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## Electoral Support Project (ESP)

Final Report  
on

# **Assessment of Civic and Voter Education during the Electoral Process in Nepal**

Submitted by

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December 2012

Funded by





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## Electoral Support Project (ESP)

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## **Executive Summary**

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The Electoral Support Project (ESP) contributes successfully to supporting the development of the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) since the 2008 Constituent Assembly Elections. Formally, the ESP started in 2009, strengthening the institutional development and building on the capacity of the ECN. Furthermore, the ESP enhances and further consolidates the institutional and professional capacities of the ECN.

Among its activities, the ESP supports the ECN's Public Outreach and Voter Information/Education program. The ESP helped to build and open the Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC), which become the official ECN Department of Civic and Voter Education. Moreover, the ESP needs to support the EEIC with strategic planning efforts. The main challenge is not to explain how to vote to the electorate, but rather to motivate it on why to vote. Indeed, the EEIC could a catalyst to re-motivate a frustrated electorate.

In so doing, the EEIC has to become more democratic and more accessible to the public. It must also be sufficiently resourced in terms of personnel and financial capability- to adequately address operational requirements for sustainable civic education. Strengthening interaction with Civil Society Organizations (CSO), political parties and other Nepali stakeholders in the field, is particularly important. The ESP needs to focus more in capacity development for EEIC officers and ECN officers at the national level.

In light of the expected challenges regarding the potential Constituent Assembly Elections in 2013<sup>1</sup>, UNDP-ESP should continue to assist the EEIC in structuring, unifying, harmonizing, emphasizing and archiving civic-voter education campaigns and to design a public outreach-external relations strategy. Significant improvements have been made in the conduct of voter education during the voter registration period. Nevertheless, some improvements are still necessary to motivate the remaining millions of Nepali to register. The ECN-EEIC should be more proactive in educating the electorate about their rights and duties, working in close collaboration with all political parties. Whereas the ECN maintains a good reputation of professionalism in Nepal, the ECN-EEIC should develop a dynamic public outreach-external relation strategy to keep the public and the political parties motivated to vote and to garner greater confidence in the electoral process.

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **Background**

On May 27, 2012, Nepal's Constituent Assembly was dissolved as it had failed to produce a new Constitution within the specified deadline. In response, the government announced that a new election would be held on November 22, 2012. At the time of this assessment, the Nepali Government has not been able to organize these elections according to its schedule, leaving the country in a political vacuum, which creates voter disappointment and lack of motivation among the population. The political parties still need to find a political consensus and decide on an exact date to organize the next elections. If political consensus is achieved and the framework for the first post-conflict general elections is in place, the next election, supposed to be for the Constituent Assembly could possibly take place six months later -in mid-May 2013. At the time of the assessment, the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was being considered by the ECN.

The assessment of the ECN Voter and Civic Education program took place in November 2012, that is to say, a year before the end of the Strategic Plan (SP). Despite the fact that the national ESP counterparts were not available, the evaluation period overlapped with the celebration of major festivals<sup>2</sup>, the ongoing DTOT and BRIDGE training of electoral staff, and with the period of

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<sup>1</sup> 2070 in Nepal.

<sup>2</sup> Tihar-Desain-Diwali.

examination leave for ECN-EEIC public servants.

The civic and voter education assessment covers the period since 2010<sup>3</sup>, focusing on progress and challenges to date, with a view to extending an adjusted version of the EEIC with some recommended changes.

## **Methodology**

The assessment relied on consultations and information obtained from ECN Commissioners, donor representatives and ESP advisors<sup>4</sup>. The stakeholder interviews included EEIC staff members, ESP staff, ECN Chairman, Commissioners, ECN Secretary, Joint Secretaries, Section Heads and staff, District Election Officers, donors, civil society groups, and other electoral stakeholders from organizations such as The Carter Center (TCC), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE).

The evaluation<sup>5</sup> is based on a review of the strategic plan, annual reports (2009-2010-2011), weekly reports, workshop reports and ECN decisions, ESP technical reports<sup>6</sup> and all the civic/voter education, public outreach materials (leaflets, brochures, audio/video materials) designed and disseminated from 2010 till 2012. Internal working documents and reports produced during the course of implementation, such as training materials, training needs assessment, and reports on programmatic activities such as gender mapping report, geographic information system concept, electoral dispute resolution reports, voter registration planning documents, implementation and assessment reports, relevant letters and memos between the ESP and ECN, and coordination and quarterly meeting minutes and power points were also reviewed. In addition, publicly available information such as reports from independent observers, including reports from media, international and national observer groups have been reviewed.

Although ECN's archives and institutional memory are not entirely satisfactory, utmost efforts were made to fill this gap through interaction with key officials. The interaction with field level offices was confined to the surroundings of the capital; it was therefore not possible to obtain primary information to assess the impact of the interventions made towards achievement of the targets at the local level. This gap was, however, filled by the findings of national level meetings shared with stakeholders, including District Electoral Officers, during the DTOT Training and the BRIDGE training<sup>7</sup> that was organized on 23 November-4 December 2012. In order to do a mapping of all the civic and voter education activities, a questionnaire was sent to the 75 District Electoral Officers (DEO) to evaluate and improve the ECN civic and voter education campaign.

Since the ECN-EEIC do not have a specific strategic plan on civic and voter education, it was not possible to make any comparison of progress made since the strategic plan was implemented. Therefore, the evaluation is largely based on achieved outputs rather than input-output analysis. This assessment compiles some recommendations for the implementation of civic/voter education, and public outreach activities. Some strategic guidance for the ECN to devise civic/voter education targeting socially excluded and various marginalized groups in the electoral process have been included with some technical support to the ECN on voters' awareness assessment and impact assessment studies/surveys. Technical advice and assistance to ECN's Civic and Voter Education section is also suggested on formulating and implementing comprehensive civic/voter education, public information, and external relations strategies including rationale, budget and other required

<sup>3</sup> Date of the beginning of the voter registration.

<sup>4</sup> The list of the persons interviewed is attached in Annex 2.

<sup>5</sup> Terms of Reference of the position is attached in Annex 1.

<sup>6</sup> The list of documents reviewed is attached in Annex 3.

<sup>7</sup> The list of participants who attended the BRIDGE training is attached in Annex 4.

resources, and delegation of responsibilities for the Constituent Assembly Elections 2013.

At the end of the mission, a civic/voter education workshop with a power-point presentation on the outputs of this assessment has been designed for all EEIC-ECN staff members.

On the External Relations aspect, some strategic guidance to the ECN and EEIC has been decided for the next mission, in the development of a media and communication strategy, in formulating an official external relations program as a means to effectively communicate key messages to the widest possible number of electoral stakeholders.

## **I. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CIVIC-VOTER EDUCATION**

### **A- Overview of the Strategic Plan (2009-2013)**

The ECN/UNDP Strategy Paper on “Enhancing Public Participation and Understanding of the Electoral Process in Nepal” points out that the public needs to be more fully engaged through direct outreach activities. The 2009 Strategic Plan suggested that a comprehensive and inclusive Voter Education and outreach strategy and methodology was required to improve on past performance during the upcoming election.

In order to achieve its long-term vision, the ECN set out a five-year Strategic Plan (SP) with an aim to “increase voter’s awareness”<sup>8</sup>. The SP requires that “the stakeholders’ participation will be based on the principle of inclusion. Accordingly women, indigenous groups, groups from backward areas, Dalits, Madheshi communities and other groups and communities as defined in the Interim Constitution will have their participation.”<sup>9</sup>

The SP established three targets leading to improved voter awareness for the period 2009-2013.<sup>10</sup>

The first target is to address civic education programming as a regular program (and not just during the election process) and reach out to over 95% of the voters. There is a general consensus within the ECN that voter education should be a key activity within the electoral process and that it should be launched on a regular basis in different languages spoken in various regions of the country. This target requires survey-monitoring throughout the country to see if 95% of the voters have been reached. All means and venues are to be used to educate voters during the voter registration drive; they included radio jingles, posters and pamphlet, poem competition, TV program and drama.

As second target, voter education programs should be conducted in 17 different languages and sign language. During CA Elections posters were produced in 17 different languages to educate people on the voter registration process. No program was developed in sign language.

The third target is to increase voter participation to above 66 percent during the elections. In order to achieve a two-thirds voters’ turnout<sup>11</sup>, planned activities have to be implemented before the elections.

Interestingly, many of the challenges mentioned in the SP in 2009 are among those the ECN is still facing today, for example:

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter 5.3 of the SP.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 4 of the SP.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 6.3 of the SP.

<sup>11</sup> Approximately nine out of twelve million voters.

- State Restructuring and Inclusion. The adoption of a federal system was decided, where all classes, communities, and people from geographically backward areas will have proportional access to resource-distribution and policymaking.
- Retention of Human Resources and Capacity Building. The absence of a dedicated electoral staff results in a high turnover of personnel. The Commission is dependent on personnel provided by the Government. Frequent personnel transfer jeopardizes the efforts to build capacity and to form and develop a long-term election-oriented staff.
- Political culture has a significant role in advancing the institutional development of democratic values and principles. However, unhealthy competition among political parties during election periods is quite challenging for the Election Management Body.
- Voter Disappointment. Public opinion expressed in a fearless atmosphere is the foundation of democratic governance. In case the political parties or candidates cannot live up to the expectations of the voters to bring stability, peace and development in the country then this could discourage the voters from exercising their voting rights. Voter disenchantment could be a significant setback in the overall electoral process.

#### **B- Overview of the ECN Civic-Voter Education Program 2010-2012**

The ECN developed a framework for the conduct and implementation of electoral education throughout Nepal and raised public awareness on all aspects of electoral processes by mobilizing voter education officers to disseminate information and materials during the registration process. In so doing, the ECN faced new challenges, such as educating an electorate on new aspects of the electoral model.

Since 2010, the ECN is conducting a nationwide voter registration exercise to create a new computerized voter register. The requirement for the implementation of a new voter education campaign was driven by widespread concern over the Citizen Certificate and marginalized groups, as well as the need to restructure and unify the voter education campaign; informing the population about the reform of the voter registry and the new voter identification system.

Enumerators and District Electoral Officers (DEO) were the main actors of the voter education campaign. Due to equipment and staff restrictions the “mobile registration centers” were unable to operate simultaneously. According to IFES; the ECN failed to provide sufficient information regarding the location of the “mobile registration centers” to the citizens.

Voter education and awareness has been conducted throughout the registration period through pamphlets, posters, public service announcements (TV & Radio), mock elections, loud speaker, community meetings and the enumeration process. In rural and remote areas the use of FM radio and enumeration proved to be the most successful method.

The assessment of the voter education campaign conducted by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in 2011, indicated a lack of campaign, and recommended the reinforcement of the civic education campaign throughout Nepal. According to The Carter Center (TCC) and IFES, significant improvement in the voter education campaign is required, particularly in the areas of continuous voter registration and out-of-district registration. In the Missed Voter Registration (MVR) process conducted in municipality wards and Village Developed Communities (VDCs), a strong voter education and awareness campaign is still crucial at this phase of registration, which is no longer supported by enumeration.

According to UNDP experts,<sup>12</sup> many voters become aware of the availability of these processes through word of mouth rather than the ECN awareness mechanisms. This requirement becomes particularly relevant as new locations are made available for registration (DAO, ward offices) and the missed voter process is phased through ward and VDC locations.

A small survey made by ESP expert with District Electoral Officers from Pokhara, Kathmandu and Taplejung indicates that the voter-education program requirements and processes are well understood by field staff and most staff understood their role and function. The overall comprehension of the program within ECN including planning and implementation of the voter education campaign has increased significantly since the commencement of the project and the level of ECN ownership has continued to develop.

The survey also demonstrates that the basic information to eligible voters on voter registration, such as information regarding the new voter registration with photographs and fingerprints, dates, time and place of registration and the documents needed for the registration has been well provided by the enumerators to the voters of their respective districts.

The voter education program was delivered in all 75 districts, reportedly without any major obstruction or incidents. Notwithstanding the scale of these efforts the level of awareness remained insufficient, as ECN still didn't reach the 95% of the potential voters. According to IFES<sup>13</sup> voter education has apparently consisted exclusively of door-to-door canvassing. This has indeed been effective in terms of awareness, but entails a risk of inconsistency of messages as different enumerators may prioritize differently. The enumerators could have worked longer as voter educators. Moreover, in a country with the geographic challenges of Nepal, a standardized process should be adopted to ensure that the elderly, disabled, or otherwise physically disadvantaged voters are identified and are not disenfranchised from the electoral and national identity systems.

### **1) The Role of the Enumerators**

The ECN directives for the voter registration exercise clearly indicate that the ECN Enumerators will bear primary responsibility for voter education at local level to "carry the campaign on VE in the areas of their responsibility through a door-to-door campaign and distributing the leaflet and the brochure of the ECN VR; carry out face-to-face programs with voters on the occasion of temporary markets, ritual events and local fairs; visit the teachers and students at their local campus, high school etc.; paste the posters in public places, such as intersections, main roads, cinema halls etc."<sup>14</sup>

The Enumerator<sup>15</sup> is responsible for conducting voter education for their communities. Enumerators report to their Registration Place Manager who coordinate their daily activities and create the Action Plan to enumerate their community. There were local support and coordination committee at VED and registration center level. Those committees were responsible to organize the street drama, rally, community meetings.

Beginning three days before the start of Voter Registration, Enumerators went from door to door to collect the details of Nepali citizens aged 16 and above using the Enumeration Forms approved by the Election Commission. The completed forms were delivered at the end of every day to the Registration Place Manager to be used to verify voters' data during registration. In each district, school teachers performed a house to house enumeration. Enumerators worked six days per week until they completed their task – returning to houses that are missed to ensure that everyone is enumerated within 25 days.

<sup>12</sup> UNDP Report on Voter Registration, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> IFES report voter registration, April 2010.

<sup>14</sup> The function, duty and rights of the Voter Education Volunteers, VR Directives.

<sup>15</sup> From the Enumerators' Handbook designed by IFES.



Enumerators are trained at the district level and received a handbook/manual. Cascade training was conducted by the ECN according to the training handbook/ lesson templates designing by IFES<sup>16</sup>. The training for trainers at national, regional and district level lasted for two days. Enumerator training sessions were meant to last for two days at the municipal phase and one day at the VDC level. Despite DEO, ESP and IFES objections, the training for enumerators was cut from two days to just one day –in order to reduce costs- and lesson plans/contents had to be radically revised. Overall, sessions were relatively participative.

The Voter Education campaign of the Enumerators began five days before the start of Enumeration. Enumerators conducted a local voter education campaign in the designated communities. The enumerators had an important voter education role by delivering key messages to their community and mobilizing all eligible citizens to participate in the Enumeration and Voter Education Program. When providing voter information, Enumerators are required to encourage everyone to register – especially youth, women, minorities and those with disabilities and inform their respective Registration Manager of any difficulties or questions that they are unable to answer. Each registrant receives a receipt telling them when to show up at the registration centre for capture of fingerprints and photos. Enumeration worked well as voter awareness. Also, the LSCC (Local Support and Coordination Committee) members were tasked with providing voter information support at district and VDC/registration center level and had a small budget for this. This door-to-door canvassing proved its worth and may be kept as an element for voter education but should be combined with other measures.

The length of employment of enumerators depended on the number of voters expected at the registration centre. There were two preparatory days for local voter education (generally miking), and enumerators were assigned a number of days equivalent to enumerating 35 people per day. There were up to 16 enumerators per registration centre and up to 7,280 expected voters per centre. In practice, outside densely populated urban areas this target was generally not achieved. In some cases enumerators also appeared to be working later in 2011 in registration centers, enumerating those missed earlier. There has been no door-to-door enumeration of voters since July 2011.

After a two-week pilot program with nine enumerators, a national voter education program was implemented throughout four phases in the field.

- a) Phase 1: From 15 September to 16 November 2010, 58 municipalities; 3,092 Enumerators.
- b) Phase 2: From 6 October 2010 to 12 February 2011, 56 districts; 42,366 Enumerators.
- c) Phase 3: From 13 February to 30 November 2011, 42,366 Enumerators in 19 districts; 3,906 VDCs.
- d) Phase 4: From 14 April 2012 to 30 June 2012: all VDC and Municipalities wards, 4,721 enumerators (3,915 VDC Secretary and 806 Municipalities wards).

For the major field data collection drive between September 2010 and July 2011, door-to-door enumeration was carried out to identify, inform and document all eligible voters within the household, entitled to register at the local registration center. Data was also gathered on other members of the household who could be potential registrants –Nepali citizens without a Citizenship Certificate, or who moved within the country or are not in the country. Any person aged 16 or above, possessing a Nepali Citizenship Certificate is eligible to register. However, only individuals who are aged 18 and above on election day will be eligible to vote and included on the voters' list. Voters complete an enumeration form when they arrive at the Registration Centers in their wards with the Enumeration

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<sup>16</sup> IFES has been providing technical assistance to the reform process through its project -Nepal: Building Electoral Capacity, Promoting Electoral Legal Reform, funded by Norway.

receipt and their Citizenship Certificate. If their permanent address was different from the one indicated on the Citizenship Certificate, then the Nepali citizen had to bring also a document related to his or her change of residence (Migration Certificate, any other document proving the actual residency like Marriage Certificate or electricity and water bills)..

As mentioned above, the work of the enumerators ceased in 2011, there is therefore nobody presently encouraging the population to register. The process now relies on mass advertising and local community personal contact to get people to attend registration places. According to IFES, there was a poor fit between the ECN's information campaign for VR and the VR methodology.

## 2) The Role of District Electoral Officers (DEO)

Since August 2012, the 75 District Electoral Officers (DEO) bear primary responsibility in promoting voter education.

In order to raise awareness for the Enumeration campaign, each DEO received a small budget<sup>17</sup> to organize: Awareness Rallies, Community Meetings, Street Drama, Cultural Awareness Shows and other events. The DEOs' also employed FM Radio, newspapers, Interaction meetings with Political parties, NGOs and the media to get their message across.

The ECN neither monitored, nor kept a record of the number and type of activities undertaken in each district. Plans and budgets were allocated to each district, but a thorough mapping exercise should have been carried out to know exactly the breakdown of public outreach techniques employed in each district.

The ECN conducted a one-day training for DEOs on the claims and objections process, and the DEOs in turn trained ANROs. DEOs reported to Carter Center observers that they found the training useful. However, some of the training sessions took place before training materials were approved and published, and one-third of the ANROs said that the training they received to do their job was not long enough. These shortcomings contributed to some of the confusion and problems regarding the display, claims and objections process.

The DEO Voter Education activities were as follows:

Poster, pamphlets, brochure production and distribution at district level	<u>Production and distribution as follows:</u> Posters - 10 sets to each VDC having at least one set at each registration centre. Leaflets – on the basis of number of voters in the district Brochures – 500 copies to each district.
Jingle production, Programs produced and broadcast from Radio Nepal and Television	Coordinate with concerned agency of respective areas to produce jingle in different languages. For television and radio, act according to the decision taken on the proposal submitted to the Commission and coordinate with the concerned agency for this purpose.
Public notice announcement at the national level in newspapers	Made an agreement after receiving rate (cost) from the concerned agency.
Interaction (Central Level)	Conduct consultations/discussions, inviting various parties and stakeholders.
Information dissemination through local newspapers and FM radios	Make an arrangement for publication and dissemination having taken decision at the meeting of District Support Coordination Committee with the presence of the representative/s of FNJ (Federation of Nepali Journalists) district chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Around 100 US Dollars per month.

Interaction meetings (District Level)	Inform about the program by inviting various district-level stakeholders.
Jingle broadcasting, leaflet distribution at district offices, putting stall at tourism fair, leaflet distribution at local fair/ market	Manage to display all materials relating to elections at the stall in the fair within the prescribed budget and in collaboration with local FM radio/s.
Interaction meetings (Local level)	Inform about the program by inviting local stakeholders.
Leaflets distribution at local fair/ market	Conduct/act in coordination with District Election Office.
Voters' education program at schools/colleges	Coordinate with school/college and train the teachers/lecturers of schools/colleges on the respective subject matters/issues by District Election Office.
Conduct interaction, rally, miking, street drama, cultural program etc. as well as distribute leaflets, posters – door to door, banner writing	Design the program taking local needs and culture into consideration.
Conduct essay competition	Make a public announcement on the newspapers providing certain topics and arrange for prize to winners

The LSCCs were responsible for much of the planned street drama and community meetings (with a budget of around NPR 4,000 each). The DAOs also played a voter education role given their responsibility to issue Citizenship Certificates, which is a far more fundamental document for individuals than voter registration as such. When a person comes to get her/his Citizenship Certificate at the DAO s/he can be pressured to register immediately afterwards, for example by not giving out the plastic sleeve for the Citizenship Certificate until the person has registered. To use the CVR facilities at a DEO a person has to travel there specifically for the purpose of registering to vote.

### 3) Trainings of the ECN Electoral Education Human Resources

The trainings of the ECN Electoral Education human resources took place in three phases. First at the National level, the Master Training of Trainers (MTotT) was carried out in Kathmandu over five days in August 2012. The training was organized by 19 ECN officers, IFES officer and members of the Department of Education to 25 people representing non-governmental sector, professional institutions and civil society organizations involved in Voter Education. The Training of Trainers (ToT) at the regional level took place in 10 locations in Eastern, Western Mid- Western, Far- Western, and Central Region in September 2012, organized by the DEO resource person of the Department of Education. A total of 225 participants were trained in five days. Finally, the District Training of Trainers took place in November 2012. ECN-ESP-IFES made a very limited number of monitoring visits for the ToT program.

On another hand, the BRIDGE Training the Facilitators (TtF) program took place towards the end of November 2012 for ten days. It was a very intensive, engaging and interactive workshop. As part of the overarching goal to acquire facilitation skills, 21 participants learnt how to design curricula, use and customize BRIDGE modules to fit local contexts and specific needs. BRIDGE methodology relied on a practical approach where the participants learnt from experiencing facilitation as well as seeing other fellow participants facilitate. The trainees could put the newly acquired knowledge directly into practice by making their own action plans for their organizations on how they could incorporate BRIDGE training and by identifying modules important in their working areas. The training was facilitated by an international BRIDGE expert along with Nepali accredited facilitators.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See in Annex 4 the number of DEO who attended the BRIDGE training.

### **C- ECN Public Outreach Campaign in Mass Media<sup>19</sup>**

The Voter Education campaign for the registration process was carried out at multiple levels (at national, district and local levels) and employing multimedia and other approaches. The use of mass media, newspapers, radio and TV was predominant at the national and to a lesser degree district level. The ECN has been communicating to stakeholders about the registration process through different media and practice. The print media like public notice, pamphlets, leaflets, stickers and posters remained common communication media followed by electronic broadcastings like PSA, jingles and radio broadcasting.

The ECN asked all the media operating in Nepal to support the ECN's voter education efforts and to help in disseminating the pieces of information regarding the registration process. Some CSO representatives in districts such as Ilam, Dhankuta, and Kalikot, interviewed by The Carter Center, noted they were satisfied with ECN public outreach efforts. Moreover, according to one Ward Citizen Forum representative in Tanahu, there was insufficient voter education. For example, he said there was no miking and only some general radio announcements without information for specific VDCs. In a VDC in Bara, interviews with citizens and VDC staff revealed that there was a very low level of awareness about the ongoing processes; no citizens interviewed said they had been reached by voter education efforts.

Interviews with 215 new registrants revealed that 60% heard of MVR through word of mouth, while 24% learned of it from VDC and ward officials, police, teachers and other government employees. Radio advertisements were cited by 7 % interviewed, miking by 6%, political parties by four percent, TV and newspapers by one percent, and posters by no interviewees. The primary means of education funded by the ECN (radio, miking, mobilization of parties, TV, newspapers and posters) had limited direct reach on those who participated in MVR, but may have had higher secondary impact by reaching those who spread the word to others.

Interestingly, according to an IFES survey, 66% of surveyed households were aware of the registration process, whereas 34% said they were not. Whilst Enumerators are by far the most cited source of information for the registration process, radio and information through miking and posters are other mass distribution sources mentioned by a significant percentage of those aware of the registration process. Quite positively, 67% of those who said they were aware of the registration prior to enumeration mentioned that the information provided them with all the details they needed.

However, The Carter Center<sup>20</sup>, notes that a significant number of eligible voters (potentially between approximately –one to four million people) are still likely to be unregistered and recommends that the ECN consider another round of voter education regarding the registration prior to the next elections, time permitting.

Civil society interviewees suggested the ECN consider including more visual content in voter education materials, increasing the quality of the materials, tailoring the materials to each voter registration phase, making voter education efforts more targeted to specific audiences, and recommended that the ECN consider holding more interaction programs.

### **D- The Election Education Information Centre (EEIC)**

As part of the ECN's five-year Strategic Plan and given the high importance placed on sustainable professional capacities, information dissemination, voter education, outreach, research and

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed overview of the ECN's public outreach campaign in the media and recommendations for greater effectiveness, please refer to Annex 5.

<sup>20</sup> The Carter Center's Fourth Interim Statement on the ECN's Voter Register with Photograph Program, July 2012; Carter Center observers have gathered information about the registration process from 58 of Nepal's 75 districts since March 2010.

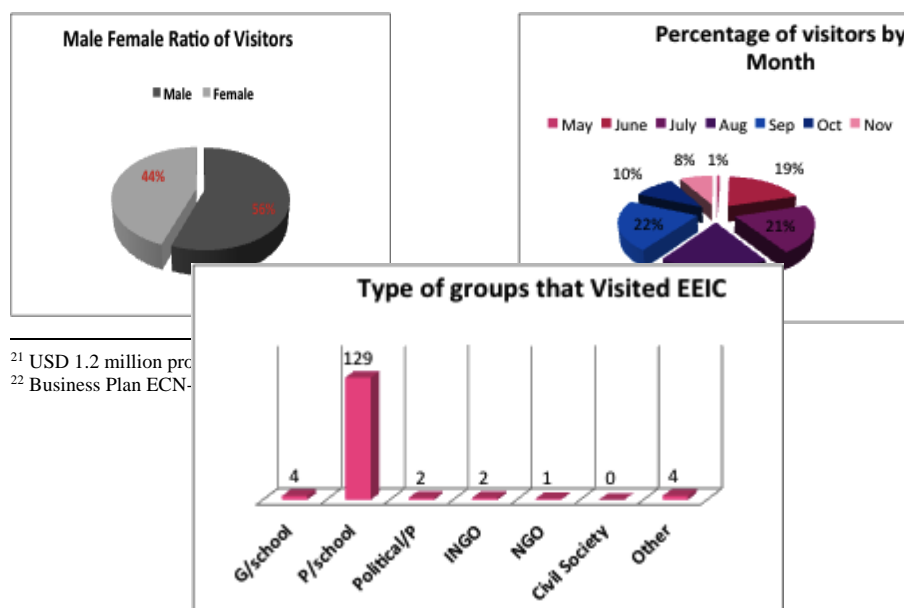
development, the ECN strove to establish the Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC). The EEIC was funded by AuSAID<sup>21</sup> and UNDP, and implemented by UNDP Nepal's Electoral Support Project on behalf of the ECN.

The EEIC, which was inaugurated on 24 May 2012, became the official ECN Department of civic and voter education programs. Its objective is to provide information to the general public about democratic, electoral education and help in the institutional development of democracy through free, fair and credible elections. Indeed, its strategic goal<sup>22</sup> is to increase knowledge and promote values that encourage the people of Nepal to become active citizens in a democratic society. In so doing, its primary targets are: Schools and Colleges, Women groups, Political parties, Minority Groups, ECN, Students and other Stakeholders.

The EEIC is well equipped with several very interesting facilities. There is an Election Museum where materials related to Democracy and Elections are stored. An Amphitheatre where a 20 minute documentary film is projected covering the history of democracy in Nepal, federalism, government, good governance, the electoral system, procedures and process. An Interactive Room is also available, providing information and education on subjective and objectives aspects of democracy, elections and good governance. At the end of the visit the participants have to answer a very complete questionnaire on Democracy and Election; Rights and duties of citizens; Electoral process and polling procedure; Political parties and procedures; Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the context of election. In addition, there is a Polling Room where visitors are able to participate in a mock polling through the use of ballot papers and an electronic voting machine. There is also a Training Hall, allowing for the conduct of the numerous ECN trainings.

Finally, the Library and Research Centre stores books on election, political parties, civil and political rights, gender and politics, international relations, conflict resolution, law and legal procedures, public administration, economics, etc. So far, the Library has cataloged over 2,000 printed and electronic materials. Approximately 330 visitors visited the library in the six months after its inauguration. Additionally, the Library performed three promotional outreach activities: participation in a book fair and exhibition program, the EEIC library orientation and interaction program at Tribhuvan University Central Library and at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology. The Library is facing some governmental procedure hindering its proper management to manage books of old library, book collection and disposal policy.

Since its opening, the EEIC has developed partnerships with different stakeholders. In 2012 the EEIC organized interactive programs such as roundtables discussions with political parties, the media, CSOs and the ECN. Six months after its opening, around 6,000 persons visited the EEIC from 158 different groups.



<sup>21</sup> USD 1.2 million pro  
<sup>22</sup> Business Plan ECN-

### **E- Voter Education by Civil Society Organizations (CSO)**

In addition to the ECN, a voter education campaign was delivered by Civil Society Organizations (CSO), NGOs, and sometimes by political parties.

As noted in the Strategy Paper, “NGOs and CSOs are better positioned for further analysis at the local level, and identify the specific challenges and opportunities in reaching out to each audience. NGOs should then define the most appropriate approaches”.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the ECN decided to train representatives from NGOs and CSOs to disseminate specific messages during the voter registration process throughout their organizations and networks.

One of the ECN’s international partners, IFES, had funds specifically allocated for CSOs, so the ECN took advantage of this opportunity and had IFES select NGOs and CSOs network to work in voter education. IFES sponsored Youth Initiative, an NGO working with youth in municipalities, the Dalit NGO Federation, working with Dalit in Terai, the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization working for Dalits in Far Western Nepal, and the Janaki Women awareness Society, working with women in Central and Eastern Nepal.

The selected NGOs and CSOs organized various activities: on-the-spot activities: (group meetings improvised in a public environment, for example walking through a local market and disseminating electoral information directly to people); face-to-face sessions in groups of 10 to 30 (one of the most participatory and effective direct outreach formats, adaptable to most audiences and potential venues); peer outreach (reaching an audience through peers that they can relate to, for example students with students) and roving outreach (through field visits and mobile teams, for example with loudspeakers and through home visits).

For the CSO Voter Education program, IFES had a rigorous monitoring program, involving regular visits from IFES staff, with up to 15 local level monitors, to cover the 25 districts the CSOs were working in. The monitors had all previously worked for the ECN on the registration process at the local level (as registration staff - often as computer operators) and knew its requirements, and had good relationships with local ECN staff. They were required to attend a specified percentage of the planned CSO events and report on their conduct/content/effectiveness back to IFES HQ. Any issues were followed up by IFES with the relevant CSO. The monitors' role later expanded to provide advice to local CSOs on improving their program delivery.

Although the ECN at the central level organized a ToT in voter education for the representatives of the selected NGOs and CSOs; the ECN did not participate directly in the training of CSOs for Voter Education. A day of interaction was organized by the ECN at district level (with IFES funding/content

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<sup>23</sup> ECN / UNDP Strategy Paper, 2009.

development support) and lower level for the members of Local Support and Coordination Committees for Voter Registration, which included some CSO representatives. These LSCCs had a very small budget for VE and the interaction was meant to orient them in the VR process. IFES tried to ensure that the relevant District Election Office staff participated in the training of CSO staff for their VE programs - generally on technical election/voter registration issues. This measure contributed to reinforce CSO/DEO links.

The European Union (EU) also has two CSO based VE programs in the Karnali zone (the far North West), through the Jagaran Nepal CSO, and nationally with NEOF (National Election Observation Committee) which organized numerous awareness building programs in the districts. They produced a significant amount of education materials, training manuals. In addition, the EU financed NEOF to make a mapping of all the electoral education in Nepal.

Five CSOs in 26 districts in the Terai and Far West carried out community meetings and the distribution of materials, focusing on Dalits, Kamaiya, and other disadvantaged communities, as well as women and youths through street theatre, household visits and locally-targeted radio PSAs in some of these districts.

### **1) Voter Education Targeted at Dalits**

According to The Carter Center, CSOs were visibly active in several locations such as in Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rupandehi and Surkhet districts. In Surkhet, a Dalit NGO (NEPSCON, Dalit NGO Federation) was coordinating actively with the DEO and conducting voter registration education in 30 VDCs with IFES funding. The group was present and assisting registration staff in Dasarathpur and Ghumkhahare VDCs.

According to IFES, voter education programs targeting Dalits, women, freed Kamaiyas, and youth were held in 342 VDCs in 25 districts and these programs reportedly assisted over 6,200 people to check their registration and almost 33,000 to register. Finally, the National Election Observation Committee (NEOC), which was accredited to observe the voter registration process, told The Carter Center that it had extended its observation efforts in order to observe the most recent phase of the voter registration process in 15 districts, mainly through its volunteer networks.

In order to reach the electorate in the remote area of Kailali, the ECN should work in close cooperation with the Dalit NGO NNDSWO that is well-established in Kailali.

### **2) Voter Education Targeted at Madhesi**

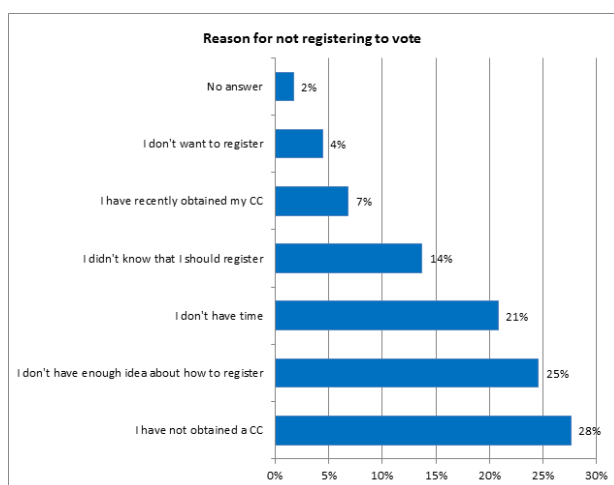
Madhesi community issues were addressed as an integral part of the project through CSO work such as VE to Madhesi Dalits, Muslim women, and Madhesi women as a whole. These specific activities like, home visits, Madhesi women group orientations, street drama were performed by the CSOs. Specific focus was given to the local language and context, CSOs performed their activities in Maitheli, Bhojpuri, Abadhi and Tharu languages. No specific program has been carried out so far by ECN for the Madhesi people.

### **3) Voter Education Targeted at Youth**

The results of the Enumeration and Registration Pilot Study in April 2010 conducted by the ECN showed that the groups who were least likely to register were the youth (16-25 years old). Therefore the ECN had to target these groups with specific voter education messages to encourage them to participate in the registration program. In order to support the "Voter Registration with Photograph program" since August 2011, the NGO Youth Initiative has been conducting, awareness-raising sessions at colleges on voter registration. Awareness of voter registration amongst youth at these sessions was lower than expected, and many of these youth had not registered to vote.

In the absence of any reliable current data on how many youths had registered to vote and the reasons for youths not registering, in early 2012 Youth Initiative proposed that IFES conduct a small survey at colleges in the Kathmandu Valley, to establish data on the voter registration status of young people attending college. The survey was conducted in July 2012.

The IFES-conducted survey for students in the Kathmandu Valley, asking those that had not registered (about 41% of those sampled) the reason why, produced the following results: Lack of motivation was the key reason for the 16-25 year age group to not have a Citizenship Certificate. Distance to office was a major reason in remote areas.



Respondents who had already obtained a Citizenship Certificate but had not registered in the Voter Register with Photograph were asked what their reason for not registering was. Information about the program had not reached over 53% of these students (19% did not know they should register to vote and 34% did not have enough information about registration). 29% percent stated they did not have the time to register, while a further 9% stated they had just obtained their CC and had not yet had time to register. Six percent stated that they did not intend to register to vote. This would indicate about 39% of the 41% of the sampled college students in the Kathmandu Valley who had not registered did not have sufficient information - stressing that this is a sample of one small sub-group in one small area of Nepal.

#### 4) Voter Education Targeted at Women

The Strategic Plan of ECN (2009-2013) has overlooked Gender and Social Inclusion aspects and hence no specific targets are set for Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI). Consequently, GESI commitments rely heavily on individual interest within the ECN. The frequent transfer of gender specialists within the institution impacts the GESI related vision/ agenda and activities of ECN.

The ECN invited the women's wing from "sister organizations" of political parties to share their voter registration activities, their upcoming plans and expectations from women's groups. The women from different political parties welcomed such an initiative and used the platform to raise their concerns regarding securing voting rights of women and citizenship issues of marginalized women and groups.

The ESP hired a Gender Officer in 2012, to advise the ECN. Voter registration figures show a positive trend in voter registration for women, now accounting for 51.22% among all persons



registered so far<sup>24</sup>. This rising figure among female voters could be attributed to the deliberate assignment of women officials in voter education, door-to-door enumeration and voter registration. GESI is increasingly integrated as an important cross-cutting issue in various ECN activities.

The Gender and Social Inclusion agenda was given space in the various regional review workshops and its outcomes were shared in the central review and planning workshop. As a result *The Godavari Declaration*<sup>25</sup> sufficiently highlighted GESI issues related to elections, the need to integrate GESI perspectives in all electoral process as well as the need for the ECN to adopt the GESI policy. The draft gender and social inclusion policy was finalized in consultation with various stakeholder groups (Civil Society and Political Parties) and ECN Commissioners approved the first draft. The policy now awaits official adoption by the Commission.

BRIDGE training on Gender took place in 2011 and 2012 in Kathmandu. Altogether 128 participants (ECN members, advocates from media, civil society, political party members, and CA members) have participated in exclusive Gender and Election training. BRIDGE training modules other than the Gender Module have also incorporated Gender and Social Inclusion elements as an important cross-cutting issue.

## **II. PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR FURTHER CIVIC-VOTER EDUCATION**

The 2013 Voter Education program aims to follow the end of the registration process by providing basic information on the electoral process and its technical and legal aspects to all voters.

1. Develop, produce and disseminate electoral materials.
2. Publicize materials through electronic and print media.
3. Carry out trainings at various levels to develop the efficiency of relevant human resources.
4. Deploy volunteers to carry out interactive programs directly with the electorate.
5. Collaborate with various stakeholders as needed while carrying out the programs.
6. Monitor and evaluate the program effectively.

The three key objectives of the civic-voter education campaign will be:

- To encourage the last millions of potential voter to register.
- To educate the voters on why to vote and the importance of democracy.
- To educate the voters on how to use the Electronic Voting Machine –if its use is implemented- by conducting a large number of mock elections in the 75 districts and to inform voters about their rights in the Electoral Dispute Resolution process.

In order to achieve the three key objectives and taking into account the outcome of the NEOF-EU audit on Voter Education, the ECN may organize the public outreach campaign around the following lines of work that will place all voters at the heart of the education campaign:

- **Civic Education Campaign**  
A general Civic Education campaign will be conducted nationwide based on the main principles of democracy and elections extracted from the EEIC-designed and IFES supported, trainers' manual. The objective of this campaign is to increase the populations' overall

<sup>24</sup> As per data of the Voter registration roll, ECN November 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Signed in September 2012

awareness of the meaning of Democracy, Federalism, Constituent Assembly, Constitution, Elections, and to awaken their perception concerning the rights and duties of citizens. It has been suggested to send four Civic Education vans to the four corners of Nepal and to open five EEIC Regional Offices. Translating the Building Democracy brochure into 17 different languages and distributing it around the country could enhance the effectiveness of this campaign.

- **Voter Education Campaign**

A general Voter Education campaign will motivate the last potential voters to register, as well as starting to explain the use of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) –if implemented- and polling procedures. The objective of this campaign is to increase the populations' overall awareness of the end of registration, polling and the use of EVM –if applicable. The general Voter Education campaign will be available throughout the country and should help to prevent confusion, while contributing to a higher level of understanding of the new voter registration. This approach will be reinforced by targeting specific audiences in the Voter Education campaign.

- **Public Outreach Campaign for Specific Audiences**

Specific products and initiatives will target specific audiences, notably young voters and most especially women, and marginalized sections of the population in order to motivate these groups to register and to actively participate in the reform of the voters' registry undertaken by the ECN, that will help in the production of new national identification cards. This campaign will take into consideration the marginalized groups, women, youth, indigenous, disabled people. The campaign will be customized for the literates and illiterates people.

#### **A- Reaching the Electorate**

In order for the ECN to reach the electorate, the first thing to keep in mind is that around 46% of Nepali citizens are illiterate<sup>26</sup> and that Nepal's mass media remains largely concentrated in the capital, major towns and district headquarters, although radio has a fairly broad reach<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, there are large numbers of rural residents temporarily working and residing in urban and semi-urban areas.

Roughly 31 % of the Nepali people live in conditions of poverty.<sup>28</sup> These people are among those for whom meeting daily survival needs remains a major concern. These are groups that also migrate in search of work. Therefore, the poor and the people from minority social groups are the ones for whom special efforts of education are needed to ensure that they are informed and aware about registration, and its procedures.

Activities that combine education with entertainment are among the best to target this audience. Thus, street theatre (at local bazaars, vegetable markets, bus terminals and other public places) may be appropriate for explaining the importance of registering. Street theatre and group interactions may also be useful in rural areas, where distance may be a factor and one-to-one communication would be the only other viable option for voter education.

In conclusion, the ECN will be able to reach the electorate through:

- Use of the media, including traditional (such as radio, TV, billboards, poster displays, newspapers) and non-traditional mass communication mechanisms (such as the ECN website,

<sup>26</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal, three-quarters of the total illiterate population of 6.4 million are women. <http://www.nepalvista.com/realnepal/literacy.php>

<sup>27</sup> The Community Radio Support Centre claims that FM stations collectively reach about 65% of the population. Radio Nepal claims to cover over 80% of the population.

<sup>28</sup> Nepal Living Standards Survey, 2004.

web feeds, SMS, Call Centre). The voter education campaign may be disseminated through paid notices/announcements, such as broadcast Public Service Announcements (PSAs), Dohari-geet programs, sitcoms, drama programs and published notices on newspapers. But also through press events, such as press conferences, photo opportunities, seminars for journalists and free-of-cost events or activities such as interviews, broadcast discussion programs and opinion articles.

- Direct outreach activities with the general population and specific groups in the community through the ECN representatives in the field (the Enumerators/Voter Educators), and also through Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that can entertain and inform the audience, and distribute the different ECN voter education printed materials (posters, leaflets etc.). Among the direct outreach activities we can list awareness rallies, cultural activities, use of mikes or loudspeakers to gather and inform the electorate.

The ECN-EEIC will oversee all voter information activities and voter education programs that may be implemented by them or in collaboration with civil society partners.

### **B- Designing the Messages**

Before proceeding with the production of any messages or the organization of any direct outreach activity, the ECN-EEIC with the advice of ESP would develop the key messages they intend to disseminate. In this respect and considering the Herculean task that community outreach entails in Nepal, a national electoral hymn could facilitate the ECN's dissemination work. Similar initiatives have proven successful in India and even in Nepal in 1959 when.

The EEIC would formulate all voter education messages. The Voter Education Unit will be responsible for preparing them, but specialists could provide assistance to ensure that the messages are communicated appropriately and effectively. Before the release, the ECN could test the major messages through focus groups.

After testing, the ECN could gather selected advertising professionals, CSO and NGO representatives, human rights activists, and political party representatives to preview the major messages. Nonetheless, in order to have a sustainable civic education campaign, the EEIC still needs to design a public outreach campaign on the responsibility and the rights of voters.

### **C- Developing the Voter Education Campaign**

The goal of the Election Commission is to register 95% of eligible citizens. The only way for the Election Commission to reach this goal is by informing and motivating the population through a broad-reaching voter education campaign. In accordance with international principles, the voter education campaign should be universal in scope, provide an impartial message, which must in addition be clear and easily understood by the widest number. In the current context, the campaign should focus on informing the population on three specific aspects of the process.

#### **1) End of Registration**

The registration program and the goal to register twelve million persons can only succeed if people are aware of it and understand the importance to them personally of being enumerated and registered to vote. The main voter education message would inform the voters about the end of the registration period and encourage the last few to register in order to be able to vote in future elections. In addition to administering the voter registration, the ECN has also two major voter education tasks: informing about Complaints and Missed Votes.

#### **2) Electronic Voting Machines (EVM)**

This aspect will only be relevant if the decision is taken to introduce Electoral Voting Machines (EVMs) in Nepal. Once the ECN has ensured that all eligible voters are registered, ready, willing and able to vote by means of equal access to information, the ECN-EEIC should make sure that all voters acquire an accurate knowledge on the use of EVMs. The EEIC should hire voter education volunteers or the former Enumerators to inform voters and conduct mock polling exercises, which should be spread throughout the country at least three months prior to Election Day. A number of programs on TV and radio should explain the reasons why the decision was taken (if applicable) to opt for EVMs and inform the Electorate about the time and location of the mock EVM election trainings to be held in their district.

### **3) Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR)**

As part of the broader need for large-scale voter education and public outreach on the electoral process, the ECN-EEIC must ensure that information on the complaints and appeals process is publicly disseminated. The right to an effective legal remedy cannot be fully effective if the electorate and the candidates are not aware of existing complaint mechanisms and available remedies and sanctions for violations. Public education in this respect also enhances the transparency of the electoral dispute resolution process, and of the electoral process as a whole. The voter education program should be timely and understandable, and include comprehensive information about the rights of the electorate and other stakeholders to pursue and protect their electoral rights and to bring electoral offenders to justice.

A mechanism was established to address disputes called “implementation of Code of conduct and Dispute Resolution Mechanism at the central and district level.” The report on Gender Mapping in the field of Elections requested a voter education campaign on EDR including further information on the dispute resolution mechanisms and on who and where to report disputes. Information should include procedures for filing various types of complaints and appeals and for reporting electoral offences. Standard complaint forms should be made readily available. In light of electoral reform potentially taking place so close to an election, it will be a key challenge for the ECN, law enforcement bodies, and the courts to ensure that stakeholders are sufficiently informed of newly established rules and mechanisms on complaint resolution.

### **D- Reaching Specific Audiences**

The ECN/ UNDP Strategy Paper identified in 2009 some methods of reaching specific audiences. The following text is an adaptation for the purpose of voter registration.

#### **1) Women**

Radio is usually an effective means to reach women, especially in rural areas, through radio programs broadcast during the day. Given the relatively high number of women representatives in the CA, a series of radio interviews and discussions regarding the role of women in a democratic society and the importance of women becoming involved in electoral processes would be of particular relevance to gender inclusion in Nepal. For this reason, it is important for women to register and participate in future electoral processes. In addition to radio interviews and debates, sitcoms, drama programs, Dohari-geet programs and PSAs targeting women would be highly recommendable.

With regard to direct outreach, consideration should be given to whether there are women Enumerators / Voter Educators, also from within NGOs and CSOs to reach women directly. An agreement could be reached with the Department of Women Affairs in each region.

#### **2) Youth**

TV and radio PSAs, sitcoms, drama programs, Dohari-geet programs, printed materials and new media, especially through social websites and mobile phones can reach the literate and urban youth.

Text-messaging (SMS) information has proved to be very effective in different countries. It is important that the young Nepali can recognize themselves in the language used for the PSAs. Using well-known figures could help to attract youth. Famous actors or Nepali singers such as Ram Krishana Dhakal and Aani Sherpa<sup>29</sup> could provide valuable support for the ECN voter education campaign. According to Internet World Stat<sup>30</sup>, 1,828,700 Nepalis use Facebook and 9% of the Nepali population uses the Internet, only 3% in the South.<sup>31</sup> A Facebook page on voter registration was created by the NGO Youth Initiative; a link to this Facebook page from the ECN website could be contemplated. With regard to direct outreach towards urban youth, different possibilities include: meeting students at high schools and universities, but also sports facilities, internet cafés, and youth clubs. For youth in more rural areas who have less access to media and technology, non-traditional methods like engagement outreach through sports (by visiting sport grounds), games and mobile cinema and theatre can be very effective in attracting large groups of youth. Some VE material could be distributed at these meetings. Furthermore, the ECN should aim to interact with political party youth groups and associations.

### **3) Minorities and Remote Areas**

Community radio broadcasts in local languages can be a useful means to reach remote or minority groups. Targeting these individuals on market days when they travel to the nearest village or town may be a cost-effective way of reaching larger numbers. Coordination with NGOs working with minority groups will be needed. Materials should be produced in local languages or at least meetings held with minority groups should be conducted in their own language. To reach the Madhesis, the ECN could involve the famous Madhesi Ram Krishana Dhakal and Aani Sherpa: singers of Phul ko ankha ma in their programs.

### **4) Community Leaders**

Outreach with opinion leaders should always start with direct meetings. This will also help facilitate access to their communities. These leaders can also help to spread voter education messages effectively throughout their communities. Meetings with opinion leaders should also include the distribution of printed and promotional materials, which will ensure that they convey accurate information to their communities.

### **5) People with Special Needs (Physically Challenged)**

Radio and TV PSAs tailored for people with special needs, motivating them could be produced. Meetings with organizations and associations that work with people with special needs should be held. Coordinated efforts between local authorities, medical institutions, charities, NGOs, CSOs and the general community will be required.

## **E- Producing Public Outreach Material**

The EEIC-ECN already has a budget for the Public Outreach campaign in 2013. The EEIC is planning to produce audiovisual materials, printed materials, messages in newspapers and the dissemination of promotional materials, such as broadcasting of televised and radio materials, the dissemination of posters, handbooks, FAQs, flip-charts, etc. The ESP Graphic Design Unit has already designed six different kinds of posters (see Annex 7).

## **F- Reporting and Monitoring**

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<sup>29</sup> Singers of Phul ko Ankha ma.

<sup>30</sup> September 30, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> 2,690,162 users.

As indicated in the VR Directives and in the Implementation Plan for the first phase, the Voter Education Unit is responsible for monitoring the voter education campaign at the district level, while the Voter Education District Support Committee is responsible for monitoring voter education at the local level. The ECN has adopted the policy of rewards and punishment for the personnel involved in the voter education program but so far the policy has not been adequately implemented. The ECN needs to organize monitoring training for the LSCCs, DAO, and DEOs to teach them how to monitor the civic-voter education activities in the field. In this regard, the IFES Monitoring methodology could be implemented.

In addition to the identified monitoring system, due to the nature and the scale of the activities to be undertaken the ECN could seek the support of journalists and their professional associations and inform their members of potential news events: the voter education sessions in the districts and in the villages. The resulting press coverage would provide some feedback on the efforts carried out. If needed, the ECN could even commission special reporting assignments to journalists who would travel to different parts of the country to interact with the people and report on their awareness and knowledge of the voter registration and the voter education campaign implemented in their area.

In terms of monitoring the program, arrangements were made so that the Facilitators would supervise the Voter Education Volunteers deployed in the Voters Education program, Supervisors would supervise the Facilitators and the District Election Office would supervise the Supervisors. The arrangements to have a regular monitoring of the program were made by assigning the supervisors and facilitators to report at District Election Office every Sunday. Similarly, the District Election Office would report to Voters Education Unit every Wednesday.

Furthermore, the Voter Education Committee Technical subcommittee and the Voter Education Unit were also authorized to carry out field visits to look into the implementation of the program and to inform the Commission through the Unit.

#### **G- Small Grant Funds for CSOs**

While Nepali NGOs and CSOs have historically played a limited role in electoral education and outreach activities, they are generally constrained by the limited funds available for such work. An Electoral Education Grant Facility is commonly developed by the UN and donors during electoral cycles as a mechanism for selected CSOs to provide electoral education initiatives and outreach, generally in collaboration with an election management body (EMBs).

The facility allows EMBs to build a working relationship with CSOs in the provision of voter education; maximize the capacity of CSO networks to reach rural areas and marginalized groups; enables the EMB to develop outsourcing strategies and capabilities and increase the participation of CSOs in VE and the election processes.

Under this mechanism, the UN solicits the services of an organization and/or consortium of organizations, to provide financial, grant management and monitoring and evaluation services for the Electoral Education Grant Facility. The facility encourages partnerships between the EMB and CSOs working at both grassroots and regional levels.

The guiding principles for the Grant Facility are:

- ⇒ Consistency with relevant national and electoral laws,
- ⇒ Ability to provide rapid disbursement,
- ⇒ Transparency and information sharing,
- ⇒ Financially accountable,
- ⇒ Effective in risk management.

The Grant Facility mechanism works by managing the selection process for voter education small grants to civil society organizations following agreed criteria and grantee selection/grant-making process. A competent service provider organization (national, international or a combination of both) is contracted by the UN to manage the grant facility and is responsible for the following:

- Develop guidelines to ensure that all regions of Nepal, including remote and difficult to access areas, are focused on. Specific emphasis should be placed on identifying CSO/NGOs with local knowledge and experience;
- Working closely with the ECN in the selection process and provision of necessary training on VE and financial/administrative management;
- Develop a comprehensive grant monitoring and evaluation plan;
- Develop a strategy to enhance the participation of women as voters through innovative awareness projects targeting women in urban and rural areas;
- Promote the mobilization of people with disabilities through networks and interest organizations, and provide guidance to the ECN on the particular needs and requirements of people with disabilities in the electoral process;
- Similarly, identify other target groups that may require dedicated focus and devise appropriate and innovative outreach strategies (particularly women, Dalits, Janjati, Madhesi; etc and the youth) within the community;
- Provide training to grant recipients on the identification of key voter education messaging as a common component of voter education projecting and modalities for delivery;
- Further build the capacity of CSOs through exposure to international best practice.

#### **H- Relations with the Media**

Electronic and print media can be very useful instruments for disseminating voter education not only through paid announcements, but also through press events, such as press conferences, media field trips, seminars for journalists and activities such as interviews, broadcast discussion programs and opinion articles.

The ECN should therefore be in regular contact with the media (an updated list with contacts from the media is needed), informing them of developments in the voter registration. Such occasions could also be used to distribute informative materials on voter registration, such Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), brochures, leaflets, pamphlets.

The ECN spokesperson and/or Deputy should be officially designated and assigned to deal with the media regarding all voter registration matters. All public documents should display his/her contact details.

Before the end of the voter registration period, field trips and press conference should be organized in order to inform the electorate through the media about the end of the VR process and encourage the last ones to register. A press conference could be held on the day each phase of the process begins, and a press release distributed accordingly.

The Election Reporting Center, or Media Center, within the ECN compound is a very important feature for democratic elections. The Media Centre should be fully equipped with the necessary high tech equipment, high speed Internet, mobile teams with vans, a call centre etc. As a multi-purpose support centre for local and international journalists covering the elections, it can be used to host regular meetings with the media. Frequent and regular updates to the media and direct contact with election officials can be complemented through the use of ICTs and social media applications.

In addition, the Media Centre can serve as a monitoring hub to monitor and report on media coverage of the elections across four channels (newspaper, urban-based radio, television and community based radio). Moreover, it can readily serve as a platform to receive and document incidents of campaign violence across the country. The center will host the “Elections Day Results Reporting” technology designed to aggregate smaller results from precincts for mass media dissemination via a two-way, communication between journalists and the system. The system works by assigning various protocols to the selected elections centers and their corresponding precincts. Reporters will then be assigned to cover these centers and submit certified results from each precinct to the system via text. Once the total polling places have been completed the system automatically tabulates the Center results and shares across the platform. In some cases, the system would tabulate regional results based on the number of centers and release those results, avoiding the airing of piecemeal precincts results on radio.

#### **I- ECN-EEIC Website**

The ECN-EEIC website is an important tool to reach out to the public and the media on the status of the different elements of the electoral process, notably the voter registration process. The website should also be a depository of all relevant election related materials. Ideally the contents should be available in as many of the locally used languages as possible for the broadest possible outreach. The ECN is currently working with partners to update and upgrade the site, including specific modules such as online polls, intranet and email system, registration search, gallery, maps centre and subscriber services. Efforts should be made, in conjunction with the ESP Graphics Unit, to develop a more attractive interface

#### **J- Call Center**

A national call centre with toll free numbers<sup>32</sup> set up with partner mobile phone companies would provide Nepalis with instant access to information. Trained operators will answer caller questions about the voter registration, the electoral process, Citizenship Certificate or location of registration centers. A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and standard answer would be provided.

#### **K- EEIC Civic-Voter Education Committee**

As the UNDP report on enhancing Public Participation mentioned “Civic education is a broad, continuous and long term process usually embedded in school education curriculum and other programs. Civic Education deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and the mass media. It emphasizes not only citizen awareness but citizen participation in all aspects of democratic society. Civic and citizenship education typically comprise three main elements: civic knowledge, civic values, and civic skills, i.e. to enable citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills essential for informed, effective citizenship.”

Given that civic education is a continuous process, not tied to a specific electoral cycle, the EEIC-ECN needs to build a solid Civic Education Unit responsible for the setting up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Civic Education Program. The Unit should include a committee of official member. A Civic Education Committee should be set up under the coordination of the Election Commissioner in order to conduct, control, direct and supervise the Civic Education awareness Program in all Nepal. The EEIC should coordinate the Civic Education Unit and invite the following to be members: ECN Secretary, Election Commissioners, Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication, Secretary of the Ministry of Local Development, Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Secretary of the Ministry of IT, Science and Technology.

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<sup>32</sup> Expenses to be covered by the ECN or a donor.



### **III. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

ESP commends the efforts undertaken by the ECN thus far to ensure the success of the civic-voter education. Furthermore, ESP encourages both the ECN and the Nepali Government to build on positive efforts to take further steps to promote greater fairness, access and opportunity for all Nepali citizens to register and vote. The following recommendations to strengthen the electoral process are offered with the hope they will provide useful discussion points for future action to organize the upcoming election.

#### **1) Human Resource Management and Staff Retention**

The members deployed at the EEIC are Nepal Government Staff. The turnover is very high because civil servants can be transferred at any time. Government staff is usually sent from one governmental body to another after one or two years of service. To build a strong structure and keep a wide vision of democracy, the ECN should keep the EEIC Director for at least three years and EEIC staff members for at least two years. Before starting a new position, EEIC members should spend one month with the new civil servant to ensure a proper handover. There should be special motivational packages and regular capacity-enhancement trainings for EEIC staff. The management of EEIC should be handed over to a dedicated team of officials having specific Terms of Reference (ToR) geared to the proper operation of the Centre. The management team should meet regularly to resolve issues, if any, and identify better ways to operate the Centre. As performance depends upon clear job descriptions backed by required authority and responsibility; monitoring and evaluation activities, the same could be advised to the EEIC management team.

#### **2) Sustainability of the EEIC**

The Centre is established with the financial support of AusAID and UNDP at the premises of Election Commission of Nepal (ECN). The Centre benefits from a number of modern equipment and tools, which require technologically competent human resources to utilize them and care for them properly. The Centre also has to have a required Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs) with service providers or vendors for proper maintenance of the equipment. The electricity from the national grid is of capital importance to run all the equipment in the Centre. The currently acute power shortage and heavy load shedding (that ranges even up to 18 hours a day) requires that the Centre should plan for proper power backups – inverters or diesel generators or solar energy. The record of the equipment, their operating manuals, warranty and maintenance guidelines, etc. should be properly managed and used on required basis. The EEIC staff should update their skills handling technologies and equipment, provide trainings, if require.

As a whole, the monthly operating cost of this Centre is of about NRs 700,000. This monthly expense is considerable. At present, donors like UNDP and the European Union are supporting this Center's operation. In order to guarantee the Center's sustainability the EEIC must develop and implement partnership programs with election stakeholders, notably Nepali corporations and educational institutions. The EEIC needs to get some public/private partnerships to boost its corporate image. Such partnership programs will increase the sense of ownership and social responsibility among election stakeholders. Prior to such partnerships, the EEIC must develop a Basket Fund Concept paper along with a well defined business plan and marketing strategy.

#### **3) Accessibility of the EEIC and its Resources**

In order for EEIC to do not become an elitist "palace of wind", some measures need to be taken to make the Centre more democratic and more accessible to the public. Although the Centre is free and open to all, the data indicates that private schools have more access to the Centre than other groups. This is largely to do with transportation facilities and costs, as the Centre is located within the ECN compound in Kantipath. Measures should be taken to welcome more public school students and the general public who cannot afford transport. The EEIC and the Ministries of Education and/or

Transport should reach an agreement to provide facilities to ensure that the Centre is truly accessible to all.

The difficulty for most regional and local level stakeholders outside Kathmandu to access the Centre is a serious concern. The Centre could therefore consider extending its network to improve its accessibility at the national-level. Whereas there is an interest among some ECN staff to decentralize the EEIC throughout the country, there is also some skepticism as to its added value as compared to other voter education or outreach activities that could have a more meaningful and immediate impact. Any decision to build additional EEICs should be based on a careful assessment of their cost-effectiveness in reaching voters and other stakeholders. The possibility of using mobile education and information teams around the country as opposed to fixed EEIC regional offices must also be evaluated.

In addition the EEIC's facilities and resources, notably its library, election museum and archives should be promoted and developed. Orientation and interaction programs to the library should be organized for ECN staff and other potential users such as university students or lecturers and a stable library budget allocated to purchase new collections. Beyond the possibility of physical access, virtual access through the Internet –requiring extensive resource digitalization- in the form of an Online Public Access Catalog should be developed. A network with other libraries specializing in democracy and elections could be created to exchange valuable items. Links with the Education Department and universities need to be actively pursued and strengthened. There could also be some provision for Electoral research grants and mechanisms to promote Electoral research in Nepal, for PhD candidates for example. The ECN could also consider opening the EEIC for use by multiple organizations. ECN has to manage the building but perhaps others - from universities to CSOs - can use the educational facilities available and not be dependent on ECN.

#### **4) EEIC Management Restructuring**

The EEIC is dependent on ECN decisions to take any action. Such a structure can lead to sluggish and potentially inefficient decision-making as well as discouraging proactive initiatives. Were the EEIC to be headed by an official of Joint Secretary level –as in EMBs where the Information/Education branch is separated from the actual electoral operations- the EEIC Director could be far more reactive. Nonetheless, the success of such an initiative will always depend greatly on the subordinate structure and the quality/skill fit of appointed staff.

In addition, a high level advisory board needs to be created, including senior civil servants from other departments. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of clarity regarding the EEIC's role in relation to training; the Head of EEIC does not necessarily need to be the head of Training.

Having funding from different sources with different allocation dates – Government of Nepal, NPTF, ESP makes planning more complex but not impossible. There is a lack of integration and transparent coordination in the funding originating from different sources, which donors are now starting to bite back on. However, there should be ways to ensure that allocation and spending are done rationally and with a view to long-term goals.

#### **5) Standardization of Voter Education Campaign and Awareness Program**

The sustainability of the voter registration process is largely dependent on the ability of the ECN to keep voters aware of the continuous process to update the voters' list and the procedures for the update. Voters must be motivated to keep their registration details up to date and be aware of the linkages between voter registration, civil registration and National Identity Card. In order to do so, the ECN needs to design an operational EEIC strategic plan on Civic and Voter Education. Faced with a generalized lack of motivation regarding the next elections, the ECN must strive to invert the trend to

maintain credibility and trust in the process and to ensure stakeholders ownership. Its success will require effective cooperation with all political parties and CSOs working in this domain.

First and foremost, the ECN needs to have a plan that integrates its Civic and Voter Education (CE/VE) programs and electoral operational activities. A Civic and Voter Education strategy that is not ad hoc but is linked with operational plans will help to promote democratic values in the country. Similarly, the EEIC could consider an agreement with the Ministry of Education to include civic education within the national curriculum.

Existing capacities of ECN staff need to be strengthened. The EEIC should organize BRIDGE trainings on Civic and Voter Education, Voter Information, Media and Election for political parties, ECN DEO and Voter Educators, EEIC staff members, representatives from CSOs focusing on elections, journalists and media organizations. The ECN-EEIC needs a continuing engagement at the local level. Beyond one off trainings, local community educators must be regularly stimulated to be fully effective.

DEOs need to be more involved in EEIC activity so they become local agents for the EEIC. They should be regularly engaged in civic and voter education, beyond occasional trainings and activities. Their participation could be requested in the development and/or implementation of voter education, possibly through short rotations in the EEIC. Overall, the DEOs role should be empowered; for example, the ECN needs to restructure the DEO position to allocate appropriate resources and capacities to support the registration process.

#### **6) Improving Voter Education Materials**

The Centre has been providing a unique package to serve all types and categories of people. Given that a single product is unlikely to be equally suitable to all population categories, it should plan product segmentation depending upon target groups -a) political parties and researchers, b) women, for socially deprived and marginalized community and c) special or physically challenged groups, etc. According to the target group the Centre has to design its materials, services, delivery mechanisms, etc. It could also assess the possibility of providing CSOs and other relevant stakeholders with soft copies of the electoral materials, allowing them to print and distribute them.

The EEIC staff needs greater experience and skills in Voter Education material design and development. Consequently, the EEIC should have the capacity and the budget to hire expert contractors, to overcome this knowledge gap. In addition, the ECN needs to simplify the approval chain for Voter Education materials. Approvals take too long as ECN members from different hierarchical levels have to agree on contents and products. The follow-up on Voter Education materials should be done with the ESP Graphic Design Unit and EEIC head of Public Outreach. One ECN Joint Secretary member and the head of the EEIC should give the final approval on the voter education material.

In terms of the actual messages, the EEIC-ECN must ensure that they are clear and simple, both when addressing the general public and the media. The EEIC-ECN must integrate inclusiveness in their core thinking for VE campaigns and strategies. Decision-makers should come to adopt an inclusive approach instinctively, without external reminders, regarding target audiences and the portrayal of particular groups in the materials.

#### **7) Coupling Voter Education Campaign with the End of Voter Registration**

Given the number of inaccuracies in registration records, the large-scale effort being undertaken to correct them, and the need to register additional voters, allowing citizens a further opportunity to register and to verify their data prior to the closing of the voter roll would be of benefit to citizens and the ECN alike. Another phase of display, claims and objections and MVR should be coupled with a well-planned voter education campaign.

The period for which display, claims and objections and MVR are conducted should be sufficient for citizens to be able to learn about and participate in them. The ECN-EEIC should continue to inform the population about display, claims and objections with DEO public outreach activities. This includes continuing to transparently and systematically correct all serious problems, such as ward and polling station misallocation, which if left uncorrected could disenfranchise affected citizens. Other problems on the rolls (such as name misspellings and typos in Citizenship Certificate numbers) should also be properly managed and corrected in a timely manner. Conducting subsequent rounds of display, claims and objections, and publicizing the continuous claims and objections process at DEO offices will help to identify, fix, and reduce the overall number of errors on the register. To this end, the broadcast of one minute PSA taken from the 30 minutes documentary on the registration process on TV and radio could be beneficial.

### **8) Encouraging Active Engagement of Political Parties and CSOs**

Political parties and civil society should play a more active and supportive role in the voter registration process. Carter Center observers found minimal involvement of political parties during this voter registration phase. Political party representatives checked the voter rolls in a handful of locations visited but were criticized in several others for not playing a more active role. On the whole, observer teams found little evidence that political parties had undertaken efforts to raise awareness about or mobilize citizens to participate in the display, claims and objections and MVR processes in areas visited. It is in the interest of all parties to support the registration process by mobilizing potential supporters.

Additionally, while there continued to be some positive CSO activities around voter registration, there is still some room for further efforts to support the process more broadly. The ECN-EEIC should promote coordination with CSOs and political parties, the EU, and other stakeholders. For example, organizing monthly meetings in ECN HQ in Kathmandu or DAO in the districts, and maybe once a week prior to Election Day in order to maintain a harmonious voter education campaign and avoid the duplication of work.

According to the EU EOM<sup>33</sup> 2008 report, during the last CA elections, 148 CSOs were involved in observing and monitoring the elections. The sector does however, lack capacity and coordination. The ECN should therefore strive to further coordination to spread civic and voter education with the largest civil society networks such as: National Election Monitoring Alliance (NEMA), National Election Observation Committee (NEOC), Democracy and Election Alliance Nepal (DEAN) and General Election Observation Committee (GEOC).

### **9) Adopting a Gender Policy**

The assignation of a Gender Focal point to the Joint Secretary rank is a positive and important step for decision-making purposes and expert inputs on Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) issues. This position provides partners with a counterpart for GSI experts. Notwithstanding, it is crucial that the ECN adopts an explicit gender policy and includes the notion of gender in its action plan finalization and budget allocation.

It is worth noting that in the new voter education materials (posters) for Voter Registration with Photograph, the gender aspect is overlooked and women are depicted in stereotypical roles. This highlights the need to internalize gender sensitivity and integration in all aspects of the ECN's work and this in turn calls for relative sensitization/technical trainings for different sections of the ECN. There is a need to focus on promoting the image of women as able citizens with a right to vote.

So far, the focus of international organization support has been mainly centered in promoting women's electoral participation as candidates and elected representatives, through candidate training.

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<sup>33</sup> European Union Election Observation Mission 2008.

This support has proved valuable together with the impetus to incorporate gender into electoral legislation, political party advocacy, outreach, and media campaigning to ensure promote a positive environment for women candidate to contest elections etc. However, there is little or almost negligible support in the area of encouraging women as enabled and informed voters, women's participation as electoral administrators, and an overall strengthening of the election management body to undertake gender mainstreaming in electoral processes.

#### **10) Carrying Out a Survey on Democracy and Civic Education**

New surveys should be organized by the ECN to determine the democratic knowledge of the Nepalis and to see if the 95% of the population have been reached by the public outreach campaign. CSOs and NGOs could assist it, drawing on their local bases, for example, the NGO Jagaram could conduct the survey in the remote area of Karnali.

#### **11) Anticipation - no procrastination**

The need to anticipate was highlighted by the recent voter registration process. The ECN did not plan the claims/objections/missed VR until the last minute, and this was followed by the usual delays in approving VE materials. This hindered the provision of publicity sufficiently in advance for the claims/objections/missed registration process.

All ECN and EEIC staff need to have training on planning for voter education and operational activities. The ECN must produce guidelines sufficiently in advance to ensure that all election administration staff and other stakeholders have a common understanding of the different phases of the electoral process. These measures would also ensure enough time for training and for increased communication between the ECN, field staff and other stakeholders about concerns and potential problems with upcoming and ongoing activities and allow the ECN ample time to properly address them.

#### **12) Development of an External Relations Strategic Plan**

There is an identified need to assist the ECN-EEIC in the development of its external relations. Training in interview techniques and public reporting could be envisaged to ensure the delivery of clear and concise messages, which are of paramount importance for the transparency and credibility of the electoral process at all levels.

At the local level, the Local Support and Coordination Committees established for voter education for voter registration have brought together a wide variety of local stakeholders -parties, government officials, media, CSOs, local election officials, and through these there have been local attempts at external relations/image building.

### **ANNEX 1: TERM OF REFERENCE (T O R)**



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

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#### **I. POSITION INFORMATION**

Location: Kathmandu, NEPAL  
 Additional Category Democratic Governance  
 Type of Contract: Individual Contract  
 Post Level: International Consultant  
 Languages Required: English  
 Duration of Initial Contract: 150 working days during the period from 15 August 2012 - 31 July 2014  
 Expected Duration of Assignment: 150 working days during the period from 15 August 2012 - 31 July 2014

## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Background:

In April 2008, Nepal conducted the election for a Constituent Assembly (CA) which as a first step, proclaimed the country a Federal Republic. The CA was mandated to draft a new constitution and establish the framework for the first post-conflict general election and possibly, for local government elections. While the CA did not complete its mandate of drafting the new constitution within the May 2012 deadline, discussions are ongoing among the political actors on next steps in Nepal's peace process and possible elections.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the international donor community remain committed to assisting the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to continue to deliver its mandated functions. Recognising that the election of the 2008 CA was only the first crucial step of the peace process in Nepal, UNDP initiated an Electoral Support Project (ESP) in 2008 aimed at institutional strengthening and professional development of the ECN. The Phase II of the project commenced in 2012 extending more comprehensive operational support for the next series of elections. The ESP support aims at building sustainable and enduring institutional and professional capacity of the ECN, of its Secretariat and its district offices that could be easily and effectively deployed in future elections. The ESP (2008-2016) consists of two phases: Phase I (2008-2011) focused exclusively on long-term electoral capacity building during the first three years following the CA election and was drawing to a completion at the time of the Project's second revision. Phase II (2012-2016) focuses on operational support for future electoral cycles.

A key area of support in ESP Phase II is technical assistance on civic/voter education and external relations. To assist the project in effectively carryout this support, the project is seeking to recruit an international Civic/Voter Education and External Relations Advisor to provide technical assistance to ECN counterparts on the development and implementation of its civic/voter education and external relations activities.

## III. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT

The objective of the assignment is to provide technical assistance to ENC in its preparations for upcoming set of elections in the field of civic/voter education and external relations. The incumbent will be required to actively provide advice and inputs in civic and voter education strategies and plan, design and production of public outreach materials, maintain external relations with electoral stakeholders- donors community, media, and civil society etc. This support is envisioned through the electoral cycle including in the pre-election, during election and post-

election period.

Description of the assignment:

To provide technical assistance to ECN counterparts on the development and implementation of its civic/voter education and external relations activities. The Consultant shall be based in the ECN Building, Kathmandu.

Period of assignment:

The duration of the Long Term Assignment (LTA) will be from 15 August 2012 to 31 July 2014 covering a total of 150 days of working period. Upon signing of an LTA, a separate Individual consultancy contract will be signed for each assignment during the LTA period on “as and when requested” basis. The actual schedule and duration of support will be defined based on the election timeline and in consultation with the incumbent. If the elections to the Constituent Assembly are held in 22 November 2012, service of the consultant will be extensively required prior to the elections.

#### **IV. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Chief Technical Advisor and in close cooperation with the ESP team and ECN counterparts.

Review ECN’s current strategy, plan, information materials and methodology for the civic/voter education and public outreach.

Provide technical advice and assistance to ECN's Civic and Voter Education section on formulating and implementing of comprehensive civic/voter education, public information, and external relations plans and strategies including rationale, budget and other required resources, timeline and delegation of responsibilities.

Examine efforts and provide strategic guidance to ECN to devise civic/voter education targeting socially excluded and various marginalized groups in the electoral process.

Develop civic/voter education, public outreach materials (leaflet, brochures, audio/video materials etc.) and its dissemination plan.

Devise civic/voter education related training program for ECN and other electoral stakeholders both at national and field levels.

Build the capacity and ensure transfer of skills and knowledge to the ECN counterparts on efficient management of civic/voter education program and external relations.

Conduct relevant training/workshops to the concerned division/section of ECN in key areas of civic/voter education and external relations.

Develop standardized reporting formats, regular reports and progress updates, briefing, bulletin for both ECN and donors community. Also develop Monitoring and Evaluation plan for the implementation of civic/voter education, and public outreach activities.

Support ESP management in procurement processes for civic/voter education related goods and services.

Provide strategic guidance to ECN in formulating official external relations program as means to effectively communicate key messages to the widest electoral stakeholders.

Advise ECN in the development of media and communication strategy and plan.

Provide technical support to the ECN on voters’ awareness assessment and impact assessment studies/surveys.

Other support as requested by the ECN & duties as assigned by the project management team.

The International Consultant will be obliged to prepare a final report at the end of each assignment period that should compile achieved results, evaluation, recommendations for further actions, as

well as practical reference points.

**Quality Assurance:**

Chief Technical Advisor/International Project Manager will be primarily responsible for monitoring consultant's progress on a regular basis as he/she will work under the direct supervision of the International Project Manager;

Payments will be made only after receiving a report towards the end of the individual contract period;

Overall performance of the consultant will be evaluated towards the end of the contract, following UNDP's standard evaluation form: "UNDP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM FOR INDIVIDUALS HIRED UNDER IC."

Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards;

Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the project;

Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;

Treats all people fairly and equally.

**Functional Competencies:**

Knowledge and expertise in democratic governance, electoral assistance and democratization;

Demonstrates strong intellectual and operational capacity in providing and coordinating advisory services to stakeholders in electoral processes, specifically to EMBs and civil society organizations;

Strong communication and interpersonal skills, ability to foster networks and partnerships, and good working knowledge of information and computer technology.

Excellent organizational skills and ability to work effectively in teams, delivering through and with others.

## **V. RECRUITMENT QUALIFICATIONS**

Education:	Advanced University degree preferably in the field of public relations, journalism, communications, politics or related field
Experience:	Minimum 7 years of progressively responsible experience with civic/voter education, external relations or training in relation to electoral processes Prior election experience in post conflict countries will be an asset

## **ANNEX 2 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS MET**

Mr. Neel Kantha Uprety, Former Chief Commissioner, ECN

Mr. Dolakh B Gurung, Commissioner, ECN

Dr. Ayodhee Prasad Yadav, Chief Commissioner, ECN

Mr. Madhu Prasad Regmi, Joint Secretary, Legal and Political Party Registration Division, ECN

Mr. Komal Prasad Dhamala, Under Secretary, Head of EEIC Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN



Mr. Maheshwor Neupane, Joint Secretariate, ECN  
 Mr. Anil Kumar Thakur, Joint Secretary, ECN  
 Ms Mamata Malla Shrestha, Electoral Educator, EEIC  
 Mr. Gopal Prasad Aryal, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN  
 Mr. Hemraj Aryal, Under Section, Voter Education, EEIC  
 Mr. Laxman Bhattarai, Former Spokesperson and head of Voter Education, ECN  
 Mr. Surya Prasad Aryal, Training Section, EEIC  
 Mr. Ghana Shyambhan Dari, DEO Kaski, Pokhara, ECN  
 Mrs. Seeta Samba, DEO Taplejung, ECN  
 Mr. Sumam Gihimire, Communication and Information Officer, EEIC  
 Mr. Bishak Dakal, Section Officer, ECN  
 Mr. Krishna Wagle, Section Officer, ECN  
 Mr. Rishi Bhusal, Section Officer, ECN  
 Mr. Andres del Castillo, Chief Technical Advisor, Project Manager, UNDP/ESP  
 Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha, Deputy Project Manager, ESP/UNDP  
 Ms. Najia Hashemee, Technical Advisor, ESP/UNDP  
 Mr Mukunda Raj Panday, Training and Capacity Building Specialist  
 Mr. Prabhat Kumar, National GIS Officer, ESP/UNDP  
 Ms. Anita Karki, Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist, ESP/UNDP  
 Mr. Sachin Karmacharya, Voter Registration Coordination Officer, ESP/UNDP  
 Ms. Anamika Pradhan, Reporting and Communication Officer, ESP/UNDP  
 Ms. Sumita Shrestha, Training and Logistic Assistant, ESP/UNDP  
 Mr. Sujit Gopal Shrestha, National IT Specialist, ESP/UNDP  
 Ms. Diana Garcia Al Cubilla, Governance Program Manager, European Union  
 Mr Jakub Smtny, Development Cooperation, European Union  
 Mr. Allan Wall, Country Director, IFES  
 Mr. Ramesh Prajuli, EEIC Library Development Consultant, IFES  
 Mrs. Radhika Regmi, National Training Advisor, IFES  
 Mr. Shashank Pokhrel, Public Information Specialist, IFES  
 Mr. Raj Bahadur Scpkota, Training Assistant, IFES  
 Mr. Suraj Sigdel, Project Coordinator, IFES  
 Ms. Leena Rikkila Tamang, Head of Mission, IDEA  
 Mr. Shanti Ram Bimali, BRIDGE International Focal Point, IDEA  
 Mr. David V. Hamilton, Director, Carter Center  
 Mr. Oil Housden, Deputy Field Office Director, Carter Center  
 Mr. Dinesh Pathak, Long Term Observer, Carter Center  
 Mr. Paul Guerin, Founder of BRIDGE  
 Mrs Deepika Naidu, Program officer, NEOC  
 Mr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, Secretary General, NEOC  
 Mr. Bikal Shrestha, Program Officer, NEOC  
 Mr. Bijay Raj Gautam, Executive Director, INSEC  
 Mr. Gokarna Adhikari, Program Assistant, Youth Initiative  
 Mrs. Raju Malla Dhakal, Gender Consultant, IDC  
 Mr. Bhadra Aryal, Education Officer, Election Commission  
 Mr. Jit Bahadur Lamecklane, Teacher, Janapath secondary school  
 Mrs. Anita Acharya, Reporter, Janpakal Newspaper  
 Mr. Tulasi Prasad Gautam, Executive Director, National ID Management Center, Ministry of Home Affairs

### ANNEX 3 LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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- Final Report on Education and Awareness Program in Local Elections, Ram Kumar Shrestha, ECN, 1992
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- Key Findings: audit of pilot voter registration, IFES, 2010

**ANNEX 4: List of the BRIDGE Facilitating the Facilitator Training, Kathmandu, November-December 2012**

S.N.	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Mr. Bisaksen Dhakal	Section Officer	ECN
2	Mr. Laxmi Prasad Joshi	DEO	District Election Office, Kailali
3	Mr. Ram Govinda Aryal	Computer Officer	ECN
4	Mr. Umesh Kumar Rai	DEO	District Election Office, Sindhupalchowk
5	Ms. Seeta Samba	DEO	District Election Office, Taplejung
6	Mr. Binod Kumar Dahal	DEO	District Election Office, Morang
7	Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari	DEO	District Election Office, Kaski
8	Mr. Tole Raj Upadhyaya	DEO	District Election Office, Baglung
9	Mr. Punya Prasad Bhattarai	DEO	District Election Office, Solukhumbu
10	Mr. Deepak Kumar Thapa	DEO	District Election Office, Jumla
11	Mr. Shyam Kumar Yadav	Coordinator	Loktantrik Adhyan Kendra
12	Ms. Manju Kumari	Women Rights Activist	9803710849, Janakpur
13	Ms. Akim Shrestha	Training Director	Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI)
14	Ms. Yogmaya Sapkota	Training Mgmt. Officer	Local Development Training Academy (LDTA)
15	Ms. Meena Bista	Founder Member	Jagaran Nepal
16	Ms. Shova Gautam	Founder Member	NWS-Watch/35/810 Thapathali/
17	Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha	D P M	UNDP/ESP
18	Ms. Anita Karki	Gender Specialist	UNDP/ESP
19	Ms. Nilu Puri Basnyat	Deputy Country Director	IFES Nepal
20	Mr. Suraj Sigdel	Program Coordinator	IFES Nepal
21	Mr. Abhinandan Sharma	IT Officer , Biratnagar	UNDP/ESP

## **ANNEX 5: Detailed Overview of the ECN's Voter Education through the Media**

### Public notices in newspapers

In 2010, the ECN published public notices on the Voter Registration with Photo Program (VRPP) in national dailies and regional newspapers. It intended to inform the audience about the ECN's nationwide VRPP. The public notice carried the information about the Enumerators coming to households to collect data appealing to the public to register. It explained the need for the citizenry to get enrolled in the VRPP. It also informed the people that based on the information collected, the Government of Nepal (GoN) is planning to produce a National Identification Card.

In 2011, a notice was published in national daily newspapers regarding the VRPP with its enrollment process. It also made an appeal to the people reaching the age of 16 and above to register. It further appealed to those who were not enrolled earlier, to get registered. A second notice published in the national daily newspapers highlighted the Out District Registration process and requested Nepali citizens of 16 years old and above to get enrolled in the VRPP. Later that same year another notice was published in national and regional newspapers mentioning the ongoing registration program at all District Election Offices (DEO), District Administration Offices (DAO) and Local Administration Offices (LAO). It again requested the leftovers to be registered in VRPP. Finally, it mentioned that the new voter list is the only valid one to exercise the right to vote.

In 2012, a notice was published in national daily newspapers about the VRPP. This time the notice highlighted the reviews of rolls, claims and objections. The messages focused on the manner of verifying one's name on the voters' list and where to report if there were any flaws in the published details.

### Recommendations:

- Communication could be more effective if illustrations accompanied the texts. This could help to attract everybody's eye and provide illiterate persons with some sense of the message.
- For greater visibility the message should be carried in a strategic part of the newspaper or in a strategic manner, such as the front page, or in striking multicolor, or at the right bottom corner of newspapers, etc.
- The messages should be carried through in fortnightly magazines like Nepal, Himal, etc., for even greater visibility.
- Besides direct communication about the VRPP, indirect communications concerning the importance of registration, public partnership programs, etc. could be added for further effectiveness. Coordination of different media must be well-planned and launched in a coordinated manner for optimal results.

### Posters

The ECN developed three types of posters for the VRPP. The first poster stresses that the ECN Enumerators will visit households to collect information on potential voters. It indicates that the public must present their Citizenship Certificate to enroll in the program. A second poster indicates that voters will have to go the Registration Centre with the receipt provided by the ECN Enumerators and with their Citizenship Certificate. The third poster informs voters about what they have to do if they identify any mistake in their data or if they cannot go to the registration center.

### Recommendations:

- Branding of the character/ characters for ECN is very essential to bring uniformity in posters, pamphlets, brochures.
- The old and physically disabled are not included in posters/ brochures. Enough space should be given to them in future designs. In general, greater attention should be given to making the posters disabled-friendly.
- Distribution and circulation of posters, leaflets, brochures must be as broad as possible, including temples, mosques, schools, cinema halls, etc.

Flyers/ Leaflets/ Brochures The ECN has developed a leaflet containing general information on voter registration. The leaflets give general information on VRPP. A million copies of the leaflets were printed for a target audience of literate persons. The ECN has also developed brochures with 14 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on VRPP, and contain graphics, pictures and sketches. A total of 60,000 brochures were printed with the support of IFES. These leaflets and brochures were reprinted in 2012.

The Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) established at the ECN's premises produced a brochure in 2012 in both Nepali and English for the promotion of the work of the EEIC.

**Recommendation:**

- The amount of text in both the brochure and the leaflet should be minimized inasmuch as possible. More graphics, cartoons, sketches must be considered to make it more attractive and easily accessible. To make them even more accessible, different versions with specific information could be considered.

Booklet

A booklet -Building Democratic Future- was published with IFES support in 2012. The booklet provides clear and detailed information about the country's electoral history, the ECN's organizational structure, role and responsibilities as well as activities.

**Recommendations:**

- This booklet needs to be widely circulated among all stakeholders.
- The booklet should be published in Nepali as well.

Radio materials – PSA, Radio jingles

In order to provide detailed information on the Election Commission's activities the ECN started a radio program in 2010. This 15 minutes weekly program is aired every Saturday at 7.30 a.m. through national radio -Radio Nepal. This radio program includes updates of the ECN activities, interaction with the stakeholders, interviews of officials and experts.

The Election Commission produced a radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) in 2010. It was aired on commercial and community FM stations in all 75 districts. The PSA gave information to local people about the start of the ECN's Voter Registration with Photograph program. Information was also provided on the arrival of Enumerators. The Radio PSA also highlighted that any Nepali citizen, male or female, above 16 years of age and having Nepali citizenship can enlist in the Enumerators' record.

A Radio jingle highlighting the commencement of the Voter Registration with Photograph program was also produced and aired nationwide.

In 2011, another Radio PSA was produced and aired on national and local radios. This 40 second PSA is also known as a motivational PSA, calling upon citizens aged 16 and above to enroll in the voter registration program. Similarly, to provide voter information and education IFES prepared and broadcast PSAs in 17 languages. These 17 PSAs were 30 second long and were aired for 28 days on 5 networks (from March to April). The 17 languages in question were: Abadhi, Bhojpuri, Doteli, Gurung, Kham Magar, Limbu, Magar, Maithali, Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, Pashim Tharu, Purbeli Tharu, Rai Bantaba, Rana Tharu, Sherpa, Tamang, and Urdu.

In 2012 a Radio PSA was aired on national and local FM radios. This time the PSA focused on review of rolls, claims and objections. Similarly, a radio PSA on the continuous voter registration program was also aired.

### TV PSA

In 2010, a Television (TV) Public Service Announcement (PSA) was produced by IFES. Popular Nepali comedians – Madan Krishna and Haribansa Acharya participated in the PSA. This two minute-long PSA carried information on the VRPP.

In 2011, focusing on the youth and first time voters, a PSA was aired on national TV channels. Popular TV artists of “Tito Satya” TV serials were used in the PSA. Another two PSAs were also made in Nepali and English languages, communicating the VRPP for public enrollment.

In 2012, another TV PSA was prepared and aired on national television concerning the claims and objections on registration process. Once again, popular comedians – Madan Krishna and Haribansa (MaHa Group) were used to deliver the message. Similarly, another PSA has been prepared on the continuous VRPP. MaHa has been used again. At the time of writing, this PSA was in the process of obtaining approval from ECN authorities.

#### Recommendations:

- In all the TV PSAs, the communication seems direct and focused on general information regarding the VRPP. The ECN should consider adopting varying communication strategies at its different stages of communication. Sometime it should be persuasive – action oriented - as well.
- The role models in the TV PSA though representative of different ethnic groups and classes, failed to represent physically disabled people. Greater attention to this could be considered.
- The producers should look into how to represent different classes, cultures, voices and genders, etc. when preparing PSAs. There is room for improving these aspects even when using celebrities, religious/opinion leaders for their personality endorsement.

### Documentaries

A 20 minute long documentary on voter education was made in 2012. The documentary on Nepal’s democracy is aired at the EEIC’s Mini Theatre and is shown to all EEIC visitors. Another, this time 30 minute long documentary on the Voter Registration with Photograph Program was in the process of being finalized at the time of writing.

#### Recommendations:

- Rather than resorting to (relatively) long documentaries it may be better to opt for shorter documentaries, which might be more effective.
- All documentaries should include the different subtitles that may be necessary depending on their expected audience.

### Other Promotional Material

IFES supported the ECN in the production of 88,000 promotional bags. These bags included the text “Have you registered?” and were distributed in all the 75 districts, among political parties, CSOs, Enumerators, stakeholders and even in the ECN’s meetings.

In 2010, 50,000 of a Nepali calendar highlighting the Voter Registration with Photograph program were published. In 2011, 30,000 calendars were published and in 2012, 40,000 copies were published with the support of IFES. These calendars were distributed nationwide with messages on the Voter Registration with Photograph programs.

## **ANNEX 6: Main Challenges to the Voter Registration Process**

### Lack of interest

Although political party obstruction prevented the ECN from conducting registration adequately in some parts of Nepal, few other challenges seriously affected turnout. The main source for the lower turnout could be the frustration of the Nepali citizenry with the ongoing political process. This factor added to a certain degree of apathy given an uncertain future election date could explain the turnout. It is likely that this degree of apathy will subsist until there are clear indications of an upcoming election.

### Citizenship Certificate Requirements

The second main challenge to the registration process is likely to be the fact that a significant number of individuals do not possess the required documentation, the Citizenship Certificate and if necessary proof of migration.

The government awarded citizenship to 1.7 million people - born within the Nepali territory before April 13, 1990 - ahead of the 2008 CA, but their offspring do not have citizenship. This issue is likely to generate tension and protest. The Madhesi parties are likely to demand that these people are granted citizenship and registered in the electoral roll ahead of the election. In January 2012, the Home Ministry tried to resolve the problem by issuing a circular to all the District Administration Offices to grant citizenship. But the SC stayed the implementation of the circular, saying the circular violated the Constitution. A Madhesi leader stated that the package deal should also include the provision of either granting citizenship to those whose names figured in the 2008 list or enabling them to vote without an identity card.

To ensure the legitimate entitlement of voters for registration the ECN insists that eligible voters present their Citizenship Certificate during enumeration and registration. It is recognized that not all citizens of 16 years of age and above have completed the required process to attain their citizenship Certificate. ECN highlighted the requirement for Citizenship Certificate in all voter education programs and worked with the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide mechanisms for fast-track processing of Citizenship Certificate applications. The ECN undertook voter education efforts at the national and local levels to inform people about the display, claims, and objections period and, in order to increase turnout on the new voter register, the ECN also conducted a Missing Voter Registration (MVR). The ECN purchased advertising on national television and radio networks and placed advertisements in national daily newspapers. At the district level, some DEOs purchased airtime on local FM stations, and funds were made available for posters, fliers and loudspeaker messages. In several districts, voter education was also conducted in local schools and colleges. Despite these efforts, awareness and turnout for the processes remained low in many areas. 20 of 28 ANROs interviewed by Carter Center observer teams said the level of turnout in their VDC or municipal ward was low. Slightly more than 350,000 citizens registered during MVR while the ECN had hoped that between 500,000 and one million new registrants would be added to the register.

Without an intensive Citizenship Certificate issuing campaign, preceded by appropriate education, there is a risk of disenfranchisement, especially of the youth, women and persons living in remoter areas. This is a political, not just administrative issue. 39% of persons under the age of 25 do not have the card, 67% of 16-17 year old, 34% of 18-25. Women are almost twice as likely not to have their CC as men. In the present context a CC issuing campaign should ideally precede registration.



## ANNEX 7: END of REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN POSTERS/FLYERS

POSTERS/FLYERS (Possibly Billboards) designed by ESP Graphic Design Unit

### 1. General Registration Poster

Diversified group of people all-inclusive holding citizenship Certificates.

Text:

Head: You must register in order to Vote

Bring your Citizenship Certificate to your local registration office to register to vote.

Tagline: Every vote counts. Register now to vote.



### 2. Urban: How to Register Poster

3 illustrations depicting the process

- registration site--with group of people
- photo taken--with computer and desk set up
- thumb print--close up

Text:

Head: How to register to vote.

Bring your Citizenship Certificate to your local registration office to register to vote. Your thumbprint and photograph will be taken at that time.

Tagline: Every vote counts. Register now to vote.

### 3. Rural: How to Register Poster

4 illustrations depicting the process

- election officials meeting in the villages to gather registration information from the rural households
- registration site--with group of people
- photo taken--with computer and desk set up
- thumb print--close up

Text:

Head: How to register to vote.

Electoral officials will come to your household to collect your information. Have your Citizenship Certificate ready.

You will be given a slip with date, time and place to have your photograph and thumbprint taken to complete your voter registration.

Tagline: Every vote counts. Register now to vote.

#### 4. Why Vote, Why Register Poster

Large diversified group/crowd gathering—  
walking towards viewer. (see idea to left)

Text:

Head: Voting is your right and responsibility

With fair elections, we can make government  
liable to answer to the people, settle disputes  
and protect democracy.

The future is in your hands.

Tagline: Every vote counts. Register now to vote.

#### 5. Gender Poster

Group of women all-inclusive with speaking bubbles  
(randomly placed not from one person.)

Women to include:

1. Tamang (Mongolian features)
2. Sherpa (mountain women --Tibetan dress)
3. Brahmin/Chhetri (Hill women)
4. Newar
5. Muslim (prominent)
6. Maithili (Terai region)
7. Youth (Young urban girl)
8. Tharu (Terai region)

Text:

- a. To vote you need to register--(Prominent bubble—Head)
- b. I have registered! Have you?
- c. We have the right to vote. Lets take this opportunity to be heard.
- d. It is our responsibility for our future and the future of our families.

Tag line: Decide your future! Register to vote now!

#### 6. Youth-first time voter Poster

Group of youth by schoolyard with books/backpack (show school in background). Prominent girl and boy (16 yrs old) with speaking bubbles. Boy with arm raised in excitement of turning voting age.

Text:

- a. I just turned 16! Yeah now I can vote.
- b. Remember you can only vote if you are registered
- c. So don't forget to register.

Tag line: Decide your future! Register to vote now!

#### 7. Social inclusiveness Poster

Minorities--indigenous/disabled/lower castes/religious.

Show images of various peoples of different minority backgrounds—  
professions: tailor, shoemaker, farmer  
Disabled: blind, wheelchair.  
Religious: wearing cross, Muslim cap, prayer wheel

Men & Women to include:

1. Tharu
2. Raute
3. Dalit
4. Janajati (Sherpa)
5. Poor Farmer
6. Terai Poor
7. Elderly
8. Disabled
9. Religious

Text:

Head: Empower Yourself!

Tag line: Decide your future! Register to vote now!

#### **8. Citizenship Certificate**