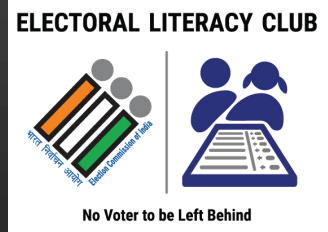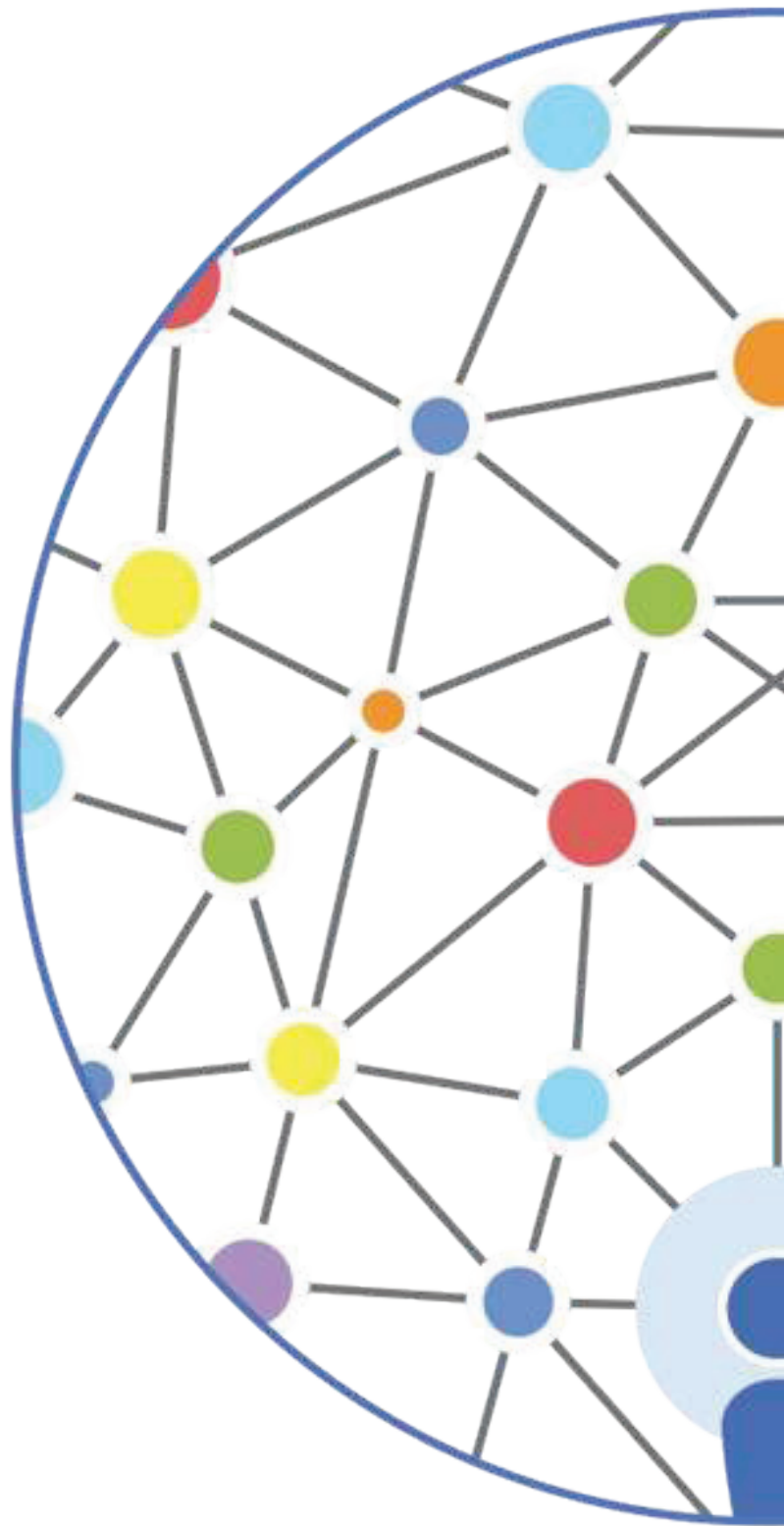# V ICE International

A Quarterly Global Magazine for Voter Information Communication & Education

A VoICE.NET e-Publication

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EDITORIAL

I thank the readers and contributors of the previous issues of VoICE International and welcome the readers to this special Issue No. 2 & 3 of Volume II of the magazine. In this issue, we bring to you a bouquet of articles on the theme 'Voter Education through Educational Institutions'. This theme primarily focuses on introducing greater electoral awareness and sensitivity for future generations of voters and electoral participants, an issue that has great significance and relevance for investment in the future of Electoral Democracy.

Today, apathy of the youth towards electoral participation and non-exercise of the right to franchise by a large proportion of them, is a major concern in several democratic countries. In this respect, effective electoral literacy programmes through school and college level initiatives are an important means of encouraging participation of youth in the electoral process. Further, the outreach of electoral literacy initiatives can be increased manifold through the use of electronic, internet and social media. It is heartening to learn that most democracies across the world, conscious of the importance of such initiatives have taken significant steps towards introducing several innovative and creative initiatives toward their electoral literacy programmes using both formal and informal channels.

On behalf of the magazine, I would like to express my gratitude toward all contributors who have sent their insightful articles on this subject. I salute Ms Nubia Villacís Carreño, President of the National Electoral Council of Ecuador, who has taken the time to write on the role of the Council in the construction of a democratic culture in Ecuador. I also thank Mr. Ravneel Chand from Fijian Election Office for his article on the topic 'Elections Module in Compulsory School Curriculum', Ms. Lela Javakhishvili, IFES Georgia for her article 'The Galvanizing Force of Civic Education in a Sustainable Democracy', Ms. Dorothy Atieno and Ms. Katie Simba, IFES, Kenya who wrote on 'Voter Education through Educational Institutions in Kenya' and Ms Zvjezdana Dragovic from AEOBiH Secretariate for her article 'First Time Voter – Go Out and Vote.'

Further, we also have a highly informative in-house contribution from Mr. S D Sharma, Senior Fellow, ECI on voter education through educational Institutions in Australia, New Zealand, Georgia, Canada and the US etc.
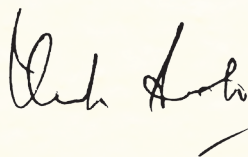
In India, we have been working on 'Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through Educational Institutions, Organizations and Communities' under the long term Action Plan of the ECI. Under this initiative we have launched the Electoral Literacy Club (ELC) project in addition to the several electoral literacy programmes introduced in educational institutions right from the secondary level. I am happy to share our experience in India with you in this issue.

Apart from contributions on the core theme, the magazine also features articles on some other important and pertinent subjects. We are thankful for an article by Mr Tarcisio Vieira De Carvalho Neto, Minister, Superior Electoral Court of Brazil on 'Brazil's Fight Against Fake News The Threat to Democracy and Elections'. The magazine also includes an article about 'National Consultation on Accessible Elections' organized by the ECI.

I take this opportunity to heartily thank all the contributors for sharing their rich experiences in the current Issue.

I am also delighted to announce the topic of the forthcoming issue of the magazine - 'Making Polling Stations Accessible and Voter Friendly', which has been an area of focus for many EMBs. Voter friendly polling stations make the experience of voting more welcoming and convenient for all voters, an essential element in ensuring a pleasant and smooth electoral experience. I am sure this will give a great opportunity to all EMBs to learn from one another. I earnestly call upon the Member EMBs and Institutions to send us their contributions on the subject as soon as possible and preferably by October 31, 2018.

I dedicate this issue to the cause of larger participation of young in the world democracies.

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

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONTENTS

106

109

112

Voter Education through **Educational Institutions**

The Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AEOBiH) project **'First Time Voter – Go Out and Vote'**

The Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AEOBiH) was founded in 1999 with the aim to provide a politically impartial forum in which people and institutions will debate and work for the promotion of democratic, open and transparent elections and government. AEOBiH has been working on educational projects with elected officials, women, youth, people with disabilities in order to strengthen the role of citizens in the decision making processes. AEOBiH has a crucial role in the field of elections and increasing democracy and good governance in BiH. It has more than 1,000 members and volunteers all over BiH.

One of the AEOBiH strategic goals is to establish better communication between citizens and

officials in BiH. This contributed to the raising of general awareness in citizens to better exercise their rights and responsibilities through strong educational campaign.

One of the project is "First Time Voter – Go Out and Vote", voter education project through secondary schools. Since 2010, thanks to the funds of the USA Embassy in BiH – Office of Public Affairs, Council of Europe and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, more than 10,000 students have been trained. The main goal of this project is to motivate youth to actively participate in the elections and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This project familiarized students with election policy and system in BiH, and motivated them to

become more involved in public and political life in BiH. This was proved by increasing number of young people that participated in the elections as members of polling station committees or as observers of election process.

Taking into consideration that there are almost 140 000 new voters who could vote for the first time, this activity was extremely useful and important. Although students have subject "Democracy and human rights" in their regular school's curriculum, elections are not covered and unfortunately level of students' knowledge about elections is very low. Trainers in schools educated students about elections and elections procedure and asked them some basic questions such as "Who are current presidents of the Presidency of BiH? Which level of government shall we elect in October 2016? Who are Vice-Presidents of RS? Very few students in schools knew the answer and are generally less interested in this topic. Trainers in the field used various approaches to students. Some of them used various multimedia presentations, TV spots, etc. while the others had presentation through questions / answers method, quiz. One of the trainers used brainstorming on elections.

Students' answers were very broad, but usually negative such as corruption, framing, fraud, etc. Many of them said they would go out and destroy their ballots on purpose, but after explaining them how important their vote can be, they changed their opinion. We explained them that they are the ones who know their needs best and they should not allow someone else to make decisions for them. Some of the students were especially interested in the work of mobile teams and how fraud could be prevented.

All trainers made simulation of elections. Most of them brought ballot box and all of them brought sample ballots for the training so students had an opportunity to see complete elections procedure in the class. Some students took role as polling station committee members and were motivated to apply for observing or working in PSC during elections. Many of the students promised that they will advise their age-mates and family to go out and vote. It was very interesting question from one of the students: why don't we have ballot box for each election level during elections at each polling station because it would be much faster to count votes in that case? In accordance with current BiH election procedure, PSCs need at least

> **Many of the students promised that they will advise their age-mates and family to go out and vote**

half an hour to 2 hours just to separate ballots per levels.

Students listed more job opportunities, better infrastructure in municipalities, more working places, higher scholarships, less betting shops, repair of factories, streets, and mostly programs generally more oriented towards young people when we asked them what they would like to see in programs of political subjects for election campaign. Very low number of students listed entertainment or sports related needs, such as athletic track, roller track, swimming pool, etc. This gives us hope that young generations have very good way of thinking.

Students actively participated in the workshops and were very happy with approach of the trainers who succeeded to motivate them to be active. They were most interested in the work of mobile teams and they were surprised by the fact that prisoners have the right to vote because they could not understand how people involved in criminal activities could vote for future representatives, i.e. local authorities. They promised to go out and vote in October!

All pupils had a chance to vote on mock elections, which were organized in their classrooms and some of them were acting as Polling Station Committee members. It is promising that there were not many invalid ballots (only 2%), and that students now know and understand how to properly vote. All students declared that they will go out and vote. They understand the importance of voting and active participation in public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thanks to this project, AEOBiH was recognized as a credible organization enable to motivate students to participate during workshops, and to go out and vote. Some school principals
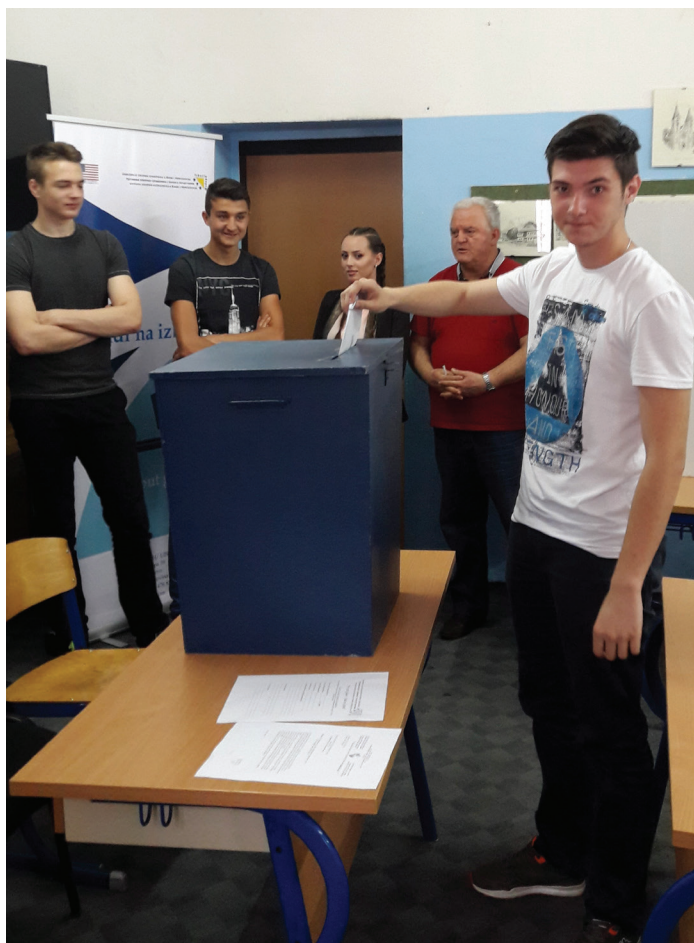
asked for additional workshops, and to include their schools in any other project that we will implement in the future.

AEOBiH has been selected as one of three finalists of the 2016 International Electoral Awards in the category "Citizens' Engagement Award" by the International Electoral Awards Committee from International Centre for Parliamentary Studies in the category "First Time Voter Award". Award ceremony was held on December 5, 2016 in Mozambique, and AEOBiH was awarded with 'Recognition for outstanding achievement'. *http://awards. electoralnetwork.org/shortlist-2016.php*

Zvjezdana Dragovic
Executive Director
AEOBiH Secretariat

Role of National Electoral Council in **constructing a Democratic Culture**

In compliance with the Constitution, the National Electoral Council (CNE) has carried out electoral processes at national and local level, with efficiency and security. Likewise, it has promoted the strengthening of the civic and democratic culture through educational programs and trainings addressed to different political and social stakeholders throughout the country. By means of these actions, which are executed in close coordination with middle-level and higher educational institutions, social collectivities, associations, unions and political organizations, the Ecuadorian electoral organism guarantees its citizens their rights of political participation.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador stablishes in its Article 1 that: "Ecuador is a constitutional State of rights and justice, a social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, multinational and secular State. It is organized as a republic and is governed using a decentralized approach. Sovereignty lies with the people, whose will is the basis of all authority, and it is exercised through public bodies using direct participatory

forms of government as provided for by the Constitution".

Following the approval of the Constitution through Referendum in 2008, the Ecuadorian State moved forward in its search for inclusion, encouraged participation, reached a new way of citizen coexistence, in a society that respects, in every dimension, the dignity of persons and collectivities.

The Electoral Branch, formed by two institutions in the current Constitution, guarantees the exercise of the political rights expressed through suffrage, as well as those related to the political organization of citizenry.

This State Branch comprises the National Electoral Council, whose constitutional mandate is to organize, direct, oversee and guarantee, in a transparent manner,the electoral processes, as well as to promote civic and democratic education of citizens; and the Contentious Electoral Court, whose function is to administer justice in electoral matters, and its decisions and resolutions shall constitute electoral case law, shall be the appeal of last resort and shall require immediate compliance.

In compliance with the Constitution, the National Electoral Council continuously carries out electoral processes, both nationwide and at local level, reaffirming itself as an institution that guarantees political rights. At the same time, it develops educational programs to promote civic and democratic education of the Ecuadorian society.

The continuous improvement of its processes is part of a policy for institutional strengthening, which allows the CNE to provide citizen services aiming to promote an educational culture that permits every citizen to know their rights, obligations and responsibilities.

The fact that the CNE has formulated as one of its strategic goals: "To promote citizen civic

and democratic education" has allowed it to occupy spaces of interrelation with the citizenry in territory, developing programs focused on awareness and civic and electoral training, in the 24 provincial offices of the National Electoral Council across the country. Working in territory is the essence of being an electoral official, which allows the CNE to project a model institution at national and international level, which continuously innovates its processes.

The strengthening of democracy through electoral education has originated, in several segments of society, good practices to elect their representatives. The implementation of mechanisms of direct democracy allows perfecting representative democracy and strengthening citizen participation.

> **In numerous higher education institutions, the National Electoral Council has provided support in every phase of the electoral process**

"Learning by doing" is the methodology with which voters have been educated, that is to say, for each electoral processes carried out by middle-level and higher educational institutions, private enterprises, public institutions, unions, associations, etc.,the National Electoral Council´s advice is requested in order to guarantee the appropriate development of each electoral event.

In order to provide support in all the electoral process requested by the citizenry, the National Electoral Council has established procedures that allow training for all electoral stakeholders participating in these processes for them to acquire general and specific knowledge of the development of an electoral process. Likewise, they are trained on the different roles citizens may play as electors, members of the polling stations, electoral observers, and candidates, among others. In numerous higher education institutions, the National Electoral Council has provided support in every phase of the electoral process. Since 2013, following several requirements, the National Electoral Council included university students within the potential members of the polling stations who

have participated in electoral processes in their respective universities and have played roles such as: polling station members and observers, among the most relevant.

Gradually through the electoral processes, the National Electoral Council has considered that, given the education and experience acquired by the students, they should be the ones participating as members of the polling stations, thus guaranteeing the transparency of each process. Furthermore, the training provided and the fact of working side by side with them in their universities creates the perfect melting pot that guarantees a clear and prejudice-free citizen education.

The National Electoral Council's mission to guarantee the exercise of political and citizenship rights in order to promote the strengthening of democracy, and its function as promotor of citizen civic and democratic education, are duties that have been accomplished on a daily basis, setting the course of a change process. The information, training and education of each one of the citizens that make up the Ecuadorian society aims to achieve an interaction that allows the

better development of a process of democratic construction. It is not enough to develop democratic institutions from the State. It is essential that the Ecuadorian citizens actively participate in the public sphere, either as an individual citizen or as part of a civil society organization. Alongside, it is necessary that both share a democratic commitment that gives meaning to our electoral culture.

In the National Electoral Council's opinion, the democratic duty goes further than just organizing electoral processes; it is about organizing the society aiming to ensure and increase citizens' rights; it is about heading towards the construction of democracy from the citizenry.

Electoral organisms ensure the efficiency of electoral processes. Electoral education ensures the strengthening of democracy and of our electoral culture.

Nubia Villacís Carreño
President
National Electoral Council, Ecuador

Fiji Approves **Elections Module** in Compulsory School Curriculum

The Fijian Elections Office [FEO] introduced the first ever substantive voter education module for all year/class 10 students this year. The module is titled as *'Introduction to Elections: A Learning Module for Year 10 Social Science'.*

The module compromises of five (5) lessons. The first four (4) lessons lay the theoretical grounds of democracy, electoral history, the need to vote in a democracy, the role of the FEO, and electoral processes in Fiji.

The fifth (5th) lesson is a practical election simulation activity which requires teachers and students to conduct an election similar to how the general election is conducted. Identical but dummy materials have been developed by the FEO to facilitate this activity.

The comprehensive module compromises of the following materials or resources:
- Students Workbook;
- Teachers Manual;
- Mock Election and Resource Kit; and
- A full time dedicated website to supplement the module.

A setup displaying the Students Workbook, Teachers Manual and other dummy election materials

Outreach

The module forms part of strand 1 of the Social Science Curriculum for year 10 students and it is compulsory for all year 10 students to take this course. Approximately, 17,000 students have studied the module this year (2018) in the 172 secondary schools throughout Fiji.

Year 10 Students with their copy of the Students Workbook

Year 10 students generally fall between the age group of 14-16 years, the voter registration age in Fiji is 18 years. This indicates that students before reaching the legal age of voter registration and voting would know their fundamental voting rights and will be acquainted with the electoral processes.

It will further enhance and strengthen the democratic roots of the country through interest generation and political participation of youths.

Development of the Module

The module is developed in line with Goal 9, Objective 1 and Activity 31 of the FEOs 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. It took three (3) months of hard work, dedication and commitment to

complete the module. The module was jointly developed by an international consultant hired by the FEO and the Executive team of the FEO. Various consultations were also done with the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education. There were a series of workshops and meetings held before the final module was ready. The module was launched and handed over to the Ministry of Education on January 11, 2018.

The Electoral Commission Chairperson, Mr. Suresh Chandra handing over the Module Kit to the Minister for Education, Hon. Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum

Innovative Methodologies Used

There were a lot of innovative methodologies used by the FEO to deliver this module.

The FEO developed various videos that discussed the processes on how to conduct mock election, developed lesson videos to summarise the main concepts in each lesson (this was broadcasted on national free to air television for an entire week); developed a full time dedicated website that has disability friendly features to accommodate for those students who are visually impaired and regularly uploaded materials relating to the module on social media sites.

Capacity Building

In order for teachers to efficiently deliver the
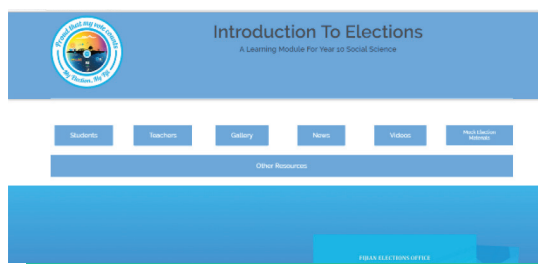
Picture of the voter education website

A scene from the Lesson Videos where the hosts are summarising the main concepts from the lessons

content of the module to the students, training of trainers workshops were organised. More than 500 teachers were trained to deliver the module to students.

The FEO staff also visited certain schools to assist them conduct the mock election activity.

Year 10 Social Science teachers having a look at the Students Workbook

Way Forward

The module substantially covers the essentials of an election. However, the FEO will be engaged pro-actively in refining and enhancing the module. Potential ways to do this is by converting the module into an audio book and

A student casting his vote during the mock election activity

developing various inclusive resources to better impart the knowledge.

The FEO is also planning to develop university level curriculums in near future.

Case Study

The case study below is an article that was written by Eshilta Nivarni who is a Year 10 Student at Rishikul Sanatan College in Nasinu. This was one of the first schools to complete the mock election activity and send their case study to the FEO. During the mock election exercise she played the role of a Media Official. She feels that the Introduction to Elections Module for Year 10 students is an important and essential tool that will enable students to better understand the dynamics of electoral processes in Fiji.

Conclusion

The FEO continues to take advantage of every opportunity it gets in creating awareness amongst voters and particularly the new voters. The right to vote is a fundamental right

Banana Wins at Rishikul Polls

By: Eshilta Nivarni

This year the Social Science department together with the student representatives conducted a mock election for all the year 10 students. This event was carried out for the first time in school which was part of the topic introduced to year 10 – Introduction to Elections. The polling station was set up at the Rishikul Sanatan College Hall.

This mock election was carried out to help the students learn more about the election process, how voting is carried out, counting of the votes and seat allocation. A total of 169 students took part in the mock election. For the purposes of this mock election, 100 pre-marked Ballot Papers were used. Hence, a total of 269 votes were casted from which 5 were invalid.

There were 3 political parties contesting for 10 seats in the parliament. Since it was a mock election dummy party names and candidates were used. The 3 parties were Fruit Party, Vegetable Party and Root Crop Party. The majority number of votes cast was for Fruit Party (215 votes) and the second was Vegetable party with a total of 32 votes, least votes were cast for the Root Crop Party with a total of 17 votes. The candidate with the highest number of votes was Banana with a total of 139 votes. We realized that banana was the favourite amongst students.

Students participating in mock election activity

During the whole election process the voters showed patience and cooperation despite waiting for long hours. The polling station was opened by the Presiding Officer at 1.30pm and general instructions were given to the voters. The polling station closed at 3.10pm after which the ballot box was opened in front of the media officials, polling agents and the observers and counting of ballot papers was carried out.

Students acting their roles out during mock election

To add on, the Research Officer (Ravneel Chand) from the Fijian Elections Office was present at the polling station (Rishikul Hall) to observe the mock election, and he also addressed the students and guided the election officials through the counting of the votes.

The whole process of the election was steered efficiently and was very well organized by the teachers and year 10 students. The voters were given clear instructions and the voting was fairly done.

There were no hiccups or any forms of tumults throughout the election process. The mock election was conducted in a transparent, credible and accountable manner.

under the Constitution and as the election management body, the FEO aspires to ensure that every voter exercises this right with proper information and education.

Ultimately it will create voter interest which will have a ripple effect and perhaps also contribute to increasing voter turnout in Fiji for future elections.

The Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem, in his remarks at the launch of module summed it up as follows "The Introduction to Elections Module in year 10 of the Secondary Schools is an investment that we are making in the future of our country."

Ravneel Chand
Research Officer
Fijian Elections Office

Electoral Literacy Clubs in India

An Initiative in Electoral Literacy through Extracurricular Interventions

Development of culture of Electoral Participation: A conceptual framework

The importance of developing the practice of citizenship development for electoral participation is vital to investment in future of democracy. Citizenship development in a democracy is about developing effective electoral engagement, participation, making informed choices and ethical ballot decisions. In the given context, one of the key goals of society is to have an active democratic citizenry originating in integrated civic and voter education and electoral participation right from a young age.

Culture of democracy and electoral participation flourishes when citizens are well informed about democratic principles and are able to translate that knowledge into action by engaging with institutions and other public structures; performing community service, and exercising leadership. It is necessary to focus on younger generation for civic education leading to robust electoral participation.

It is imperative to inspire young voters, remove all barriers in educating and empowering them for electoral participation. It is important to bring young people to interaction, listen to their voices, engage and encourage them in a dialogue with a focus on development of a culture of electoral participation. It is necessary to work on youth programs that foster an appreciation of citizens' rights and responsibilities in a pluralistic society and create a culture of engagement especially for the young and future voters in their communities.

Voter education resources, hands on experience, incentives, tools and opportunities for new voters to participate in elections and in turn harnessing their potential for evolving a culture of informed, inclusive and ethical voting within their communities need to be encouraged, fostered and strengthened.

International Experience

Young and Future Voters have been in focus across the democracies of the world for addressing 'voter apathy', 'My Vote does not Matter' and course correction for their electoral participation. Democracy Clubs have been established in different countries of the world as an instrument of strengthening the democratic culture. Countries such as USA, UK, Bhutan (Democracy Clubs), Tunisia (Citizenship Clubs), Jordan (Crazy Boys Groups) and others have established Democracy Clubs or similar other groups to strengthen democratic culture

amongst young and future voters. Other countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand have made substantial investments in engaging young and future voters for electoral participation through innovative strategies and technology driven programs. Young people have built networks and other public forums to discuss and debate issues of importance; trained for and served as poll workers and election observers in their communities in order to uphold principles of free, fair, peaceful and transparent elections.

Need for Curricular and Extracurricular Interventions

Curricular and extracurricular interventions are aimed at educating, and engaging the young and future voters for hands on experience so that they feel at home with the conceptual and operational framework of the electoral processes including registration as a voter. As an outcome the young people should be fully confident of how, when, where, what and why of the electoral participation. They should understand the value of their vote, significance of sanctity and secrecy of their vote besides being confident of mature and ethical ballot decisions. They should be interested in participating for their first Ballot Decision on an ethical note leading to a regular participant.

Indian Experience

In India, electoral literacy has been in focus as an integral part of SVEEP for strengthening participation among young and future voters. In this context, while working on curriculum analysis, co curriculum and extracurricular interventions in voter education for empowering young and future voters, the concept of Electoral Literacy Clubs has emerged as an effective instrument of engaging young and future voters in schools including those who are not covered under the schools (Communities), colleges and other educational institutions.

Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy

Continuous Education in Electoral Democracy is one of the important goals under Strategic Plan 2016-25 of the Commission. In this context, the Commission had set up Working Groups and Committees with representation from the National Council of Educational Research and Training, Indian Council of School Certificate Examination, National Institute of Open School, other major Educational Institutions, Experts and other stakeholders on the subject. The Commission also interacted with the EMB's across the democracies of the world through seminars and knowledge sharing on the best practices. With a view to appreciate the status

of electoral literacy in the country, a systematic and a comprehensive analysis of the existing curricula and extra curricula was also taken up for coverage under Social Studies and Political Science. Recommendations based on findings related to critical gaps in curricula, co curricula and extra curricula were presented in the report 'Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through Educational Institutions, Organizations and Communities in India.' The Report was examined in detail and after a careful consideration on recommendations contained in the Report, Election Commission of India decided for mainstreaming electoral literacy in schools, colleges and other institutions through curricular and extracurricular interventions as mentioned:

(i) Introduction of Electoral Literacy in Curricula at the School level and above (including colleges, universities etc).
(ii) Setting-up Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC) in all educational institutions starting from Secondary School Level and above.
(iii) Establish ELC's for future and new voters not covered under the formal educational institutions.

Programs in the Run up to the Electoral Literacy Clubs

Run up to the ELC Project included a comprehensive and in depth analysis of the extant civic and electoral education content of the study courses and simultaneous experiments in interacting with the students closely and evincing their interest in electoral process through innovative programs such as Interactive School Engagement and National Election Quiz. The programs were all organized as a part of the theme adopted for the NVD, 2017 that is 'Empowering Young and Future Voters'.

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs)
Aims

In general the aims of ELC's are as follows:

(i) To develop a culture of registration and electoral participation right from their first election once young people cross 18 years of age.

Interactive School Engagement (ISE) Program

The Interactive School Engagement (ISE) program was one of the pre-cursors to the ELC project. ISE was conceptualized to target the future voters studying in schools so as to sensitize them about the electoral process in general and about the registration and voting procedure in particular. It was carried out in run-up to the National Voters' Day 2017 which had the theme 'Empowering Young and Future Voters' and the same was the focus of the Commission for the year. ISE was used as a platform to connect future voters with the election machinery. Launched in January 2017, ISE covered 11,800 schools and 2,511,594 students during Phase I.

During Phase II (July-August 2017) 3,258,080 students in 16,855 schools were covered across the country under the interactive exercise of electoral machinery.

All the Chief Electoral Officers of different states, the District Election Officers and the Electoral Registration Officers in the country were involved in the interaction with school students under the ISE.

In all, over 5.7 million students in 28,000 schools were covered under the ISE.

National Elections Quiz (NEQ) 2017

As part of ECI's theme for the year 2017- 'Empowering Young and Future Voters', ECI organized the National Elections Quiz, a knowledge outreach venture for the future voters (school students of classes IX to XII) on elections and electoral processes. The Quiz started with the District Round (under the ambit of the DEOs) followed by the State Round (organized by the CEOs) and the Zonal and National Finals (conducted by ECI in New Delhi). Themes covered included Elections in India, History of Democracies and Elections, Vote Process, Voter education and literacy, National Voters' Day to Electoral Technology, Model Code of Conduct. ECI collaborated with Rajya Sabha TV for producing and broadcasting 7 weekly episodes (6 Semi-Finals and the Grand Finale) from the January 25 to the March 11, 2018. NEQ 2018 witnessed a robust participation of about 1.4 million 3.63 students from 38,000 schools across the country staking a claim to being the World's Largest Quiz on Elections. Each episode broadcast on RSTV also had an 'Audience Question' to promote engagement with the viewers and first 50 respondents received merchandise as prizes for each episode.

(ii) To appropriately engage the future voters and new voters as a continuous process for active learning and requisite skill development in matter of 'Elections' in general and for informed, inclusive, confident, comfortable and ethical electoral participation in specific.

(iii) To encourage students to understand and appreciate value of the vote and ensure that they do not miss their first vote of life.

(iv) To facilitate voter registration for its members as they achieve the age of 18.

(v) To function as a mini election office to conduct simulated elections, organize events and activities that promote understanding electoral system and processes, electoral institutional structure, organization and electoral participation.

Objectives

The overall objectives of establishing of Electoral Literacy Clubs in schools and educational institutions, Communities, Government and non government institutions etc are to ensure that future and new voters:

(i) Educate the targeted populations about voter registration, entire electoral process and related matters by engaging them through well designed attractive resources in hands on experience, simulated elections;

(ii) Capacity building for generating/ locating information on what, when, where and how of the elections and electoral process right from a young

Institutional Coverage and Target Populations under the ELCs

Each school, educational institution and all other institutions, mentioned as below, is envisaged establish an Electoral Literacy Club that will initiate, coordinate and implement activities that promote and sustain electoral literacy through engagement in hands on experience. The ELCs shall be established as per the following pattern:

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn."
Benjamin Franklin

---

age of around 14 years (Class IX onwards).

(iii) To engage in activities for appreciation of the value of their vote and exercise their suffrage right in a confident, comfortable and ethical manner.

(iv) Enhanced voter turnout;

(v) To understand the constitutional, legislative and legal provisions besides the technological innovation and integration in elections;

(vi) Nature and role of the Election Commission, Courts, Media and other stakeholders.

(vii) Harness their potential for carrying the electoral literacy in communities.

(i) ELC Future Voters; for Classes IX to Class XII (Secondary and Senior Secondary Level).

(ii) ELC: New Voters: College, University, all other educational institutions including professional and technical educational institutions.

(iii) ELC (Communities) *'Chunav Pathshala':* For all those students who are not a part of the formal education system.

(iv) Voter Awareness Forums : For Government Departments, Organizations, Autonomous Bodies, Semi Government and all non government and the private sector.

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SWEEP Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation

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No Voter to be Left Behind

Electoral Literacy Clubs
What are ELCs
An Electoral Literacy Club is a platform to engage school students through interesting activities and hands-on experience to sensitise them on their electoral rights and familiarise them with the electoral process of registration and voting. ELCs are also present in colleges and rural communities.
At ELCs, learning meets fun. Activities and Games are 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.

Who shall be the members of ELCs?
ELCs are present in Schools, Colleges and Rural Communities. Following will be the members in each type of ELC –
  ○ Schools : Students from Class IX – XII; 14-17 year olds
  ○ Colleges : 18 – 21 year olds
  ○ Rural Communities (Chunav Pathshala) : All members of the village

What shall we do in ELCs
In the ELCs, members will be part of interesting and thought-provoking, mostly classroom based activities and games. There are around 25 such activities and 6 games which have been carefully designed to impart specific learning which will help them become an

'INDIAN ELECTIONS' launched on QUIZUP app

Last June, in congruence with NVD theme for the year- Empowering Young and Future Electors, ECI launched a new topic- Indian Elections, on the hugely popular gaming app- QuizUp. The topic is available on the app for both Android and iOS users.

Gaming & Voter Education

While LS 2014 saw ECI venturing into edutainment for the first time through development of board games and computer games, second initiative in this direction was taken up when for *Chunav Pathshala* (ELC Community) it was decided to devise some floor games to engage rural community. A set of 6 floor games was developed with Lady Irwin College, Department of Development Communication & Extension, incorporating important learning and messages.

On these lines, for the tech savvy future and young voter, ECI with the National Institute of Design, Bangalore is developing a Smartphone based digital game through its Digital Game Design Faculty. Instead of passively receiving information, players take the role of a curious citizen who wishes to understand how Indians select their law makers. Players will actively engage in completing quests and challenges and unravel information regarding the election process that is crucial for progressing to the next stage. The final stage of the game involves the player entering the Polling Station, going through the entire process and casting his vote using EVM and looking at VVPAT slip in a computer simulated environment. The game will be available for free download through popular mobile apps stores such as Google Play.
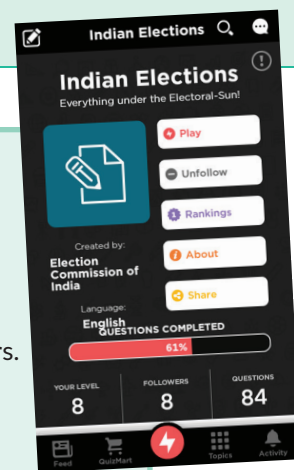
Activities in the ELCs

Learning through hands on experience or engaging young people is vital to success of the ELCs. Based on an analysis of the good practices across the democracies of the world, the following generic activities have been suggested for the ELCs. The list is only illustrative.

- Mock Vote
- EL week at the time of the NVD
- Debates relating to Electoral Literacy may step into domain of the civic education
- Essay Competitions in EL and Democratic Governance
- Voter Registration camps or innovative programs for voter registration; a list of such programs will be separately provided
- Interactive School Visitor Program
- Engaging with nearby communities for EL programs
- Poster competitions.
- Games, Puzzles, Cartoons, Scrabble, Pathfinders etc
- Visitors including Elected Representatives, Election Officials; Interactions FAQ banks.
- Youth Parliaments and debates on relevant electoral participation issues.
- Technology driven initiatives including Social media, Student Blogs

The engagement as per requirements will be in local languages for effective interactions. The entire engagement is envisaged to be non partisan and strictly neutral in nature with the sole objective of enhancing electoral participation amongst the young and future voters.

Expected Outcomes

As an expected outcome, future and new voters should be fully confident of how, when, where,

what and why of the electoral participation. They should be able to understand the value of their vote, significance of sanctity and secrecy of their vote, confident of mature, competent and ethical ballot decisions. They should become interested in participating for their first Ballot Decision on an ethical note as soon as they become 18. In quantifiable terms the expected outcomes would mean larger electoral registration and enhanced Voter Turnout.

Student Teacher Resources

After well structured rounds of consultations with key stakeholders, Student Teacher Resources have been developed for students in the ELC's at secondary and senior secondary level and also for the ELC (Communities or the '*Chunav Pathshalas')*. These resources include engaging activities for the students as also the guidance for the teachers or the conveners on conducting various activities. The activities were field tested and later reviewed in a consultation with the stakeholders. To accommodate diversity, the resources are translated into regional languages to ensure the desired connect with the targeted student populations.

Training

Training of Resource persons (Master Trainers) has been done at the national level by the specially organized teams of the SVEEP Division of the ECI, the state level and the District levels in coordination with State Chief Electoral Officers and the concerned institutions.

Pilot Electoral Literacy Clubs and the ELCs set up so far

Three Pilot Electoral Literacy Clubs established at St Xavier's College, Ranchi, Department of

Political Science, Punjab University Chandigarh and Shiv Nadar School, NOIDA have found tremendous response from students. The activities include robust and vibrant interactions, visits of election officials and interactions, debates, voter camps, debates, setting up of wall magazines, and above all the harnessing of the potential in the form of guidance to other institutions for setting up of the ELCs. Separate articles in the issue discuss these ELCs. Till date, 1,26,698 ELCs have been set up in the country.

Independent Evaluation

An independent evaluation of the project has also been set up for concurrent evaluation of implementation of the project. The evaluation is aimed at mid course corrections and consequent strengthening of the system.

Epilogue

ELCs are envisaged to serve as a vibrant hub of Electoral literacy direct interaction in education institutions in the country for strengthening electoral participation among young and future voters. The program has the potential of becoming largest electoral experiment in the world with over a million ELCs in the Country. ELCs form a vital investment in encouraging new and future voters for electoral participation and as such the future of democracy.

Umesh Sinha
Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner, ECI
& Chief Editor, VoICE International

Electoral Literacy Clubs Preparing **Future Voters** of India

Studies suggest that participation in the first one or two elections of an elector's lifetime helps to inculcate the habit of voting and makes participation in future elections more likely. The importance of developing the practice of citizenship development for electoral participation is vital to investment in the future of democracy. It is necessary to focus on the younger generation for civic education leading to robust electoral participation. Keeping this rationale in view, the Election Commission of India (ECI) took a landmark step towards the cause of electoral literacy with its initiative - '*Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through Educational Institutions, Organizations and Communities in India*', under its Systematic Voters' Education & Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Programme.

ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUB

No Voter to be Left Behind
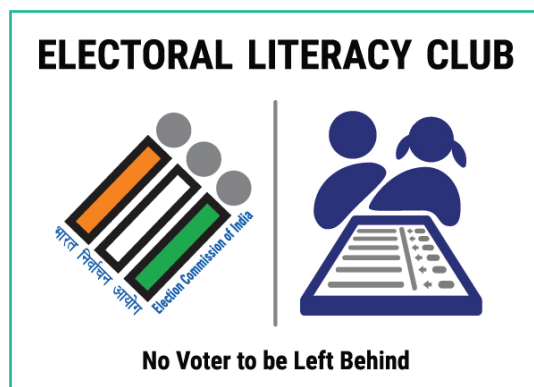
The entire project revolves around keeping voter education relevant and practical through a host of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular methods for the young and future voters. This year, ECI committed its efforts towards the inclusion of electoral literacy through the medium of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions.

Focused on young citizens, especially in the age group of 14-17, the future voters as we call them, ELCs in schools aim to serve as a long-term, sustainable solution to the humongous task of spreading voter education in a country of 1.2 billion people. ELCs are proposed to be established in 0.2 million secondary and higher secondary schools and 25 thousand colleges/universities. In rural communities, *Chunav Pathshalas,* at the polling station level will target those falling outside the formal education system. Currently, the project is in its execution phase.

During the project's preparation phase, an important working group activity was undertaken in the month of May 2017. Members of national and state level education boards, school teachers and university professors participated in this activity where the civic studies course books from grades 6 to 10 were analyzed along with study material from NIOS to assess the electoral literacy components in the existing curricula. It was found that while students are taught about democracy and functioning of the government, there is little content on the development of active electoral participation. No information is available about something as basic as the registration/enrolment process of the voters.

After comprehensive rounds of discussion with key stakeholders, important messages were listed out besides learning outcomes that were aimed at through ELCs. Guided by these learning outcomes, games and activities were developed for students of Class IX, X, XI, XII and for *Chunav Pathshala* members. This resource development phase continued for about six months and was followed by three rounds of field trials in schools and communities in Delhi

and NCR (National Capital Region). It was realized that the effectiveness of any activity depended on the persons convening the ELC, their language and communication skills, and their correct understanding of the messages.

On December 19 & 20, 2017, ECI organized a two day workshop for a final review of tools prepared for the Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs). Forty participants that included Chief Electoral Officers, master trainers, representatives from civil society organizations, educators from schools and colleges as well as development communicators from different corners of the nation were invited to further refine the learning tools, check their viability and deliberate on an effective roll-out plan to set up the ELCs. Around 30 learning tools were reviewed by the participants in the workshop.

Post the final review, a total of seven comprehensive resource guides were created for the ELC project. These are -

- Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for class IX
- Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for class X
- Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for class XI
- Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for class XII

- Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for colleges
- Chunav Pathshala Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for communities
- ELCs common handbook

Along with these resource guides, an ELC game kit consisting of five floor games has also been developed. The resource guides and games have
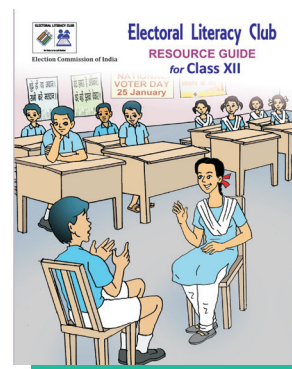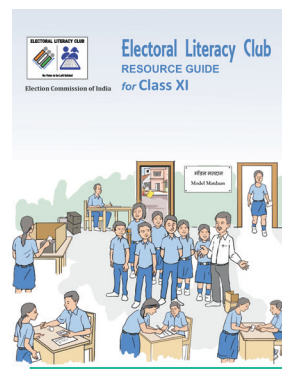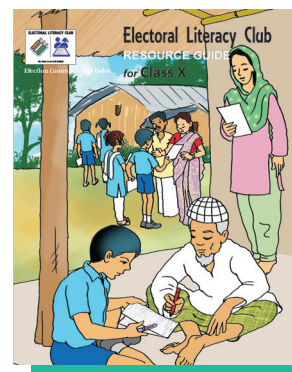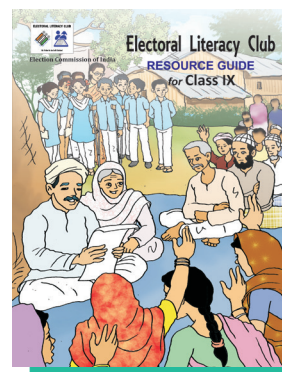
been developed in Hindi and English. States shall translate the content in their regional languages and adapt them to suit regional and local sensibilities.

The resource guides and floor games can be accessed at *http://ecisveep.nic.in/elc.aspx*.

A major component of the project in its execution phase was the training of the ELC conveners. Considering the sheer magnitude of the numbers the project is dealing with, devising a training program itself proved to be a challenge. Workshops were conducted for State Level Master Trainers from the 36 states and union territories of the country in four batches of 40-50 participants each, in February-March 2018.

Considering the activity based engagement approach that formed the basis of the ELC project, and the resources developed, the training was also planned in an activity based manner to engage the trainers rather than following a lecture based format. The vibrant workshop witnessed enthusiastic State Level Master Trainers, who were identified by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of every State, trying out the learning tools themselves and engaging in the various activities. These State Level Master Trainers now hold the responsibility of further training District Level Master Trainers, identified by the District Election Officers, who will then train the specific ELC conveners falling in their respective districts.

The Election Commission of India is also working towards developing a portal where all tools and instructions can be easily accessed by the Master Trainers (MTs) and the portal will provide a discussion forum to the ELC MTs. The portal will also serve as a mechanism for collecting feedback, for reviewing the resource tools and updating them.

ELC is indeed one of the most ambitious and challenging projects of the ECI. Well begun is half done, and a good beginning has already been made. An independent evaluation of the project has also been sanctioned by the Commission and evaluation shall be simultaneously carried out so that necessary corrections can be made for successful achievement of the objectives.

Sneak Peek Into Some Of The ELC Activities

A majority of educators will agree that students grasp the most when learning meets fun. The ELC learning tools have been developed in a manner such that important information, which might seem banal in textbooks, is imparted in engaging ways to young students.

The following are a description of six games out of a total of 30 that have been developed for the ELCs –

1. NIRVACHITRA

A portmanteau of the words *Nirvachan* and *Chalchitra, Nirvachitra* introduces the electoral process and procedures through an engaging film show or a picture story scroll developed by the ECI. *Nirvachitra* is the first activity proposed for all ELCs to set the tone of the club.

Set in the environment of Class XII students in a school from a rural area, the film *Masti, Dosti aur Matdaan,* covers the basics of voter registration by introducing concepts like democracy and value of a vote as well as talking about the age of eligibility, how to register as a voter, the documents required, etc., through its animated characters. For schools where screening the film is not possible, story scrolls have been developed that send out the same message with their characters *Abha* and *Abhay.*

Before the film screening, the convener (teacher) shall have an introductory discussion with the students where their knowledge and views on democracy, voting, etc., are gauged. Post the film/scroll show, students are prompted to recall their first memories of an actual election held

in their vicinity irrespective of their parents/ guardians/relatives/neighbours' participation and make a poster either on the most important takeaway of the film or on the importance of elections and voting.

2. CARD GAME

Drawing inspiration from the popular card game *UNO*, two card games *Vigilant Voter* and *Be the People's Representative* have been developed. Each deck consists of six cards in five colours along with some lucky and unlucky cards to make the game interesting. Each of the six numbered cards carry messages specific to the respective games. The player who arranges all the six cards in their correct order in a single chosen colour and reads out the messages stated on the cards correctly, wins the game.

The *Vigilant Voter* enables the players to play through the perspective of a voter. The six cards break down the entire registration and voting process, right from eligibility till poll day, into six key messages. The *Be a People's Representative* game lets the players don the role of a contesting candidate and breaks down the candidate's journey in an election to six messages in six cards.

The idea of the card games is that while playing, the students absorb the messages communicated while still enjoying a good game.

3. BUILD YOUR BALLOT

An activity developed specifically for the students of class IX, *Build your Ballot* is aimed at familiarizing the students with EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) and VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail). Through this activity students will make their own ballot paper with dummy candidates and symbols including NOTA.

The game requires 15 students as volunteering candidates of a hypothetical election. The aim is for the entire class to make their own ballot paper. For this purpose a chart paper is used to make the layout of a dummy ballot paper. Fifteen pre-decided symbols denoting state parties, national parties, registered parties and individual candidates are shuffled and randomly allotted one each to every student acting as a candidate.

Following this, the candidates come forward and alphabetically arrange their names on the ballot paper according to actual ECI guidelines. First, the students with state and national party symbols come forward to form category I and write their names alphabetically on the ballot, and stick/draw their symbols against their name. Category II is formed by registered party candidates. Last but not the least, individual candidates arrange their names on the ballot.

The idea behind building the ballot is for the voters to realize that candidates are arranged on the ballot in an unbiased manner according to set guidelines, and give an idea on where to find the name of the candidate of choice on the ballot.

4. HOPSCOTCH – MATDAAN KE PADAV

Matdaan ke Padav or Steps to Vote, is a stapu (hopscotch) game designed to familiarize students with the steps of voting. The game is printed on a flex and laid on the ground for
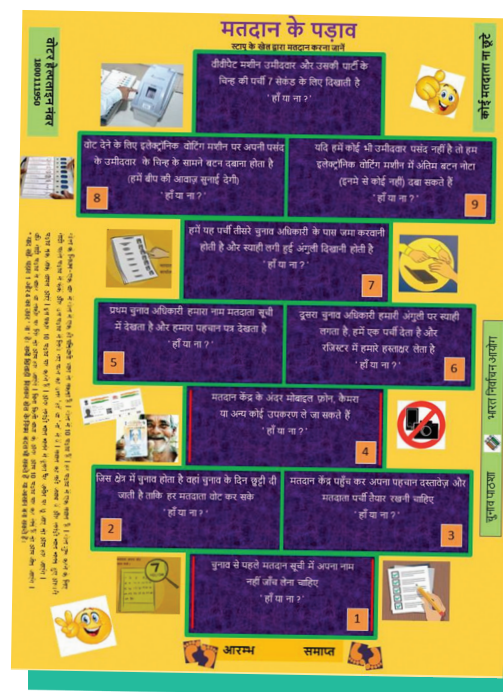
students to play. It consists of 10 steps with each step carrying a question.

The player has to hop and stand on one foot throughout the game and will lose if the other foot touches the ground. The player enters the game by standing at the start position and throws a coin inside the first rectangle which is the first step of the game. S/he then reads out the question written inside the rectangle loudly for all to hear and answers it in either "Yes" or "No". Similarly, the player progresses by throwing the coin in the next rectangle and repeating the process until they reach the tenth and the last rectangle.

The game creates awareness amongst players by asking questions like "Should we check our name in the voters' list before elections?", "Before entering the polling station should we keep our identity proof and voters' slip ready?", "On the EVM, do we have to press a button in front of the name of a candidate we have chosen?"

5. NOTA

NOTA stands for None of the Above. If a voter does not wish to vote for any political representative, s/he can still exercise their franchise by voting for NOTA. The activity, for students of class X, introduces the concept of NOTA to the students in a humorous way and sends out the message that knowing what you do not want is as important as knowing what you want.

This activity uses colourful, visual flashcards. Each flashcard poses a question and offers four answers to the question. The first three options are deliberately funny, silly and incorrect. For example, if the question is, "Which one of the following is a means of transport?" The first

three options to this question are a water bottle, a hen and a carpet. The fourth option to every question is NOTA. Thus students choose NOTA as the answer to every question, familiarizing them with the concept in the process.

However, post the flashcard display, the convener brings out one final round where the following question is verbally asked - "Who do you vote for?"

The answers would include:
   a. A corrupt politician bribing people to vote in his/her favour.
   b. A lazy politician who is inefficient.
   c. A politician with criminal charges.
   d. None of the Above (NOTA).

The Convener then initiates a group discussion or debate in the class on the topic of NOTA Senior secondary schools within every state and district will be identified by the office of the District Election Officer (DEO), schools are being covered under phases. Schools that have not yet been covered under this project and would like to join can write to the office of the DEO of their district and also to the Director, ECI Padma Angmo at padma.angmo@eci.gov.in. A separate portal for the ELC is being developed where a facility shall be provided to schools to get registered for the ELC.

The ELC Resource Guides developed individually for class IX, X, XI and XII detail the activities to be conducted with the respective classes in one academic year. Each activity includes an element of summary and recall at the end. Each grade will only spend about four hours on ELC activities in a year, and yet the long-term impact of the club activities will be significant in creating prepared, responsible and informed young voters of India. These aware and educated voters of tomorrow will also be the ones who will act as ambassadors of democracy who will share their knowledge, inform and educate their peers, their family and their community at large.

Padma Angmo   &   Simran Sachdeva
Director   Executive, SVEEP
Election Commission of India

The Galvanizing Force of **Civic Education** in a Sustainable Democracy

As a relatively young democracy, Georgia is striving to bring respective democratic principles to life. On this path, Georgia has been criticized for the lack of a proper, state-oriented outlook – a mindset scholars tend to justify by the country's short history of independence. However, recent discoveries illustrate how civic understanding and activism have been an integral part of Georgia's history. In May 2018, a 111-year-old petition found at Oxford demonstrates that even under the Russian Empire's dominance, people across Georgia had lobbied for their rights. The *Petition of the Georgian People[1],* signed by 3,000 men and women at a great personal risk, outlines

grievances against Russian policies. The petition was presented at an international conference on "subjected races" in 1907 in Hague.

Today, this legacy of civic activism and responsibility is well maintained in Georgia. In particular, it is furthered by the students and alumni of IFES' civic education university-level course titled "Democracy and Citizenship" (D&C), which is delivered at 30 academic institutions throughout the country. The goal of the course is to strengthen the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are associated with students' effective democratic citizenship. To nation of updated knowledge following political

[1] https://www.georgianjournal.ge/culture/34520-century-old-georgian-independence-petition-discovered-in-university-of-oxford.html

and social developments that are taking place in the country and on the international arena, IFES Georgia has issued and piloted a second edition of the D&C textbook (the first edition was issued in 2011). The textbook's updated edition contains reforms and amendments to laws, events and processes described together with 40 case studies. In one of the D&C students' focus groups (conducted in 2017 by IFES Georgia), the students stated that the course played an important role in changing the way they perceive the efficacy of civic engagement. Many students for whom the 2016 parliamentary election and 2017 local municipal election were their first voting opportunities noted that the course both influenced their decision to vote and spurred the encouragement of their peers to take part in the elections.

In addition to learning the fundamental concepts of democratic citizenship, good governance, civil society, civic participation and human rights, the course supports students in the development and implementation of civic action projects where they are challenged to think critically about the needs of their communities. Specifically, groups of students are cooperating with various state and non governmental institutions including local self-government units, civil society organizations (CSOs), schools' administrations and media organizations to implement alternative ways for resolving problems that local communities are facing. Research areas that students are interested in include but are not limited to: youth's civic engagement, voter education and awareness raising, ethnic minority integration, equal education and disability rights, and creating or equipping libraries in rural areas, inter alia. Course alumni who work on action projects become more self-confident and inspired as

evidenced by some students who go on to form non governmental organizations and galvanize like-minded youth to continue addressing various problems.

The Civic Education Lecturers Association *(CELA http://www.cela.ge/)* established in 2014 is another entity dedicated to furthering civic education through institutions across Georgia. Under the aegis of IFES, CELA's civic educators teach the D&C course at IFES partner academic institutions nationwide. CELA also continues to evaluate and improve the course curriculum while refining civic education materials and carrying out a broad array of activities aimed to increase civic and voter awareness for educators and students. Since its establishment, CELA has grown into an independent, successful network continuing to foster civic and voter education in Georgia.

Ahead of each Georgian election and election period, IFES works to improve voter education outreach to youth with disabilities through raising awareness on their political rights and opportunities to exercise those rights in the election process. Parallel to this, IFES is constantly connecting civically active Georgian students with their peers in different countries through facilitated video conference calls on topics that include the essence of elections and citizen engagement; conducting civics-themed summer/winter schools and civic and voter education micro-grant competitions for university students; holding civic seminars at universities on topics ranging from electoral systems to freedom of information; and organizing leadership and gender advocacy trainings for female students and members of the university student governments. Moreover, IFES' civic and voter education programming

> **IFES' civic and voter education programming aims to address the societal and attitudinal barriers towards women's political participation through civic education curriculum at universities, media campaigns, and community outreach initiatives.**

aims to address the societal and attitudinal barriers towards women's political participation through civic education curriculum at universities, media campaigns, and community outreach initiatives. To that end, these efforts emphasize positive qualities that women exude as candidates and elected leaders. Recently, IFES Georgia established the Youth Empowerment Lab – a two-month informal civic and voter education training-course for young people with the goal to empower them with leadership skills and enhance their civic/voter competencies through a specially tailored cycle of courses and visits to various higher academic and public institutions.

IFES, in cooperation with D&C course lecturers and CSOs, also conducts voter education lectures and meetings that target youth, ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities nationwide ahead of each election cycle. The aim of the aforementioned activities is to enhance citizen awareness of the essence and meaning of the upcoming election and voter engagement, in particular with respect to first-time voters. This approach demonstrates how institutional civic education contributes to voter education, enabling D&C course students to become active and informed voters who clearly see the role of elections in a strong democracy. Moreover, alumni leave the D&C course as engaged citizens inspired to make a positive difference in their communities. These students recognize that while voting is crucial, it is not the sole civic responsibility or means to influence the sustainable democratic growth of a society.

Georgian society is experiencing rapid political, social and cultural changes geared towards building a viable democracy. In this process, the galvanizing force in constructing an

Youth is organizing animated voting day procedures ahead of the October 21, 2017 Self-Government Elections in Georgia.

effective democratic system is civic education through key institutions as democracy can not exercise its full potential in the absence of informed, active and responsible youth who are the country's future decision-makers and cornerstone of its democratic progress.

Lela Javakhishvili
IFES Georgia Civic and
Voter Education Officer

Voter Education through
Educational Institutions

In Kenya, university students have long been associated with protests and rioting against government decisions that are perceived to be unpopular. Over time, the term "comrades" how activist students referred to each other became synonymous with mass demonstrations that would disrupt businesses and social life in Nairobi and other principal cities. University student elections were especially problematic and often marred with violence.

This association of students with political protest, coupled with the considerable political clout wielded by student leaders and their positions with in established political parties in Kenya, led to the passing of laws to greatly reduce the influence of university student government and leadership. As a result, many parents in Kenya took measures to steer university-aged children away from university politics with some even sending their children abroad for higher education to avoid the association of youth protest. The passing of the 2010 Constitution granted new political rights and privileges to Kenyan citizens causing student-led protests to decline. However, over

time, university students had become excluded from political life through policy decisions and processes. For example, the scheduling of national voter registration campaigns for the months of November and January during exam period meant that many students were not able to travel to their home places of residence to register. As a result of these structural barriers, by the 2013 national elections, youth in Kenya comprised a relatively low percentage of citizens registered and were not actively participating as voters, even though some 60% of the country was under the age of 24.

Keen to get young people involved in the electoral process, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) saw the potential in increasing youth participation on university campuses. IFES identified institutions of higher learning as spaces where young people could be easily reached through voter education efforts. In Kenya, institutions of higher learning were estimated to have approximately two-million students, many of whom being first-time voters. IFES, together with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Kenya,

sought out partnerships with student associations and implemented outreach and educational activities in the run up to the country's 2017 electoral process.

IFES and its partners designed a youth voter education and registration program targeting first-time voters in institutions of higher learning known as *Changamka* – loosely translated as 'take action'. For the first phase of the

program, IFES successfully appealed to the IEBC to amend the process for biometric registration to allow students to register at their place of study, and to use university campuses as registration centers. IFES then partnered with a local outreach organization to mobilize youth by bringing entertainment and popular media personalities to schools to encourage new voter registrations and draw attention to the campus registration centers to make voter registration as "cool" as possible. These media personalities also used their own social media networks to mobilize students and reach out to potential new voters. Through this campaign, the IEBC registered an additional 33,000 youth across different institutions of higher learning in Kenya.

During the program's second phase, IFES worked with student associations and other partners under the campaign slogan *Changamkia Vote Yako* - meaning 'take action with your vote' to encourage registered youth to get out the vote. IFES organized advocacy training for nearly three-hundred students who served as "campus ambassadors." These ambassadors conducted peer-to-peer voter education efforts on their campuses urging fellow students to participate in elections and refrain from taking part in election-related violence or conflict. Recognizing the potential of the program, the IEBC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with university students and accredited them as voter educators. The voter education efforts conducted by the students also extended to educating prisoners as first-time voters, as prisoners were granted voting rights for the first time in the 2017 national elections.

Several factors proved critical to the success of these voter registration and education activities. *Partnering with the election management body* gave credibility to the initiatives, and the presence of election commissioners and staff on campuses increased impact. To engage effectively with students in a campus environment, *initiatives utilized existing student networks and student-led activities* to have maximum reach, while carefully avoiding duplication of existing outreach efforts and the introduction of entirely new activities that require substantial time to take root or find an audience. Creating voter education *materials*

with the design input of their intended audiences, i.e., having program youth audience members themselves design educational materials for their peers in a format accepted and appealing to young persons. An example of this was the "Youth Voters Passport", which was received as an effective voter education reference material given that the text was easy to understand and resonated directly with the readers.

Campaigns targeting young people should make use of social media to reach and attract wide audiences. Social media requires maintenance and online administrators who can monitor social discussions and address questions in a timely manner. IFES and its partners found that most young people required immediate responses and answers to their questions, otherwise their attention shifted to other issues. Using *effective images in messaging* proved also to be vital in attracting audiences and conveying information. Images targeting first time voters were the most impactful when they included groups of people, as this appealed to a sense of inclusion – wanting to take part in a process with peers. To better reach young women and other traditionally less active groups, *using innovative, non traditional outreach strategies* are useful to appeal to these audiences. For example, IFES-sponsored teams established interactive "make up corners" within their university campuses where female students received free make-up as they listened to electoral information.

With these and other lessons learned, IFES and the IEBC have continued working with various higher education institutions to reach out to youth voters and promote positive student engagement. Given the size and political strength of Kenya's youth population, the positive involvement of this demographic in elections and public life will be critical for the future of the country.

Dorothy Atieno & Katie Simba
IFES
Kenya

Developing a Culture of Electoral Participation among **Young and Future Voters** through Formal and Informal Channels

Introduction

Youth Electoral Participation has been a subject matter of significant concern, debate and discussion across the democracies of the world. While today's youth are most well connected than ever, yet factors such as voter apathy, "My vote does not matter', lack of interest in participation and consequent low voter turnout in this segment have been the areas of focus for address. It is necessary to bring young people to interaction, listen to their voice, engage and encourage them in a dialogue with a focus on development of a culture of electoral participation. Research, systematic studies and analysis have highlighted the importance of supporting the practice of citizenship development for their electoral participation as vital to investment in future of democracy. In the given context, one of the key goals of society is to encourage an active democratic citizenry originating in integrated civic and voter education and electoral participation right from a young age through both, the formal and informal educational channels.

Curricular and Extracurricular Interventions

Curricular and extracurricular interventions for civic and voter education are aimed at educating and engaging the young people through hands on experience to make them feel at home with the entire vote process including enrolment. As an outcome the young people should feel confident of how, when, where, what and why of the electoral participation. They should be able to appreciate the value of their vote, significance, sanctity and secrecy of their vote besides being confident of mature and ethical ballot decisions. They should be interested in participating for their first 'Ballot Decision' on an ethical note leading to a regular participation.

Nature of Voter Education for Young and Future Voters in different Countries

Different countries have developed their own need based Civic and Voter Education Resources for Teachers and Students at different levels. Countries such as USA, UK, India (SVEEP: Electoral Literacy Clubs) Bhutan (Democracy Clubs), Tunisia (Citizenship Clubs) and yet others have established Democracy Clubs or similar other institutional Infrastructure to strengthen culture of participation amongst Young and Future Voters. Many countries such as Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, UK and USA have made substantial investments in engaging young and future voters for electoral participation through Formal channels, innovative strategies and technology driven programs. Young people have built networks and other public forums to discuss and debate issues of importance; trained to serve as poll workers and election observers in their communities in order to uphold principles of free, fair, peaceful and transparent election. The instant article intends to visit the system, resources and the practice in some of the countries of the world with a view to learn from their experiences.

AEC
Australian Electoral Commission

Voter and Civic Education Resources and Program for **School**

General

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), established under the Electoral Act, 1984 as an independent organization, is charged with the responsibility of all matters relating to conducting federal elections, referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll. The AEC is also responsible for educating and informing the community about participating in the electoral process. AEC has developed comprehensive and well designed voter information and education resources. While the AEC resources provide comprehensive information and guidance to voters on all election related matters including enrolling and voting, the AEC schools provides free educational resources and program for teachers and students.

2. AEC's Voter Educ ation Resources and Program

AEC's educational resources and programs are structured and well designed to suit the needs of students at different levels. Some of these resources, programs are briefly discussed in the following:

2.1 'GET VOTING'

'Get voting' is a holistic program that provides all what is required to run a free and fair election for school level students. The salient features of the program are as follows:

- It helps to organise a school election conveniently spread over 2-4 weeks.
- It addresses Civics and Citizenship curriculum outcomes by providing students hands on experience of voting.
- It helps in electing suitable student leaders while modelling good democratic practice.

Get Voting programme encourages the school community to value voting, develops students'

trust, confidence and motivation to participate in democratic process.

The programme comprises of the following step wise components:

- (i)   Get Started: Planning and nomination
- (ii) Get Organised: Pre election preparation.
- (iii) Get Informed: Voter education and campaigns.
- (iv) Get Voting: Election Day participation.
- (v)   Get results Counting and announcement.

The exercise for an election can be run through the following steps through the AEC guidance:

- (i)   Order election equipment pack.
- (ii) Ballot Paper Generator.
- (iii) Download Resources.

2.2 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.

2.2.1 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.

2.3 'DEMOCRACY RULES'

2.3.1 Aims and Objects of the Programme

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the Education Systems have identified civics and citizenship education as an important priority for all the students in Australia. The AEC believes it has a significant role to play in the advocacy and practical advancement of this cause with a particular focus on building electoral literacy and encouraging future participation in Australian electoral processes. In this context, the AEC has worked with Curriculum Corporation to develop a new and exciting classroom-based electoral teaching and learning package called Democracy Rules: An electoral education resource.

2.3.2 The Conceptual Framework

Democracy Rules is an enquiry-based electoral education resource of the AEC. It includes a detailed teaching guide, online interactive and printable activities for students.The programme is relevant across the curriculum especially the Australian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship, Australian Politics and History, Indigenous Studies and Studies of Australia and the Asia Pacific. It provides background knowledge to enable teachers to confidently guide students on the electoral education

Democracy Rules aims to explain these facts and themes in an engaging manner and to make a significant contribution to what might be described as the 'democratic life experience' of the students.

2.3.3 The Content

The resources include an 'Introductory for the teachers' for guidance on running the program. The components are: Introduction to the teacher, How to use this resource, curriculum links and Background Briefings.

The Topics and investigations include the following:

Topic 1: You and me, the decision makers.
- Investigation: What do we mean by democracy?
- Investigation: Can we make all decisions?
- Blackline Masters1-9

Topic 2: Representing everyone!
- Investigation: How do you have your say?
- Investigation: How are we represented?
- Blackline Masters 1-4

Topic 3: What is your worth?
- Investigation: How and why do Australians vote?
- Investigation: How do electorates change over time?
- Blackline Masters 1-8

Topic 4: The voice of a vote in a world of change.
- Investigation: How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?
- Investigation: How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?
- Blackline Masters 1-8

2.3.4 Further resources
- Running an election in your school
- Glossary
- Student Animation and Interactive
- Links for Democracy Rules Topics.

2.3.5 Sourcing of the Program

Democracy Rules has been provided to all schools in the country, it can be downloaded from AEC links also.Many investigations in

this guide refer to the education section of the AEC *website www.aec.gov.au/Education/ Democracy_Rules/ web_links.html.*

Check the Democracy Rules page for navigation pathways on the link to the specific information the students need for upper primary, lower secondary and middle secondary curriculums

2.3.6 Upper secondary curriculum

The voice of a vote in a world of change, i.e. Topic 4, is suitable for use in upper secondary levels. The two investigations 'How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights' and 'How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?' examine and go into the role of electoral systems and voting in bringing about political change, and develop students' understanding of the symbolic and practical importance of the franchise, before inviting them to consider their own obligation to enroll for vote, and young people's overall civic engagement.

Further resources for running an election in a school include BLM 1 Ballot paper template, BLM 2 Scrutiny chart CD-ROM, Teacher's Interactive Voting Tool CD-ROM.

2.3.7 Toolbox Checklist:

Running an election in your school: Ballot box seals, Ballot boxes, Ballot papers, Candidate name signs, Certified list of electors, Chairs, Pencils, Polling official badges, Scrutineer badges, Tables and Voting screens

3. Further Resources for Classroom Elections from the AEC

3.1 AUSTRALIA VOTES DVD

This DVD contains 'mock-up polling place' footage showing the stages and procedures of voting in a federal election.

3.2 DOWN FOR THE COUNT DVD

This DVD explains in straightforward language and clear graphics on how votes are counted for elections in the House of Representatives, the Senate and in referendums. Presented in three individual sections this product is designed for education purposes.

3.3 EVERY VOTE COUNTS VIDEO

This video is set against the background of the 2004 federal election and has been designed as an educational resource to explain how an election is organized and conducted. It is suitable for groups from upper primary level onwards; Comprehensive Teachers' Notes that provide many classroom activities are also included.

4. Making a Nation

This program focuses on evolution of the Australian democratic system. It comprises of inquiry-based interactive modules designed for students' requirements of 'History for Year 9 and 10 levels' of the Australian Curriculum. The programme covers key features of Australia's democratic system and the student exposure includes a range of evidence in practical and a set of self-contained classroom-friendly activities aimed at developing their own knowledge and understanding of these features.

It helps students develop a range of historical skills as per the curriculum.

4.1 TEACHER RESOURCES

Teacher resources include professional learning workshops, classrooms activities and other useful information about the electoral system as per topics shortlisted below:
- Federation Factsheets.
- Three Levels of Government
- Voting activities for people with disability and learning difficulties.
- Let Your Electoral Knowledge bloom.
- Constitutional Referendums.
- Voting in Australia
- Constitutional Referendum brochure.
- The Australian Constitution.
- National Electorate Map.
- State specific interactive electorate Maps.
- Counting of Votes.

The above resources and details can be accessed at website of the AEC at the following link: *https://education.aec.gov.au/teacher-resources/*

Student Vote

Elections Canada Online: **Voter Education Resources** for Schools

General

Elections Canada (EC), responsible for conduct of federal elections and referendums in the country provides voter education including civic education programs and resources to elementary and secondary level students. Elections Canada's Online provides all the voter education resources/tools through its web based online operations accessible at *http://www.elections.ca/content2.aspx?*

Voter Education for School Students

Aims and Objects:

Voter education for school students encompasses civic education for primary and secondary level students and the teachers through curricular coverage and extracurricular youth engagement, community involvement and through various other means including online services, partnership building etc. Aims and objects of voter education in Canada essentially include educating all categories of voters and as such the public about voter registration, where to vote, when and how to vote, the identification required to vote and the entire electoral process to make them ready to exercise the right to vote.

Approach:

EC has developed and provided a series of shareable resources known as Federal Election Resources to help all categories of voters become fully informed of the entire electoral process and make them prepared to exercise right to vote. These resources may be categorized as below:

- Voter Information Service
- Voter Identification
- Ways to Vote
- Voter Registration
- FAQ's for Electors
- Backgrounders on Electoral Process
- Aboriginal Voters

- Voters from Ethno-cultural Communities (in 31 languages)
- Voting by Special Ballot by Canadian Forces
- Information for People with Disabilities
- Information for New Voters
- Civic Education for Elementary and secondary Students, Teachers
- Youth Engagement
- Partnership with National and Regional Organizations for Voter Education, Civic Education and Youth Engagement

EC's outreach programs, special programs, blogs, research studies, social media connect on Facebook, Twitter etc also contribute to the electoral engagement and educational programs in an efficient manner.

Civic Education, Outreach Programs

EC's mandate under the Canada Elections Act inter alia covers the following responsibilities through:

- Implementation of public education and information programs for the purpose of making the electoral process better known to students at the primary and secondary levels, and
- Advertising for informing electors about the exercise of their democratic rights.

Strategy

EC identifies groups for targeted outreach on the basis of electoral participation barriers faced by different categories of voters including students and youth especially the barrier of lack of information about when, where and how to register and vote. EC collaborates with national and regional organizations that are able to reach members of these groups for further steps as follow:

- Shares information about the electoral process, for dissemination by partner

organizations to their stakeholders;

- Informs groups about EC programs, including online services and field outreach during an election;
- Actively solicits the groups' collaboration to share official voting information and promote EC's initiatives.

EC's Voter Education Resources: Civic Education

Teachers

Teachers would require:

- Lesson plans and resources to teach about democracy, elections, voting, government and citizenship.
- Conduct an election simulation in classroom.
- Way to make the federal election relevant to students.

EC offers educational resources that are

- Free and easy to order,
- Delivered directly to the targeted school,
- Created to meet your curriculum needs,
- Designed to make your work a little easier.

Students

EC resources help students increase political knowledge and interest, encourage them to develop a sense of civic duty, connect them to the world and issues that surround them make democracy, elections and voting relevant to students' daily lives at home and in their community. EC Online provides all kinds of resources for students' class projects on democracy, elections and voting.

Parents

EC's website is the authentic source of information on Canadian democracy, elections, voting and citizenship. This helps parents to guide their children on the subject.

Youth-serving Organizations

EC's resources provide guidance for youth programming and resources focused on democratic and civic leadership and engagement. It also provides programming ideas and hands-on resources that make young Canadians aware, informed and engaged in civic and democratic education.

Background Resources

EC also provides students with more information on how democracy, elections and voting work in Canada through brief papers called Background Resources. They include Electoral System of Canada (an e-booklet), Political Parties, Ridings and Members of Parliament, Becoming a candidate, Research, Events, Youth Organizations and FAQ's etc.

EC participates in a variety of activities with Youth Organizations and maintains a list of Youth Organizations. EC offers a variety of ways for students to engage as active citizens and different civic engagement programs. An illustrative brief on a featured program follows:

Classroom resources

Elections Canada offers vast educational products and resources for elementary, secondary and ESL teachers free educational resources, tools, activities, information and links, all designed for sparking interest in voting in a classroom. These resources aim at appraising the relevance of the country's parliamentary and democratic institutions to the students who are the future voters. These resources may be categorized as below:

- Educational Products for Elementary Level, secondary Level;
- Educational Resources;
- Annual Initiative;
- Election Canada Partners;

Detailed lists of these resources are available on EC's website along with an online order form

Helpful links

EC' online resources also provide 'Helpful Links' for further guidance and operations.

A number of organizations are engaged in the work relating to promotion of awareness and understanding of the country's electoral process, democratic and civic engagement, community involvement and active citizenship for elementary and secondary students and for educators. Links to civic and democratic engagement organizations are listed below for ready reference. Students and other youth can find more ways to get informed get involved and help the next generation be ready to vote in their first election when they turn 18.

- Youth Organizations and Programs;
- Teacher Information;
- Your Province or Territory's Electoral Body
- Other Resources

More general information on the electoral process is available at Election Canada's Links. Visit *http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx? Also See Annex I*

Canada's Democracy Week team would like to congratulate CIVIX, the organization responsible for the **Student Vote** initiative!

During National Student Vote Week (October 13-16), **850,000** Canadian students voted in over **7,550** schools!

Elementary and high school students across Canada took on the roles of election officials and voted for the federal candidates running in their local riding. Their vote followed a series of instruction and activities focused on the federal government, research into the candidates,

Featured Program: Student Vote

Getting Young Canadians Ready for the Federal Election with 'Student Vote'

Since 2003, the Student Vote program has been giving students under the voting age the opportunity to experience the voting process and have a voice in the election.

Bring the 2015 federal election to your classroom. Student Vote is a parallel election for students under the voting age, coinciding with official election periods. The program combines in-class learning, family dialogue, media consumption and an authentic voting experience. Approximately 560,000 students in over 3,800 schools participated in the Student Vote program during the 2011 federal election.

Student Vote is a parallel election program offered to elementary and high schools during official federal, provincial and municipal elections. Participating students learn about government and the electoral process, research the party platforms and local candidates, and participate in an authentic vote for the official candidates in their school's riding.

Registered schools receive all the material necessary to run the program, including educational resources, an election manual, posters, voting screens, ballot boxes and ballots.

The goal of Student Vote is to create life-long voters who are ready, willing and able to participate in their democracy.

Schools can sign up now at *www.studentvote.ca* or by calling our team toll-free at 1-866-488-8775.

Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX, Canada's leading civic education charity. Visit civix.ca to learn more.

parties and issues, as well as dialogue with family and friends.

View the **results** of this parallel election.

Learning Resources

Educators: Discover or rediscover the **learning resources** developed by Elections Canada!

You will find **elementary** and **secondary** school lesson plans and **civic education materials** to help you take advantage of Canada's Democracy Week in the classroom and inspire lifelong engagement in our democratic process.

By using the Democracy Week Education Guide and Elections Canada's civic education materials, you can engage your students in their democracy by giving them tools to talk about:

- democracy in Canada;
- the importance of voting;
- how they are already contributing to democracy;
- how they can continue to contribute in the future.

Plus, discover the **Additional Resources** section of our website, where we have posted various organizations› civic education materials.

Annex I
Featured Program

Student Vote

Bring the 2015 federal election to your classroom. Student Vote is a parallel election for students under the voting age, coinciding with official election periods. The program combines in-class learning, family dialogue, media consumption and an authentic voting experience. Approximately 560,000 students in over 3,800 schools participated in the Student Vote program during the 2011 federal election.

Programs for teachers

Elections Canada works with a variety of organizations that deliver amazing training and learning experiences to teachers of social studies, civics, politics and citizenship.

Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

Coordinated by the Library of Parliament and supported by the Speakers of both the Senate and the House of Commons, the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy is a unique professional development opportunity for teachers of governance and citizenship education. Each year, the program brings together approximately 85 educators from across the country for an intensive,

informative and unforgettable week at Parliament.

Programs for students

Elections Canada works with a variety of civic education and youth civic engagement organizations to give elementary and high school students access to participatory and experiential programming inside and outside the classroom.

The National Democracy Challenge

The National Democracy Challenge invites Canadians aged 14 to 17 to submit a video, image or piece of writing answering the challenge question. Contestants win great prizes for the best submissions in each category. The school with the most entries wins the School Challenge.

- Inside and outside the classroom
- High school students aged 14 to 17
- Submissions accepted as of mid-August 2015

Rep Day

Rep Day is a nationwide civic education initiative that connects elected representatives with high school students for a dialogue on current political issues. Rep Day aims to break down the stereotypes that young people have of politicians and the political process. It helps students develop a better understanding of and a sense of trust in the people and institutions within our democracy.

- Inside the classroom
- High school students
- Contact CIVIX directly for more information

Forum for Young Canadians

Each one-week session gives 120 Canadian high school students a behind-the-scenes look at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, the chance to enhance their knowledge of Canadian politics and public affairs, and an up-close look at running the country.

- Outside the classroom
- High school students aged 15 to 19
- Application deadlines apply

Encounters with Canada

Every week of the school year, 120 to 148 high school students visit Ottawa to learn about Canadian institutions, meet famous and accomplished Canadians, explore exciting career options and develop their civic leadership skills.

- Outside the classroom
- High school students aged 14 to 17
- Application deadlines apply

Be the Change!

Teacher candidates from the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education conceive, develop and deliver engaging and experiential modules on democratic citizenship at nine Encounters with Canada sessions. Participating youth increase their awareness, understanding of and interest in civic and community responsibility, action and engagement. They leave with an action plan that they can implement in their school or community.

- Outside the classroom
- High school students aged 14 to 17

Rotary Adventure in Citizenship

Each year for four days, 220 Canadian youth meet in the nation's capital. Through meetings with political leaders, senior executives and others, they discover up close the inner workings of our democratic institutions and develop their civic leadership potential.

- Outside the classroom
- High school students aged 16 to 18
- Application deadlines apply

Keystone

The Youth, Democracy and Engagement module of the flagship Keystone program gets youth to experiment with participating in the political system. They become more aware of and involved in the issues of citizenship and democracy in their club and community.

- Outside the classroom
- High school students
- Contact your local Boys and Girls Club for details

CEC
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
OF GEORGIA

Voter Education in **Schools and Colleges**

Voter and Civic Education

Civic and voter education is one of the priorities areas under the Strategic Plan (2015-19) of the Central Election Commission (CEC). It envisages maximizing voter awareness, voter participation and increasing civic engagement in electoral processes. The CEC has undertaken several innovative initiatives to achieve the desired objectives of electoral and civic engagement. Some of the initiatives are briefly discussed as follows:

Electoral Development Schools

A pilot project namely "Electoral Development Schools" for youth was launched in 2015 by the CEC and has been successfully implemented in 10 election districts. The project is being implemented by the CEC in collaboration with its Training Center. The Schools under the project aim at increasing civic engagement, popularization of elections amongst youth besides developing training skills of the election officials. The project will gradually cover all election districts in Georgia in a well designed manner.

Election and Young Voter

The CEC, in collaboration with its Training Center, implements the information cum learning course "Elections and Young Voter" for engaging youth in public, political life and raising their awareness levels. The course is conducted for the 11th and 12th grade public school students especially in the regions densely populated with ethnic minorities in Georgia.

The project is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

Courses for Election Administrators

The CEC and its Training Center implement the project "Courses for Election Administrators" for preparing professionally qualified personnel. The course focuses on learning of the voting procedures.

Legal Clinic

The Legal clinic has been operating at the CEC Training Center since 2010. The clinic aims at strengthening the professional knowledge of law students at higher educational institutions, in election law as well as raises their civic awareness and develops practical skills.

Learning Course in Election law at High Education Institutions

The CEC Training Center implements various educational programs including one semester learning course in election law (Study Course in Election Law) for the students of law faculty as well as political and social science faculty (media school) students.

Distance Learning Program

The CEC Training Center promotes distance learning program aimed at increasing awareness and is available for all interested persons. The program includes tests which is additional mean for checking knowledge.

Supporting Civil Society Engagement

CEC Training Center within the framework of the grand competition issues the targeted grants for increasing civic engagement in electoral processes and capacity building of civic sector and political parties.

Link for access: *cesko.ge/eng/static/1602/ akhalgazrda-amomrcheveli*

SVEEP Phase III:
Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in India

Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP), the Flagship voter education program of the ECI witnesses major enrichment in its Phase III through the new initiative of 'Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy in Educational Institutions' under the Strategic Plan of the ECI for 2016-25.

The 'Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy' marked by International Conferences on 'Inclusive, Informed and Ethical Participation' (Oct 2016), Strategies for Empowering Young and Future Voters' (January, 2017) and followed by a series of national level consultations on curricular and extracurricular interventions and initiatives such as Interactive School Engagement Program (2017), National Elections Quiz (2017) finally embarked on the project for setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs). While on one hand the 'Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy' initiative has sought curricular

changes for enhancing electoral literacy supported by strengthening of Civic Education at school level, on the other hand the ECI has launched the program for setting up of the ELCs.

The ELCs are being set up in three formats: ELC (Future Voters for secondary, senior secondary level students), ELC (New Voters) at college level all higher education institutions and the ELC (Communities) for covering young people not covered under formal education system. Integration of state of the art technology, training of master trainers, development and delivery of student teacher resources etc has been completed. Till date 1,26,698 ELCs are reported to have been set up. Close monitoring is being done. Evaluation has been organized through an independent agency.

A separate full article appears in this Issue on the subject. Further details are available in that article.

National winners of NEQ 2018 being awarded by Hon'ble President of India

Voter Education in Kenya

Introduction

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) is charged inter alia with the responsibility of conducting voter Education in Kenya. IEBC believes that access to accurate voter education integrated with civic education helps to nurture an informed voter aware of his electoral rights and responsibilities in a democracy. Voter Education in Kenya is guided by the Elections (voter education) Regulations, 2017.

Voter Education: Approach and Strategy of the IEBC

IEBC, keeping in view its responsibilities and obligations arising out of the new Constitution of 2010, has taken up voter education as one of the major thrust areas for nurturing democracy in the country. In this process it has developed a curriculum followed with a number of user-friendly guiding documents on voter education through well designed and comprehensive stakeholder participation process. These documents include audio, video, print booklets with lucid and comfortable easy to read user- friendly illustrated hand books besides use of updated technology options. It has also developed a comprehensive and a well organized operational system through formal and informal channels to reach the voters at ground level and has launched several new projects in this endeavor.

Voter Education Curriculum

A Holistic Document Prepared Through Stakeholder Participation

One of the key initiatives taken by the IEBC under the Constitution of 2010 is preparation of a holistic, impressive and well structured Voter Education Curriculum (VEC) document with the support and contribution of its partners. The process included support from Kenya Institute of Education, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (IFES) and comprehensive consultation with different stakeholders including media, academic institutions of repute, NGO's, National Cohesion and Integration Commission, UNDP, representatives of different ethnic and religious groups etc.

Voter Education Curriculum with module wise objectives may be accessed at IEBC website link *http://www.iebc.or.ke/index.php/careers/voter-education*

Aims and Objectives

The VEC aims at addressing political and electoral developments as provided under the 2010 constitution. Informed participation in elections to different offices and other provisions of electoral process necessitate inclusion of relevant voter education areas that enables voters to understand the respective roles of the positions in governance of the country. It also aims at promoting the desired participation of all sections of voters in electoral process viz women, PwD's, ethnic groups and people from all the communities.

Objectives

The voter education curriculum is geared towards:

- Arousing public interest in the electoral process and their involvement in the process of electing political leaders
- Informing the public on the link between human rights and voter rights
- Making the public aware of the relationship between elections and democracy
- Enlightening the public on the importance of voting and its impact on transparency and accountability
- Understanding the rationale and importance of boundary reviews in Kenya
- Educating the public on the electoral process, role, responsibilities and rights of voters

- Undertaking voter registration, polling and counting procedures.
- Understanding the role and importance of political parties, candidates and observers in elections.
- Enhancing voter's participation in the electoral process in an objective and issue based platform.
- Ensuring that voter apathy is minimized.

Role and use of Emergent Technologies

The VEC also addresses the role and use of emergent technologies in conduct of elections such as Electronic Voter Registration and Electronic Tallying of results

Voter Education Training Manual

A comprehensive Voter Education Training Manual has been prepared and launched by IEBC to complement the use of the Voter Education Curriculum as the primary reference material in voter education.

Formal and Informal Channels for Voter Education: Voter Education Providers

The voter education is provided through formal and informal channels. Formal channels include the schools and the universities where the voter education program has been launched. A Directorate of Voter Education and Partnerships has been set up in the IEBC. Voter Education Providers have been accredited by the IEBC in each of the constituencies in sufficient numbers. Voter education providers are expected to use the Trainers manual when planning for and disseminating voter education. Directorate of Voter Education and Partnerships utilizes the services of voter education providers accredited by IBEC for different counties.

User- Friendly Guides 'Yes, I Can Vote!'

IEBC has produced user- friendly guides in the form of booklets to facilitate educators, trainers and directly, the voters. One of these booklets is titled "YES, I Can Vote!' developed in

close collaboration with stakeholders with the intention of reaching out to all voters in Kenya. The overall goal of the guide is to demystify the electoral process and make it more accessible.

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

FROM 2015 - 2018

The Launch of
VOTER EDUCATION FOR SCHOOLS PROJECT
"Nurturing Democracy in Schools"

For more information contact any Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Constituency Office, **OR** IEBC Head Office 6th Floor, Anniversary Towers, P.O. Box 45371 - 00100 G.P.O, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel 2769000 Email: info@iebc.or.ke Website: www.iebc.or.ke
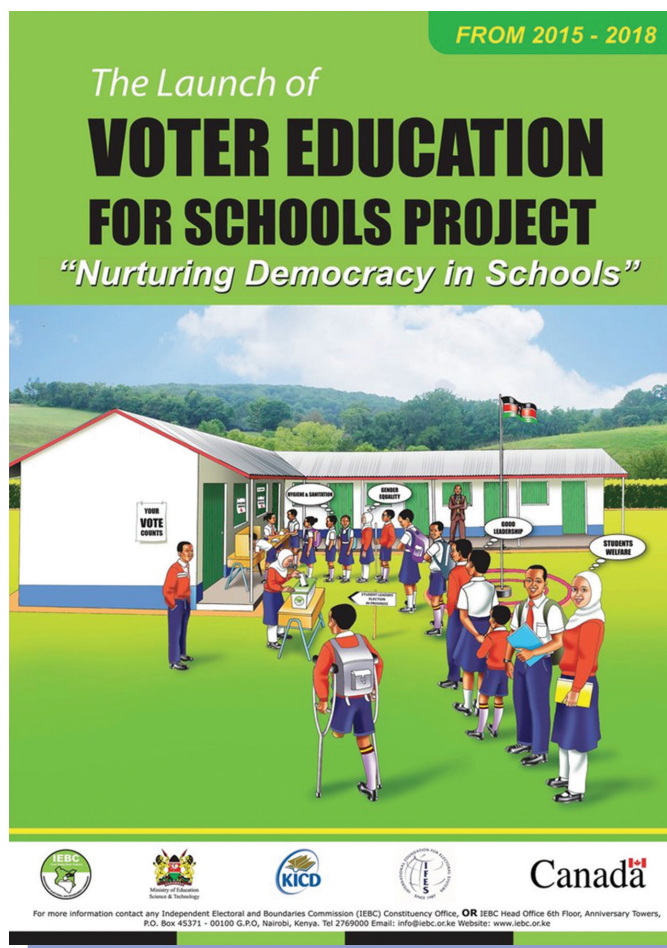
given to the program for information of the electorate and all the Voter Education Providers are directed to follow the program carefully. The climax of the forums is marked by the simulation of the voting process in designated venues at respective CAWs countrywide.

Voter Education Weeks

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 were held countrywide in May, 2015.

During this week, IEBC sensitizes the citizens on importance of participation in the electoral process as well boost the continuous voter registration process. 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 weeks are implemented nationwide through outreach programs to schools, electoral technology exhibition, media campaigns, onsite service delivery, open stakeholders' forum and town hall meetings.

Voter Education for Schools Project: Nurturing Democracy in Schools

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission launched an ambitious voter education project for schools in March 2015. For this purpose the Commission has established a partnership with the Ministry of Education and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to realize the goals of this project.

The project focuses more on the secondary school students because they are about to turn 18 years of age and will therefore be eligible to participate in elections.

The project is funded by the Canadian Government through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). It is meant to nurture democracy in young Kenyans and includes focus on PwD's besides women voters.

Implementation of the project includes developing a curriculum and curriculum support materials; piloting the curriculum in selected schools; training teachers and students on the curriculum and handbooks; establishing the best platforms to engage the young people in schools; and rolling out the curriculum in schools nationally. The project is forward looking and intends to foster an understanding of the electoral process and develop leaders of integrity from an early age. The project is supported by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.
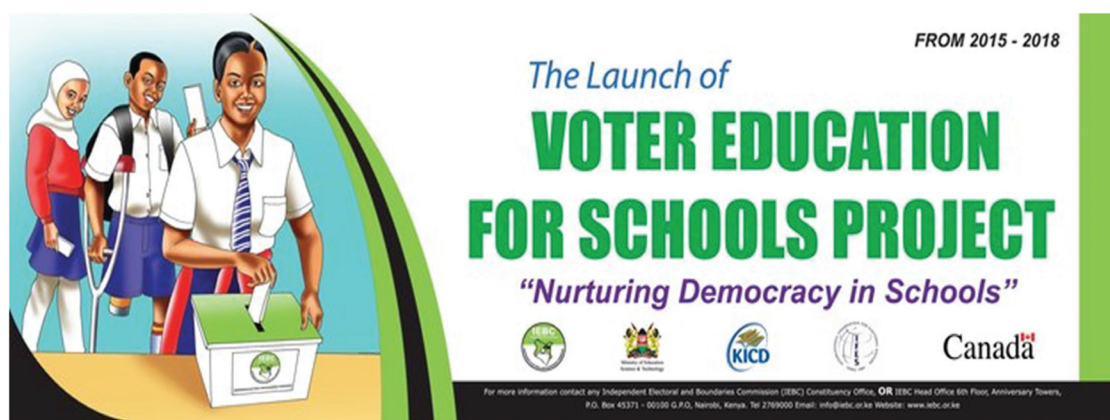
Banners Announcing Launch of 'Voter Education for Schools Project' in Kenya

ELECTIONS
ELECTORAL COMMISSION
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

Voter Education in New Zealand: School Resource

Introduction

The New Zealand Electoral Commission has developed civic and voter education resources to guide and help schools deliver engaging activities designed to encourage students' understanding for participation in electoral process including voting. The main objective is to prepare future generation of active, engaged citizens with 'Your Voice, Your Choice teaching units'.

The teaching units are aligned with the vision, principles, values and key competencies of Levels 3 to 5 the New Zealand School education Curriculum with linkage to the social sciences learning area.

The educational material is flexible for different levels. Schools are encouraged to adapt the sequence of learning activities depending upon the specific needs and experiences of the students.

The Programs

Some of the programs are discussed as follows:

Kids Voting Program

'Kids Voting' programme has been designed to create awareness among young people about the country's electoral processes. Building first-hand experience of active participation by young people supports their personal understanding, belief and confidence in electoral participation including voting and as such the democracy.

The program provides a chance to the students to take part in elections. Students vote for real candidates, on a real ballot paper, and compare the results of their classroom election with the results of real election.

Registered schools are provided with all the materials required to conduct various activities envisaged under the program. The materials include a Teacher's Guide, a ballot box and other resources to support and run the Kids Voting at a school. The ballot papers are sent electronically to teachers from two-and-a-half weeks before Election Day. The classroom elections process has to be completed as per the prescribed timeframe before the Election Day. The entire exercise is completed in one to two sessions (voting and counting the votes). Thousands of students across New Zealand have participated in Kids Voting and gained a first hand experience of electoral process.

Curriculum-linked teaching units

EC NZ encourages schools to cover material in the, 'Your Voice, Your Choice' resources as aligned with Levels 3 to 5 of the New Zealand Curriculum. These resources have been developed to help schools deliver engaging activities designed to encourage students' understanding and enthusiasm for participating in their communities and the voting process.

Registration of Schools for Participation in Kids Voting

Schools have to register for 'Kids Voting' online at the time of the election. Following steps are advised at the time of registration:

- Identify one key liaison person at the school for communication with the EC NZ. The liaison person should register the school to participate online. EC NZ sends e copies of the Kids Voting ballot papers directly to the liaison person as per time schedule of the election.
- Decide class year(s) that will take part in Kids Voting at school
- Decide time frame the school requires to prepare and deliver Kids Voting
- Consider which curriculum-linked resources a school needs. Teaching units may be downloaded online at *www.elections.org.nz* and hard copies along with the Kids Voting are supplied by EC NZ at the time of the election

'Your Voice, Your Choice' Have Your say:

Teaching Units under this program are aligned to Levels 3 and 4 of the New Zealand Curriculum. These resource are aimed to encourage students to have their say on the decisions that affect their lives. The resource support students to learn about their rights, duties, and responsibilities in a democracy and to develop understandings of how they can influence what happens in their school and community.

'Your Voice, Your Choice' Be Heard:

Teaching Units under this program are aligned to Level 5 of the New Zealand
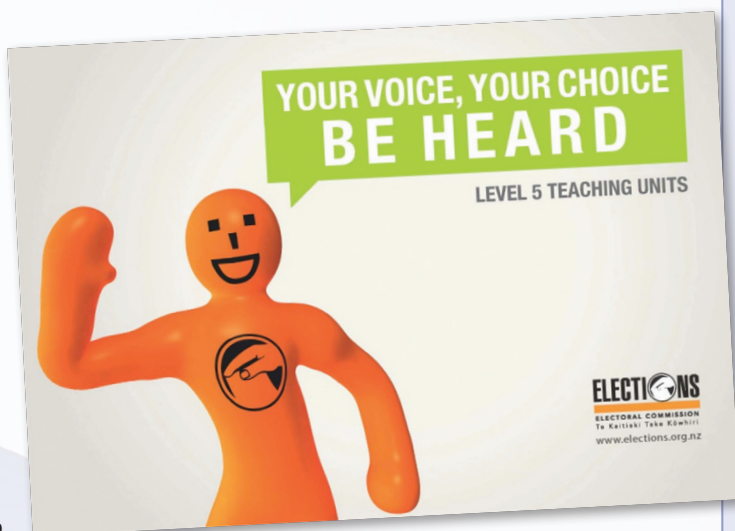
educational Curriculum. This resource explores the relationship between voting, system and functioning of government and the issues faced by the local communities and electorates. The focus is on connecting the voting system to students' own lives to deepen their understanding about functioning of the government in New Zealand.

'Your Voice, Your Choice' Turanga Mua, Turanga Tika

Teaching Units under this program are aligned to Level 5 of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa This resource is aligned with Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and is intended for use in Māori-medium classrooms. By exploring the participation of Māori in decision-making in different environments, students will see that Māori have sought and been able to meet their physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs.
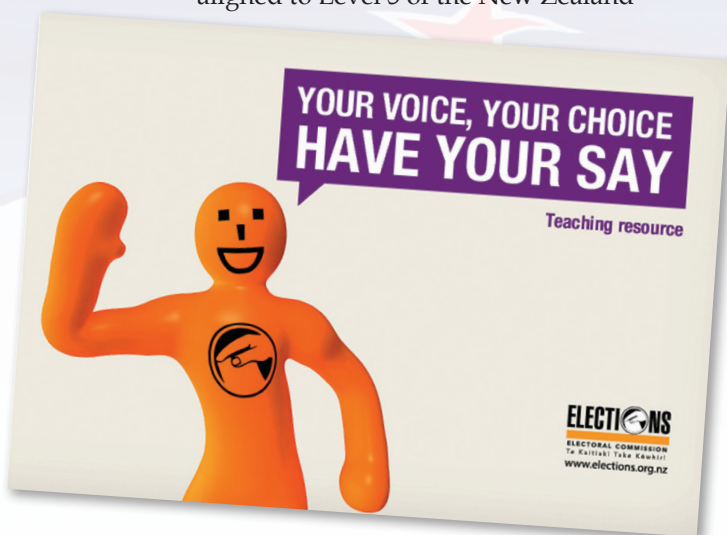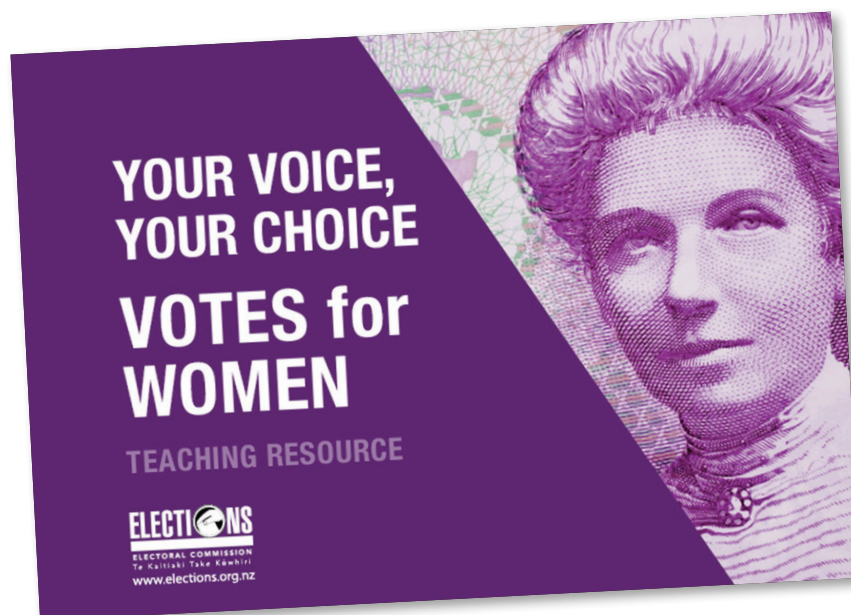
'Your Voice, Your Choice': Votes for Women Teaching Resource

Teaching Units in this programme are aligned to Level 4 of the New Zealand Curriculum. The EC NZ celebration of 120 Years of Votes for Women provides a connect between the suffragists' achievement in 1893, and voter engagement and participation today.

Electoral Commission Suffrage Scholarships

The EC NZ established scholarships in the year 2013 to celebrate the anniversary of universal suffrage. The scholarship covers fees for post-graduate research in voter participation.

The Electoral Commission is committed to encourage wide-reaching research on voter participation, and the scholarships referred to above aim to contribute to this. The Suffrage Scholarships encourage research that furthers understanding of the factors that motivate voters to take part, and the barriers to voter participation. Community-specific researches in cohorts that experience low turnout are also encouraged.

To find out more and to apply for the scholarships, follow the link to the Election Commission suffrage Scholarships page

at the Universities New Zealand Website *http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/scholarships/sufferage*

Availability of Brochures and Resources

Copies of the EC NZ resources and brochures can be obtained by placing order with the EC NZ. Information on users of the resources is sought by the EC for developing the user profile such as a school, any organization, a church, community centre or for a notice board. Details of the resources, brochures are available on the EC NZ website *http://www.elections.org.nz/resources-learning*

The orders can be placed online. The resources availability in other languages and information on downloading is all made available by EC NZ in a user friendly manner on its website. For illustration the flyer Ready to Vote is available in Chinese, Cook Island Maori, English, Maori, Korean, Samoan and Tongan languages. This convenient method of providing multilingual information is helpful to all sections of society and facilitates faster and broader dissemination.

Voter Education in Schools and College through **Formal Curricula and Campus Engagement**

General

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) of the USA has developed technology based, focused educational and electoral engagement resources for the schools including 'Mock Vote'; Campus engagement for colleges and universities in a well organized manner. The system, backed by the provisions of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) 2002 and the state financial support is briefly discussed as follows:

HELP AMERICA VOTE COLLEGE PROGRAM (HAVCP)

Introduction

HAVCP was established by the EAC in the year 2004 under express provisions of the Help America Vote Act for student engagement in the electoral process. The program is supported through grants from EAC authorized under HAVA 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 the grants further aim to relieve poll worker shortages by engaging students. The program also leverages the technology skills of a tech-savvy generation as well as recruits the next generation of poll workers.

Aims and Objects of HAVCP

The purpose of the HAVA College Poll Worker Program is to:

(i)   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;

(ii) Encourage college students to become cognizant of the elections process and civic education, and to assist in the smooth administration of elections in their community; and

(iii) Encourage state and local governments to use the services of the students participating in the program. EAC is particularly interested in supporting programs that propose partnerships between various student and other university organizations and local election officials in order to mobilize college student interest in elections and create meaningful activities for students leading up to and on Election Day.

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 in voting technology, improvements to 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, universities, and nonprofit organizations to assist EAC in implementing the HAVCP. EAC has provided substantial grants to colleges and nonprofits to recruit, train and support students serving as poll workers on Election Day.

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 to those with disabilities. EAC is also encouraging applicants to recruit

student poll workers that speak foreign languages to assist 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.

Coordination with Institutions of Higher Learning

EAC encourages institutions of higher education to participate in the Program, and is expected to make all necessary materials and other assistance (including the same for workshops and poll worker training sessions) available without charge to any institution which desires to participate in the Program.

National Student and Parent Mock Election

As provided under Sec 295 of HAVA, the EAC is authorized to award 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 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 present awards to outstanding student and parent mock election projects.

Encourage Institutions of Higher Education

The EAC encourages institutions of higher education (including community colleges)

to participate in the Program, and make all necessary materials and other assistance 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 schoolchildren and their parents. California High School Voter Education Weeks details as an illustration are attached at Annex I for information.

Help America Vote Foundation

Section 601 of HAVA provides for establishing the Help America Vote Foundation as a charitable and nonprofit corporation.

Aims and Objects

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.

Non-partisan Approach: An Essential requirement for Eligibility

The foundation is expected to carry out its purposes without partisan bias or without promoting any particular point of view regarding any issue, and shall ensure that each participant in its activities is governed in a balanced manner which does not reflect any partisan bias.

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 as per prescribed procedures. 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.

Addressing Voter Apathy among Young Voters

Campus Election Engagement Project (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 now intends to maximize 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.

Resources
CEEP resources are covered in two categories as given below:
I category Overall Engagement Resources
Nonpartisan Voter Guides
Online Voter Tools: This includes online collection of CEEP and related allies/partners engagement sites with registration and voter information, maps, widgets, webinars etc.
Voter Registration Resources
Voter Education Resources.
Voter Engagement Organizations

II Category: CEEP Resources
Seven key ways for campus engagement
Campus Electoral Engagement Assessment
Combating Cynicism
Covering Elections through Social Media
Working with Student Newspapers
How to distribute Non partisan Candidate Guides.
Allies and Partners
CEEP has reputed, established highly rated partners and allies whose services are utilized in Campus Engagement project. These allies and partners include Keystone partner: Campus Compact; Allies: League of Women Voters; Campus Vote Project; Rock the Vote; Non Profit Vote; National Voter Registration Day; US PIRG; Vote Smart; Long Distance Voter etc.

Technology Driven Tools for Electoral Engagement
CEEP, its allies and partners provide technological tools including web based on line tools for the campus electoral engagement programs. The main objective of this brief is to apprise the reader of technology application in voter education in US with specific emphasis on what CEEP and its allies and partners offer to the students for electoral engagement through IT tools.

Annex I

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL VOTER EDUCATION WEEKS: Best Practices Shared by County Elections Offices 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.
- Encourage a question and answer period where the students can inquire about the process of a working democracy.
- Allow teachers and students who are eligible to apply on site.
- Create a mock election ballot and give attendees the opportunity to cast their ballot, similar to Election Day.

Conduct a Mock Election (Sacramento County)

- Select a school that is enthusiastic about getting involved in 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 to simulate election day
- Use this time to encourage students to become poll workers on Election Day.

Host a Voter Registration Drive on Campus (Plumas County)

- Elections 101. Present a slide show on basics of participating in a democracy.
- How to Register.
- Am I eligible to register to vote?
- What to expect after registration
- 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.
- 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.

EPILOGUE

The discussion in the paper reflects the sustained, systematic efforts made by these countries in evolving a robust system, institutional infrastructure backed generally by suitable legislation for voter education to the young and future voters for empowering them for electoral participation. Partnerships with the Civil Society organizations, Non partisans and other stakeholders have been involved in a significant manner in the connect with the targeted populations. Efficiency and efficacy of the delivery systems, especially in view of the online service, has been very helpful. Research suggests that voting habit is best developed when participation starts early once they cross the eligibility criteria. In that context the Student, Teacher Resources including technology driven integration, have been developed and made efficiently accessible to the targeted young and future voter populations. The resources offering is attractive and engaging to the young minds to prepare them to participate right away for their first ballot decision at the right age.

S D Sharma
Senior Fellow
Election Commission of India

National Consultation on
Accessible Elections

The Concept

As stated in the Constitution, the principle of Universal Adult Suffrage forms the basis of the electoral system of India. Drawing from this fundamental aspect, the Election Commission of India is committed to the spirit of *'No voter to be left behind'.*

In other words, it implies that the Election Commission is dedicated to the conduct of Inclusive Elections in which all categories of voters require to be engaged in electoral processes thereby ensuring their holistic participation. In this context, inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the electoral process has been one of the core areas of the Commission for long and holds a prominent status under its Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020. In view of its importance, the Commission has taken a prodigious step by declaring *"Accessible Elections"* as the theme for the National Voter's Day on January 25, 2018.

Moreover, this year's International Conference of VoICE.NET, organized on the of January 24, 2018 revolved around the theme of 'Inclusion of PwDs in Electoral Process'. Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners of India, Dignitaries from five EMBs, Former Chief Election Commissioners of India besides Secretary General, International IDEA, President and CEO, IFES, Experts, Senior Officials and CSO representatives participated in the conference.

Prior to this, the Commission's resolve in support of inclusion of PwDs has been conveyed through official directives dated March 12, 2016 and September 7, 2016.

While, a diverse set of real and tangible measures have been adopted in adherence to the directives, it also remains necessary to glance at the consolidated picture of outcomes, good practices (including innovations and technological support), existing barriers, addressal of barriers, efficacy and efficiency of the directives in place and further engagement via comprehensive consultation with the stakeholders.

In this connection, a series of consultations for Inclusion of PwDs in the Electoral Process were conducted across the country- in Districts and States to identify barriers, challenges, and ways to overcome them and draft strategies to increase their participation. The Offices of the Chief Electoral Officers of States/ UTs were made in-charge of collating and compiling reports received from the Districts. This aided in the development of State - Level Reports which included databases on related achievements and good practices. The reports were taken up as key agenda documents for State-Level Consultations, serving a role in further enriching aspects relating to the inclusion of PwDs particularly with regard to matters of registration and polling.

The State Consultation Reports dealt with numerous aspects such as - polling station-wise mapping of PwD electors not registered on the electoral roll, PwD friendly and accessible websites of CEOs/DEOs, specially-abled specific Voter Facilitation Centres, accessible voter awareness resources, special registration and sensitization camps for the concerned electorate, partnering with PwDs as District/State Icons, collaboration with subject-specific NGOs/CSOs, training and sensitization of the election machinery, engagement of volunteers in facilitation-support, accessibility enhancements at the polling station level, appointment of district-level Nodal Officers for PwD voters, et al.

Apart from carrying key recommendations on the following, the State Reports delved upon Physical, Attitudinal, Social, Policy, Transportation and Communication barriers presently facing the PwD electorate as well as methods to address the concerns via a set of rationally-rooted Action Points on the following:

- Accessible Registration Process including use of IT
- Accessible Polling Station including EVM/VVPAT and other Facilitation Measures
- Voter Education and Leveraging Partnerships

Furthermore, as a run-up to the State/District Consultations, a thorough mapping of PwDs extending to the level of the Assembly Constituency was also conducted, classifying the concerned electorate into the following five categories-

a) Electors with Visual Disability
b) Electors with Speech and Hearing Disability
c) Electors with Locomotors Disability
d) Electors with Intellectual Disability
e) Electors with Multiple Disabilities

The entire process aided in generating a nationwide data of proven veracity on Persons with Disabilities that is expected to be of vital use in designing accessibility initiatives, developing PwD-friendly communication strategies, making provisions available and rendering requisite amenities targeted right to the polling station level for specially-abled electors.

Thence National Consultation on Accessible Elections was the culmination of more than three month long series of District and State-Level Workshops undertaken as a part of ECI's theme for 2018- Accessible Elections, to identify barriers in the inclusion of PwDs in the electoral process, assess the present accessibility policies in place and put forward recommendations for addressing barriers to enhance the participation of the differently-abled.

Proceedings of the Consultation

The Election Commission of India's two day National Consultation on Accessible Elections scheduled on July 3 & 4, 2018 in New Delhi, opened with an enthusiastic start with the participation of more than 50 Civil Society Organizations and all the Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs besides members of National Political Parties and Ministries, Government of India.

Reaffirming ECI's commitment to make elections entirely inclusive, accessible and hassle free for PwDs, Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat said in the inaugural session - "Despite having International, National laws and treaties or procedures in place, there is still a gap in reaching out to PwDs because of the apathy towards electoral process. I urge all the participants to suggest effective measures and help us devise a policy that can serve as a model framework for all Election Management Bodies of the world. Election Commissioner Sunil Arora

Invitation card to the National Consultation

talked about Master Ram Chandra, a technician who was instrumental in creating the Jaipur Foot. "It is famous worldwide for providing assistance to PwDs and like him there are many famous as well as unsung heroes who are the part of war against disability," he remarked.

In addition to that, Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa highlighted the importance of collaboration with stakeholders and society as a whole, while laying emphasis on awareness initiatives and spirit of volunteering among people to make the entire electoral process accessible. Concluding his remarks he said - "More Sensitized we are, More Sensible we become."

The first day of consultation also witnessed the launch of new dynamic website for ECI's SVEEP (Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation) Division with a dedicated section on PwDs and state of the art security and accessibility features.

The first technical session commenced with a presentation by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment followed by the presentation of Best Practices on Accessible Elections by the Chief Electoral Officers of Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Meghalaya and the District Election Officer of Mandya, Karnataka.

Post-lunch technical session involved division of working groups as per the following five main disabilities.

- Group 1: Blindness and Low Vision
- Group 2: Deaf and hard of hearing
- Group 3: Locomotors Disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims of muscular dystrophy
- Group 4: Intellectual disability including autism, specific learning disability and mental illness
- Group 5: Multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness

The groups read through the reports submitted by States/UT and assessed barriers, challenges specific to the disabilities; study existing initiatives, took inputs from the participating CSOs and discussed at length to draft findings and recommendations for thematic presentations on three different topics namely:

- Accessible Registration Process including use of IT
- Accessible Polling Station including EVM/VVPAT & other Facilitation Measures
- Voter Education and Leveraging Partnerships

Each group was asked to prepare a presentation on all three topics. All the presentations on a specific topic were to be summarized by the moderator of the session and presented in the Closing Session to the Commission and senior officials.

Commencing with the 3rd Technical Session, the second day began with group presentations on the theme of '*Accessible Registration Process including use of Information Technology*'. Chaired by Deputy Election Commissioner, Sandeep Saxena and expert panellists including Deputy Election Commissioner Chandra Bhushan Kumar, senior officials from the Ministries of Electronics and Information Technology, delegates of political parties and field experts were there. The major takeaways relating to the subject involved **development of accessible websites and mobiles apps for PwDs** along with the **training and awareness programs for Poll Officials, Political Parties' candidates and workers on the special needs of PwDs** for effective electoral process. Following are the other important points:

- Door step and single visit registration as well as house hold mapping of all persons with disabilities to be carried out for recording the specific facilitations required. Multiple strategies such as cluster registrations and online enrolments may be carried out as well.
- Enrolment and voting rights of persons with intellectual and psycho social disabilities to be clarified at the ground level. Persons affected by leprosy / leprosy cured to be included within the same enrolment setting and not to be discriminated or excluded by personnel carrying out the enrolment.
- Special attention and accommodation to be given to the mis-match of identification of acid attack victims. Scribes for filling Form for persons with visual impairment to be enabled

- Training and Awareness programs for sensitization of poll machinery specifically BLOs and other officials involved in registration of voters.
- Standard Training Materials to be accessible to all Persons with Disabilities: signage, charts, posters, electronic and social media advertisement, short films, involvement of local FM channels (to sensitize family members etc.) and other medium of communication for awareness of the registration process
- Identification and involvement of State and District Level PwD icons or leading CSOs working for the 100% enrolment of disabled, specially deaf and hard of hearing
- ECI to form working group involving different stakeholders towards removing all the barriers faced by Persons with Disabilities in the electoral process. CSOs empaneled with ECI to be collaborated with DEO offices.
- Well planned communication strategy to be devised and implemented by promoting enrolment (awareness) campaigns inclusive of social media advertisements/short films, providing necessary materials/forms and adapting existing IEC material in accessible formats such as braille, sign language, text to speech conversions, audio visuals, signages, posters/brochures/charts in plain language with pictures and large text etc., accessible web tutorial, IVRS and so on by involving CSOs/institutions working for Persons with Disabilities.
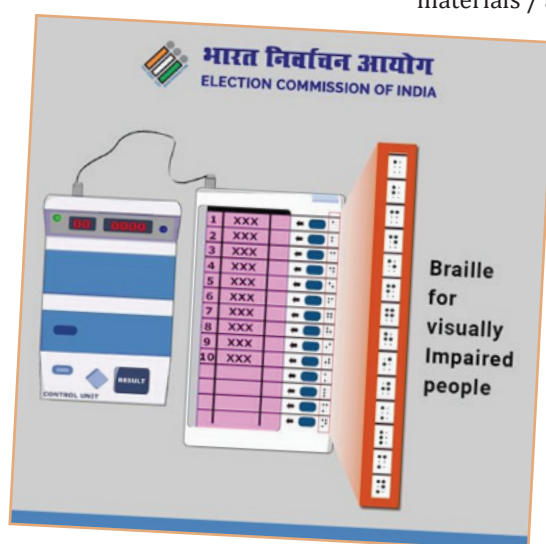
- CEO's websites including voter enrolment web page to be made accessible as per standards.
- Accessible mobile apps to be developed for enrolment of electors. The entire process of registration (form 6A) and grievance redress to be made accessible and simple for Persons with Disabilities including those with intellectual and multiple disabilities/deaf blindness, with inbuilt human and technical assistance throughout the process.
- To reach out to all adults with deaf blindness it is essential to include 'persons with deaf blindness' specifically along with multiple disabilities in the ECI mapping format. Other initiatives like NSSO survey for Persons with Disabilities currently going on could be another source of required information. Likewise, inclusion of persons with high support needs (intellectual & psycho social disabilities, autism, leprosy, etc.) to be provided targeted intervention.
- An IT enabled tracking system to ensure that Persons with Disabilities, specifically those with high support needs (such as intellectual/psycho social/multiple disabilities, persons with autism, leprosy affected persons) stay in the loop throughout, and if not participating at any stage, then to identify reasons thereof.

Comprising group presentations pertaining to the theme of '*Accessible Polling Station including EVM-VVPAT and other Facilitation Measures*', the second segment was chaired by Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha and included as panelists- Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain, representative from Sense International, Shishu Saroti and delegates of political parties and field-experts. The session laid emphasis on **need to create a separate polling station for PwDs in highly populated PwD area, strict accessibility audit of the polling station across the country and EVM/ VVPAT awareness campaigns specifically designed for PwDs.** Following are the other important points:

- All photo voter slips of persons with disabilities to be stamped over leaf for priority and assistance. EPIC to have disability identification. Voter slips and voter I-Cards to be prepared in regional braille for voters with visual impairments.
- All instructions at polling stations to be made available in braille, signage, sign language, audio, plain language, and posters with pictures & large text with contrast colors etc.
- Process of voting and usage of EVM / VVPAT to be explained using radio, short films and other awareness materials / activities in large print posters with contrast colors, audio visual / sign language/ plain language/ pictorial chart formats as well as by experiential demonstration.
- Polling booths to be well lit and accessible as per standards. Demarcated parking space, accessible toilets, quality wheel chairs, trained volunteers, assistive aids like magnifiers, small stools, etc. to be made available at polling booths. EVM pulled to reach parallel reach arrangements to be made for people who have issue in reaching the EVM / top most button.
- Access audits of the polling stations based on standardized checklist to be conducted through trained auditors from public private partnership which need to be followed by corrective actions. Access audit apps can be developed and used.
- Quick orientation about the setup of polling booth & voting compartment

with regard to directions, polling officers desks, braille ballot sheet, EVM braille numerals and VVPAT to be provided to a voter with visual impairment.

- Persons affected by leprosy / leprosy cured to be included within the same polling setting and not to be discriminated or excluded by the polling officers or booth volunteers.

- Audio enabled app to guide persons with disabilities to commute from home to PS and back as well as with other aspects of participating in electoral process to be evolved.

- Transport facility to be provided to

voters with disabilities from home to polling booths and back.

- Mobile polling stations to be enabled in locations with sizable Persons with Disabilities. Other alternative voting methods such as postal ballot and online voting may be enabled.

- Development of a standardised training protocol on accessibility and training of election officials including BLOs, polling personnel and voluntary work force to be enforced. The same may include mobility orientation inside the booth, assistance to be provided to voters with disabilities inside and outside

Exhibition : Unfolding Indian Elections & SVEEP Initiatives

On the occasion of National Consultation on Accessible Elections organised on July 3 & 4, 2018, an exhibition was set up by Election Commission of India at the venue. It was inaugurated by Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat and Election Commissioners Sunil Arora and Ashok Lavasa marking the beginning of the proceedings.

The exhibition comprised two sections:

Unfolding Indian Elections

India has been able to uphold its democracy, through the ebb and flow of the political and security challenges. Proving its detractors wrong, the country has survived the crisis that befell on many Asian and African nations in post-colonial era. A large measure of credit goes to the free and fair elections. They have reflected people's will and provided for seamless transition of power at the Centre and States.

SVEEP initiatives

Recent SVEEP initiatives & endeavours were showcased including the new initiatives for PwDs.

polling booth, communication strategies including sign language training and disability etiquettes including terminologies to be used and allowing priority entry at booths, vehicles of persons with disabilities (tricycles) inside the Polling station premises, additional time and / or a companion of their choice in case of voters with low vision, visual /intellectual disabilities or other high support needs.

- Collaboration at all levels with various agencies, departments and CSOs to be worked out to identify barriers and implement remedies.

- Clear cut monitoring system of the entire process to be evolved. Observer's checklist to include indicators on accessible electoral process. Provision of feedback forms and accessibility evaluations (also by CSOs / third parties) to identify and remedy the existing barriers. Data of voters with disabilities who voted need to be tabulated, gap analysis between actual data of electors with disabilities and those who voted to be carried out and reasons for not voting as well as the issues faced by voters who voted need to be figured out through feedback process.

- Persons with deaf blindness need prior information about polling facility in Braille or tactile sign language either face to face or through website and other online mediums for casting their vote. In case they are not able to move out, facilities like postal ballot or voting from home through mobile voting option may be extended. In case of those who are able to travel, they would need transport facility or accessible route to reach the polling station. The support of sighted guide (usually a family member or friend) is crucial for deaf-blind persons who too need to be informed, aware, educated and empowered. Persons with deaf blindness also need support in becoming familiar with the voting machine and its usage as well as support in choosing the right button to press, in which process, the choice of the voter should be ensured.

- Tactile/ audio aids with head phones/ bright visual cues to be made available in/with ballot unit as well as VVPAT. EVM buttons to have sensor that reads out the name of the candidate when touched lightly.

- Online voting method to be explored for people with severe disabilities and those who are on hospitalization.

Tackling the theme of *'Voter Education and Outreach for Persons with Disabilities',* the third segment included as panellists- ECI Director-Generals Dilip Sharma and Dhirendra Ojha, senior officials from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, National Literacy Mission

Authority, delegates of political parties and field-experts. Addressing a plethora of topics within the theme, the main points of discussion included **indispensable need of voter education in schools, colleges and communities.** In addition to that, **use of local organizations and NGOs for information dissemination and collaborations with inter-ministerial department to create a stronger community of informed voters.** Following are the other important points.

- Instructions & information on election process including contesting candidate details to be provided (preferably in capsules) in braille script, sign language, flow charts, signed audio visuals, readable e- text and other accessible formats. All such information to be provided in accessible web page of CEOs/DEOs as well. For persons with intellectual disabilities, simpler language and shorter sentences shall be used for voter education material.

- Websites of CEOs/DEOs/ECI to be made accessible for all Persons with Disabilities. All documents, circulars, notifications to be made accessible to scree reader software.

- Targeted training to enhance electoral literacy (capsule courses) in camp mode for persons belonging to different categories of disabilities through various modes such as electoral literacy clubs, mock drills, street plays, short films, games, media, community / cultural events/ adult literacy activities and other accessible exposure and experiential activities. Information on equal electoral rights of persons with leprosy / leprosy cured / TB /

Model Polling Booth

A Model Polling Booth was established during two day National Con¬sultation on Accessible Elections scheduled on July 3 & 4, 2018. The Consultation saw the participation of more than 50 Civil Society Organizations and all the Chief Electoral Officers of States/UTs besides members of National Political Parties and Ministries, Government of India and media. The motive of the Model Polling Booth was to familiarize the stakeholders with the process of voting and related aspects. Persons with Disabilities were motivated to cast a vote through the Mock Poll and provide the feedback which was further incorporated in the recommendations.

The National Consultation on Accessible Elections was the culmination of more than 3 month long series of District-Level and State-Level Workshops undertaken as a part of ECI's theme for 2018- Accessible Elections, to identify barriers in the inclusion of PwDs in the electoral process, assess the present accessibility policies in place and put forward recommendations for addressing barriers to enhance the participation of the Persons with Disabilities.
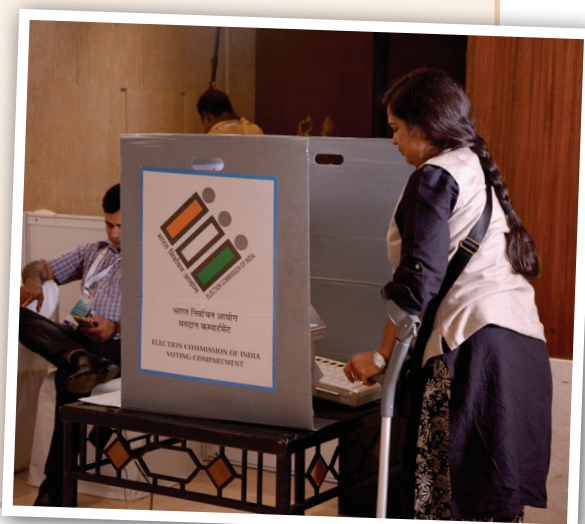
HIV Aids, intellectual / psycho social disabilities, autism, multiple disabilities and voters with high support needs to be disseminated to multiple stake holders including election machinery as well as general public.

- Mass reach-out to be administered through multifarious approach such as media, social media, community radio, ICT, street plays, use of disability icons, *gram sabha* meetings, adult literacy programs, self-help groups, involvement of political parties / community leaders and other reach out initiatives, in accessible venues, means and formats (braille, audio visual, sign language, plain language, posters / brochures with large print, pictures and contrast colours in easy to understand language.)
- National institutes and other ministries / departments to be involved in reaching out to children and persons with disabilities in the community
- Stakeholders with disability to be involved in every process as volunteers, peer trainers, ambassadors. A list of icons with disabilities to be prepared for each district and AC
- Public grievance redress mechanism / communication interface with election machinery to be adapted in accessible means and formats
- To develop web tutorial
- Sensitivity trainings for all stakeholders, including general public.
- Recognition and incentivization of good practices.
- Setting standards for each leg of election process and compare with actuals to measure success of accessible elections. A task force for setting standards to be set up at central level
- General and awareness observers to monitor the inclusion of persons with disabilities in voter education and outreach as well
- Qualitative & Quantitative feedback to be obtained post-election process

The Closing Session of the National Consultation on Accessible Elections was graced by the presence of Chief Election Commissioner O. P. Rawat, and Election Commissioners

Sunil Arora and Ashok Lavasa. The Commission announced the following measures for the facilitation of PwDs.

- Printing of EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card) with Braille for Persons with Visual Impairment or Blind,
- Accessible Communication Awareness Materials
- A Mobile Application to motivate and educate
- Appointment of Disability Coordinators at AC, District and State Level
- Cascaded training on Accessibility to Poll officials
- Auxiliary Polling Stations
- Accessible Photo Voter Slips
- Sign Language window in all the audio visual training and advertisement content material for the convenience of deaf persons
- Free Transport Facility for PwDs and their Assistants
- A new Accessible Division in India International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Management (IIIDEM), New Delhi

In addition to that, Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat stated that a review of the program will take place in the next three months. Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said, "We should go far beyond the bureaucratic measures to overcome the barriers. Technology has the capability to fill the gaps and it shall be explored to its fullest potential. Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa remarked that the set of recommendations received from the Consultation will be examined properly and efforts will be made to implement the same in a time bound manner. The Commission also facilitated two blind voters with Braille enabled EPIC Cards marking the first step towards this initiative.

Launch of Strategic Framework

The deliberations held during the two day consultation resulted in a comprehensive, 'Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections'

May 12, 2018

ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

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which will help in making electoral process more accessible in the forthcoming State and National Elections. It would be a significant step in pursuit of Election Commission's mission 'No Voter to be Left Behind'. The Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections is built around sensitization through education and training, community involvement of different sections of society, effective partnership with institutions and organizations and creation of facilities to cater to the specific needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with a view to increasing their participation. The Strategic Framework shall inter alia include the following components:

1. **Barriers: Continuous Identification and Solutions**

   Identifying barriers and finding solutions to the same has to be a continuous process. A system of regular, periodic feedback shall be taken up. Well-designed approach with strategic interventions including technology integration can help in obliterating barriers.

2. **Voter Registration &Polling**

   Database on PwDs, identified through mapping or initial voter registration, shall be efficiently and effectively used for follow up steps in the electoral process and the monitoring system for feedback, evaluation

and consolidation. Polling stations shall be made accessible to all Persons with disabilities based on mapping of PwD electors and their specific needs.

3. **Inclusive Voter Education**

   Customised voter education to cater to the different requirements of PwDs shall be taken up to empower them for electoral participation. All voter education content shall be in accessible format. Focussed and need based interventions shall be taken up under ECI's flagship voter education programme SVEEP to engage PwDs and also to sensitise their friends, families, polling officials, security officials and all other stakeholders.

4. **Leveraging Technology for Accessible Elections**

   This would essentially include (i) User friendly websites for PwDs of different categories. (ii) Accessible Technological Tools for facilitating PwDs of different categories to cast their vote (iii) Solutions for assisting voters with disabilities through technological innovation, research and integration. (iv) Accessible Media including Social Media Communications.

5. **Research, Study and Knowledge sharing**

   A continuous search for best practices, international and domestic, through detailed study and research on all areas of participation by PwDs and sharing of experiences to help formulate enabling policies and interventions, to aid, assist and facilitate the participation of PwDs.

6. Role of Partner Departments
To explore and build partnership and commitment with Ministries and Departments to evolve and carry forward the interventions to facilitate electoral participation of PwDs

7. Role of Educational Institutions
The Commission has already issued directions for setting up of Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) in educational institutions etc. Setting up of ELCs in educational institutions dedicated to the PwDs shall be expedited and the ELC resources shall be customised to match disability requirements.

8. Role of CSOs
To assess the potential of CSO's and assign them specific role in assisting equal access and capacity building through well designed partnerships. CSO's potential to build partnerships should be utilised subject to their non-partisan nature.

9. Role of Media
To utilise the potential of media in taking forward voter education and to engage PwDs for increasing their electoral participation. Media can actively contribute to an effective and successful integration of persons with disabilities in the electoral process

10. Poll Volunteers
Poll volunteers from among future voters can be organised from educational institutions, and Chunav Pathshala, (ELCs for Communities) and trained to assist PwDs, besides from among NCC/NSS/NYKS and other non-partisan voluntary groups. The initiative will be subject to provisions of Rule 49N.

11. Training and Sensitization of Staff
Training and sensitization of the election staff is important so that they are empathetic to the needs of PwD voters. The training shall be factored into regular training to the staff as also

for the registration and facilitation of the PwDs.

12. Alternative Voting methods
Alternative voting methods like advance voting or early voting, voting from home, Postal vote, transport assistance to PwDs or mobile polling station concept shall be looked at without compromising on the essential requirements of sanctity and secrecy of vote.

13. Legislative Initiative
The scope of assistance to PwDs for participation is wide and diverse. Need for legislation shall be examined for enhancing electoral participation of the PwDs.

14. Special 4 tiered Committees on Accessible Elections
Committees shall be formed at National, State, District and Assembly Constituency level with members from departments as well as stakeholders to review implementation of the directions of the Commission on 'Accessible Elections'.

The Commission is committed to build an equal access framework for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) supported by the fundamentals of responsiveness, respect and dignity to enhance elector confidence among them; and support initiatives for improved service offerings to enhance their electoral participation.

Dr. Aarti Agarwal & *Aradhana*
Senior Consultant *Executive, SVEEP*
Election Commission of India

Brazil´s Fight Against Fake News: Threat To Democracy And Elections

Fake news has become a real problem for the exercise of democracy and freedom of expression within the information society. With the proximity of the october 2018 elections in Brazil, the debate about the publication and propagation of fake news comes to light, as well as its impact on the electoral process and its increasing polarization. The term indicates false stories that, by retaining the appearance of news stories, are spread over the media, specially over internet, and are usually created to influence political positions. In fact, it contains false content, always with the intention of obtaining some type of advantage, financial, political or electoral.

The issue runs through the problematic of the dialectic between consensus and dissent, the limits of dissent, the forms of political organization in the perspective of public space and plural society. Other extremely current topic also arises, such as the emergence of the private sphere on the public, and the public relevance of the private sphere that demands the publicity of political and judicial debates.

With the advent of social networks and internet access, fake news promise to add particular difficulty to democratic debate and conscious voting. The propagation of untruths on elections is not a novelty; it always arises in an attempt to favor candidates, but the speed and scope of the diffusion of this type of content is now different, encouraged by the advancement of technology.

Dialoging with the ideas of Norberto Bobbio, communication was born with a perspective of eliminating human societies and invisible power. Thus, in Bobbio's words, democratic government is a promise to give life to the transparency of power, to power without a mask[1].

Freedom of expression, plurality of thought and access to independent sources of information constitute essential principles for the social control of State actions and for citizens to seek information on the various subjects in order to form their opinions and decisions.

In this context, the Superior Electoral Court of Brazil (TSE) has developed mechanisms of study and defense against the possibility of undue influence in the choice of political agents. One important action was the participation in a working group created by the Federal Police together with the Attorney General's Office to prevent fake news in the 2018 elections. Also worthy of note is the creation of the Internet and Elections Advisory Council by the Presidency of SE, to discuss what can be done to prevent the use and propagation of false news during the upcoming electoral process, to make research and studies on electoral rules and the influence of the internet on elections, especially the risk of fake news and the use of robots in the dissemination of information.

The article 33 of the Electoral Court´s Resolution nº 23.551/2017 deals with the

[1] BOBBIO, Norberto. The Future of Democracy: A Defense of the Rules of the Game. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.

removal of content on the internet, determining that "the action of the Electoral Justice in relation to content disclosed on the internet should be carried out with the least possible interference in the democratic debate". And, in order to ensure freedom of expression and to prevent censorship, judicial orders of removal will be limited to those cases where, through a reasoned decision, violations of electoral rules or violations of people who participate in the electoral process are proved.

As a result, the president of the TSE, Luiz Fux, received representatives from ten political parties to sign a term of collaboration for the maintenance of an immune electoral environment of dissemination of false news. In the agreed text, the parties undertake to maintain the environment of information transparency, so as to fail any practice or expedient regarding the use of false content in the elections, acting as collaborating agents against the dissemination of fake news in the 2018 elections. The president of the TSE said that the Court will count with several councils and the collaboration of Federal Police, social media platforms and the press.

Besides, the Minister of the Superior Electoral Court Sergio Banhos has ordered the judicial

withdrawal of news items that have been pointed out as false references to a presidential candidate in June this year[1]. According to him, on the agenda of the contemporary world, there is an inescapable commitment: ensure that the electoral process takes place on a regular basis, observing the constitutional requirements, so that effectively legitimate applications are the one those chosen. Likewise, the use of fake news is an ancient and effective mechanism for raising the reach of information and, as a consequence, weakening candidates.

The ideal of gradual renewal of society must come about through free discussion of ideas and the change of mentalities, because, as Bobbio says, only democracy allows the formation and expansion of silent revolutions. Progress is the result of the movement of will and work, and must be accompanied by the brakes of ethics and responsibility for the decisions made. The fake news issue and the brazilian complex political scenario renew the debate about what world we want, about dignity, freedom of speech and rights to development as goals to be pursued.

Source of images: *english.tse.jus.br*

Minister Tarcisio Vieira De Carvalho Neto
Superior Electoral Court Of Brazil

[2] Superior Electoral Court. Representation nº. 060054670.2018.6.00.0000. Class 11541. Brasília- Federal District, Brazil. 06/07/2018.

Agents of **Democracy**

Raising the interest and participation of young people in the political life of the country is one of the factors that contribute to the strengthening of democracy. Therefore, the Electoral Justice of Tocantins, through the Electoral Judicial School (EJE), launched on March 2, 2018, the project "Agents of Democracy - formation of voters and politicians of the future", at the Serra das Cordilheiras State College, in Beehive, headquarters of the 16th Electoral Zone.

The vice-president, TRE-TO corrector and director of the Electoral Judicial School (EJE-TO), pronouncer Ângela Prudente, explained that the country is going through difficult times that cause discouragement and apathy on the part of society, especially of the young. "It is in this scenario that we must carry out a citizen education to strengthen Brazilian democracy, educating and raising awareness in order to produce opinion leaders able to modify paradigms and positively influence others," he said.

Calling the attention of young people to the importance of participation in the electoral process through conscious voting is one of the objectives of the Electoral Justice of Tocantins, through the project 'Agents of Democracy'. The Project is being carried out in partnership with the State Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the State of Tocantins (SEDUC).

The project is developed by TRE-TO, through the EJE / TO Electoral Judicial School, and provides information on how the elections are held, as well as clarifies doubts about security in electronic ballot boxes, void ballot, ballot and many another subjects.

Since its beginning in March, the project 'Agents of Democracy' has already gone through 23 electoral zones, 37 schools, involving 6,620 students. It has mobilized more than 2.5 thousand young people from the Bico do Papagaio region, in the northern tip of the state, who participated in the first phase of the project 'Agents for the Democracy'- education of future voters and politicians, held in seven electoral zones from March 2 to 13. The new phase of the project began on March 22, 2018 and continued until May 8, 2018, travelling through 29 cities of Tocantins.

The action counts with special attention for the young students who will take the title of voter and vote in 2018 for the first time. A partnership with the Electoral Registry has offered the necessary logistics to carry out the electoral enlistment.

In the first stage, the project toured all the Electoral Zones of Tocantins, attending 73 State Schools, raising awareness, training, mobilizing and including socially and politically young people enrolled in high school in the public school system. In addition, major objectives were to awaken the importance of voting among youngsters, preparing those who will participate in the fundamental political decisions of the country, making citizens more aware of their role in building a more free and democratic society.

The action in schools included lectures on 'The importance of youth participation in the Electoral Process' and 'The Future Politician: with power come great responsibilities', as well as interactive activities such as: board game, simulated elections in the electronic ballot box and enlistment electoral.

The mobilization won the social network. While the project was going on in schools the students took pictures and selfies with the "Agents of Democracy" signs, the registrations were posted on *TRE Tocantins* Facebook and already have a reach of thousands of people.
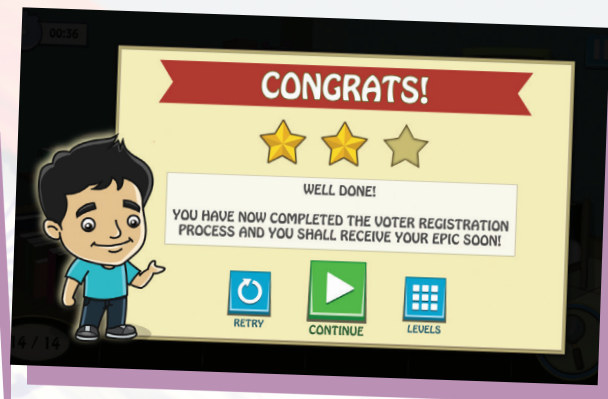
Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

Gamifying **Voter Education**

India is world's fastest growing large economy and has witnessed tremendous increase in internet penetration and smartphone usage in last decade. This has fuelled a surge in usage of Social Media and Mobile Apps by a greater number of citizens. The Election Commission of India (ECI) closely observes such social trends and has been a front runner in utilizing modern communication innovations for voter education campaigns and providing online services to voters and candidates.

Urban apathy and youth disconnect with elections are two major challenges faced by ECI. The Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) programme and its precedent Interactive School Engagement (ISE) programme were both targeted towards preparing and motivating future and new voters to participate in the electoral process. Several types of learning tools and activities have been developed under these programmes that reinforce electoral literacy through varied interventions. With technological advancement and increased Internet/mobile penetration, digital games have created a new learning opportunity and are an interesting medium to spread messages and knowledge at a low distribution and operation cost. They have the potential to build awareness, educate, train, mobilize, and engage people in advancing informed electoral participation.

Interestingly, smartphone games are most popular among urban users in India who are below 24 years (KPMG-Google, 2017) and it can be an effective intervention tool to target future and new voters. With this context, ECI is developing a new mobile based digital game in collaboration with National Institute of Design, Bangalore.

The game, currently under-development, is called "Mx. Democracy" which is also the badge that player earns after completing the game. Players can customize their game character as a male, female or transgender with the clothing and skin tone that matches their region which inherently promotes an inclusive mindset. The character embarks upon a quest to learn all about elections in India where xe discovers hidden scrolls and meets the following 6 characters at different levels:

1. New Voter - Voter registration process
2. Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) - Types of voters and forms
3. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) - Enforcing Model Code of Conduct
4. Booth Level Officer (BLO) - Voter Slip distribution
5. Returning Officer (RO) - Preparing the Ballot
6. Presiding Officer - Poll Day Preparations and Polling Process

The game levels have been designed to provide a simulated experience of real-life processes facilitating learning through practice, failure, discovery, repetition and experimentation. No knowledge is force fed to player which increases interest and takeaway learning. The player also learns how to register as a voter, how to select the right candidate and how to cast their vote using EVM-VVPAT machine. There is also a reward badge for the player at the end of the game.

Voter education in India focuses on the election process rather than on social policy or governance related topics which often makes it mundane for young learners. Gamification can transform an activity from something that is not-so-fun into something that individuals voluntarily want to be a part of. The application of gamification in voter education is invaluable since it can spark curiosity and fosters autonomous learning.

The game has been conceptualized by a team of young creative professionals working for Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Division of ECI. They are avid gamers themselves and come with an unusually interdisciplinary expertise. To make the game available to as many citizens as possible, it is being developed with the following parameters:

1. Minimum data consumption and deterioration in device storage/ performance.
2. Culturally meaningful aesthetics
3. Accessibility features

Earlier, ECI had developed a PC game titled "Get Set Vote" in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that gave out pieces of information and interesting details

to players in 10 levels of mazes. With every successive level the maze gets more challenging and the information becomes more specific to subjects such as Indian democracy, registering to vote, ethical voting, voter helpline and so on.

Playing video games is a popular activity among young people, and the feature to share game achievements directly to their social media accounts will not only popularize the game but will also promote discussions and civic engagement around election process. There has also been a shift in general attitude towards digital games. Existing evidences indicate that digital games are shedding their stigma as a force of corruption on our youth and promise to become powerful agents of social and personal transformation. (UNESCO-MGIEP, 2016)

Mx Democracy is being developed to become a promising tool for voter education. It can motivate and enhance players' knowledge and interest in electoral process without much of time-investment. The game will be available on popular online mobile app stores for free and citizens can directly download the game on their device. There are no borders to the reach of Mx Democracy as it can be played anywhere, anytime at the convenience of the player, thus, making voter education more widely available. Millions of Indian citizens, living in the country as well as abroad, will learn about the election process of their country in a short span of time from a reliable source to become responsible electors.
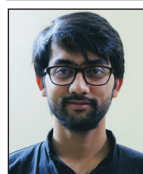
Apoorv Tiwary
Executive, SVEEP
Election Commission of India

Electoral Literacy Clubs:
Taking the Journey Ahead

Earlier this year, the Election Commission of India rolled out its landmark project of establishing Electoral Literacy Clubs under the initiative of '*Mainstreaming of Electoral Literacy through Educational Institutions, Organizations and Communities in India.* Focused on future voters (in the age group of 14-17 years) the project also aims to enhance voter awareness and literacy amongst college students, rural communities and government/ private organisations. Presently in the roll out phase, the Electoral Literacy Clubs project crossed a few important milestones in the past few months of its journey.

ELC Training of the SVEEP Nodal Officers

On April 13, 2018, the SVEEP Nodal Officers of all States and UTs were invited to ECI headquarters at New Delhi, for a day long meeting to discuss the preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha 2019 elections as well as the Electoral Literacy Clubs project.

The second half of this meeting was centered around acquainting all SVEEP Nodal Officers with the various activities prepared for ELCs wherein the SNOs, who were part of one or the other training workshops, took the lead. The 35 Nodal Officers were divided into 5 groups and allotted 2-3 activities each. After one hour, each group made a presentation to the remaining SNOs on their activities, thus familiarising all in the process.

Video-Conference with Chief Electoral Officers

On April 24, 2018, Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha held a video conference with the Chief Electoral Officers of all States and Union Territories where in CEOs were briefed about the developments of the project in detail and discussions regarding the establishment of Electoral Literacy Clubs were undertaken. Training of District Level Master Trainers and further development and region specific adaptations of the same were the focus of the discussion.

The Chief Electoral Officers were encouraged to hold a similar video conference with the District Election Officers of their respective States/UTs . All States were instructed to finalise their training calendars for the purpose of speedy execution of trainings and subsequent setup of ELCs. They were further encouraged to invest in development of creative resources for the club and documentation of good practices.

A key highlight of the VC was the genesis of the concept of 'Lead ELCs'. Lead ELCs will be clubs adopted and personally overseen by the election officials. Each ERO shall adopt one ELC in School and one Chunav Pathshala (ELC for Rural Community) within his/her jurisdiction. Similarly every DEO shall adopt one ELC in College within the district and every CEO shall adopt one ELC in a University. These shall be model ELCs.

ELC workshop for training CSOs

A final leg of trainings was conducted under the ELC project on the May 23 & 24, 2018 at USI, New Delhi. However, this training workshop was different from others as its participants were not members of the election machinery, but in fact members of various Civil Society Organisations from across the nation.

The workshop observed the participation of 43 participants from 23 States and Union Territories. The participants were mostly associated with CSOs who have previously partnered with the Commission or CEOs for voter awareness campaigns. These CSOs covered issues related to Persons with Disabilities(PwDs), rural poor, poverty alleviation, education and literacy etc.

The idea now is, that CSOs will take forward the initiative of imparting electoral literacy through games and activities within their respective organisations as well as the communities they work with.

Simran Sachdeva
Executive, SVEEP
Election Commission of India

cVIGIL: An App to Report Unlawful Activities

On July 3, 2018, on the occasion of the inaugural programme of Election Commission of India's National Consultation on Accessible Elections, the IT division of ECI launched cVigil - *a simple, android based mobile app through which citizens can promptly report unlawful campaign activities within minutes of having witnessed them and without having to rush to the office of the Returning Officer.* cVIGIL is user-friendly and easy to operate and all that one has to do is simply click a picture or a video, describe the activity and upload it through mobile application. After that, it is just a matter of minutes before flying squads zoom in on the culprits to catch them red-handed.

The application connects the vigilant citizen with District Control Room, Returning Officer and Field Verification Unit (Flying Squads / Static Surveillance Teams) thereby, creating a rapid and accurate reporting, action and monitoring system.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT

- Citizens' genuine complaints on Model Code of Conduct violations get in the long queue with those by vested interests to divert attention and delay the response of enforcement machinery. This App empowers citizens to get priority action as it is a complaint with a piece of evidence which is geo tagged. On the other hand it filters frivolous complaints easily.
- The App allows hiding complainant's phone number and identity so as to encourage informing against powerful

elements without any risk of subsequent possible backlash.
- In case phone number and identity is not hidden, the complainant gets response about the action taken and he/she can also track the process.
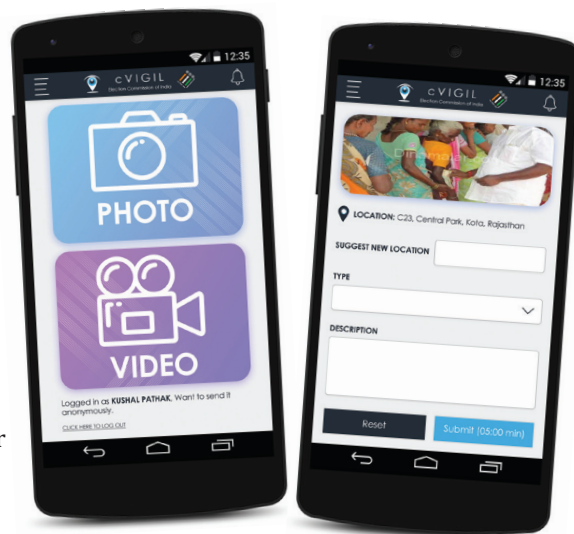
The Operating Model of cVIGIL

Step 1- The citizen opens the application and clicks a picture or records a video. The Photo / Video is uploaded on the app, along with an automated location mapping by the Geographic Information System(GIS). After its successful submission, the citizen, who opted for registration gets a Unique ID to track and receive follow up updates on his mobile. A citizen can report many incidents in this manner and will get a unique id for each report for follow up updates.

Step 2- Once the citizen has reported the complaint, the information beeps in the District Control Room from where it is assigned to a

Field Unit (FU). Each FU has a GIS-based mobile application called cVIGIL Dispatcher, which allows the field unit to directly receive the complaint including the location and via cVIGIL he is given instruction to complete the incidence verification in a time-bound manner.

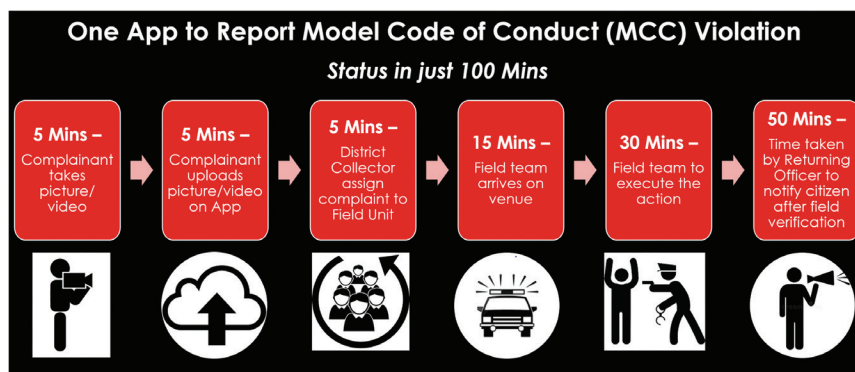**Step 3-** After Field Unit has taken the action, it messages the action taken report via cVIGIL Dispatcher to the concerned returning officer for decision and disposal. If the incidence is found correct, the information is sent to National Grievance Portal of the Election Commission of India for further action.

Benefits of the Application

- cVIGIL is a convenient and user friendly app allowing citizens to send pictorial evidence of the model code of conduct violations in their vicinity.
- Each reported incident is tracked and scrutinised from the beginning to the end point, thus bringing accountability into the system.
- The immediate location verification feature of the cVIGIL will act as a strong deterrence for miscreants and wrong-doers as they can be easily tracked.
- A combination of all these factors will

One App to Report Model Code of Conduct (MCC) Violation
Status in just 100 Mins

| 5 Mins – Complainant takes picture/ video | 5 Mins – Complainant uploads picture/video on App | 5 Mins – District Collector assign complaint to Field Unit | 15 Mins – Field team arrives on venue | 30 Mins – Field team to execute the action | 50 Mins – Time taken by Returning Officer to notify citizen after field verification |

The App Essentials

The app requires an Android smartphone equipped with a Camera, good internet connection and GPS access. The operating system should be Android jellybean and above. The application supports all the latest Android smartphones.

Safety Features

- The application is meant only for Model Code of Conduct Violations.
- The app allows the user only 5 minutes to submit an incidence report after having clicked a picture or a video.
- The app will not allow uploading of the pre-recorded images/ videos.
- The photos/videos clicked via this app cannot be saved in the phone gallery.
- The application has a feature that allows citizens to file a complaint only in the state where Elections have been announced.
- Any citizen who has installed cVIGIL will find that the app becomes active only in the States undergoing elections.

encourage citizens to keep vigil over unhealthy electoral practices and bring them to the notice of the Election Commission. This in turn will help the commission reach its objective of conducting free and fair elections.

Roadmap

The application is being rolled out for the Election staff of the four Poll going states in India which are Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Rajasthan. Extensive training will be imparted on how to operate its feature during the preparation period. After the completion of the training, the application will be made available to all citizens in the mentioned States from the date of announcement of elections. After that it will be ready for the Parliamentary General Elections which are to be held in India in 2019.

Aradhana
Executive, SVEEP
Election Commission of India

ECI launches its new
SVEEP Portal

Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program, better known as SVEEP, is the Election Commission of India's flagship program for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India. SVEEP's primary goal is to build a truly participative democracy in India by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections.

SVEEP accomplishes them by educating citizens on how, what, when, where and why of the electoral process and by imbibing values of ethical voting. Thus, the programme seeks to create a stronger, participative democracy by educating and encouraging all its eligible citizens to vote and become active decision makers to nudge the country towards a better future.

free and accessible for all. The portal, *ecisveep.nic.in* has been redesigned in order to boost dynamic interactivity and networking features. It offers its users features like Gallery, Events Calendar, Tutorial, Blogs, Video Recording of events and Online Quizzes which encourages them to use this space to brainstorm, organize and blog their activities.

An Online Space for Electoral Literacy Clubs

As discussed in the featured article by India in this magazine, the country has recently started countrywide project of establishing Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) for reaching out to young and future voters of the nation via educational institutions. The features of the new website will also be utilized by ELCs as they will use this space to form their online communities

On July 3, 2018, preceding the proceedings of the National Consultation on Accessible Elections organized by the Election Commission of India, members of the Commission inaugurated the refurbished website of its Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme.

About the Portal

The website, better known as the SVEEP portal, aims to takes forward the programme's efforts on the online medium to reach out to an enhanced audience and making voter education

wherein they will be able to plan, manage and record their events by posting relevant articles, drawings, posters, images and videos of events like debate, elocution, poetry recitation, essay writing and poster contests organized by them in their physical premises. This will also give ECI a basis of monitoring the functioning of the clubs at the ground level.

Accessible Website

Committed towards making voter education as inclusive as the elections process itself, ECI's new SVEEP portal has incorporated features in
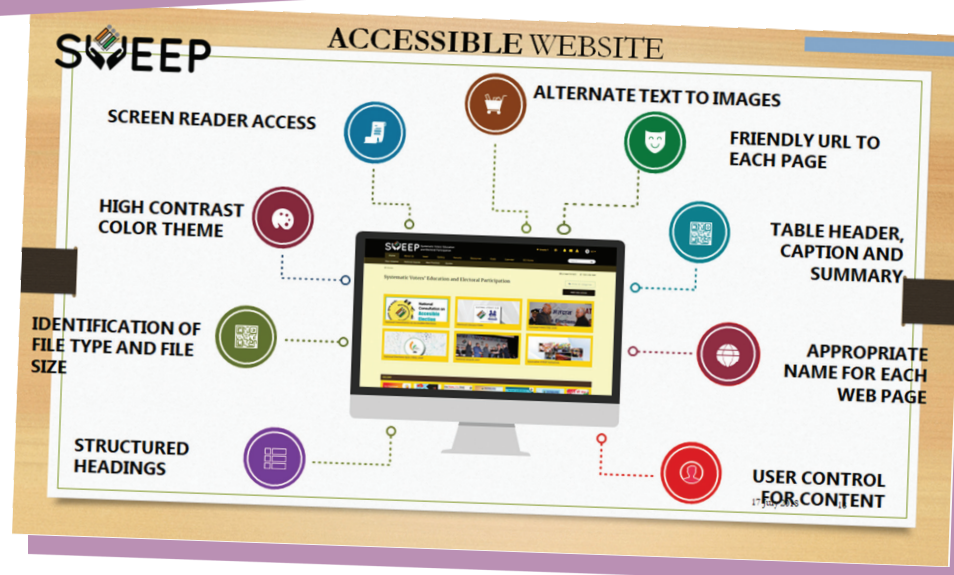
its design that makes it user friendly for Persons with Disabilities. These features contribute to a more universal website design which makes it accessible for elderly citizens as well as for the illiterate ones. Some of these features are as follows:

- The portal hosts many features to help them navigate the site with ease. It has a straightforward menu, simple design layout and flexible font size and script along with assistive technology features to suit the requirements of People with Disabilities (PwDs), senior citizens as well as colorblind people.
- Among the assistive technology features, the portal has incorporated features of Screen Magnifier and Screen Readers.

- The Screen Magnifier increases the text size to large thus aiding users with visual disabilities.
- The Screen Reader turns the information from text into speech for illiterates, blind, partially sighted or those with difficulties in reading.
- Contrast Scheme Adjustment - The website provides different schemes to enable users with visual impairments, such as low vision and colour blindness to view the web page information with ease. Different contrast schemes include Standard, Black on Yellow.

Source: *ecisveep.nic.in*

Independent Election Commission arranges Security Meeting for **Voter Registration Process**

A joint meeting of Independent Election Commission(IEC), security institutions and election stakeholders was conducted on April 1, 2018 at IEC headquarters. The aim of meeting was the adaption of protocol on the recruitment of female searcher for VR centres. Based on this protocol more than ten thousand female searcher have been recruited for security of VR PS. IEC management welcomed the participants and asked security institution and electoral stakeholders to cooperate based on 9th article of election law and decree Afghanistan government.

The meeting was attended by the deputies from Interior Minister for security, Ministry of Defense, official representative of NDS, IDLG, resolute support, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women affairs and UNDP.

IEC has signed a Memorandum of University with security institutions and other stakeholders based on 9th article of election law a committee established between IEC, international community and Afghanistan government to accelerate all electoral process.

Source: *http://www.iec.org.af/*

28 Political Parties Announce their Support for Transparent Electoral Process

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) of Afghanistan's management met 28 political parties' director and representatives at IEC HQ office on March 13, 2018. Representatives of political parties, who appeared committed for cooperation added that the 28 official and registered political parties within the ministry of justice are pursuing the conduct of transparent elections without frauds and supporting the IEC in its efforts towards the same. The representatives also said that the political parties and IEC have mutual views on conducting elections, public awareness, monitoring election and introducing systematic changes.

IEC management welcomed the guests and added that IEC respects the political parties which have a key role in ensuring transparency in elections. IEC management continued based on law monitoring the voter registry, distribution of Tazkira, recognizing the refugees and the homeless; in the mean time IEC stated that changing the electoral system is logically correct but furthermore, amendment of law and some technical efforts need to be determined based on request of other political parties.

Source: *http://www.iec.org.af/*

Bhutan organises co-ordination meeting 'Our Mission 2018: The National Assembly Elections'

A co-ordination meeting was held on the theme **'Our Mission 2018: The National Assembly Elections'** from June 18 to 20, 2018 in The Great Fourth Auditorium, Democracy House in Thimphu to review and coordinate various programmes and activities being undertaken and planned towards the conduct of the successful Third National Assembly Elections.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commissioners, Secretary, Dzongkhag (District) Election Officers of the twenty Dzongkhags and officials from the Head Office.

The meeting reviewed in detail the Work Plan and preparatory activities of the 20 Dzongkhags and the Departments and Divisions in Head Office. Specifically, the individual Dzongkhag strategies to increase voter turnout during the Third National Assembly Elections and implementation issues were discussed and resolved.

Source: *http://www.ecb.bt/*

Bhutan organises **training of Electoral Officials** in preparation for the Third Parliamentary Elections

The Election Commission of Bhutan started the training programme for the Electoral Officers who will be deputed on election duty for the Third Parliamentary Elections 2018 as Returning Officers and National Observers. The training programme was held in two batches of officers, first from 8th -10th and second from 11th – 13th of February 2018.

During the opening session, the Chief Election Commissioner highlighted the importance of the Third Parliamentary Elections 2018 and the need for dedicated services of the electoral officials in ensuring that the Third Parliamentary Elections 2018 is successful and meets the expectations of their Enlightened Kings and the People of Bhutan.

The objective of the training was to educate and orient on the legal provisions and requirements, highlighting the key areas of concern, clear understanding of the specific roles and responsibilities; assure competence with the various Election Procedures and Forms; provide hands-on training through role play on Postal Ballot handling process and use of the EVM.

The programme held a high importance as all officials on election duty must have a sound understanding of the electoral processes as well as the key legal provisions to ensure elections of a high standard. In particular, the Returning Officers, National and Micro-Observers have a vital role to play in the conduct of elections and it is imperative that they are conversant with the Electoral Laws and thorough with the election process and procedures to discharge their duties confidently, completely and efficiently.

Source: *http://www.ecb.bt/*

Delegation of the Election Commission of India on a seven day visit to the **BiH Central Election Commission**

In line with the Memorandum of cooperation between the Election Commission of India and the BiH Central Election Commission, signed in January of last year, a five-member delegation of the Election Commission of India arrived at Sarajevo on March 21, 2018 and stayed on for seven days to deliver a training to the members and employees of the BiH CEC at the Center for Education of the BiH CEC.

The delegation also comprised representatives of the Indian Institute for Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) that works within the Election Commission of India.

All segments of the election process were covered during the seven-day training on "election management" including: role of the Election Management Bodies, voter registration, election planning, voter education, vote count and transfer of results, as well as electronic voting. Experiences of India, as well as that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in all the above mentioned segments were presented and discussed during the workshop.

Source: *http://www.izbori.ba/Default.aspx?Lang=6*

BiH organises a two-day conference
Towards the 2018 General Elections

A two-day conference titled "Towards the 2018 General Elections" was organized at Ilidža, Bosnia & Herzegovina on the June 18 & 19, 2018. The conference was organized by the BiH Central Election Commission with the support of the Council of Europe. Logistical support at the conference was provided by the BiH Association of Election Officials. The conference brought together around 180 participants – representatives of municipal/city election commissions from more than 120 municipalities/cities in BiH.

Guests of the conference included Ambassador DrahoslavŠtefánek, head of the Council of Europe's Office in BiH, Mr. Francois Friederich, Head of the Department for Electoral Assistance and Census, General Directorate for Democracy, Council of Europe, as well as representatives of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), Organisation for Security Co-operation in

Europe (OSCE) Mission and the European Union (EU) Delegation to BiH.

Topics of the conference outlined were changes and amendments to the BiH CEC's regulations, timeline of electoral activities, appointment of the polling station committees, process of accrediting the observers, receipt of polling material and E-Day and correct consolidation of election result.

The goal of the Conference "Towards the 2018 General Elections" was to inform the electoral stakeholders about changes and amendments to the election-related regulations, forthcoming activities concerning the conduct of elections and to exchange opinions and views on current challenges in the 2018 electoral process.

Source: *http://www.izbori.ba/Default.aspx?Lang=6*

Conference on **Voter Registration**

The Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to BiH and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) organized a Conference on voter registration in Vlašić, Bosnia & Herzegovina on May 29, 2018. The BiH Chief Election Commissioner welcomed the efforts of the international organizations to contribute to the update of the voters register, which represents direct support to the continuous activities of the BiH CEC.

Representatives of all relevant institutions in BiH concerning the voters registration attended the Conference including the representatives of municipal election commissions, centers for voters' register, Registry Offices, ministries

of interior and Agency for Identification Documents, Records and Data Exchange of BiH. Dr. Irena Hadžiabdić represented the BiH CEC at the conference.

The Conference had two related thematic units 'State of the Central Voter Register (CVR)' and 'Accuracy of data in the Central Voter Register (CVR)'. The participants discussed challenges concerning the regular maintenance of the voters' registers, roles and responsibility of different actors with the focus on removal of the names of deceased persons and registration of voters outside BiH, and possible manipulations.

Source: *http://www.izbori.ba/Default.aspx?Lang=6*

After mobilizing more than 2.5 thousand students, Brazil's 'Agents for the Democracy' begins a new phase

Through the Electoral Judiciary School (EJE-TO), the Regional Electoral Court of Tocantins (TRE-TO) mobilized more than 2.5 thousand young people from the Bico do Papagaio region, in the northern tip of the state, who participated in the first phase of the project 'Agents for the Democracy' - education of future voters and politicians, held in seven electoral zones from March 2 to 13, 2018. The new phase of the project began on April 22 and continued till May 8, 2018, traveling through 29 cities of Tocantins.The project aims to enlighten people on the importance of voting by preparing adolescents who will participate in the country's fundamental political decisions, as well as training citizens to be more aware of their role in building a more free and democratic society.

In addition to the lectures "The Importance of Young People's Participation in the Electoral Process" and "The Future Politician: with power comes great responsibilities," students also participated in interactive activities such as board games, simulated elections in the electronic voting machines and the electoral registration.

The director of EJE-TO, Vice-president and Chair of Judicial Council of TRE-TO, Associate Justice ÂngelaPrudente, stressed that raising the interest and participation of young people in the political life of the country is one of the factors that contributes to the strengthening of the democracy. "The project 'Agents for the Democracy' was designed to raise awareness, train, mobilize, and socially and politically include students enrolled in high schools in our Tocantins. It is very gratifying to see the engagement of so many young people. Now, our biggest challenge, with the project, is to transform the youth's engagement into a permanent practice," the Associate Justice said.

"As representatives of the Judiciary, we must have a dialogue with the students, who will participate in the electoral process for the first time, to explain the importance of conscious

voting and how politics can directly affect their lives," said the Electoral Judge Ricardo Gagliardi.

Some schools have a student council, which, according to the Regional Director of Education, Father Milton, encourages students to engage in citizenship actions, such as participating in decisions made within the school. "And this is the first contact of these young people with politics," he said.

Use of Facebook

The mobilization has reached the social networks. During the project's journey, in the schools, the students also took photos and selfies with the signs of the project "Agents for the Democracy". The photos were posted on the Facebook page of TRE-TO and have already reached about five thousand people.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

TSE participates in a debate about the **fake news impact** on the 2018 Elections

On March 21, the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) participated in a Session of Thematic Debates, at the Federal Senate's Plenary, about the theme 'Fake news and its impacts on the 2018 Elections.' Justice Tarcisio Vieira de CarvalhoNeto and General Secretary to the Presidency, Carlos Eduardo Frazão, represented the Electoral Court at the event. The session of debates, presided by the Senate's Vice-president, Cássio Cunha Lima, was held because of a request made by Senator TelmárioMota.

In his exposure, Justice Tarcisio Vieira presented a few of the TSE impressions on the topic. According to him, amongst the many challenges that the Electoral Justice will have to face this year, three need to be highlighted: the electoral financing, the printing of the vote and the spread of fake news. According to the magistrate, the Electoral Court has had a concern in debating the issue by using instruments that are within the Court's reach, with the aim of comprehending and mitigating the phenomenon.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

Justices of the TSE talk about the 2018 Elections at the **Young Lawyers Conference**

The 2018 General Elections were one of the topics addressed during the II National Young Lawyers Conference, held by the Federal Council of the Brazilian Bar Association, in Natal (RN), on 22nd and 23rd March. Justices of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), Tarcisio Vieira de CarvalhoNeto and SérgioBanhos, attended the panel that dealt with this year's election dispute.

"The matter under discussion, related to the election disputes, is growing at a remarkable rate. It is an interesting convergence zone between the many branches of Law, such as Constitutional, Administrative and Criminal, among others. The electoral legislation is erratic, with gaps, though this is not a misconception of the legislator. It does not change much and, when it does, it is always to reverse peaks of social dissatisfaction," said Justice Tarcisio, citing the Clean Record Law (Complementary Law 135/2010) as an example.

He also spoke about the banning on the donation of legal entities for election campaigns. "The 2016 Elections were the first that dealt with this resource shortage after the banning on donations, by companies, for parties and candidates. In that election dispute, we counted more than 50% of donations with clear indications of irregularities. There were amounts from beneficiaries of BolsaFamília (Family Stipend), a program whose requirements are, specifically, to be in an indigent situation. Thus, the party funds were raised but no remarkable advances have been seen yet," he said.

In addition to the General Elections of 2018, the conference, organized by Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), also dealt with themes such as 'The role of young lawyers in the fight for access to justice', 'Young female lawyer: the achivement of rights' and 'Judicial activism', among others.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

TSE seminar debates truths and myths regarding the **Electronic Voting Machine**

The Superior Electoral Court (TSE) promoted the seminar "Segurança da UrnaEletrônica" (Safety of the Electronic Voting Machine). The event counted with the participation of journalists, academics, students, electoral judges and Technology professionals of the public sector.

The debates centered around the myths and truth involving the electronic voting machine. The initiative came from the principle that the device still generates doubts as to the safety it provides and its own way of functioning.

When opening the seminar, the president of TSE, Justice LuizFux, stated that the Electoral Justice has been searching to control its acting based on the republican principles of morality and transparency. According to Fux, the citizen has greater participation in the democratic life in the moment of voting. Because of that, it is necessary that the voter is certain that his conscious choice will be reliably portrayed in the voting machine.

After remembering that the electronic voting machine was implanted more than 20 years ago in Brazil, without registers of "errors" in its functioning, the judge recorded episodes of that time in which the vote was exclusevily prohibted and the canvas process was more vulnerable. "The electronic voting machine, in a good time, came to bring means of defence for the society against these frauds," he emphasized.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

Program "Justiça Eleitoral Itinerate" is launched with the **Biometric Registration** of Paulistanos

On April 24, 2018, the president of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), justice LuizFux, launched the program *"JustiçaEleitoralItinerante" (Itinerant Electoral Justice)* in São Paulo.The initiative aims to bring more citizenship to the population through electoral services. It also aims to train agents who will be directly involved with the 2018 election dispute.

In a crowded event, more than 300 voters had their fingerprints collected and their registration updated in the Electoral Justice.

LuizFux highlighted the scope of the program and the importance of biometrics as a means of combating electoral fraud." Instead of the citizen coming to the justice, it goes to the citizen," he said, "and biometrics has the advantage of ensuring the healthiness and honesty of the elections. This completely rules out the possibility of someone using the voting machine in order to vote in place of another."

In this first moment, the program itinerant Electoral Justice will support the "Projeto de IdentificaçãoBiométrica" (Biometric Identification Project) of the Electoral Justice, whose goal is to register all voters by means of fingerprints until 2022. At the time, a structure was set up on the ground floor of the Regional Electoral Court of São Paulo (TRE-SP), with 29

kits for collecting citizens' fingerprints. The service was available during the entire day.

The TSE president also explained that it will be up to each state's TRE to make partnerships with bus companies, for example, to bring the services provided in the program to voters living in remote regions.

National Identity Document (DNI)

After the opening, which also had the participation of TSE justice Tarcisio Vieira de CarvalhoNeto, the President of the Court and other authorities went to the São Paulo School of Judges (EPM), where they gave a lecture to 200 guests on the challenges and perspectives

in relation to the 2018 General Elections. Topics such as fake news, partisan democracy, and campaign financing were discussed.

At the time, there were also six stations of the pilot project of the National Identity Document (DNI). The participants of the EPM event downloaded the free application in their *smartphones* or *tablets* and registered and validated the digital document directly in the stations, with representatives of the Electoral Justice. The DNI is expected to be available to all citizens from July of this year.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

EJE/TSE organises debate on **Electoral Propaganda** on the Internet

More than 60% of Brazilians have access to the internet and Brazil is the 4th most connected country in the world. This was the starting point of the substitute justice of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), Carlos Horbach, when he opened the panel "Propaganda Eleitoralna internet: redessociais e impulsionamento de conteúdo" (Electoral Propaganda on the Internet: social media and the promotion of content), which followed up the seminar "Perspectivas e Desafios da Propaganda Eleitoral " (Perspectives and Challenges of Electoral Propaganda), promoted by the Electoral Judiciary School of TSE (EJE / TSE) on April 19 and 20, 2018.

According to the justice, the law is constantly challenged by the evolution of times and customs, especially the Electoral Law in the field of electoral propaganda, precisely because of the evolution of internet usage by the population. He pointed out that the innovations brought by the 2017 political reform to the electoral legislation, especially in the field of electoral propaganda on the Internet and social media, were reflected in Resolution TSE n. 23,551/2018, which is dedicated to electoral propaganda.

Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

TSE and the Judiciary School launch the program "**Itinerante Electoral Justice**" Electronic Voting Machine

The Superior Electoral Court (TSE) and the Electoral Judiciary School (EJE) launched on the April 23, 2018, the program "JustiçaEleitoralItinerante" (Itinerant Electoral Justice) in Sao Paulo, which has the objective of taking citizenship to the population and amplifying the dialogue and education of the agents that are directly involved with the electoral process.

The program was launched by the president of TSE, justice LuizFux, and by the director of EJE, justice Tarcisio Vieira de CarvalhoNeto, at 9 a.m., in the head office II of the Regional Electoral Court of Sao Paulo (TRE-SP), located in Street Dr. FalcãoFilho, 121, Vale do Anhangabaú.

The Itinerant Electoral Justice is part of an agreement established by the president of TSE in his installation speech. The program, that had the support of the Regional Courts and Electoral Judiciary Schools, covered cities in the five regions of the country during the pre-electoral period of 2018.

The initiative was divided into two fields. The first was focused on the voters. Through it, representatives of the Electoral Justice provided itinerant services to the population, such as biometric register, beyond information on the electronic voting machine, voting and other themes that were defined as of the main necessities pointed out by the TREs in each one of the places.

The second field, in turn, focused on the orientation of public agents and other professionals that will participate directly with the electoral process: servers, poll workers, judges and electoral Corregidor, amongst others.They will receive information and will be able to take their doubts on relevant issues that refer to the election dispute.

Biometric Register

In this first edition, the program Itinerant Electoral Justice will support the "Projeto de IdentificaçãoBiométrica da JustiçaEleitoral" (Project Biometric Identification of the Electoral Justice), which has the objective of register all the voters by means of fingerprints until 2022. For that, the TRE-SP prepared a "Central da Biometria" (Biometric Center) in the ground floor of the building. The venue consisted of 29 kits in order to collect the fingerprints of citizens that had not yet done their biometric register. The expectation was to accomplish more than a thousand attendances on April 23 itself, when the place functioned from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The process of the biometric register is fast, lasting 10 minutes at maximum. However, the slots for attendance on April 23were limited. The citizen who wished to participate in one of them must scheduled their time on the website of TRE Paulista.

After the opening, the president of TSE and other authorities went to the EscolaPaulista de Magistratura (EPM - Sao Paulo School of Judges), in Street Consolação, 1483. In the place, they delivered a lecture for 200 guests on the challenges and perspective in relation to the 2018 General Elections. Various panels, addressed various themes such as fake news, partisan democracy and financing of the campaign. The event was restricted to guests.

At the occasion, six stations of the pilot project "Documento Nacional de Identificiação" (DNI - National Identification Document) were installed. The participants of the event from EPM were able to download the free application in their smartphones and tablets, register themselves and validate their digital documents directly in the stations with the representatives of the Electoral Justice. The expectation is that the DNI is available to all citizens, in general, from July of this year.
Source: *http://english.tse.jus.br/*

CEC
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
OF GEORGIA

Dialogue on enhancing **Electoral Integrity**

A dialogue on Enhancing Electoral Integrity was conducted by the International Democratic Institute (NDI) and Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) in cooperation with Georgian Election Administration. The conference covered important issues on transparency through open election data, voters' registration, use of effective electoral technologies, data processing and information accessibility for electoral stakeholders.

NDI and GNDEM in cooperation with Election Management Bodies (EMB) of various countries conduct the Dialogue during the years. This year, by the initiative of the organizers, the conference was facilitated in cooperation with Georgian EMB.

At the conference Tamar Zhvania, the CEC Chairperson talked about the achievements and challenges of Election Administration. She emphasized the tight cooperation between EMBs and observer organizations, which ensures more efficient and accessible electoral environment. CEC Chairperson delivered the presentation on formation and transparency of the voters' list and talked about the innovative projects implemented within the respective field.

"The dialogue between the election management bodies and observer organizations is of high importance, as both sides strive to make the election processes transparent and accessible on local as well as on international level. Georgian Election Administration implements various projects, which ensures the electoral databases and suggested services to be more effective and accessible for electoral stakeholders. The CEC of Georgia locally facilitates meetings on a regular basis, where together with the representatives of observer organizations, international and local organizations discuss the important issues and challenges. We also try to respond all questions related to the electoral processes"- underlined Tamar Zhvania in her opening remarks.

The Dialogue provided break-out groups, where the problems and challenges related with the data accessibility were discussed. Challenges of disinformation, addressing them and mechanisms of cooperation with electoral stakeholders were also discussed at the break-out group sessions.

Representatives of Election Management Bodies of 25 countries, international and local observer organizations participated in the Dialogue.

Source: *http://cesko.ge/eng*

8ᵗʰ **Annual Meeting** of Election Management Bodies, 2018

Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) hosts the 8ᵗʰ Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies.

The main theme of the meeting was 'Technologies and Innovations in Citizen's Engagement'. Representatives of EMBs of

various countries, international organizations and vendor companies oriented on electoral technologies participated in the event.

Thea Tsulukiani, a Minister of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Tamar Zhvania, the CEC Chairperson, Niels Scott, the UN Resident

Coordinator in Georgia, Matt Gokhool, Chief Executive of International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS), Jerome Leyraud, Chief of Party, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and CristianUrse, Head of Office in Georgia, Council of Europe, made opening remarks at the meeting.

During the two-day conference, adoption of new technologies and innovations in the election processes for ensuring voter engagement were the major topic of discussion. Participants shared their experience in this respect and discussed future plans.

Tamar Zhvania in her presentation emphasized citizen engagement in the election processes and the importance of use of new technologies in introducing new services in this regard. According to MsZhvania, the two-day meeting hoped to enable the participants to find new ways for boosting citizen awareness and their active involvement in the election processes. The event served as a perfect platform for EMBs and relevant organizations to share their experience and come up with important decisions.

In the framework of the meeting, Tamar Zhvania discussed the current practice involving use of modern technologies for voter and stakeholder's engagement.

8th Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies opened on February 28, 2018 and was concluded on March 1, 2018. Representatives of 21 EMBs, 10 international organizations, US Embassy in Georgia and four vendor companies oriented on electoral technologies, amounting to 105 participants in total are present at the meeting. This year, for the first time, EMB representatives from Colombia, Tunisia, Ecuador and Bangladesh joined the annual meeting.

The Central Election Commission of Georgia organized the meeting in close cooperation and support with the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

Source: *http://cesko.ge/eng*

Georgia organises Seminars at Universities on 'Informed Young Voters

The Training Centre of the Election Administration of Georgia implemented a project 'Informed Young Voter' at partner universities for young voters aged between 18-21.

As part of the above-mentioned initiative, 2-hour seminars were held for university students during which they received information about different topics, including the essence of elections and its importance in the country's democratization process; international values and principles regarding elections; election stakeholders and their role in electoral processes; active citizenship, importance of a single vote and reasons for participating in the October 2018 Presidential elections.

The seminars were held at Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University on April 30, 2018 and at Grigol Robakidze University on May 3, 2018. By May 31 the project was gradually implemented in all partner universities of Training Centre.

The 'Informed Young Voters' Project was launched in 2013 and is aimed at raising civic awareness among young voters and supporting enhanced active engagement of those young voters who are participating in the elections for the first time.

Source: *http://cesko.ge/eng*

Election Commission of India organizes Training of State Level Master Trainers for **Electoral Literacy**

The Election Commission of India organized a 3-day Training and Certification Programme for State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs) from April 19-21, 2018 at New Delhi. About 280 SLMTs from across the country attended the training, who in turn would deliver cascaded training to various functionaries in the States/UTs and would also conduct certification course for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs).

roll management. He urged the participants to create an atmosphere of motivation and increased participation in training of EROs and AEROs and other officers in the field.

Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said that in election management, electoral roll is akin to foundation of an institution. He made special mention on motivating field-level officers to achieve greater participation and deeper understanding of the subjects and procedures.

Launch of 'Handbook for ERO and AERO Certification' at the programme

The Chief Election Commissioner of India O. P. Rawat recalled the time when India got its first electoral roll after independence. He said that the preparation of India's first electoral roll was a humungous and complex task. However, the election machinery, with their efforts, made it possible to hold the first election during 1951-52. He urged the participants to continue the tradition of working diligently in conduct of elections. He added that elections could further be improved with better electoral

Talking about use of technology in elections, he said that ethical issues are of concern in Information Technology, and asked the participants to keep a check on the malpractice. He hoped that the 3-day training programme would be an immense learning experience for all participants.

Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa said that importance should be given to procedures and systems, which are two of the most important

factors in making elections a success. He said that preparing for elections is as difficult a task as conducting elections, thus equal importance should be given to non-election period as well in election management. Referring to concerns over ethics in use of technology, he added that morals of human beings cannot be substituted.

Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha called electoral roll management as the foundation to poll management. Thus, it is necessary that electoral roll is clean and healthy. Given the dynamic population of India, he said that electoral roll management should be a continuous process. Citing IT as a big enabler, he urged the participants to use the ERO-NET platform gainfully.

Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena explained the different methodologies to the participants to make electoral roll more transparent and credible. He presented a number of facts and figures that could help in improving electoral rolls. He Saxena expressed his gratitude to the Commission for their constant guidance and to senior ECI officers for bringing in technology in electoral roll

management.

Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain said that there was a felt need to train election officers since they perform election duties in addition to their primary work. Realizing the need for a structured training, ECI started with a certification programme for returning officers in 2016 which received a positive feedback. He expressed his pleasure to see the programme being extended for EROs and AEROs.

The programme also saw the launch of *'Handbook for ERO and AERO Certification'* by the Commission. The participants were handed out certificates for successful completion of the three day training workshop. The interactive sessions at the workshop were much appreciated by the EROs and AEROs. Suggestions have been invited from the participants to make ERO Net more effective. Two best entries would be awarded at the next National Voters Day function held every year on the 25th of January.

Source: *https://eci.nic.in/*

IIIDEM organizes 2-Day **Consultative Workshop** for the Delegation from the Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan

The India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) organized a 2-day Consultative Workshop for the Delegation from the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Kazakhstan from April 16-17, 2018 at Nirvachan Sadan, Election Commission of India, New Delhi. The six-member delegation comprised of the Vice-Chairman of CEC, Kazakhstan and other Senior Officials. The workshop aimed to hold interactive discussions on the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) & Role of IT and Conduct of Training Programme.

The Chief Election Commissioner of India O. P. Rawat talked about the Indian EVM which is being used for the past 20 years in the Indian elections. He said that EVM is a unique voting machine and has multiple features which bring transparency in elections. Yet, there are times when people raise questions on its credibility.

To clear all possible doubts, the Election Commission makes constant efforts and goes out of the way to address the concerns. In wake of the upcoming state legislative elections in Karnataka, the Commission is inviting the

public to have a hands-on demonstration of EVM & VVPAT. He further explained to the participants the features and advantages VVPAT, or Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail, in making the election process transparent for the voter. He also invited the delegation to have a Memorandum of Understanding with ECI and IIIDEM for collaborating in the field of election management.

The Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa said that exchange of ideas between different countries is extremely beneficial for all of us in working towards the objective of strengthening our democracies. He said that in the last two centuries, democracy has found roots in countries around the world. During the same time, technology has also grown manifold. It is, thus, important to understand how technology can be used to strengthen democracy. He added that in a country like India, about 11 million persons are deployed for conduct of elections and all of them undergo training to be equipped to handle the dynamics of elections.

Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain said that during the rollout of EVMs, the Election Commission faced a number of challenges but always overcame them. Today, EVM has been fully accepted by the 80-plus million electors of India. He told the participants that the current

workshop would talk about the various forms of electoral technology being used to continuously improve the election processes in India. He hoped that the ECI would be able to learn from the challenges faced by CEC, Kazakhstan, and be able to address the same. Jain added that IIIDEM, so far, has conducted international training programmes for 83-plus countries across the world.

Electoral Expert at IIIDEM Dr. Noor Mohammad briefed the participants on the schedule of the 2-day workshop. The key topics of the programme included challenges in electoral technologies, online voter registration, transmission of results, apps and electoral services, electoral capacity building, training of trainers and facilitators, among others. Dr. Mohammad said that the training would readily accept recommendations from participants on similar topics which may have been left out in the programme.

Vivek Khare, Director (Training), ECI, gave a vote of thanks to the delegation from Kazakhstan, the Commission, and senior officials of ECI and the IIIDEM staff. He looked forward to a fruitful interaction for a greater learning experience.

Source: *https://eci.nic.in/*

Delegates from CEC, Kazakhstan at the Consultative Workshop at ECI, Delhi

People vote to elect 17 Governors, 39 Mayors and 115 Regents of the country

On June 27, 2018, Indonesia observed local elections wherein votes were held to elect 17 governors, 39 mayors and 115 regents across the country. The elections included gubernatorial elections for Indonesia's four most populous provinces: West Java, East Java, Central Java and North Sumatra, due to which, the elections were described as a run up to the 2019 National Elections scheduled to be held in the country. The 2018 elections were the third simultaneous election to be held in Indonesia after the first two being organised in 2015 and 2017 respectively. The elections followed a simple plurality, first-past-the-post system where the candidates with the most votes automatically wins the seat even if they have less than 50% of the votes.

The preparations for the recently concluded elections began in 2017 with the first major task i.e. finalization of the voter list completed by December 31, 2017. This was followed by the process of registration for candidates opened on January 1, 2018 and closed on the January 10, 2018. The campaigning period officially lasted from February 15 until 24 June. The actual voting took place on 27 June. According to *Komisi Pemilihan Umum* (KPU) also known as the General Elections Commission, the election would cost an estimated Rupiah 10.5 trillion which converts to USD 735 million. June 27, which was the poll day, was declared as national holiday by the government giving every citizen the opportunity to cast their vote.

The results of the gubernatorial elections for West Java, East Java, Central Java and North Sumatra were declared as follows –

- West Java – Amongst 4 contesting candidates from the province, Mochamad Ridwan Kamil won the elections with 32.88% of votes and succeeded Ahmad Heryawan
- East Java – Khofifah Indar Parawansa won from amongst two contesting candidates. She succeeded Soekarwo by securing 53.55% of votes.
- Central Java – Ganjar Pranawo continues to be the governor of Central Java after beating his rival by securing 58.78% votes.
- North Sumatra – From a total of 2 contesting candidates, Edy Rahmayadi won the elections and succeeded Tengku Erry Nuradi.

The General Elections Commission *(Komisi Pemilihan Umum*) is now gearing up for organising Indonesia's National Elections scheduled for 17th April 2019. The elections will help the Indonesian citizens choose their next President. In Indonesia, the president is elected for a five-year term, as are the 560-member People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) and the 128-seat Regional Representative Council. Despite plans to introduce electronic voting, the House of Representatives in March 2017 announced it would not mandate e-voting in the 2019 elections, fearing hacking and internet inaccessibility in some parts of the nation. The Commission will be focusing on its core responsibilities that include deciding which parties can contest elections, organising the voting and announcing the results and seats won in the various branches of the government.

Source: *https://www.ifes.org/indonesia*

South Africa's Electoral Commission launched Schools' Democracy Week

The sixth annual Schools' Democracy Week programme – a joint initiative between the Electoral Commission and the Department of Basic Education, was launched at KwaMhlanga Show Grounds in Nkangala, Mpumalanga on April 23, 2018.

Themed Be the legacy: Strengthen our democracy through voting, the programme was rolled out in selected public schools throughout South Africa from 23 to 27 April 2018, in the week that South Africa celebrates Freedom Day and 24 years of electoral democracy.

Staff from the Electoral Commission's outreach Division in nine provinces visited participating public schools and lead activities which included debates, presentations, mock elections, role play, voter registration, interactive sessions, lectures and formal lessons were conducted.

The Schools Democracy programme started in 2013, in the run-up to the 2014 National and Provincial Elections, when the Electoral Commission signed a three-year memorandum of agreement with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to facilitate the teaching of civic and democracy education in schools across the country.

Source: *www.elections.org.za*
Source of images: DBE SA facebook page
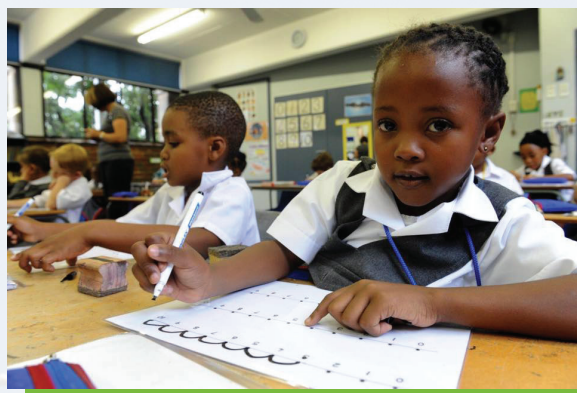
AFGHANISTAN

Commencement of Voter Registration first phase at the provincial capitals

Dr. Abdul BadiSayat IEC Chairman announced the commencement of VR process in a press conference at IEC HQ. He said, "In accord with the electoral law of Afghanistan the Independent Election Commission is committed to conducting the Wolesi Jirga and District Council elections on October 20, 2018 and will bring reformation in all electoral; hence we are starting the voter registration in 34 provincial capitals to prepare the voter list and connect each voter to a specific polling center."

IEC management asked all Afghan citizens to register and show their unity at the international community to decide on their future with their own vote. As well as Dr. Sayat call on all oppositions to take part in this national process, get rid of obstacles and encourage the public to take part in voter registration process.

The VR process will conduct in three phases; the first phase starts on April 14th at the provincial capitals and will continue till May 13th, second phase will start on 15th to 28th May center of the districts and the third and last phase will start on 30th May and will continue till 12th June 2018 at the villages. Tazkira and being 18 years old is the only requirement to register as a voter.

Source: *www.iec.org.af*

AUSTRALIA

New program engaging Northern Territory communities in the electoral process

The Electoral Commissioner, Tom Rogers, said the Electoral Awareness Officer (EAO) program is tackling enrolment and voting issues in remote communities in the Northern Territory.

Electoral Awareness Officers are members of the local Indigenous community, and work with AEC staff to help them understand the unique environment within each community they visit, advise on local issues and help the AEC to spread the word about the importance of enrolling and voting. They provide unique insights into how the AEC can develop appropriate information and materials to help local communities to better understand the importance of enrolling and voting. A key element of this has been the ability of the Electoral Awareness Officers to talk to community members in their language about these issues.

The program initially operated in the remote community of Galiwin'ku, located on Elcho Island off the Arnhem Land coast.

Source: *www.aec.gov.au*

AEC nearing official poll declarations in Longman and Perth by-elections

The AEC will work on Sunday (August) to complete the distribution of preferences required in the Longman and Perth by-elections with the aim to officially declare each poll this weekend.

Electoral Commissioner Tom Rogers said that today's legislated deadline for the receipt of any final declaration votes allows the AEC to now complete the required counts and meet the legislative requirements for declaration.

"We are obviously conscious of Parliament resuming on Monday and anticipate being able to officially declare each poll this weekend and return the writs on Monday morning," Mr Rogers said.

Source: *www.aec.gov.au*

BHUTAN

Postal Ballot and Mobile Booth facilitation in National Council Elections 2018

The Election Commission of Bhutan released information related to the operation of the Postal Ballot Facilitation Booth on April 12, 13 and 14, 2018 and April 15, 2018 for Election Officials in the 20 Dzongkhags as part of the National Council Election 2018, as follows:

Out of 60,590 (30,001 female and 30,589 male) registered Postal Voters for the Postal Ballot Facilitation and Mobile Booths, a grand total of 42,518 (20,654 female an 21,864 male) turned out to cast their vote on the above dates. A total of 699, 65 female and 634 male casted their vote in 9 Mobile Facilitation Booths and the rest in the 69 Facilitation Booths in the 20 Dzongkhags with overall Voter Turnout of 70%.

Source: *www.ecb.bt*

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Optical scanning of the ballots

As part of the continuous advocacy efforts for introduction of new technologies into the election process in BiH using enforceable legal solutions, the BiH CEC has organized a presentation, "Functioning of optical scanners for ballots" on August 26, 2018 in Sarajevor. Representatives of companies from BiH that work in the IT sector, members of several municipal election commission and employees of the BiH CEC Secretariat were invited to attend the presentation.

Source: *izbori.ba*

BRAZIL
Brazil introduces Electronic Voting

As the fifth most populous country of the world, Brazil also adopted electronic voting, this will ensure electronic mechanisms of collection and voting gauging that will be fast and trustworthy. Due to this technology, the country became one the few that can announce the elections' results a few hours after the end of the voting process.

TSE and OAB partnership will promote actions of Electoral Awareness

President of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), Justice Luiz Fux and the President of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), Claudio Lamachia came out to debate on the partnership between the two institutions to promote voter awareness among Brazilian citizens. The idea was to promote the awareness of future electors about the importance of the vote. Through the project "Legal inclusion", the TSE intends to take, to the schools, activities that search to contribute with the education of children and adolescents.

For this purpose, actions of citizenship, democracy and fundamental rights awareness will be articulated. The activities will include lectures and debates. Both Justice Luiz Fux and Claudio Lamachia emphasized on formalizing the partnership so that these actions can already happen in this year's general elections.

TSE's advertising campaign encourages women, young and black people to have a greater participation in politics

The advertising campaign of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), which is destined to increase women, young and black people's participation in politics, has started to be disclosed at social media and at radio and TV stations.

The initiative is envisaged in Art. 93-A of Law n.9,504/1997 (Elections Law), as amended by Art. 1 of Law n. 13,488/2017(Political reform). According to the norm, in electoral years, the TSE must promote up to five minutes per day, continuous or not, of institutional publicity in radio and television that is destined to encourage a greater representativity of this group of people in the Brazilian political life. The law also establishes the period from April 1 to July 30 for the broadcast of the campaign.

The video, which went live on April 1, talks specifically about the representativeness issue and has the slogan "Nobody represents as well as you" as a motto. Its objective is to make the citizen reflect on the importance of political engagement, alluding to the benefits that the diversity and political renovation can bring to the country.

Source: *english.tse.jus.br*

CANADA

Elections Canada is distributing Voter Information Cards through mails

Elections Canada in its new move mailed a personalized voter information card to each registered elector in Chicoutimi–Le Fjord (Quebec) during the month of May. The card tells electors when and where to vote and whether their polling place is wheelchair-accessible. It also provided an option for updating the voter information card at the nearest Elections Canada office in Chicoutimi–Le Fjord or at the polls just before they vote.

Electors should contact the Elections Canada office in Chicoutimi–Le Fjord if:

The name listed on their card is incorrect and they cannot go online to update their information;

They receive a card for a deceased or unknown person at their address.

The voter information card cannot be used as proof of identity or address at the polls.

Students line up to register and cast their ballot at a temporary Elections Canada office on campus.

A young woman places her ballot in the ballot box.

Canadian citizens can update their voter registration by checking "yes" on their T1 tax form

Elections Canada invites all Canadian citizens filing their income taxes to check "yes" to share their basic information with Elections Canada. This is the easiest way for citizens to make sure they are registered at the correct address on the voters list and ready to vote at the next federal election.

On their T1 tax form, filers are asked whether they are a Canadian citizen and whether they will allow the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to share their name, address, date of birth and citizenship with Elections Canada.

Elections Canada uses this information to update the National Register of Electors, the permanent, continually updated database of Canadians eligible to vote in federal elections. The information is used for electoral purposes only.

By checking "yes" every year, Canadian citizens can be sure their federal voter registration is always up-to-date and that they will appear correctly on voters' lists at the next federal election.

Source: *http://www.elections.ca/content. aspx?section=abo&lang=e*

COLOMBIA
Conservatives retain their bastion in Bogota

Becoming the country's youngest President at the age of 42, Ivan Duque Marquez of Democratic Center secured 53.9% of the votes in the second runoff defeating Colombia Humana's Gustavo Petro (winning 41.8% of the votes). The much debated peace deal with Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) drawn in the backdrop of 52 years of civil war lay at the heart of the closely contested elections, with the two key alliances taking diametrically opposite stands on the issue.

Source: *https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/18/ivan-duque-wins-election-to-become-colombias-president*

ECUADOR
Over one hundred electoral zones will be created nationwide with a view to the 2019 Elections

The Plenary of the National Electoral Council (CNE), approved the creation of 86 new electoral zones in 15 provinces of the country, within the framework of the activities contemplated in the organization of the Sectional Elections 2019 and election of directors of the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS), which is ongoing.

In this context, Roberto Ronquillo, national director of the Electoral Registry, indicated that these new areas are added to those that have been created as part of the organization of the next electoral process. In total, 151 electoral zones have been created and updated, which will benefit more than 200,000 voters, who will be able to exercise their right to vote in a place close to their residence, on March 24, 2019.

Source: *http://cne.gob.ec/es/*

FIJI
Fiji Nursing Association uses Touch Screen Voting Machines

App to give poll updates and results

The Fijian Elections Office [FEO] successfully conducted its Trade Union Elections on the recently acquired Touch Screen Voting Machines [TSV machines] through the Association of World Election Bodies [A-WEB].The Fiji Nursing Association is the first union to utilize the machines. The TSV machines were used at its Annual General Meeting held at Novotel, Lami, in which 23 members of the Fiji Nursing Association cast their votes. The Fijian Elections Office has noted that it will have to implement a more rigorous awareness and training exercise on the usage of the machines; the overall feedback from the voters was that it was easy and convenient. The 2018 General Election however will not have any usage of Electronic Voting Machines.

The Fijian Elections Office has shifted from the traditional means of announcing election results to its very own app for the 2018 General Election. The app will feature election results for each candidate, political party and the polling venue. Electoral Commission chairperson Suresh Chandra said this showed how the FEO was using modern technology as a useful tool for electoral management and ensuring transparency of electoral processes during the election period. Supervisor of Elections Mohameed Saneem said the results released from the app were from the results management system. The app can now be downloaded via Google Play Store and App Store.

Source: *http://www.feo.org.fj/*

GEORGIA
Awareness Raising Training Course "Elections and Young Voter"

The training course "Elections and Young Voters" comprising 25 public schools for the period of April 19 through April 25 was executed by Election Administration of Georgia.

The training project has been implemented at 83 public schools, where 11th and 12th grade students were acquainted with important issues such as the history of elections and modern times, elections and democracy, electoral administration and electorate, other electoral stakeholders. At the completion of the course, the students conducted mock elections, as part of which the winning slogan focusing on the protection of environment was identified.

The CEC and the Training Center implemented the project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia. This initiative is aimed at the enhancement of civic awareness among youth and the promotion in increased civic responsibility.

GEORGIA
Successful Graduates Of Electoral Development School Have Been Employed In Election Administration

Successful graduates of the Electoral Development Schools will receive practical experience at the Election Administration during two months. 33 graduates are employed at District Election Commissions (DEC) for two months. Today the CEC Chairperson, Tamar Zhvania and the Deputy Chairperson, GiorgiSharabidze met the youth.

At the meeting Tamar Zhvania talked about the importance of youth participation in election processes and the role of elections in the process of democratic development.

''I am very glad that you stay with us and I want to congratulate each of you. The idea of Electoral Development Schools was born at the CEC and today, I want to say with certainity and courage that we have launched a very important work, because first and foremost it aims the support of youth. Election Administration has gained much progress and you are becoming the part of this administration, which will be a very interesting experience for you. I am glad that we were able to attract and mobilize 33 young people, who

will assist District Election Commissions during this very important Election by engaging their knowledge, energy and experience ,, - stated Tamar Zhvania.

At the same meeting, the head of the CEC Human Resources Management Department introduced to the youth CEC orientation program and they received detailed information about the work of District Election Commissions.

33 graduates of the Electoral Development Schools since September 1 for two months will be employed at the CEC Election Process Management Department within the framework of the CoE grant project. Relevant DECs, including 10 DEC in Tbilisi and 23 DECs in diferent regions of Georgia were defined as their work places.

During 16-27 August, 500 youth went through the 10-day learning course at the Electoral Development Schools. The educational project, which aims at increasing civic engagement and promoting election among youth was implemented with the support of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

Trainings of Representatives of Local Self-Governments And Regional Administrations

From August 24 through September 5, 2018, the CEC and the Training Center are holding the training for the representatives of local self-government authorities and regional administrations. The Training is aimed at informing participants about the role of local self-governments in the election processes and the matters related to banning the use of administrative resources for the October 28, 2018 elections.

Training participants will be exposed to such importance issues as:

- the role of municipal authorities in the electoral processes;
- credibility of elections and the role of civil servants (restrictions applicable to civil servants);
- prohibition of abuse of office or official status;
- the prohibition of the use of administrative resources;
- banning the use of budget funds.

The trainings will be held at the regional resource centers of the Election Administration. Participants will receive manuals developed for this program.

Source: *http://cesko.ge*

INDIA
Election Commission of India launches its online RTI Portal

Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat, Election Commissioners Sunil Arora and Ashok Lavasa launched the online RTI Portal of Election Commission of India on June 6, 2018. The online portal will facilitate applicants seeking information under the Right to Information Act. The portal can be accessed by general public on the Home Page of the Commission's website 'eci.nic.in' by clicking on 'Online RTI'. There is also online payment gateway for making payment of requisite fees under the RTI Act. The portal also facilitates online reply to applications and also for making first appeal and reply thereto. There will be timely notification alerts to RTI applicant via SMS and E-Mail. Applicants seeking information from the Commission under the RTI Act can make use of the online portal. The offline mode of applications will also simultaneously continue.

Source: *http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html*

MALAYSIA
Mohamed Elias appointed new Election Commission Secretary

Datuk Mohamed Elias Abu Bakar was appointed as the new secretary of the Election Commission, The EC said in a statement that he succeeds Datuk Abdul Ghani Salleh who went on mandatory retirement on May 10.

Mohamed Elias, 58, a graduate of Universiti Malaya, joined the Civil Service on July 1, 1983, and last held the post of deputy secretary-general (operations) of the Ministry of Human Resources, from Feb 15, 2017, to May 20, 2018, it said. The EC hopes that Mohamed Elias' wide experience in the Civil Service would enable him to lead the EC secretariat in planning, coordinating and implementing the EC policies efficiently and effectively.

Source: *www.spr.gov.my*

Prime Minister Najib Razak defeated as opposition claims victory in Malaysia

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak has suffered a stunning election loss to former leader Mahathir Mohamad, who at 92 is set to become the world's oldest leader.

Najib, 64, was thrashed at the polls by a coalition of parties led by Mahathir, who led the country for 22 years and came out of retirement to challenge Najib in the country's 14th general election.

Source: *https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/09/asia/malaysia-elections-results/index.html*

Mahathir Mohamad, 92, sworn in as world's oldest elected leader after win in Malaysia

Mahathir Mohamad was sworn in as the world's oldest prime minister, making an extraordinary political comeback as Malaysia's leader at the age of 92. Supporters waved flags and cheered outside the Istana Negara palace in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, as Dr Mahathir, who previously served as prime minister for 22 years, took the oath once again.

Source: *https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/09/mahathir-mahathir-92-claims-win-ruling-coalition-malaysia-elections/*

MALDIVES
Maldives electoral body delays presidential candidate applications

The start date for presidential candidates to submit their applications has been delayed by more than a week, the head of the Elections Commission Ahmed Shareef said in a press conference.

The commission first announced that applications would be open on July 15. Because of some differences of opinion in the commission it was decided that the date for applications should be July 23, 2018. Shareef said the wait was because the term for President Abdulla Yameen expires on November 17th due to the delays in the 2013 election. The EC had to consult the Attorney General's Office about when the presidential term would end after the commission could not reach an agreement.

A revised calendar for this year's election timeline was also shared. Candidate applications will open from July 23rd to August 4th, while people living outside their home islands can re-register their place of residence from 17 July to 11 August. The commission will announce the final candidate list on August 18th and official campaigning will begin that day. Campaigning will stop on September 23rd, which is voting day.

Source: *www.elections.gov.mv*

MEXICO
Mexico witnesses a bloody run-up to General Elections 2018

Registering the death of nearly 113 politicians and 48 candidates running for posts to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, the Mexican General Elections (coinciding with Local Elections), widely viewed as the largest polls in the country's history with more than 3400 seats up for contest, has been marred with violence and criminal interference. Resulting in the withdrawal of nominations from more than 600 candidates and multiple allegations of foreign intervention, the polls are expected to be a keenly contested event between National Action Party's Ricardo Anaya Cortés, National Regeneration Movement's Andrés Manuel LópezObrador, and PRI's José Antonio Meade. The elections would also witness the first time candidates are allowed to run for the presidential office as Independents.

Source: *https://www.vox.com/world/2018/6/14/ 17463474/mexico-election-murder-politicians-presidential-andres-manuel-lopez-obrador, https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2017/10/ 26/independents-stampede-into-mexicos-presidential-election*

SOUTH AFRICA
Out-of-country registration for South African Voters

Democratic South Africa's sixth national election is set to take place in 2019. The Electoral Act 73 of 1998 gives all South African citizens the right to register and vote abroad in national elections.

To vote out-of-country your name must appear on the voter's roll of the Electoral Commission (IEC). The voter's roll contains the identity numbers, full names and addresses of voters, and is an important tool to protect against electoral fraud, that is, by ensuring that citizens vote in their correct voting district and only vote once.

Voter registration for all South African citizens – including those who live outside out of the country – is continuous, meaning that voters can register or re-register at any time.

For citizens who live 'abroad' to register as a voter, they must present themselves in person at their nearest South African mission, which includes embassies, consulates and high commissions, together with their valid South African identity document (ID), as well as a valid South African passport.

A full list of South Africa's missions is available on the website of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) at http://www.dirco.gov.za/webmissions/index.html.

Citizens based out-of-country who are already registered to vote – either on the national or international segment of the voters' roll – need not re-register to vote before the 2019 national election.

However, to be eligible to vote out-of-country, voters will have to inform the Chief Electoral Officer of the IEC via the completion of an online VEC 10 of their intention to do so and by indicating the mission at which they will be voting.

The online VEC10 will only be available on the website at www.elections.org.za from the date that the 2019 national election is proclaimed and only for a 15-day period.

Source: *www.elections.org.za*

UGANDA
EC Sets New Date for Polls in 635 Villages

The Electoral Commission appointed July 10, 2018 as polling date for election of Village Local Councils in all the 60,800 villages in Uganda. The polling process commenced this morning and has been successfully concluded. Preliminary reports from the districts indicate that in most areas, registered residents (voters) turned out in large numbers to elect their leaders at the village level.

The Electoral Commission congratulates all those Ugandans who turned up to exercise their right to vote for their leaders and those who have been elected.

The Commission established a Query/Complaints Desk at the Headquarters for purposes of receiving complaints and offering guidance to our officials and members of the general public.

Some of the issues raised at the Desk include persons who did not register in the Village Residents' Register but turned up with National Identity Cards, demanding to vote in the elections. These would not be allowed to vote as per the guidelines for this election;

The Electoral Commission notes that elections had to be called off in some electoral areas mainly because unregistered residents disrupted the exercise when they were turned away.

Source: *http://www.spr.gov.my/index.php*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
COMELEC-DFA
## says Overseas Voter Registration Hits 1.6M Mark

The Commission on Elections and Department of Foreign Affairs today announced that the number of overseas voters for the 2019 national elections has reached an all-time high of 1,600,746.

This number has surpassed the previous record of 1,376,067 for the 2016 Presidential Elections according to DFA-Overseas Voting Secretariat (DFA-OVS).

"Our media partners, bloggers and other Overseas Voter stakeholders are also playing an important role in creating awareness among our countrymen abroad," added Guia.

At the same time, he encouraged qualified Filipinos abroad to register.

He said all Filipino citizens who expect to be abroad from 13 April - 13 May 2019 during the overseas voting period for the 2019 Elections, at least 18 years old on 13 May 2019, and not otherwise disqualified by law, may register as an overseas voter, at the abovementioned locations or at the nearest Philippine Foreign

Newly Registered Voters and Active OV Voters
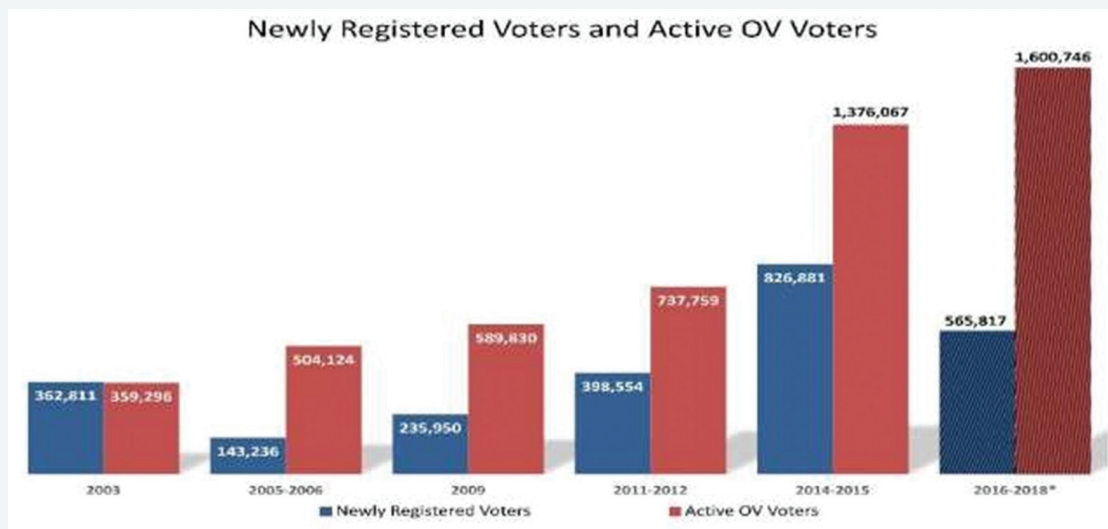
At the current rate of the Overseas Voter registration, the DFA-OVS said it is confident that by the end of registration period in September 30, 2018, there will be around 1.9 million overseas voters for the 2019 national elections.

"This is the product of hard-work of the men and women of our Foreign Service and the Commission on Elections who are encouraging more overseas Filipinos to exercise their right to vote," said COMELEC's Luie Tito F. Guia who is Commissioner in charge of overseas voting.

Service Posts abroad including the three (3) Manila Economic and Cultural Offices (MECO) in Taiwan. For an updated list please go to www.dfa-oavs.gov.ph or www.comelec.gov.ph.

For brief videos on overseas voter registration, kindly go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqKFixPsMCU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVgzivQ-x18

Source: *DFA-OVS*

TURKEY
Turkey gears for early Presidential Elections

Initially scheduled for November, 2019, Presidential Elections in Turkey are set to take place on the June 24, 2018, while the second round has been slated for the July 8. Following up on Turkey's key win in Syria and military operations in Iraq, the incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan cited the requirement of stability in the conflict-ridden zone as the major reason for the preponement of elections. However, pressing financial and economic factors are also supposed to have played a role in the change of schedule. While, Erdoğan continues to maintain an edge as the frontrunner, Muharremİnce of Republican People's Party and MeralAkşener of the İyi Party are expected to be strong contenders for the top office.

Source: *https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/18/turkey-elections-2018-everything-you-need-to-know*

Turkey registers appreciable Overseas Voters' turnout

As per Turkish High Election Board, the overseas voters' turnout in the ongoing General Elections stood at a record 1.49 million as of June 20, 2018. With nearly 3.04 million registered overseas voters, the present turnout stands midway at 48.8%. With voting being open till the June 24th, the figures are expected to end much higher than 2015's 1.3 million.

Source: *https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2018-06-20/turks-abroad-vote-at-record-level-in-elections*

ZIMBABWE
Zimbabwe on track for Presidential Elections, 2018

Scheduled on the July 30, 2018, Zimbabwe is all set to witness its first post-Mugabe General Elections. Pitching Movement for Democratic Change's Nelson Chamisa against the ruling ZANU-PF's Emmerson Mnangagwa, who succeeded Mugabe as the President in 2017, the polls are expected to see a high turnout. The Coalition of Democrats, an alliance of 9 political parties represented by Elton Mangoma presented itself as the third key contender in a record contest between 23 Presidential candidates.

Source: *www.cnbc.com*
www.theguardian.com
www.newsday.co.zw

Election of Senators to represent people with disabilities

The election of two Senators (one female and one male) to represent People with Disabilities was held in August.

> Elections are all about people; about their choices, their dreams, and aspirations. The road to democracy is paved with stories of millions of people who work behind the scenes and whose determination, grit and bravery have been instrumental in overcoming multiple challenges in ensuring smooth, free and fair elections.
>
> This section is dedicated to such stories of election officials and voters. It is a sincere attempt to profile real actors and participants of the democracy. Election Commission of India **invites your contributions** — that would go a long way in inspiring and motivating sentinels of democracy across the countries.

belief in the ballot

If we cannot Fly, We will walk

Jammu and Kashmir is the northernmost state of India, nestled in the Himalayan mountains and consisting of three regions: Jammu, Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Geographically, the Kashmir valley and Ladakh have average inhabited heights ranging from 6000 feet to 15,000 feet. Due to the prevalent extreme weather conditions, Jammu and Kashmir has Srinagar as the summer capital and Jammu as the winter capital. Naturally, the challenges posed by the difficult terrain and the weather affect the election process too. Additionally, there is the challenge of maintaining the principle of inclusion in such harsh circumstances. During the Parliamentary elections in 2009, the polling station of Ralakung had 23 voters, and that of Phema had only 14 voters. Both these polling stations (PS) were located at 13,500 feet. Polling parties had to be transported to such high locations by helicopters. Issues such as a very small number of voters and remoteness or heights have never deterred or come in the way of establishing a polling station for voters. Though the polls were being held in the month of May, the weather was not amenable in the Kashmir Valley. It was very cold, and there would often be so much fog that visibility was barely a few metres. At the time of dispatching the polling parties, three days before the polling day, they could not be airlifted by Air Force helicopters due to adverse weather conditions. The meteorological department had predicted that the weather would remain the same for the coming few days. But elections had to be held on time and the schedule could not be altered. On May 12, two teams of 12 polling personnel set out on vehicle first and then on foot, on a historic journey. They travelled by vehicle as far as they could go and then trekked to cross a pass at 16500 ft and reached the polling stations at Phema (at a descent of 13,800 ft) and Ralakung (at a descent of 13,500 ft.). They covered the last grueling 45 kms on foot and set up the polling stations at Ralakung. The polling teams were not travelling alone. They had porters, tentage, all poll materials including EVMs and a satellite phone. During this journey on foot, they had to walk for 48 hours in kneedeep snow. Tired and listless, the parties reached on time; they were welcomed by the voters of the two villages and the polling took place as scheduled on May. 15th Both the polling stations recorded 100% voting. This was probably the voters' way of expressing their appreciation for the dedication of the poll personnel towards their national duty.

By Anita Karwal

Making his Vote count

"I will walk to the polling station", said Negi as he trudged a long distance, early in the morning of July 7th, 2014, accompanied by his wife Hira Mani, to reach polling booth no. 50 in Kalpa village of Kinnaur district. As he reached amidst cheering crowds and traditional trumpet music, he was greeted and facilitated by the Deputy Commissioner. After checking his name which was registered on serial no. 123, he proudly got his finger inked and cast his vote for the 16th LokSabha elections. Shyam Saran Negi is a 97-year-old retired school teacher who cast the first vote in the elections held in 1951 — the nation's first elections after the end of the British Raj in 1947. Father of ten and grandfather to many, Shyam Saran Negi recalls how ballot boxes used to be carried on mule backs in the difficult terrains. For him, this franchise is greater than a duty; it is much more than a right. Negi has voted in every general election since 1951, inspiring millions with his spirit. He is believed to be among one of India's oldest voters.

By Sugandha Nagar

Polling Station for a Single Voter

Deep in the forests of Una Assembly constituency of Gir, Somnath district of Gujarat, there is a temple of Lord Shankar, which is at least hundred years old. It is looked after by 59 year-old Guru Bharat Das, disciple of Guru Darshan Das, a priest who has dedicated his life to the service of the Lord for about 35 years now. This temple is popularly known as Banej Temple and is situated about 20 kilometers away from the nearest habitation, a village called Sapnesh Biliyat. Besides the priest, the only other life forms that reside in this forest are lions, leopards, nilgais and deers etc. There is no bus, train or any other form of connectivity to this area. The priest survives on the food and other subsistence items brought by the devotees to the temple. The devotees dare to visit this temple only between sunrise and sunset. None of them ever prefers to brave a night in this forest with the priest. However, the election machinery has not allowed itself to be influenced by the local worries and fears. Close to the kachha (unpaved) road leading to the Banej Temple, there exists the only other construction in this wild forest in the form of a small room made by the Forest Department. For the last 30 years, this room, a public building, serves as the polling station for the lone voter in this area, Guru Bharat Das. In every parliamentary or Assembly election, a polling booth is set up here, Electronic Voting Machine, secret voting compartment et al. Election time is the only time when the priest has overnight human company in the wild forest! The polling party members and the security personnel camp in the forest building about 24 hours prior to the date and time of actual polling as per the stated guidelines of the ECI. The polling staff has never hesitated in ensuring that this single voter polling station functions entirely as per the norms of the ECI. Hence, even if the priest casts his vote in the forenoon, the polling party stays back till the end of polling hour as per the instructions of the ECI Of course, the priest shows his democratic inclination by never missing to cast his vote.

*Extract from S. Y. Quraishi's book -
An undocumented wonder*

It's a **Holy Day**
(Voters' perspective)

I am a student pursuing MBA from KSKV Kachchh University at Bhuj. Like any other internet friendly youth, I am active on social media. I come from a very humble family background. The son of educated parents, all my life I have seen both of my parents working to make ends meet. My father is an accountant in a private company and mother is a teacher. My parents have made me aware of my rights and duties as a citizen since a very young age.

As per ECI guidelines, poll day is declared as a holiday for all schools, colleges, private offices, government offices etc. I have noticed that quite a few people tend to go away from their respective cities for outings or picnics with family or friends on the polling day and do not vote. It's easy to criticise such people but when it comes to oneself as an individual, and specially as young as myself, even one tends to get carried away by the promise of fun that these outings offer.

It was April 30th, 2014, a Wednesday and poll day. My parents live in Gandhidham and I live in Bhuj. I am registered as an elector in Gandhidham. My semester end exams were just over, and I had gone to visit my parents at Gandhidham. I was increasingly feeling the need of a nice refreshing break. So on of April 28th, when my friends from Bhuj called me up and told me about the one-day trip that they were planning to Mandvi beach, I did not hesitate for a second and told them, "I am in."

The very next day, one day ahead of the poll day, I saw an advertisement in newspapers on the need to vote, and somehow a sense of guilt set in. I began questioning my own decision. Was it okay for me to skip my duty and have fun with my friends? One part of my conscience insisted, "Of course I should go and enjoy, and get refreshed." But the other side did not seem to agree.

After much qualms of conscience, I took a call. I should vote, otherwise I had no right to express my views on social media or elsewhere about anything that happened in my country . I was very clear that I would not only lose the right to speak-up, but also I would be running away from my duties towards my beloved nation. "Dude, it's not a holiday, it's a holy day!" I reminded myself. I called my friends and told them about my initial dilemma. I told them I was dropping out of the trip so that I could cast my vote. On 30th April, I voted for the first time in my life and I was thrilled to vote. My friends, back there in Bhuj, drew inspiration from me and voted too.

By Nirdesh Buch

VoICE International

VoICE International enters the second year of its vibrant life, the launch of the issue of marked beginning of volume II of the quarterly e-publication on the VoICE NET portal. VoICE.NET (Voter Information, Communication and Education Network) 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 and representatives from UNDP, International IDEA, IFES and Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre. At present, VoICE.NET has 27 members, which includes Election Management Bodies (EMBs) across the world and reputed international organizations. VoICE.NET contents are provided by the member EMBs/ Organisations and the portal is maintained by Election Commission of India.

The issue focused on 'Digital Technology and Social Media for Voter Education' with rich contributions from the EMBs of Brazil, Ecuador, Fiji, India, Iraq, Kenya (by IFES) and Nepal besides an article from IFES. Expert contribution through in-house research highlighted comprehensive and analytical information on the subject in relation to Australia, Canada, The United Kingdom and The United States of America in the form of 'Insights'. Further, there is a special section with articles dedicated to 'Inclusion of PwDs in electoral processes in line with theme adopted for celebration of 8th National Voters' Day of India. The section carries highlights of the International Conference organized by the ECI, on the subject, and rich experience sharing from Australia, Bhutan, Ecuador, India and Moldova, International IDEA and IFES etc.

The first issue of the year 'Two' was dedicated to the cause of strengthening electoral participation through integration of technology and media.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
## Rulebook on conduct of elections Bosnia and Herzegovina

This Rulebook shall define:
a) control, packing, transport and delivery of the polling material by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the municipal election commission, city election commission and the Election commission of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina

b) duties of president of the polling station committee and role of the members of polling station committees, control, transport and delivery of polling material by the election commission to the polling stations, procedure of voting and determining election results at the polling stations, procedure of counting the ballots and the votes at the regular polling stations, absentee polling stations, polling stations at the diplomatic-consular representation offices of Bosnia and Herzegovina

c) the procedure of packing polling material at the regular polling stations in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and RepublikaSrpska, at the absentee polling stations, at the polling stations authorized to issue tendered/enveloped ballots and by mobile teams

d) the procedure and deadlines for announcing preliminary, unofficial and incomplete election results after verification of results of the vote at a polling station, procedure and deadlines for counting of the ballots.
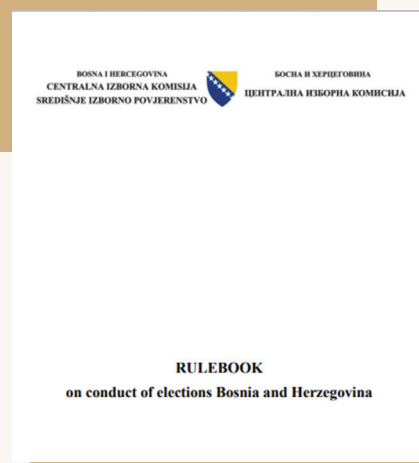
INDIA
Innovations and Initiatives in Recent Elections in India

This document 'Innovations & Initiatives in Recent Elections in India' has been prepared to share the experience and practice of the Indian Election Management. Indian democracy with over 875 million voters and about a million polling stations has successfully witnessed 16 National Elections to the House of People and the State Legislatures. With its constitutional mandate and its strength in strategic planning and management coupled with innovation, expertise and technological integration has successfully conducted these elections in a free and fair manner. The document brings to you the initiatives for expanding the elector base, efficiency and efficacy of the electoral management and

system, improvement of standards and integrity of the process, launch of e-driven initiatives and the electoral reforms. It also shares the contemporary Issues and Challenges and the Strategic Plan of the ECI for 2016-25.
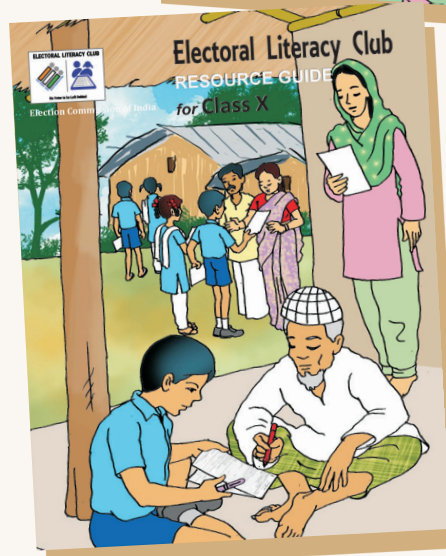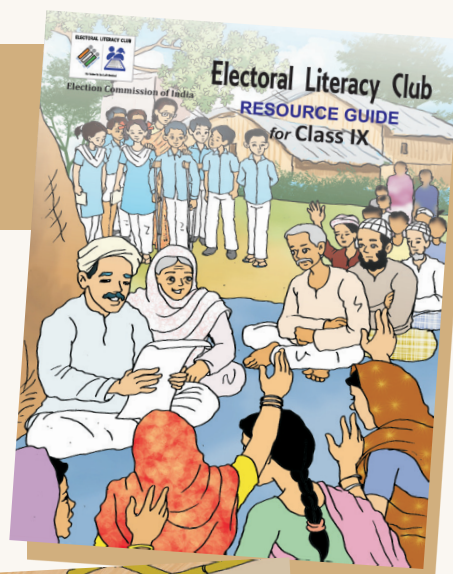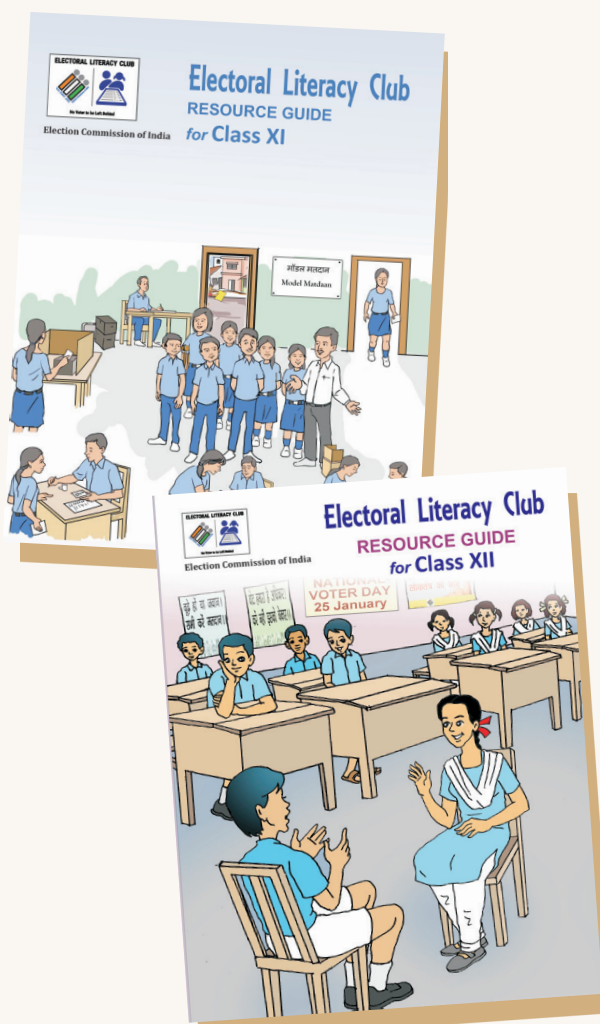
INDIA
Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for Schools

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) are being set up in the country to promote electoral literacy in all age groups of the Indian citizens through engaging and interesting activities and hands-on experience but in a neutral and non-partisan manner.

Electoral Literacy Clubs are especially being set up in Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools all across India targeting the future voters (in the age-group of 14-17 years) studying in Class IX-XII. These shall be called ELC Future Voters.

The club will have all of the students from Class IX, X, XI and XII as its members. The resource guides for all the classes will discuss in detail how ELC will be set up, who will be its participants, convener, where and how it will be conducted and what activities it will involve.

As an aid to club convenors the resource guide for each class has been developed by SVEEP division of Election Commission of India (ECI).

The resource guide comprises of detailed description of the activities to be conducted in the Electoral Literacy Clubs for schools. Through ELCs, students get engaged in interesting activities and hands on experience which sensitise them on their electoral rights and familiarise them with the electoral process of registration and voting.

Chunav Pathshala Resource Guide Electoral Literacy Clubs for Communities

This Resource Guide comprises a detailed description of the activities to be conducted in the *Chunav Pathshalas* at Polling Station locations across India.
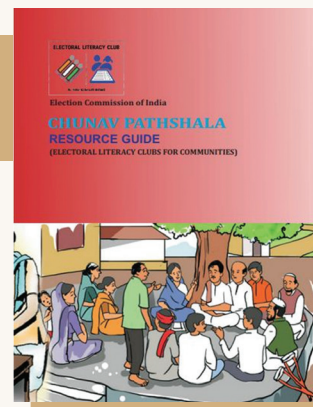
Electoral Literacy Clubs are being set up in the country to promote electoral literacy in all age groups of the Indian citizens, especially the future and young voters, through interesting and engaging activities and hands-on experience in an apolitical, neutral and nonpartisan manner. To cater to the population outside the formal education structures, Electoral Literacy Clubs will be set at Polling Station level as *'ChunavPathshalas'.*

As there shall be a mixed age group in these ELCs for rural communities, the activities are designed for easy conduct and for engaging the members. The same premise will apply in urban areas also.

The activities covered under *Chunav Pathshala* will attempt to achieve following objectives:-
- Educate the targeted populations about voter registration, electoral process and related matters through hands on experience;
- To develop a culture of electoral participation and maximize the informed and ethical voting and follows the principle **'Every Vote Counts'** and **'No Voter to be Left Behind'**
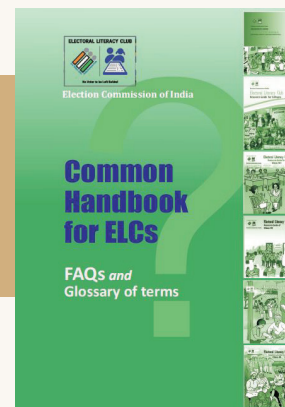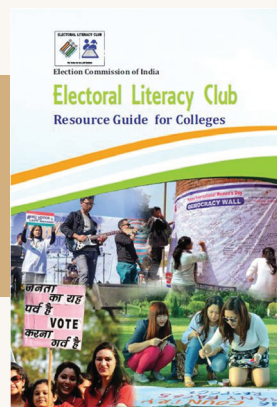
Electoral Literacy Club Resource Guide for Colleges & Common Handbook for ELCs

The Electoral Literacy Club (ELC) project also covers colleges, universities wherein the clubs will be convened by students themselves. This resource guide is a collection of ideas for activities that can possibly be conducted by club conveners.

Electoral Literacy Clubs are being set up in the country to promote electoral literacy in all age groups of the Indian citizens through engaging and interesting activities and hands-on experience but in an apolitical, neutral and non-partisan manner.

Electoral Literacy Clubs are especially being set up in colleges all across India targeting the new voters, (in the age-group of 18-21 years old) pursuing their graduation. The club will have all the students from all semesters as its members.

The common handbook for Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) is a collection of topic-wise Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to elections and serves as a comprehensive guide for ELC Club Convener to quell their doubts/ queries related to factual election knowledge.

The FAQs are sorted topic wise under following themes:
- Registration and Voting
- Election Machinery & EVM
- Election to the Office of President & Vice President
- Service Voter
- Overseas Elector
- Political Parties

IDEA INTERNATIONAL

Interactions between Elections and Constitution-Building Processes In Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

From December 4 – 5, 2017 International IDEA—together with the Edinburgh Centre for Constitutional Law, the Global Justice Academy and the Political Settlements Research Programme at the University of Edinburgh hosted the fourth Edinburgh Dialogue on post-conflict constitution-building.

The topic of the Dialogue was 'The Quest for Legitimate Stability: Understanding the Interactions between Elections and Constitutions in Fragile and Conflict-affected State Transitions'.

A number of issues permeated the discussion, which related to general concerns and drivers of post-conflict elections, including domestic pressure, cost and security.

This report summarizes the issues discussed during the Dialogue, including the interaction and sequencing of elections, interim constitutions, final and amended constitutions, and referendums.

International IDEA Newsletter

IDEA International launches a quarterly newsletter every year. The last newsletter launched by IDEA was the newsletter of January to March, 2018. The most recent edition of the newsletter, features #PressforProgress as its front page articles, and in general covers writings under an overarching theme of gender equality and political empowerment of women globally. The newsletter gives us the reflection on the achievements and challenges on gender and women's empowerment issues. It stresses that efforts to achieve greater gender equality and inclusivity are made best and more effectively when in tandem with partners, urging us all to form alliances with fellow advocates and friends.

The newsletter contains various article on the topics like women in politics, Global and regional efforts to enable the conditions to advance gender equality, The global state of gender in democracy, Why #MeToo matters for democratic politics.

Also, the newsletter covered several publications that had been launched by the IDEA International. Some of the publications that were featured in the latest edition of newsletters were Gender-targeted public funding of political parties, Women in Conflict and peace, The Global State of Democracy. The newsletter also featured a Q&A event on gender-targeted public funding to support women in politics on Facebook Live.

IFES

New Report Highlights Barriers to Meaningful Participation of Armenian Women with Disabilities

The Agate Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities, with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the United States Agency for International Development, has published new research on the barriers to and opportunities for political participation of women with disabilities in Armenia. *The Political Participation of Armenian Women with Disabilities: Barriers and Recommendations* provides insights into the challenges that hinder participation of Armenian women with disabilities and identifies the means to address them. To conduct the research, Agate utilized IFES' Intersectionality Assessment Framework, organizing participatory focus group discussions with men and women with disabilities and their peers from urban and rural areas of Armenia.

Armenian women with disabilities identified various attitudinal, communication, environmental and institutional barriers to participation in formal political spaces and in the recent demonstrations that led to a change of political leadership.
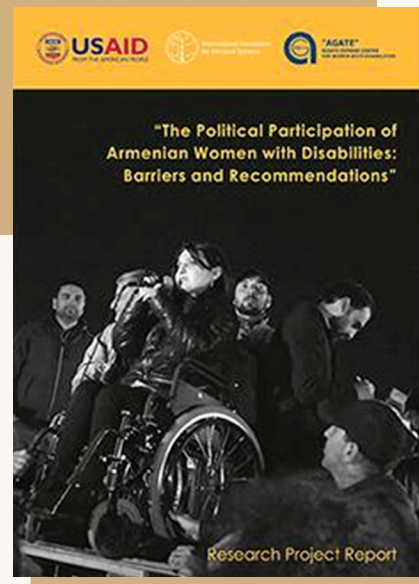
The report found that women with disabilities are not participating in formal political spaces equally with their peers. The attitude of the public, Armenian patriarchal society and family indifference also increase the likelihood of women with disabilities becoming marginalized from political processes. Even so, it revealed that building confidence in women with disabilities and raising awareness of rights would provide a critical foundation to overcoming their inner fears and building their capacity to participate as voters, candidates, observers, and other leaders in political life. Finally, when women with disabilities have the opportunity to detect and assess discrimination, government stakeholders should involve them in policymaking and legislation that concerns them.

Voter Education Handbook

This standard Voter Education Handbook is another milestone in the Electoral Commissions efforts to enhance voter education. It will bridge the gap in election information among voters, candidates, agents, Field Election Officers, observers/monitors, Civil Society and other stake holders. It will also act as a guide on how election activities are conducted.
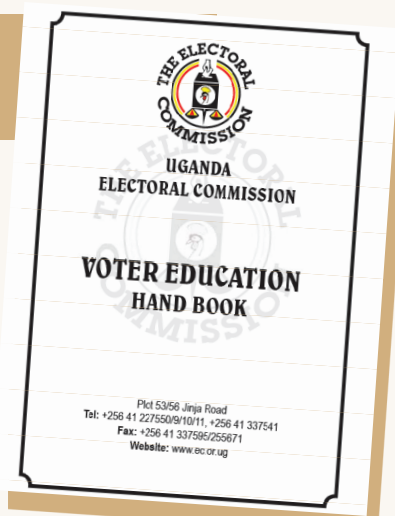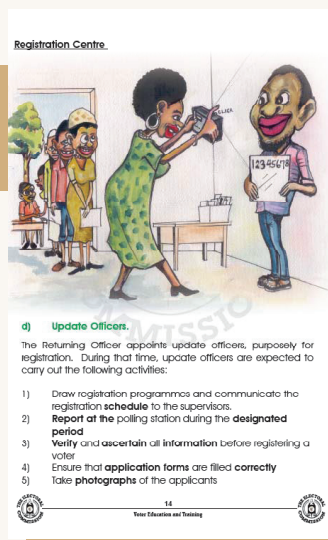
GLOSSARY

A) DISENFRANCHISE

To deny or, deprive a person, group or, a community from their right to vote.

Source: *https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disenfranchise;*
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disenfranchise

B) CAROUSEL VOTING

Usually employed with reference to elections in Russia, the term indicates the illegal activity of driving around groups of voters in buses to several polling stations to cast their vote to the preferred candidate multiple times.

Source: *https://www.collinsdictionary.com/submission/11403/Carousel+voting,*

C) STRAW VOTE

An unofficial poll conducted to test the general strength/trend/opinion concerning opposing candidates or, issues.

Source: *http://www.dictionary.com/browse/straw-vote,*
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/straw%20vote

D) SPLIT TICKET VOTING

Referred to indicate a vote cast in favour of candidates of more than one political party in an election conducted to determine multiple offices.

Source: *http://www.dictionary.com/browse/split-ticket*

E) ELECTION SILENCE/BLACKOUT PERIOD

Refers to a period of usually 24-48 hours (with 10 or, more days being the upper limit at present) preceding the day of polls, when a complete ban is placed on political campaigning.

Source: *http://aceproject.org/epic-en/CDMap?question=ME062*

QUIZ

1 In this method of election, nine hereditary sultans from the states elect one among them to become the Agong or the Head of State of the country. Which country is this?

2 What is common to the following:
   a. Cacareco, the rhinoceros
   b. Dustin the Turkey, a popular Irish TV puppet
   c. Tuxedo Stan, a cat from Halifax
   d. Tiao, a chimpanzee from Rio de Janeiro

3 Electoral stain is traditionally violet in colour but it was replaced with a different colour in Surinamese legislative elections 2005 as it was found just as long lasting and also resembled the national colours in Netherlands. Which colour was it changed into?
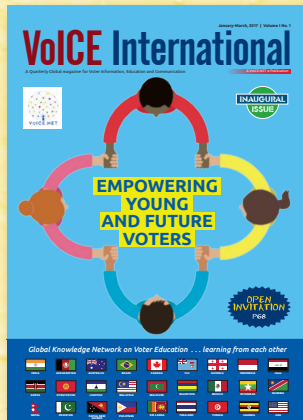
4 The Twenty-second Amendment of the United States Constitution sets a term limit for election and overall time of service to the office of President of the United States to two terms (8 years). This was in response to the 4 Presidential elections won by which US President just before this?

5 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 that?
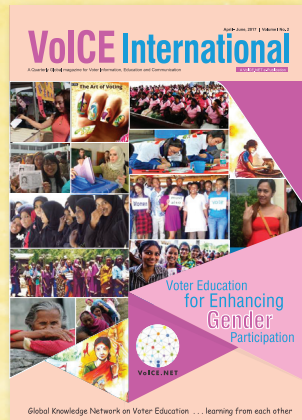
Answers: 1. Malaysia **2.** Non-human electoral candidates **4.** Orange **5.** F.D. Roosevelt **6.** Compulsory voting
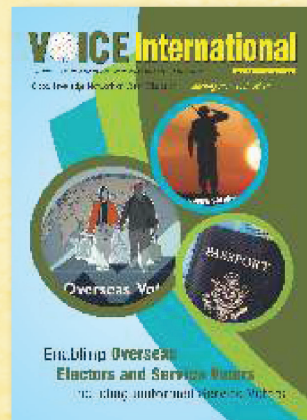
PREVIOUS ISSUES OF VoICE INTERNATIONAL

JAN-MAR 2017

APR-JUN 2017

JUL-SEP 2017

OCT-DEC 2017

JAN-MAR 2018

VoICE.NET

AFGHANISTAN	AUSTRALIA	BANGLADESH	BHUTAN	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	BRAZIL	CANADA	ECUADOR
FIJI	GEORGIA	INDIA	INDONESIA	IRAQ	KENYA	KYRGYZSTAN	LESOTHO
MALAYSIA	MALDIVES	MAURITIUS	MEXICO	MYANMAR	NAMIBIA	NEPAL	PAKISTAN
PHILIPPINES	SAO TOME & PRINCIPE	SOUTH AFRICA	SRI LANKA	TAIWAN	THAILAND	TUNISIA	UGANDA
USA	IIIDEM	IFES	INTERNATIONAL IDEA	CAMBRIDGE (ENGLAND)	UNDP		

TELL ME AND i FORGET
TEACH ME AND i MAY REMEMBER
iNVOLVE ME AND i LEARN
BENJAMiN FRANKLiN

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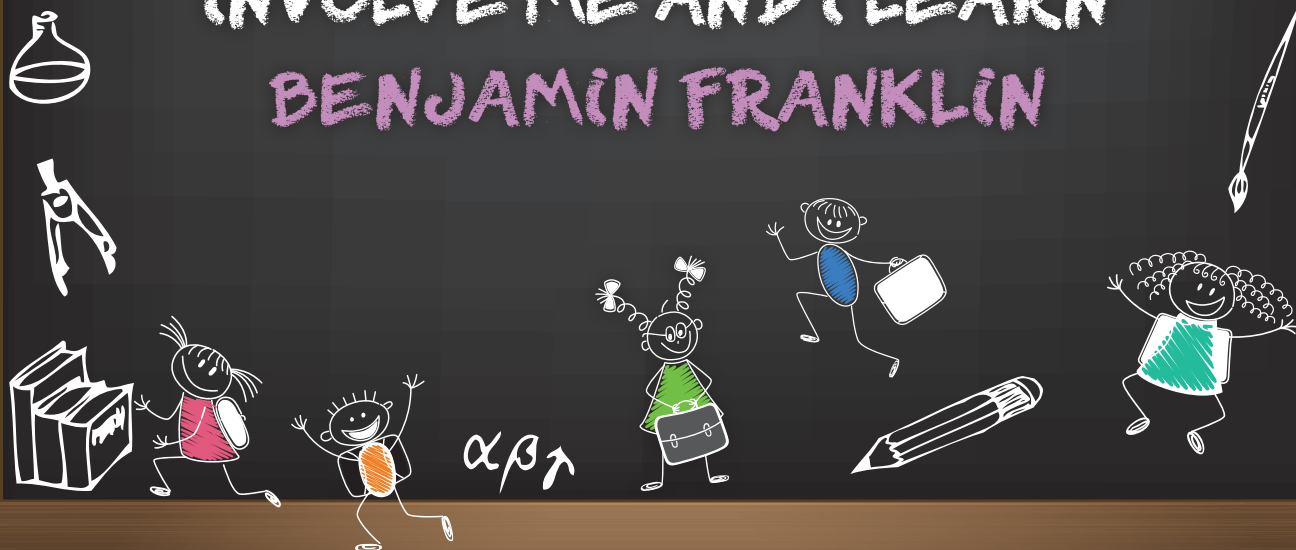
VoICE.NET

Voter Information, Communication & Education Network

Voter **I**nformation, **C**ommunication & **E**ducation 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/ Organisations and the portal is maintained by Election Commission of India.