of Russia made a decision and certified a list of 3 candidates for deputies of the State Duma nominated by the political party all-Russian political party 'Party of Growth' in single-seat constituencies and registered 5 authorized representatives of the party. The Central Election Commission decided to hold from July 15 to December 10, 2019 the all-Russian competition for the best coverage in regional periodicals and regional editions of all-Russian publications of elections of deputies of the State Duma, elections to regional authorities and local governments, issues of electoral legislation. "In 2019 the CEC of Russia will hold a competition for the best coverage of elections and electoral processes in the regional print media," said the Secretary of the CEC of Russia Maya Grishina. "There are three nominations in the competition: Information technology in elections, The Press educates and motivates and The Press on guard of the law. There are three awards in each category. We are waiting for meaningful and deep content." The CEC of Russia approved the use of technology for the production of protocols of precinct election commissions on the results of voting with machine-readable code during the by-elections of deputies of the State Duma. The working notebook of the Precinct Election Commission was approved collegially.

Source: <http://cikrf.ru/>



Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation

Everyone Makes Their Choice

On February 28, 2019 the first day of the First All-Russian Electoral Media Forum came to an end. A plenary session in an 'open microphone' mode moderated by Chairperson of the CEC of Russia Ella Pamfilova took place in the afternoon. The Chairperson of the Association of the Media of the North-Western Region, Director of the Regional Information Center 'TASS North-West' Alexander Potekhin in his speech noted that the regional press can be of a significant assistant for the organizers of the elections. "We need a program of work for the whole year," said Alexander Potekhin, addressing his colleagues. "Let's make proposals, an array of ideas: what we need from the Russian Fund for Free Elections, the CEC of Russia in order to work better on the ground; what kind of support, training, manuals." Chairperson of the CEC of Russia Ella Pamfilova responded to the proposal with readiness:



"We never conduct events for no special reason. If we gathered then it means that we need to start a process of cooperation, to determine its algorithm. Please, form a package of real proposals that are important to you. Then there will be sense to gather in a year and make conclusions on what our interaction has led to during this time." Chairperson of the Board of the the Russian Fund for Free Elections Vasily Volkov stressed that the idea of clean elections has become a flagship. This idea was supported in the regions, in precinct commissions. And if everyone understands this idea clearly, then some of the problems will be solved. "You need to learn how to translate legislative novelties into a modern youth language. Work for your target audience, for young people, be able to speak so as to ignite, so that you can be heard. Elections are compelling!" said Ella Pamfilova. "And it is most important that youth election commissions should not transform into youth bureaucrats. It is a delicate mission to work with young people in the regions, to form a youth electoral culture." Coordinator of the student scientific society "Internet in electoral processes of modern Russia" (Moscow State University) Vitaly Ermolaev devoted his speech to electronic voting and the situation when the Internet becomes the arena of struggle for voters. According to the speaker, in this new reality the role of the electoral journalist will change dramatically. "Journalists will have to master those tools of work in social networks that are used in business, which allow identifying the real needs of voters."

Source: <http://cikrf.ru/>

Celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Tunisia

On December 3, 2018, IFES partnered with local Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) across the globe to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which aims to promote the rights and well-being of people with disabilities and to increase awareness about their situation in political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme for this year's celebration was empowering people with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

Bringing the celebration to Tunisia, a disability rights-focused Twitter campaign was joined; a roundtable of DPOs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and government officials to discuss the barriers to political participation experienced by people with disabilities; began work on a sign language lexicon of electoral concepts; and partnered with a local radio station to broadcast three radio shows about issues faced by people with disabilities. Tunisian DPO representatives and IFES team members posted photos with statements describing the barriers to the political participation of people with disabilities and what is needed to overcome those barriers.



Source : www.ifes.org



Towards transparent funding of elections and politics

The Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) organized its second Election Management Capacity Building Programme of the year 2019. Themed 'Fostering Transparency in Political Finance' it was held in Incheon, South Korea from July 3 to 12. The workshop drew participation from seven nations viz. Colombia, Georgia, Mongolia, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda. The participants pondered upon the current status of their countries' political finance system and shared their experiences on effective control, monitoring and oversight. They also shared the efforts being made by their respective countries to foster transparency in political financing and increasing people's trust in the electoral processes.

Daeil Kim, Director General, A-WEB delivered his welcome address at the inauguration on July 3. The afternoon session on the first day was moderated by Prof. Eunyoung Moon, Korean Civil Education Institute for Democracy (KOEI). Beginning with Columbia, in alphabetical



order, participants from different nations presented a profile of electoral and political finance system in their respective countries and shared their experience of election management. The report presentation continued on July 4 forenoon. In the afternoon, Prof. Kyungbae Park introduced the political system of Republic of Korea and imparted a guideline for drafting an Action Plan.

On July 5, Yulipa Shypilova, International Electoral and Political Finance Expert, delivered a lecture on 'Political Finance System: Effective Implementation'. The lecture was accompanied by an activity session where participants expressed their 'agreement' or 'disagreement' with ideas proposed. The participants shared, listened and discussed each other's views on diverse topics.

July 6, being a weekend, was marked for cultural tour. The participants visited Seoul Tower and National Museum of Korea. On July 8, Brenda Santamaria, Head of Organization of American States (OAS) delivered a lecture on 'Women, Money, Politics: Political-Electoral Finance from a Gender Perspective'. The session discussed difficulties in fund raising by women candidates with special focus on Latin



American nations. In the afternoon session, Prof. Sunghun Jan from KOCEI delivered a lecture on 'Political Finance System on South Korea'.

July 9 featured lectures by Magnum Ohman, Senior Political Finance Expert from International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), and Pablo Secchi, Secretary General of Poder Ciudadano (Power of Citizens), and Argentina based civic society on the themes of 'Impact and Abuse of State Resources on the Democratic Process and Regulation Implementation' and 'The Role and Efforts of Civil Society in Fostering Transparency in Political Finance' respectively.

The following day the participants visited National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea, located in Gwacheon as well as National Assembly, to witness an interpellation session of the National Assembly, and learned more about its history. Only July 11, each participating country presented an action plan. Each plan was discussed in the assembly, and participants shared feedback. On July 12, the final day, the participants shared their impressions and opinion as the de-briefing session. The programme came to an end with the closing ceremony. Jennifer Angeyo of Ugandan Electoral Commission had the honour to offer the last words.





Regional BRIDGE Workshop on Financing of Elections

The workshop is designed to improve skills, knowledge and confidence of participants through an active-learning methodology on general principles of sound financial planning – in a general sense, and also specifically in relation to electoral events and the electoral cycle.

Furthermore, the workshop will provide an opportunity for International IDEA to pilot and further

develop the module ahead of its official launch on the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) website in late 2019.

The workshop will take place in conjunction with the Timor-Leste referendum celebrations in late August 2019 and will have a mix of 15-20 local and international participants from election management bodies (EMBs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) from Botswana, Indonesia, Malawi, Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Thailand.

The workshop is organized by International IDEA, the Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (STAE), and the UNDP project Leveraging Electoral Assistance for Regionalized Nation-Building (LEARN).

Source: <https://www.idea.int/news-media/events/regional-bridge-workshop-financing-elections>

International IDEA celebrates European elections night at the European Parliament

On the occasion of the European Parliament Elections 2019, the International IDEA Europe Office participated in a public open-air event organized by the European Parliament (EP) on May 26, 2019 on the EP Esplanade in Brussels. Together with Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE) Election Observation, we shared a large stand just in front of the European Parliament. This gave a good opportunity for International IDEA's Brussels staff to interact directly with many interested European citizens and showcase the work of the Institute, especially in relation to democracy in the EU.



International IDEA also took part as the main co-organizer in a debate on 'Leave no young person behind: youth and the EP 2019 elections'. Marilyn Neven, as keynote speaker, introduced the topic in the wider context of EU democracy and youth participation, and presented International IDEA's work in the field of youth and elections, in particular the newly released Discussion Paper 'Engaging young people and women in European Parliament elections'. A lively debate attended by a sizeable audience took place with representatives from AEGEE (European Students' Forum), the European Youth Forum, AGE Platform Europe, Democracy International and Election Watch. Many Brussels-based citizens who seldom participate in democracy debates found an opportunity to do so at the heart of the EU.

A large number of International IDEA publications and gadgets were disseminated, which prompted queries on democracy in Europe, out-of-country voting and the state of global democracy. The spontaneous discussions were a sign of citizens' genuine interest in the work of International IDEA.

Source: <https://www.idea.int/news-media/news/international-idea-celebrates-european-elections-night-european-parliament>

Third Annual Youth Academy on 'Youth Political Contribution to Prevent/Mitigate Electoral & Political Violence in African Countries'

Professional electoral administrators are key to delivering well-organized, credible and genuine elections. The Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) perform best when their leadership has thorough understanding of the mechanics, principles and good practices in electoral administration.

Ethiopia will be conducting in 2020, federal and regional elections to elect members of the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) as well as regional legislative bodies. The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) will be responsible for undertaking a range of complex tasks to ensure that an estimated 40 million eligible citizens are able to cast their ballot and have a say in the future direction of their country.

The country has recently adopted a new law governing the establishment of the electoral board and in June 2019 appointed six new members in addition to the recently installed chairperson. To support the electoral process, the International Institute for Democracy and Elections (International IDEA) will organize an orientation on electoral processes for new board members. The orientation programme will equip officials with important skills that will be required in the conduct of the 2020 elections.

Source: <https://www.idea.int/news-media/events/orientation-programme-new-national-electoral-board-ethiopia-members>



Update of Haiti's National Strategy on Gender and Elections



Haiti organised a workshop for updating the National Strategy on Gender and Education (SNGE) ahead of the country's October, 2019 legislative elections. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and the Ministry for Women's Affairs and Women's Rights (MCFDF) first developed the strategy in 2014. This new update, requested by the CEP and MCFDF, allows IFES to build on its on-going collaboration with both institutions and apply learning from the past five years to strengthen the SNGE as an instrument for the protection of women's electoral rights in Haiti. On January 15, a workshop on the SNGE update with 18 representatives from 14 prominent local women's and human rights organizations and additional representatives of the United States Agency for International Development, National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Embassy of Canada was conducted. The workshop served as a platform for participants to provide input on and suggest changes to each of the seven



themes addressed by the SNGE: legal and regulatory framework, elections management, women voters, women and decision-making, political parties, media and violence against women in elections. It was also suggested that participating organizations show their support for provisions in the draft Electoral Law currently in Parliament that bolster the 30 percent quota and requirements for more women on political parties' candidate lists for all elections. The group agreed to draft a letter supporting the provisions and advocating for Parliament to retain and adopt these provisions. The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) will support the organization of a press conference and the publication of the letter signed by all 14 organizations in the country's leading newspaper, Le Nouvelliste.

Since 2014, IFES has been working with the CEP to mainstream gender-sensitive legislation and practices that contribute to increased political participation and electoral representation for women. In the initial SNGE development in 2014, it facilitated meetings with key stakeholders and the CEP and the MCFDF officially adopted the strategy in 2015. More recently, its collaboration with the CEP and MCFDF has included meetings to discuss adding key provisions to the electoral law that strengthen requirements for female participation and stipulate concrete provisions, such as that one out of every three candidates in political parties' candidate lists must be a woman.

2019 Democracy Awards

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) Charles T. Manatt Democracy Award is presented each year in a special ceremony to one Democrat, one Republican and a member of the international community who demonstrate the dedication to democracy and human rights embodied by the award's namesake, former IFES Board of Directors Chairman Charles T. Manatt.

IFES will honor Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, former United States Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright (D) and former U.S. National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley (R) with its 2019 Democracy Award. Honorees will receive their awards at a special ceremony that will take place on Monday, September 30, at the Washington Marriott



Georgetown located at 1221 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Individual tickets for this ceremony are \$500 and tables of 10 are \$5,000. Other sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Lauren Terrell at +1.202.350.6709 or lterrell@ifes.org for a full listing.

The proceeds from the event will benefit the IFES Innovation Fund, an endowment that supports original projects that address pressing issues in democratic development today. IFES awards funds to outstanding proposals from staff that support local programs focused on promoting gender equality, adequate use of technology, electoral security, human rights and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Event Date: Sep 30, 2019 at 6:00pm

Location: Washington Marriott Georgetown, 1221 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037

Regions and Countries: United States of America

Issues: Thought Leadership



Third Issue of VoICE International Launched

This issue of VoICE International highlighted the experiences of different EMBs on 'Voter Education for Informed and Ethical Voting'. Different EMBs have shaped up their systems for informed and ethical voting because investing in the health of democracy is of utmost importance.

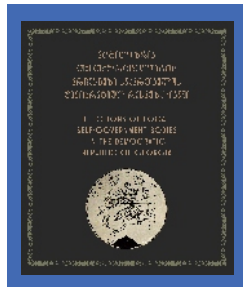
The theme of this issue essentially focuses on how to empower voters through information, awareness and motivation for participation besides enabling a voter to appreciate the significance and relevance of ethical voting. Effective voter education empowers an elector to take informed, considered and confident ballot decisions.

This issue further brings to the reader interesting snippets, election updates, international events and announcements from

different EMBs and International Institutions. Furthermore, EMBs of BiH, Georgia, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Maldives, India besides International IDEA share rich experiences on the subject besides a paper on good practices from Russia in this issue.



Elections of Local Self-government Bodies in the Democratic Republic of Georgia



The Central Election Commission (CEC) together with its partners - IvaneJavakhishvili Tbilisi State University and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) released significant publication "Elections of Local Self-government Bodies in the Democratic Republic of Georgia" in 2019. The publication is dedicated to Local Self-government Elections held in 1918-1920 and it reflects information about elections as well as documentary material.

This publication allows us to widely share the unique pathway that Georgia has undergone during the initial stage of its independence and let Georgian citizens get introduced with the process of developing the democratic electoral culture in Georgia. In 1917 Georgian society initiated self-government reform and started its implementation as soon as the first opportunity arose. The idea behind the reform can be associated with the first steps taken by Georgian people towards the formation of a democratic society. The historical materials shared in the publication take the readers to the reality that Georgia faced during those times and allow them to evaluate the readiness and aspiration of Georgian people to support its democratic development. The readers will have a chance to assess the principles, which laid as a ground to

the first electoral processes in Georgia. Self-government elections held in 20 Uyezds (regional units) and 26 cities carried the unique electoral principles. Inclusiveness of elections, active and passive electoral rights of women as well as the engagement of ethnic minorities are those democratic principles, which were born in Georgia together with elections. These principles are highly respected in today's electoral processes and a century has passed since its establishment in Georgian culture. These elections should be also outlined in terms of administration and management. All the work and complex processes carried out during at those difficult times, including the financial management of elections and the structural design of the self-government system represented a very progressive process at the beginning of the previous century. This publication will introduce historical persons, who were committed and made every effort to realize society's demand for establishing democratic governance.

The Central Election Commission of Georgia expresses special gratitude to IFES for supporting this significant process and IvaneJavakhishvili Tbilisi State University for carrying out the huge work related to the processing of archived historical materials.

Source : www.ifes.org

First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia



Another important publication, 'First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia' was initially released in 2017 and then re-released in 2018. This publication was made possible by Central Election Commission in cooperation with Ivane Javakhishvili, Tbilisi State University and with support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). This edition is dedicated to one of the most significant events in Georgian history, namely, the first free democratic elections of Georgia that unequivocally demonstrated the high level of political culture in Georgian society at the beginning of the 20th century. The 1919 elections of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia were significant in many regards, though especially notable is the application of universal enfranchisement – Georgian election legislation granted franchise to each citizen, regardless of gender and origins. In these elections, five women were elected to the Constituent Assembly, at a time when in the majority of countries women were not granted the right to vote; furthermore Kristine Sharashidze was elected as a member of presidium (Secretary). In addition

to women's participation in the elections in Georgia, voting as well as the right to contest the elections was extended to representatives of ethnic minorities residing in the country. These elections were a demonstration of democracy, equality, tolerance and humanistic values in a country that had lost its statehood for more than a century and restored independence just several months prior. The first democratic republic existed for a short of time, yet its legacy left a number of issues that are still relevant today. Two important events, the founding of the first university in Georgia and the restoration of autocephaly of the Georgian church preceded the most significant moment in Georgian history, that is the declaration of independence and establishment of the first independent republic.

This publication, 'The First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia' serves to promote Georgia's electoral legacy. The CEC of Georgia is delighted to cooperate with Ivane Javakhishvili, State University Library and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in support of this goal.

Source : www.ifes.org



Guide on Supporting Political Rights of Persons with Disabilities



In 2019, Handéo, a French Disabled Persons' Organization (DPO), released an updated version of its guide on how to promote access to elections for people with disabilities. The guide was released following a recent change to the Electoral Code, which enables people who are under

guardianship to vote. The guide, available in French, aims to raise awareness about disability rights, encourage the creation of accessible campaign materials, and provide guidance on organizing civic education workshops.

Source : www.ifes.org



Political Participation of Women and Men with Disabilities in Tunisia: An IFES Assessment



In December 2018, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) published 'Political Participation of Women and Men with Disabilities in Tunisia: An IFES Assessment', a document that outlines barriers to and opportunities for persons with disabilities who face multiple forms of marginalization. The report highlights the following findings:

- There is a lack of data related to the number of Tunisian voters with disabilities and where they live.
- Tunisia does have a supportive policy framework for inclusion of persons with disabilities in electoral processes.
- The Independent High Election Institute took numerous steps to make the electoral process accessible for the municipal council elections.
- There was not enough active consultation between Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) and government stakeholders to ensure assistive devices and materials were effective.
- The process of getting a disability card and related policies are negatively impacting the political participation of Tunisians with disabilities.
- Outreach to Persons with Disabilities regarding information about the municipal council elections was insufficient.

Source : www.ifes.org



Engaging Young People and Women in European Parliament Elections



This Discussion Paper puts together relevant data on the inclusion of young people and women in European Parliament elections.

It is focused on two pitfalls of EU electoral democracy: voter absenteeism on the part of young people, and the under-representation of women in the European Parliament. Data have been combined from the European Election Studies (EES), the European Parliament, and the Gender Statistics Database of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), face-to-face and telephone interviews, and semi-structured questionnaires. Additionally, policy papers and other relevant texts (authored by organizations dedicated to young people, women and think tanks, as well as

Europarties and groups in the European Parliament) have been considered. The scope of the paper is European, although data at a national level from France, Poland and Spain (a founding EU country, an Eastern European country and a Southern European country) are introduced in different sections to shed light on national differences. With the purpose of enriching and making EU electoral democracy stronger, the author presents, as food for thought, some evidence on key elements to foster participation in European Parliament elections, as well as to reach a more balanced composition of the European Parliament in terms of age and gender.

Source: www.idea.int



Cyber Security in Elections



Information and communication technologies are increasingly prevalent in electoral management and democratic processes, even for countries without any form of electronic voting.

These technologies offer numerous new opportunities, but also new threats. Cyber security is currently one of the greatest electoral challenges. It involves a broad range of actors, including electoral management bodies, cyber security expert bodies and security agencies.

Many countries have found that interagency collaboration is essential for defending elections against digital threats. In recent years, significant advances have been made in organizing such collaboration at the domestic and international levels.

This guide tracks how countries are making progress on improving cyber security in elections. Based on an extensive collection of 20 case studies from all over the world, it provides lessons for those wanting to strengthen their defenses against cyber-attacks.

Source: www.idea.int



Gender In Political Parties' Strategic Plans



The global average for women's representation in parliaments was 24% in January 2019. Political parties are identified as responsible for women's underrepresentation, given their role as the main gatekeepers of elected decision-making positions in most countries.

This factsheet illustrates the link of gender in political parties' programmes and operational policies, processes and practices. It highlights the approach for institutionalizing gender equality in the conceptualization, development and implementation of a party's strategic plan.

Source: www.idea.int

Press Freedom and Global State of Democracy Indices

The key findings on press freedom derived from the most recent update to the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices data are as follows:

During the period 1975–2017, the world has seen a remarkable improvement in both Freedom of Expression and Media Integrity, as measured in the GSoD Indices. In 1975, 62% of countries had low levels of Freedom of Expression and 63% had low levels of Media Integrity, while in 2017, this was the case for only 16% and 17% of countries respectively. In recent years, an increasing number of countries that were previously high performing on Freedom of Expression and Media Integrity are slipping into the mid-range, reflecting worsening conditions in these countries. The share of high-performing countries on Freedom of Expression peaked in 2012, at 41%, before dropping to 34% by 2017. Likewise, the share of high-performing countries on Media Integrity has dropped from 40% in 2006 to 32% in 2017.

Since 2012, the number of countries showing a decline in Freedom of Expression has increased steadily every year. The period 2015–2017 marked the first time where more countries have declined than advanced for two

consecutive years. Of all the aspects of democracy, Freedom of Expression is the one that has seen the most countries showing a decline.

From 2012 to 2017, 24% of countries showed a decline, and only 11% an improvement, in their scores on Freedom of Expression. Declines are seen across all regions of the world, with Europe seeing the most countries decline (14 countries, 33%). Of the 37 countries experiencing 5-year declines, 3 saw declines great enough to fall below the global average (Cameroon, Libya, Turkey), and 8 fell below their respective regional average (Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, Egypt, Libya, Poland, Thailand and Yemen).

From 2012 to 2017, 21 per cent of countries in the world (33 countries) saw a decline on Media Integrity, while only 6.3% (10) saw an improvement. The vast majority saw no change one way or the other.

This GSoD showcases data on press freedom derived from the GSoD Indices, which now covers a total of 158 countries for the period 1975–2017. More detailed analyses of regional findings will be included in the second edition of The Global State of Democracy, which will be published in November 2019.

World Election Calendar

Country	Election	Date
Greece	Greece Parliament	07-07-2019
Ukraine	Ukrainian Supreme Council (Snap)	21-07- 2019
Japan	Japanese House of Councillors	21-07-2019
Guatemala	President Run Off	11-08-2019
Madagascar	Referendum	31-08-2019
Nauru	Nauruan Parliament	24-08-2019
Tuvalu	Tuvaluan House of Assembly	09-09-2019
Tunisia	President	15-09-2019
Israel	Israeli Knesset	17-09-2019

Country	Election	Date
Afghanistan	President	28-09-2019
Austria	Austrian National Council	29-09-2019
Montserrat	Montserratian Legislative Council	30-09-2019
United Arab Emirates	Emirati Federal National Council	05-10-2019
Portugal	Portuguese Assembly of the Republic	06-10-2019
Tunisia	Tunisian Constituent Assembly	06-10-2019
Poland	Polish Sejm	13-10-2019
Mozambique	President	15-10-2019

World Election Calendar

Country	Election	Date
Mozambique	Mozambican Assembly	15-10-2019
Switzerland	Swiss National Council	20-10-2019
Switzerland	Referendum	20-10-2019
Canada	Canadian House of Commons	21-10-2019
Argentina	Argentinian Chamber of Deputies	27-10-2019
Argentina	Argentinian Senate	27-10-2019
Uruguay	President	27-10-2019
Uruguay	Uruguayan Chamber of Representatives	27-10-2019

Country	Election	Date
Argentina	President	27-10-2019
Bolivia	Bolivian Chamber of Deputies	27-10-2019
Bolivia	Bolivian Chamber of Senators	27-10-2019
Haiti	Haitian Senate	27-10-2019
Haiti	Haitian Chamber of Deputies	27-10-2019
Bolivia	President	27-10-2019
Botswana	Botswana National Assembly	31-10-2019
Botswana	President	31-10-2019

Acknowledgement: Electionguide.org

A-Z GLOSSARY

Blue Ribbon Electorates

An electorate where a substantial majority of voters usually vote for the same member or party.



Hospital vote

Voters living in retirement homes or in long term hospital care are generally visited by electoral officials. Some centres are visited ahead of polling day, and residents cast a pre-poll vote. Other mobile booths are taken around large institutions on polling day and voters are able to cast an ordinary vote. In some states, votes collected by mobile booths are referred to as 'declared institution' or 'electoral visitor' votes.



Electorate

An electorate is a geographic sub-division which elects members of Parliament. It is also referred to as an electoral district or electoral division or just simply a division. Equivalent overseas terms are 'constituency' in the United Kingdom, 'riding' in Canada and 'district' in the United States.



Push polling

Push polling is a controversial form of negative campaigning in which pseudo opinion polls are used to influence the views and beliefs of voters.



Gerrymander

A gerrymander is the deliberate drawing of electoral boundaries to gain political advantage. It is not the same as a mal-apportionment, as electorates can be equal in enrolment and still be gerrymandered. The word 'gerrymander' forever commemorates Elbridge Gerry, elected Governor of the US state of Massachusetts in 1810. Governor Gerry embarked on re-drawing the boundaries of seats in the state Senate to the extent that his party won 29 of the 40 seats despite obtaining only a minority of the vote. One of the new seats drawn bore some resemblance to a salamander, the new word Gerry-mander coined as part of the campaign to discredit the electoral boundaries.





01

Argentina, Australia and Brazil are among 22 countries in the world which have one mandatory rule for citizens. Failure to adhere to this can result in a heavy fine. Which rule is this?

02

Nepal, Bhutan, Namibia and Kenya, among others, have purchased this equipment, manufactured in India by Bharat Electronics Limited and Electronics Corporation of India Limited, for their electoral processes. What are we talking about?

03

As of 2017, the number of electors for this election stands at only 217. The vote takes place in a closed, locked room and the result is announced to the world through white smoke out of a chimney. Who is being elected?

04

The head of the Government of Austria and the head of Government of Germany is not the Prime Minister or President, the countries have another designation for their heads. What is this designation?

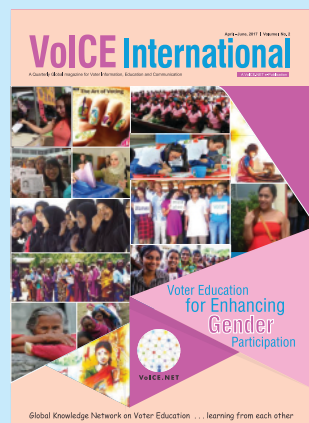
05

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 overturned existing Jim Crow laws in the United States to guarantee which group of people the right to vote freely and openly?

PREVIOUS ISSUES OF VoICE INTERNATIONAL



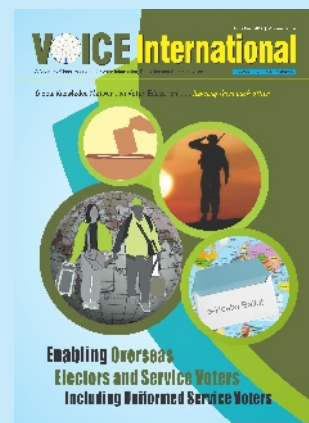
JAN-MAR 2017



APR-JUN 2017



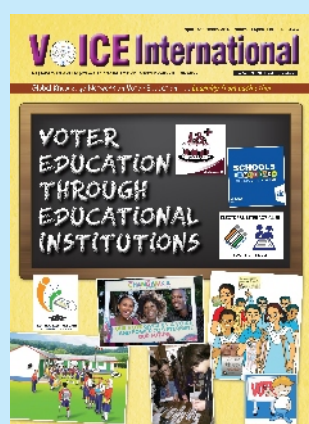
JUL-SEP 2017



OCT-DEC 2017



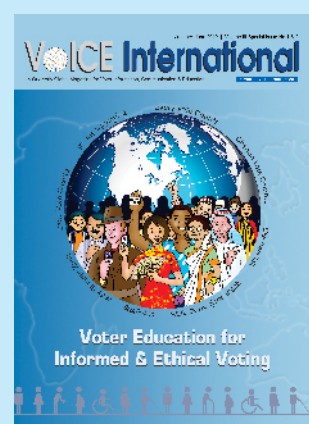
JAN-MAR 2018



APR-SEPT 2018



OCT- DEC 2018



JAN- JUN 2019

VoICE.NET





Voter Information, Communication & Education Network

Voter Information, Communication & Education Network (VoICE.NET) is a Global Knowledge Network for sharing knowledge, resources and expertise on **Voter Education**.

VoICE.NET was launched on October 20, 2016 at the International Conference on Voter Education for Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation held at New Delhi. The Global Knowledge Network is a part of the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the Conference by the 25 Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and representatives from UNDP, International IDEA, IFES and Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre. **VoICE.NET** contents are provided by the member EMBs/Organizations and the portal is maintained by Election Commission of India.

