

Date Printed: 06/16/2009

JTS Box Number: IFES_79
Tab Number: 22
Document Title: Guidelines for Civic Educators
Document Date: Jan-00
Document Country: Uganda
Document Language: English
IFES ID: CE01940



* A F 3 E 5 4 7 3 - 2 4 D 6 - 4 5 0 8 - A 6 B 1 - 4 1 5 B 7 6 0 4 C 7 9 1 *

GUIDELINES FOR CIVIC EDUCATORS



JANUARY 2000

GUIDELINES FOR CIVIC EDUCATORS

**Please note that this handbook contains
guidelines on how to use the 4 educa-
tional posters. See pages 18-29**

**Developed and published by the NGO Materials
Development Committee for the Referendum 2000
(UWONET, ACFODE, UJCC, NOCEM) in
collaboration with the Uganda
Electoral Commission.**

January 2000

INTRODUCTION

Between 3rd June and 2nd July 2000, a referendum will be held to allow Ugandans to choose between the present no party "Movement: system, a multi-party system, or any other democratic and representative system." If the people of Uganda are to make a meaningful and informed choice in this referendum, then it is essential that they are provided with civic education in advance of the referendum vote. It is also essential that a comprehensive monitoring operation is undertaken to assess whether the process is conducted in line with the Referendum Act.

The Electoral Commission (EC) is responsible for coordinating and monitoring civic education prior to the referendum. A number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been accredited by the Electoral Commission to carry out civic education and monitoring of the referendum and it is working closely with them.

This booklet is a result of combined effort by the Civic Education and Training department of the Electoral Commission and the NGOs accredited to conduct civic education for the 2000 Referendum. The Commission appreciates the input of members of the NGOs material development committee which include Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Action for Development (ACFODE), Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) and the National Organisation for Civic Education and Election Monitoring (NOCEM)

GUIDELINES FOR CIVIC EDUCATORS

What is civic education?

Civic education aims at developing responsible citizens who participate actively in public life. At different times, civic education programmes can have different emphases.

Civic education aims at deepening people's understanding of:

- democracy and their role in it;
- how government is structured, and how it works
- the importance and scope of the Constitution
- how citizens can build democracy through active participation in public affairs
- how citizens can interact with elected leaders and hold them accountable
- how democracy and development go hand in hand.

In relation to human rights, civic education aims at promoting knowledge of and respect for human rights. Here a legal approach is often taken, enabling people to understand

- their fundamental rights according to the Constitution
- the international declarations and conventions that protect human rights

-
- how to access official structures created to protect human rights

Democracy Education

In addition to increasing knowledge, the aim of democracy education is to develop democratic attitudes, values and behaviour.

Democracy education aims therefore at promoting:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| ● tolerance | ● freedom |
| ● respect for diversity | ● responsibility |
| ● equality | ● accountability |
| ● fairness | ● transparency |

Voter education

Voter education takes place in the run-up to an election (or a referendum) to ensure that people know

- the purpose of the election (or referendum)
- how to prepare for it (eg. registration, attending campaign meetings)
- how to vote

But the most important goal of voter education is to motivate people to vote.

What are the goals of the civic education relating to the 2000 referendum?

The civic education programme that will be conducted in

the first six months of the year 2000 by NGOs and the Uganda Electoral Commission will aim at preparing Ugandans for the national referendum on political systems that is scheduled to take place between 3rd June and 2nd July, 2000.

Civic educators have agreed that they wish to combine all the approaches described above. The referendum education programme will be more than just a voter education campaign. The aim will be to ensure that Ugandans who participate in civic education in the coming months will:

- ❖ know what a referendum is
- ❖ understand what Uganda's referendum in 2000 is about
- ❖ understand the constitutional background to the referendum
- ❖ appreciate the importance of participating in the referendum, and the contribution this will make to strengthening democracy in Uganda
- ❖ respect the right of all Ugandans to prepare for the referendum in a free and tolerant atmosphere
- ❖ know how to vote in the referendum
- ❖ know the structures and mechanisms that exist to ensure that the referendum is free and fair

Code of conduct for civic educators

A formal code of conduct has been developed and all civic educators are expected to sign it and abide by it. This is a simplified version of the statement of guiding principles.

1. The main duty of a civic educator is to promote awareness of the referendum, and to encourage eligible voters to register and vote.
2. A civic educator will provide information, insight and advice on the referendum, without attempting to influence voters in any way.
3. A civic educator will use all possible means to
 - a) encourage people to register and vote
 - b) encourage people to take interest in the referendum campaigns to enable them to make an informed choice.
 - c) encourage voters to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each political system
 - d) encourage voters to ask questions about the political systems
 - e) advise voters to consider the strengthening of good governance and democracy when making their choice of a political system
 - f) advise voters to respect the laws governing the referendum
 - g) discourage voters from behaving in an intolerant manner and interfering with the freeness and fairness of the referendum
4. A civic educator shall remain impartial at all times

and not express his or her preference for any political system

5. A civic educator shall not in any way assist the campaign team of any political system in the run-up to the referendum
6. A civic educator shall be diligent and carry out his or her work conscientiously bearing in mind at all times the need to promote unity, peace, social justice and good governance in Uganda.
7. A civic educator shall be just and upright in all matters related to the work of civic education.

Qualities of a civic educator

A civic educator should be:

- Knowledgeable
- Impartial
- A good communicator
- A good listener
- Creative
- Committed

Strategies for conducting civic education

In order to reach out to as many people as possible, civic educators need to be on the look-out for a variety of opportunities to accomplish their task.

They need to be pro-active (by creating opportunities for civic education), as well as responsive (by taking up

opportunities that present themselves).

The most important thing is to be open and creative, and not to stick rigidly to one way of doing things.

There are two main strategies that civic educators can use:

1. Formal events
2. Informal interaction with people

→ Formal civic education

“Formal” civic education takes place when specific events are set up in advance.

The most common way of conducting “formal” civic education is in a workshop setting.

Here the civic educator gathers a group of people together in a suitable venue for a fairly extended period of time (2 or 3 hours).

The other formal setting in which civic education can take place is when civic educators obtain permission to address a meeting or a service of worship.

Civic education can also take place in institutions of learning such as schools and universities.

→ Workshops

Advantages

- There is time to cover all issues in depth
- Time also allows for the use of creative methods

Suitable venue enables participants to concentrate

- Numbers can be limited to ensure maximum participation

Disadvantages

- Limited numbers
- Reach only those who are keen to attend, not those who are unmotivated
- Can entail costs (such as refreshments and venue hire)

Rules to remember

- Identify a suitable venue (good seating, light, ventilation)
- Book the venue in advance
- Decide on the duration of the workshop
- Invite participants in advance
- Confirm how many people will attend
- Arrange refreshments if possible
- For participatory workshops, limit participation to 30 or 40 people

→ **Meetings, worship services, other formal events, schools**

Advantages

- Captive audience, that might not otherwise have attended civic education

-
- Often large numbers of people
 - Orderly environment

Disadvantages

- Short time
- Difficult to use participatory methods

Rules to remember

- Obtain permission in advance from the chairperson, imam, priest, school principal, etc
- Visit venue in advance
- Agree on duration of civic education presentation and do not go beyond the agreed time
- Check whether there are particular formalities (eg. dress, greetings) that need to be observed
- Since time is limited, prioritise information

→ Informal civic education

Informal civic education takes place anywhere and at any time when civic educators spontaneously make use of appropriate opportunities that arise. The key approach here is for civic educators **to go to the people**, rather than expecting people to come to them.

In order to make the most of these informal opportunities,

civic educators need to be very creative and responsive to what is going on around them. Sometimes it might work to stimulate people's curiosity by creating a stir. At other times it might be more appropriate just to draw quietly along side people and begin engaging them in discussion. Civic educators should be sensitive to the mood of the moment and the needs and interests of those around them.

⇒ Informal opportunities

Opportunities for informal civic education present themselves where people normally gather in the course of their everyday lives, for example:

- In the market place
- At the well
- In drinking places
- In queues (taxi, clinic, etc)
- ⊙ At home
- ⊙ At social gatherings

Advantages

- ⊙ Reach out to people who wouldn't normally attend workshops
- ⊙ Contact with people in smallish groups can be direct and intimate
- ⊙ Provide a diversion to people while they wait, and at the same time educate them
- ⊙ Get people talking about the referendum everywhere, all the time
- Environment is relaxed and unthreatening

Disadvantages

- Environment is full of distractions
- People tend to come and go

Rules to remember

- Create a stir by putting up colourful posters, performing some street theatre, wearing an eye-catching hat, etc.
- If possible, try to do this in an open, shady spot where people can gather comfortably
- Alternatively, if more appropriate, join people in what they are doing, make some small talk, and gradually introduce the subject of the referendum
- If you are not well known in an area, win people's trust by explaining who you are and what you are doing
- Do not be surprised if people are a little suspicious of who you are and what you are doing initially, and avoid a confrontational approach
- Be creative
- Be respectful
- Sometimes "surprise tactics" work, and sometimes they don't

Target groups

Civic educators should always bear in mind that certain

sectors of society tend to have difficulty gaining access to information, and therefore end up becoming marginalised. One of the aims of civic education is to ensure that all Ugandans are informed about the referendum. Special effort should be made to target those groups that often end up being left out, and those groups that have special interests and needs.

Special target groups include:

- Women
- Youth
- Disabled persons
- Elderly persons

Remember

When dealing with specific target groups, it is important to adapt civic education programmes to address their particular interests. To do this, it is necessary to develop a good understanding of the target group, and to consult closely with them when preparing to conduct civic education. Sometimes it can help if civic educators invite a representative of the target group to co-present with them.

Once the needs and interests of the target group have been identified, one of the best ways of ensuring that civic education succeeds is to use examples drawn from their experience. For example, when addressing elderly people, stories from bygone days can be used to

people, stories from bygone days can be used to appeal to them, and their status in communities can be affirmed by urging them to encourage others to vote.

Selection of information

Civic educators always have a lot of interesting information to share. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to share all of it. Rather than trying to impress people with how much they know, civic educators should focus on communicating information that will be relevant and useful to their audience.

Missing information and difficult questions

One of the things that is likely to make the task of civic educators more difficult is that certain information about the referendum will only be available at a later stage. Most importantly, the referendum question still has to be finalised, as well as the format of the ballot paper.

It is still uncertain whether voters will be choosing between several democratic political systems, or only two (that is, movement and multi-party).

On the logistical side, certain deadlines (such as registration cut-off dates, and referendum date) will also only be made known nearer the time.

Civic educators should not be discouraged if they do not yet have access to all information. This civic education programme is designed to give people a much broader

background to the referendum. In the early months of the campaign, it will be necessary to tell people that they should keep their ears open for information that is not yet available.

They can do this by listening to the radio, looking out for posters and pamphlets, reading the newspaper and participating in later civic education events.

When confronted with questions that they are unable to answer, civic educators should **NOT** invent answers but

- Consult written texts like the Constitution, other laws and the Electoral Commission's Civic Education Instruction Manual
- Tell people if the information is not yet available
- Check whether anyone else in the group knows the answer
- Tell people where they might be able to find the information themselves

Methodologies for civic education

Since democracy forms the central theme of all civic education, it is important to use democratic methods to put the message across. Otherwise the very methods used undermine the message.

In fact, it is common knowledge that people learn much more from experience than they do from being

with people in innovative and democratic ways, they are likely to learn a lot more than if they simply have to listen to a lecture.

Because civic educators have a lot of information to communicate and often do not have much time in which to do so, it is very tempting just to tell people everything they need to know. This temptation must be avoided. It is better to convey a few important facts effectively, than to rush through hundreds of facts that will all be forgotten.

Remember

Time spent allowing people to ask questions and express their views is never time wasted. The civic educator can steer discussion to ensure that key points are covered, but if people explore issues and draw conclusions by themselves, they are far more likely to remember the lessons they learn.

Another important way of ensuring that effective learning takes place is to base it on people's own experience. The ultimate aim of civic educators is to empower citizens. For this reason, it is important to focus on what participants in civic education already know, rather than on what they don't know. The aim of the civic educator is therefore to assist people to draw new conclusions from their past experience, and skillfully to introduce certain key facts against this background.

Democratic methodologies ensure that participants are able to:

- Help set the agenda for their own learning
- Ask their own questions in their own way
- Explore their own answers
- Voice their own ideas and interests
- Compare their ideas with those of others
- Hold different opinions from others, including the civic educator

There are many different kinds of participatory and experiential methodologies, including:

- role play
- simulation games
- drama
- self- and group-expression through art or music

However, all these methods require plenty of time, a smallish group of people, and a suitable learning environment. This civic education programme is based on a question and answer approach, and on group discussion. The four posters that form part of this civic education kit have been designed to provide civic educators with tools to stimulate discussion and to provide examples of everyday experiences that can be used to illustrate some of the fairly complex concepts associated with the referendum. Using a series of simple questions, the civic educator can guide people to make their own conclusions.

Facilitating a workshop or making a presentation

There are a few key steps to remember whenever facilitating a workshop or making a presentation, either in a formal or informal setting.

1. *Introductions*

Before beginning, take time to introduce yourself and any other people who are assisting you. It is very important for people to know that as a civic educator you have been accredited by the Electoral Commission and are working under their overall supervision. It is also vital that people can trust your independence.

2. *Objectives*

Then inform people about the aims of this civic education campaign. Check whether they are interested in achieving the learning objectives that have been outlined. Also check whether they have any questions and indicate whether or not these will be covered.

Ensure that objectives are shared in an appealing and not a laborious way. At this stage it is important to capture people's interest and not put them off.

3. Duration

Give people some idea of how long the presentation or workshop will last, so that they know what to expect. A workshop using all the posters can take up to 2 hours. Sometimes, however, people do not have this much time. Be sensitive to the situation and judge the timing according to what seems most suitable for people. Remember to prioritise information if time is tight.

4. Civic education activities / presentation

Once the preliminary steps have been completed, then the civic education activities can begin in earnest. (These are covered in much more detail elsewhere in this handbook). Remember that it is of the utmost importance to avoid lecturing and to give people the chance to participate and share their views.

5. Conclusion

When the activities are complete, summarise the objectives that have been achieved and the most important points that have been covered. It is also good to ask participants to mention what they have found most interesting and useful.

Remember that only they are able to know what they have really learned.

6. Closure

Close by thanking people for their time and attention. Always encourage them to pass the message on and to share with others what they have learned.

Using the posters

Visual aids such as posters can greatly enhance a presentation. They help to focus people's attention. Most importantly, the images help to "fix" the information in people's minds. Later, when they remember the posters, they will easily recall the discussions that took place and the key learning points that were drawn out of each image.

Visibility

It is very important for everyone to see the posters clearly. The posters are the seeds for discussion. If people cannot see the posters, they will be frustrated and will not be able to participate actively. It is therefore not suitable to use the posters with a very large group of people. The poster method works best with groups no bigger than about 40 people.

If participants are seated, they should form a **half-circle** as close as possible to the civic educator and the posters. Desks and tables get in the way and are not necessary. It is more important for participants to look and talk than to write and remain silent.

If people (especially the elderly) find it difficult to see all the detail in the posters from where they are seated, then invite someone to come up closer and explain to everyone what they can see.

Putting up the posters

Put up the posters **one by one**. If they are all put up together, then it will be impossible to focus the discussion. When discussion on one poster has been concluded, take it down and put up the next one.

There are different ways of putting up posters on different surfaces. Since posters will be re-used for several months, it will be important to take great care not to damage them. It is possible to strengthen the corners and edges of the posters by carefully putting masking tape at the back. It is best to hang the posters on a flat, smooth surface such as a wall or a large piece of board. Out in the open, if no such surface is available, civic educators can ask an assistant to hold the posters for them, although they should ensure that the posters are flat and do not flap about in the breeze.

Asking questions and encouraging discussion

Civic educators should remember not to do all the talking. Their role is to help participants learn through discussing and sharing. Skillful questions can guide the discussion.

Encourage everyone to speak and to ask questions if they are uncertain. If people ask difficult questions, try to work out an answer with everyone.

If one person in the group is talking too much, then ask other people to answer questions. If participants are very shy, ask them some easy questions to boost their confidence.

Dealing with participants' responses

It is important for the discussion to be as free and open as possible. Working in this way means that civic educators have to be flexible and able to think on their feet. If participants come up with unexpected responses, they should not be told that their answers are wrong.

Rather, an attempt should be made to use their responses in a positive way, and to link them up to some aspect of the discussion. Civic educators should remember that they can learn from participants too, and should always be open to seeing things in new ways and through different eyes.

QUESTIONS FOR POSTERS

These questions are intended as a **guide**. Civic educators should feel free to re-phrase them and to add questions of their own. In order to guide participants, it is often necessary to provoke them with extra little questions, or to probe their responses further in order to draw out the full meaning.

POSTER 1: The Market

1. What is happening in this picture? Describe it in detail.
2. Is everyone at the market selling the same thing?
3. Why do you think the man in the centre is buying from this seller and not the other ones?
4. How does the seller feel who has just made a sale?
5. How does the other sellers feel?
6. When you go to market, what helps you decide what to buy and what not to buy?
7. Can anyone force you to buy their wares?
8. Why is the preacher preaching at the market?
9. Is everybody listening to him?
10. Why is a group of people sitting together on the left hand side?

-
11. Is this group closed to other people, or can anyone join them?
 12. Can you name all the things that people are free to do (or not to do) in this picture?
 13. Do you think we can say that this market scene also gives us a picture (symbol) of a free society?
[freedom of choice, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom to make a living / free economic activity, access to basic needs such as food – for additional information refer to Handbook No. 4]

❶ Conclude by commenting that all these freedoms are fundamental human rights that need to be promoted and protected in every society.

POSTER 2: The Village Meeting

1. What is happening in this picture? Describe in detail what you see.
2. Who is responsible for keeping order in the meeting?
3. Why is the woman seated at the desk taking notes in the meeting?
4. Why are the two people in the middle exchanging words with one another?

-
5. Why is the chairperson allowing them to do this?
 6. Is everyone listening to them?
 7. What happens when people don't pay attention in a meeting?
 8. Why is the man on the right hand side raising his hand?
 9. Is everyone in the village attending the meeting?
 10. What happens when people don't attend a meeting and decisions are made that affect everyone in the village?
 11. Can you think of any similarities between this picture of the meeting and the previous picture of the market?
 12. Do you think we can say that a meeting is like a market of ideas?
 13. Why does the chairperson call a meeting, instead of making decisions on his own?
 14. When you go to a meeting, are you influenced by the ideas and arguments of others?
 15. Even if most people in a meeting support one idea, can others who disagree influence the final decision?
 16. If opinions in a meeting are strongly divided, how can a decision be reached?
 17. Once a decision has been made at a village meeting, is everybody expected to respect it?

18. How does this picture illustrate what it means to live in a democracy?

[the fundamental freedoms are respected; everyone can participate; each person's views are important and must be heard; debate must happen in an orderly fashion; majority decisions must be respected; the views of minorities must, however, also be taken seriously; leaders cannot make important decisions on their own when these decisions will affect people's lives – for additional information refer to Handbook No. 4]

- ① Conclude this discussion by commenting on the importance of participating in democratic decision-making processes so that everyone's views are heard and understood. You may want to add that at a village meeting people can express their views directly about a particular issue. However, when the views of all citizens need to be heard on an issue of national importance, then a national referendum is held.

POSTER 3: Tug-of-war

1. What is happening in this picture? Describe clearly what you can see.
2. What must each team aim to do in a tug-of-war?
3. What is the role of the woman in the middle who is raising her hand?
4. What are the qualities of a good referee?
5. What conditions will ensure that this tug-of-war competition is fair?
6. Why isn't everyone in the village helping to tug?
7. How is a team selected?
8. What are the two groups doing in the background?
9. How are they showing their support for their teams?
10. What will finally happen when the one team wins?
11. How does it feel to win a competition?
12. How does it feel to lose?
13. If a team wins a competition, then do they remain the winners forever?
14. If a team loses, do they remain losers forever?
15. Once the competition is over, how should the winners and losers treat each other?
16. When we vote, are there winners and losers?
17. Why is competition important in a democracy?

-
- U** At this point, take time to share some of the essential information about the forthcoming referendum.

Explain that elections and referenda are like democratic competitions. Emphasise that in a referendum one votes on an issue or question, rather than voting for a person. Usually our elected representatives vote on issues on our behalf in parliament (for example) – like the teams in the poster who represent their sides. However, when government wishes to hear the views of each and every citizen directly, then a referendum is held. This is like every citizen participating in the tug-of-war. The forthcoming referendum will be a competition between different political systems.

Now continue asking questions about Poster 3 as follows:

18. How will the different sides prepare for the referendum?
19. Who will ensure that the competition between the different sides is fair?
20. How will you show your support for a particular side in the referendum?

-
21. Who will judge the result of the referendum once voting is over?
 22. Why is it important for the Electoral Commission to be an independent body?
 23. How should winners and losers treat each other when voting in the referendum is over and the result is known?

U Conclude this discussion by observing that in the tug-of-war, everyone can see who belongs to which side. In a referendum, however, voting is by secret ballot. Overall support for each political system will be known, but not the individual supporters. Each voter's choice is a secret.

POSTER 4: Voting Day

1. What is happening in this poster? Describe in detail what you can see.
2. Why are people holding a card as they stand in line?
3. What will happen if you go to vote without your card?
4. Will everyone in the line vote for the same side in the referendum?

-
5. What are the officials doing at the first table in the polling station?
 6. Why is it important to have a voters' register?
 7. What are the monitors doing on the left hand side of the picture?
 8. Why is there a basin on the next table, and what is the person doing in it?

U *Explain to the people that the format of the ballot paper has not yet been decided. This information will be made available later. The ballot paper will be designed to let people show which political system they prefer. It will not have the names and photographs of individual candidates. Rather, it will have symbols representing the different political systems.*

9. Do you remember how to mark a ballot paper?
10. How should you avoid spoiling your ballot paper?
11. What will you do with the ballot paper once you have made your mark?
12. How is the voter's hand marked before he leaves the polling station at the top of the picture?

-
13. What is the role of the Electoral Commission on voting day?
 14. What is the role of the Electoral Commission once voting is over?
 15. What is happening in this picture to ensure that the voting process is free and fair?

U Conclude by commenting that voting is an important aspect of a democracy. Citizens should not miss this opportunity to express their preferences about which political system should be used to govern the country. Explain that although all information on the referendum is not yet available, the voting process will be similar to what it has been in the past. Civic educators will share up-to-date information about the referendum as soon as it becomes known. People should therefore participate in civic education activities and pay attention to the campaigns so that they can make an informed choice.

