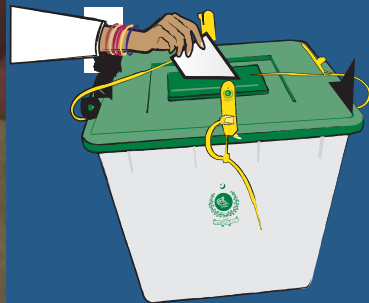


# Engaging Youth for Electoral Process



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# Engaging Youth for Electoral Process

## 1. Pre Election Schedule Announcement

Youth has an essential role to play in the elections as being the largest group among various age groups in the society. Youth can play a multidimensional role in educating people about their rights and responsibilities during the election process, for informing and mobilizing people to cast their votes, bringing people and political representatives together, seeking commitments from the candidates for betterment of the community, observing elections, and supporting the electoral process. Young volunteers can be a great support in sensitizing the people about the importance of elections and bringing people out to vote. Youth can be engaged in the elections through many ways. A few of the ways and methods to engage youth are given in this document.

### a. Campaign to Sensitize Youth about Democracy and Elections

Youth can be engaged in sensitization about democracy and elections. For this purpose, following process may be followed:

- First step is designing and developing a campaign. This requires background information about the democracy, elections, and their importance;
- Next step will be forming a group of young volunteers to work on the campaign. These volunteers should be educated/sensitized on the issue so that they perform their role in an effective manner;
- Secure/raise funds from all available legal sources such as personal donations, contributions from friends and volunteers, and financial support from the traders and donors;
- Select an area where the campaign may be organized. There can be different criteria to select such area; however, areas with huge presence of unengaged youth and low turnout in previous elections; marginalized communities and groups; and universities and educational institutes – of higher studies – can be the appropriate places to work at;
- In order to implement the campaign effectively, the volunteers should be selected from the targeted community;
- Engage volunteer experts, relevant community based organizations (CBOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the area;
- Conduct/organize seminars, forums, and discussions with youth in collaboration with/support of the CBOs and CSOs.

## b. Social Accountability Drive

Social accountability or accountability through society is highly important for public scrutiny of development projects. Government constructs roads, hospitals, schools, etc. from public money. Therefore, people have a constitutional and a legal right to know about the spending made by the government over such projects. People have a right to hold governments accountable for such expenditures and programs. However, it requires education and orientation of the people on their right to information and right to hold the governments accountable. One of the ways to educate and sensitize people about their rights as well as ensure their participation in the process is 'social accountability drive.'

To organize a social accountability drive for on-going development projects, following steps are relevant:

- Selection of an area and development scheme. This will help in keeping the drive focused and meaningful;
- Selection of a team of young volunteers from community and sensitizing them through delivering lectures, showing relevant documentaries of similar drives in other areas/countries;
- Secure/raise funds from all available legal sources such as personal donations, contributions from friends and volunteers and financial support from the traders and donors;
- Engage experts on such schemes such as engineers, etc;
- Seek information and access to public record relating to the scheme such as amount of contract issued, process of issuance of contract, duration of the project implementation, specifications of the material agreed in the contract to be used, etc., through application under Article 19A of the Constitution and other related laws;
- Ask the group of volunteers to seek information about the scheme;
- Studying/analyzing the information;
- Visit the field/area, where scheme is being implemented, with experts and physically examine the material and process of construction. Document the evidences collected through visit and video recording for future reference;
- Hold meetings with the community and ask whether they were informed about the scheme, specifications, benefits/harms, and expenditures being incurred thereon, etc;
- Organize a public hearing in the community and invite concerned officials to listen to the queries and complaints of the peoples of community regarding the scheme;

- Engage local media and educate them about the drive through orientation workshop
- Invite media for coverage of the hearing and report on the drive;
- Explain each and every minute detail of the information relating to scheme and present the ground situation as well;
- Document the hearing through audio-video cameras and disseminate the reports to larger audience such as CBOs and CSOs.

### **c. Organizing Public Forum with the Representatives of Political Parties**

Public Forum is an advocacy tool to bring decision makers, informed citizens, and people together to discuss the issues of importance for the community. A public forum including representatives of political parties on social issues of the community can help understand the issues of the community and to accommodate issues sought in the future agendas and manifestos of the political parties. While organizing a forum, following steps may be considered:

- Selection of community and study of the issues of the community;
- Selection of young volunteers from community;
- Sensitization of volunteers about the issues;
- Forming groups of volunteers and assigning the responsibilities, as given below:
  - A group to meet with the local representatives of political parties and invite them for the forum;
  - A group to make logistic arrangements for public forum such as venue, instruments like sound system, cameras, food/refreshment for participants, etc. The group also takes care of the security arrangements of the venue including informing the concerned government security officials in this regard;
  - A group to interact/meet with the community and convince them to come to the forum.
- Secure/raise funds from all available legal sources such as personal donations, contributions from the friends and volunteers, financial support from the traders and donors;
- Develop a list of political parties' representatives in the community;
- Develop information, education and communication material such as posters and banners regarding the forum;
- Develop a set of questions which may be asked from the representatives of political parties during the forum;
- Prepare an invitation letter and agenda/schedule/programme for the forum and send the same to representatives of the political parties in the area;
- Confirm and reconfirm the guests and participants;

- Invite an eminent personality from the community as a moderator of the forum;
- Invite media personnel, CBOs, CSOs representatives and any other concerned persons;
- Invite media for coverage of the forum;
- Document (through audio-video and print) the proceedings of the forum and share the same with the stakeholders.

#### d. CNIC Registration

Election Commission of Pakistan has made it mandatory for voters to hold Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) to cast their vote. National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) issues CNIC through following service points/outlets:

- Headquarter Islamabad (HQ)
- Regional Headquarters (RHQ) in Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur, Multan, Lahore, Sargodha, Peshawar and Islamabad
- District Registration Offices (DRO)
- NADRA Swift Registration Centre (NSRC)
- Sub DRO (SDRO)
- Satellite Swift Registration Centre (SSRC)
- Mobile Van Registration Centre (MVRC)

While organizing a campaign or drive for CNIC, following steps must be followed:

- Identification and selection of a community with big number of residents without CNICs;
- Collection of funds for the drive;
- Collection of information about the nearest NADRA office such as District Registration Office (DRO), NADRA Swift Registration Centre (NSRC), Satellite Swift Registration (SSRC) and (schedule of) Mobile Van Registration Centre (MVRC);
- Forming groups of volunteers to make arrangements and logistic support;
- Prepare the list of Estimated male/female without CNIC in the community through volunteers;
- Request for inclusion of the community in the schedule of MRV;
- Collection of information about the documents required for the CNIC;
- Announcements about the schedule of MRV through loudspeakers – volunteers to undertake the task;
- Volunteers to inform the community about documents required for CNIC before arrival of the MRV;
- Arrange attesting authority, i.e. an officer of grade 16 or above having authority to attest the documents at the location for full day to attest the registration forms;
- Arrangements for the camp such as convenient sitting arrangements, shelter, refreshments, stationery etc.



### e. Voter Registration Campaign

To have an effective and meaningful campaign on sensitization of youth, following steps/processes are important:

- Identify areas with low turnout, high number of unregistered eligible young voters. The target area can be a campus of a university or college, a slum, or a marginalized community;
- Get all information about the voters' registration process;
- Familiarize yourself with the communities of selected areas via:
  - door to door canvassing;
  - making phone calls;
  - text messages;
  - Setting stalls with relevant posters, banner, pamphlets, leaflets, brochures. If financially viable, documentaries and songs may be played at the stall to engage the youth;
  - Where the facility of internet is available, online tools like *facebook*, *YouTube*, *twitter*, *MySpace* may be used to engage youth;
  - Messages, documentaries, and live programmes on FM radio, if local FM radio is available.
- Collection of funds for the campaign;
- Schedule meetings with student leaders in different campuses and work with them to recruit student volunteers for campus voter registration efforts;
- Distribute the voter registration forms in events and areas of the target locations where the young people are found;
- Map out a calendar of selected campus events;
- Work with the campus administration to ensure that voter registration forms are widely distributed in the campus;
- Work with the campus administration to ascertain if a digital copy of the student directory can be purchased for data entry purposes;
- Interact with the young people and educate them about the importance of their vote to ensure desirable changes in the society;
- Inform them about the voter registration process. Since, vote can be registered through registrar office only, therefore, guide them about the location of the office, and orientate them about procedure to be registered.



## 2. Post Election Schedule Announcement

### a. Engaging Volunteers' Groups

Young people can play a very positive role in ensuring peaceful electoral process, monitoring, and observation of compliance of code of conduct of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Young volunteers can be a great support not only for sensitizing the people about the importance of elections, but also for bringing people out for the vote. In every community, volunteer groups can be found who are engaged in betterment of the community in different ways. However, volunteer groups can be formed for following activities after the announcement of election schedule:

#### i. **Volunteer group for organizing stalls and camps for voters' education**

This group should be equipped with all relevant information about importance of vote and process of vote. The groups should have sufficient Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material such as banners, posters, leaflets, pamphlets, brochures regarding voters' education. The group should have sufficient funds to run the expenditures of the stall or camp.

#### ii. **Volunteer group for monitoring and observation of violation of election laws and code of conduct**

This group must have good knowledge of code of conduct of the ECP during elections. The group should have learnt this knowledge and skills through the training process on how to do the observation and subsequent reporting to authorities in case of violations of code of conduct.

#### iii. **Volunteer group to support peaceful conduct of the elections**

This volunteer group can help reduce political rivalries and conflicts through engaging all political parties and election candidates on public forums and seek specific commitments for the betterment of the community.

### b. Organizing Public Forum with the Candidates

A public forum with candidates contesting election to assemblies on social issues of the community can help understand the issues of the community and to include issues sought in the public forum to future agendas and manifestoes of the candidate(s). While organizing a forum, following step may be considered:

- Selection of community and study of the issues of the community;
- Selection of young volunteers from community;
- Sensitization of volunteers about the issues;

- Forming groups of volunteers and assigning them responsibilities, as given below:
  - A group to meet with the local representatives of political parties and invite them for the forum;
  - A group to make logistic arrangements such as venue, instrument like sound system, cameras, food/refreshment for participants, etc. The group also takes care of the security arrangements of the venue including informing the concerned government security officials in this regard;
  - A group to interact/meet with the community and convince them to come to the forum;
- Secure/raise funds from all available legal sources such as personal donations, contributions from the friends and volunteers, financial support from the traders and donors;
- Get hold of list of candidates contesting elections from the area, which the community belongs to;
- Develop information, education and communication material such as posters and banners regarding the forum;
- Develop a set of questions which may be asked from the representatives of political parties during the forum;
- Prepare an invitation letter and agenda/schedule/programme for the forum and send the same to candidates;
- Confirm and reconfirm the guests and participants;
- Invite an eminent personality from the community as a moderator of the forum;
- Invite media personnel, CBOs, CSOs representatives and any other concerned persons
- Invite media for coverage of the forum;
- Document (through audio-video and print) the proceedings of the forum and share the same with the stakeholders.

### **c. Campaign to increase Voters' Turnout**

In Pakistan, voters' turnout has been an issue of prime concern. A number of efforts have been made in the past to increase the voters' turnout during the elections. Nevertheless, youth can play a pivotal role in increasing the voters' turnout. Youth can be engaged in following ways to increase the turnout.

- Identify areas with low turnout, high number of unregistered eligible young voters;
- Identify young volunteers from the community and form the groups;
- Secure/collect funds for the purpose of campaign;

- Prepare Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material such as leaflets and brochures;
- Assign the areas and localities to volunteers' groups who will pay door to door visits to sensitize the people about importance of vote;
- Organize stalls with the help of volunteers to distribute posters, banners, pamphlets, leaflets, and brochures about importance of casting vote. If financially viable, documentaries and songs may be played at the stall to engage the youth;
- Registration forms may be get filled by the people who make commitment to cast vote;
- Send text messages to the voters in the community about casting their votes;
- Where the facility of Internet is available, online tools like *facebook*, *YouTube*, *twitter*, *MySpace* may be used to engage youth;
- Messages, documentaries, and live programmes on FM radio, if local FM radio is available;
- Organize corner meetings and awareness walks in collaboration with the local Election Commission office, CSOs and CBOs.

### 3. The Election Day

Youth can be a great support in the conduct of peaceful, free, and fair elections. On Election Day, youth can help in many ways. Below are a few of the activities in which youth may be engaged on the Election Day:

- Reaching out to voters via phone calls, text messages or meeting them in person;
- Reminding the voters about importance of casting their vote on the Election Day to ensure their desirable social and political changes;
- Persuade the voters to visit the polling station to cast their vote;
- If legally allowed, provide conveyance services for the voters, particularly women and aged people, to reach to and comeback from the polling station;
- Reminding the voters to bring their CNICs for casting their vote;
- Help the voters in searching their name in the voters' list (electoral roll);
- Guide the voters on how to mark on the ballot and to drop in the required box;
- Serve as polling agents/staff or observer if allowed by authorities;
- Observe the compliance and violations of conduct.

#### 4. Post Election

After the elections, the youth can be educated about post-election disputes through role-play and orientation workshops.

Furthermore, youth can follow up with the winning candidates about fulfillment of their commitments. This can be done through:

- Letters sending to the elected representatives on behalf of communities;
- Groups' visits to the elected representatives;
- Publicizing the commitments;
- Holding public forums with the elected representatives and remind them about their commitments.