



VOTER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Voter Education and Training Department is one of the 9 Departments of The Uganda Electoral Commission. It falls under the Directorate of Operations

Mission

Its mission is “ **to formulate Civic Education Programs related to elections.**” It is derived from Article 61 (g) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995.

Vision

Its vision is to create a citizenship with skills, competence and the urge to participate in the governance of their Country.

Goal

The departmental goal is to increase awareness and motivation of all Ugandans who are five years and above for effective participation in elections.

Objectives

The main purpose of Civic/ Voter Education is **to enhance the awareness of the voters/ stakeholders about their right and obligations to participate in the affairs of governance either directly or through their elected representatives in accordance with the law.**

Others include some of the following:

- To educate Ugandans on the purpose of particular elections or referenda at a given time.
- To educate Ugandans on the importance of making informed decisions regarding election of their leaders, representatives as well as referenda.
- To create awareness about the rights and duties of people so as to:
 - i) Register as voters
 - ii) Participate in the nomination of candidates they support
 - iii) Attend campaign meeting and listen to what candidates have to offer to enable them make informed choices
 - iv) Adhere to legal requirements of the electoral process
 - v) Promote the freedom of association through organization, group or parties, and
 - vi) Participate in Polling day activities

Voter Education is defined as the process of imparting knowledge to people regarding their voting rights, electoral offences and generally matters to do with elections. This is directly the role of The Electoral Commission.

Civic education on the other hand is to with imparting knowledge to the populace about their rights and duties. It is basically to do with governance. This is directly the role of The Human Rights Commission.

Methodology for disseminating voter education

They include, among others:-

- Lectures
- Rallies
- Workshops/seminars
- Music, dance and drama
- Role-plays
- Networking with stakeholders
- Use of media
- Films/ documentaries
- Face to face interactions, and
- Printed materials such as posters brochures, banners, leaflets, commercial advertising e.t.c

Voter Education Publications

The department is responsible for the design, production/ publish of voter education materials such as manuals, brochures, posters, fliers, leaflets, handbills etc. The materials produced are tailored to the relevant laws and guidelines of an election at hand. There are those materials, which are standard. (See attached Brochures, posters, hand book booklets)

Voter Education through the Media

The media are essential to the conduct of democratic elections. It is one of the conventional methods of educating voters during elections. A free and fair election is not only about casting a vote in proper conditions, but also about having adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself so that voters can make an informed choice. Media is a partner in the education. Mediums such as print and electronic media are used in the dissemination of information by the Commission

Voter Education Partners

In the provision of voter education, the Commission has partners like Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) e.g. USAID, UJCC, DANIDA, CIDA etc. These organizations assists the Commission by providing additional funding in order to effectively and efficiently conduct voter education.

Voter Education Content

The content in a voter education message is based on the mode of election-covered, issues like: -

- Aspects of the prevailing, enabling electoral laws.
- Responsibility of voters i.e. Registration, voting
- Purpose of elections and referenda
- Rights of voters e.g. the right to vote as enshrined in the Constitution
- The Polling process e.g.
 - What happens at the Polling Station?
 - What are the stages of an election?
 - How to mark a ballot paper
 - The difference between a spoilt and an unused ballot paper.
- Dos and Don'ts as spelt out by the law
- Responsibilities of Polling Officials
- Obligations of candidates and their agents
- What is expected of election observers and monitors

The Training Function

Training is defined as; a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skilled behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose in the work situation is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization.

The Commission trains with a purpose of making better use of human resources by developing people to meet the Commission's requirements of the job to be done. The Commission has benefited from having staff members travel abroad to attend trainings such as BEAT (Basic Election Administration) training, managing the training function, training of trainers courses and many others.

Furthermore, the Commission has conducted numerous trainings such as training of display officers and polling day officials for all elections and by-elections so far conducted in the Country.