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REGISTRATION 1995

PUBLIC EDUCATION WORKSHOP GUIDE



Electoral Commission of Ghana

July 1995

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Electoral Commission welcomes you as a civic minded Ghanaian organization interested in participating, and encouraging your members to participate more closely in the electoral process.

Once again, the Ghanaian people are being called upon to exercise their rights and responsibilities to take part in the democratic governance of the country. To do this, each Ghanaian citizen who is 18 years of age or older by September 30th this year, will be asked to have his or her name included in a completely new voters' register that is the centrepiece of our current electoral efforts here in Ghana.

Article 45(d) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana assigns the Electoral Commission the responsibility of educating the society at large about its voting responsibilities. The Constitution enjoins the Commission .....” to educate the people on the electoral process and its purposes.” The Electoral Commission is therefore concerned with implementing registration, voting, vote counting, and final tally reporting procedures that are both efficient and totally transparent, thereby generating public confidence in the Ghanaian electoral process and encouraging one-hundred percent participation of all eligible voters.

This implies that from start to finish, all eligible voters must exercise their democratic franchise without any fear, intimidation or coercion, and they must be satisfied that their names will be properly registered and their votes properly recorded and reported.

Much has been said and written about the former voters' register which was widely suspected to contain duplicate and 'ghost' registrations. But other criticisms came from some political parties and NGOs which did not know all the proper procedures or understand their appropriate roles in elections, and often mistook differences in interpretation of regulations at polling stations or honest errors as fraud or malfeasance.

For the past two years, the Electoral Commission has been planning and developing an all new, reliable voter registration system with a uniquely numbered voter ID card for everyone who registers, as well as revised polling station operations, joint election officials and political party agents training for full understanding of correct procedures, and transparent vote counting and reporting systems. And now we invite your participation in this new process.

There are four key things that all Ghanaian voters should know: (1) a strong and stable Ghana depends upon full citizen participation in choosing the leaders that the majority want by voting; (2) the first step toward free and fair elections is for every citizen to participate in the new process, starting with registration from September 15th to 30th; (3) the new register can be trusted; and (4) it's quick and simple to register.

This Guide has been developed to help you organize and present a workshop, or multiple workshops at regional and district levels, to your members or staff to encourage their knowledgeable participation in the electoral process. We hope you will find it helpful, and that you will provide feedback so the Commission may develop other guides for your use in the future.

Thank you for your interest and participation!

DR. K. AFARI-GYAN  
CHAIRMAN

# PLANNING YOUR MEETING

## Participants, materials and logistics:

Ideally, participants for the workshop should not number more than 20 for optimum communication. You need a suitable place for the workshop -- good light, ventilation, acoustics, comfortable (not too much so!) chairs, refreshments.

A date and time for the workshop (one hour is needed for this portion of the agenda)

Voter Registration workshop kit, consisting of the following:

- This Guide
- 10 YOU CAN TRUST IT Posters
- 1 CITIZENS OVER 18 Poster
- 1 I'VE REGISTERED - HAVE YOU Poster
- 2 VOTING IS FOR EVERYBODY Posters
- 2 EXPECTANT MOTHER Posters
- 2 FARMER Posters
- 2 BLIND MAN Posters
- 2 EMPLOYEES Posters
- 5 VOTER CARDS Stickers
- 20 REGISTRATION NEWSPAPERS
- 1 Questions and Answers cartoon book



## Before the workshop begins, you need to do the following:

- Arrange chairs and table in a semi-circle around the point where you will stand.
- Make sure there is something behind the point where you will stand. On this, hang one of the YOU CAN TRUST IT posters with tape, tacks, or push pins. Study the six points and drawings thereon to be familiar with each point, as you should reinforce them during discussion.
- Have the poster on REGISTRATION STEPS that is the centerfold of the newspaper supplement handy to put up at the end of Part I, as that's the centerpiece for part II of the workshop.
- Put up the other posters around the room or area as space allows. Be sure you are familiar with the message of each one so that during the workshop you can point to one or other as the discussion enables you to bring in the various topics.

## About the Workshop:

The workshop begins with a story. The purpose of the story is to capture participants' interest about the need to register for elections.

It is very essential that participants be absorbed by the story, so you should not read it. Instead, become conversant with the story and recruit several of your members to practice it in advance and role play it at the workshop.

As this workshop focuses on registration, you need to ensure that participants do not steer the meeting away from the subject under discussion.

## After the Workshop:

Ask participants to volunteer to take the posters and put them up where many people can see them.

# RUNNING THE WORKSHOP

Time: 16 minutes

The narrator or workshop leader must be brief and concise in the introduction

Introduction:

- One minute for introduction.



The narrator or workshop leader calls the role players to take their places and proceed with the play.

I wish to welcome you to this meeting about the voter registration process. We will spend 15 minutes to learn about how and why we should register for the 1996 elections. This workshop is important because it will enable all of us to disseminate official and correct information concerning the forthcoming voter registration exercise and encourage all Ghanaians of 18 years and over to participate, and indeed, it is our civic duty to do so. We hope that at the end of this meeting members will be able to explain to people how and why we must register.

In a moment we will watch a little drama, during which I want you to listen for all the reasons why we should register to vote. At the end of it we will discuss the play and you will have a chance to share your ideas. There are four people in this story. First of all, there is Miss Kapuri, a young college student. She is talking to Mama Ophelia, who is an older woman, a domestic worker. Uncle Abaane works for himself as a painter. Mr. Babayaro is a teacher in town.

(5 minutes for play)

#### REGISTRATION ROLE PLAY

- Kapuri:** (looking at her watch) Hey, the food is not yet ready. I am going to be late for classes.
- Mama Ophelia:** Where are your classes, child?
- Kapuri:** My classes are in town, but today I must go first to register to vote.
- Babayaro:** Yes, it is most important to register. I have already done so myself.
- Mama Ophelia:** But what is this registration for? I am an old woman and it seems to me there are changes all the time in this country. Didn't I register some three or four years ago? Why this disturbance?
- Babayaro:** Well, Mama Ophelia, cool down. You see, we must all register, but let me first try to explain to you, if I may. You know, some few years back we registered to vote but not everybody registered, and some people registered twice or more, and then dead people remained on the list which was thus bloated and incorrect. The current Electoral Commission is correcting all this by scrapping the old register and making an entirely new voters' register. That is why you **MUST** put your name on the new list.
- Abaane:** Is the old voter register not good? I am tired of answering questions.
- Babayaro:** No, it will not be used for the next elections. Only the new list will be valid, so go and register. The procedure is very simple.
- Mama Ophelia:** Why should I register? What does the government do for us?

**Kapuri:** (laughs) Truly, Mama Ophelia, I understand. At college our teachers explained to us very clearly about why we should vote. They told us that if we don't vote, our interests will not be attended to. The government is responsible for decisions on things like collecting taxes, developing agriculture, planning education and health facilities, and so forth. So if we don't register to vote for people who can represent our interests, we will never get the things that we need.

**Mr. Abaane:** Yes, you have explained that for us, but now we still do not know who is qualified to register.

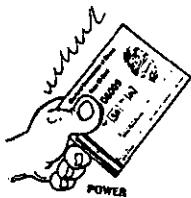
**Mr. Babayaro:** It is for every Ghanaian of 18 years or more. One must be 18 by September 30th, the last registration day, to enable him or her to register.

**Mama Ophelia:** Why should I trust this register? How different will it be from the old one?

**Kapuri:** goes to the "YOU CAN TRUST IT" poster on the wall. Mama, let me explain. You see this poster on the wall? It tells us that we can trust the voters register because it will be **reliable**. The Electoral Commission is rigorously training 60,000 registration officials and right along with them 80,000 political party agents who can be counted on to do it right. Both party agents and officials can challenge any doubtful registration they see. It is also **verifiable** because you will get an individually numbered voter ID card where the number matches your registration number on the list. Matching the number on your ID card with your number on the register will also make voting easier next year. The new register will also be **accountable** because officials and party agents both sign off every evening on daily reports on registration actions taken each day.

**Mr. Abaane:** Forgive me, my child, but why is it that some people are going to be given different ID cards -- some with ID photos and some without ID photos?

**Kapuri:** Both types of identity cards are valid. Voters in the regional capitals don't know each other well, so they need a photo ID card for quick identification. But in the rural areas people know each other very well, so they don't need photo identification. (She turns again to the poster) As I was saying, the registration process is accountable. There is daily report by party agents and officials. It is also **dependable**. Voters will be able to verify their names on the registration list next year and report any mistakes so they may be corrected. The register will also be **available** to political parties, each of which will be given its own copy of the register. Is it not **powerful**? Register, for your vote is your true franchise.



**Mr. Abaane:** Hey, you "book-long" people are full of tricks. I don't want my name on this list. You want me to pay taxes. It seems to me it's a lot of trouble to do this registration. I am busy, and I can't just leave my work and go off.

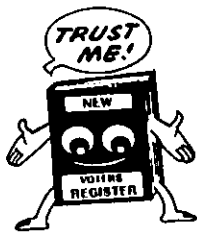
**Mama Ophelia:** Well, even an old lady like me can understand that we must all take part in the voting since it is our right to do so. But my home place is not here and I cannot leave my work to go there and register, and that is my worry.

**Kapuri:** There is no need to go back to your hometown to register. Register at the centre near where you live. Watch for neighborhood posters locating your centre, or listen to loudspeakers, or ask your assemblyman, or unit committee member. As a good citizen you should urge others to go register also.

**Mr. Babayaro:**

To add to what Kapuri said, I have found out that there are some people who think that if they were registered in the old days, then there is no need to register again. But that voters' register is no longer valid. I am sure that Miss Kapuri here will agree with me if I say that everyone must register and vote because we will only get the kind of services we want if we ourselves choose good people. Otherwise everything can just fall apart. And also some men still think that we are in the old days when men dictate to their wives as to what to do. No man any longer has the legal right to dictate to the wife whether to register or not. Women must register to vote, for they are half the population of this country.

**Miss Kapuri:**



Yes, what Mr. Babayaro is saying is very true. This time things are going to be different. Party agents, officials and even the general public are allowed to challenge applicants and report any irregularities. This time there is not going to be any house to house registration. Everybody must register near where she or he lives so that double registration may be eliminated. No one may register for anyone who is absent. Everybody must register in person. Even if a person is hospitalized, registration officials will go to the hospital and register the person. So this time, you can trust the voters' register. You must register to vote else there are so many services that you will not get if you have no representative in Parliament. Wouldn't you feel helpless then -- nobody to complain to?

**Mr. Abaane:**

I now understand why things are so. My people are living in poor conditions. I must urge them to register and vote.

**Mama Ophelia:**

You have told us about what will happen if we don't vote, so I see that we must each register to vote. How can we encourage others to do so too?

## **DISCUSSION OF STORY LED BY NARRATOR OR LEADER**

Ask participants Mama Ophelia's question. Put them in groups of four. Allow the groups 5 minutes to discuss their question and 5 minutes for the various groups to report their answers, then 5 minutes for general discussion. The main response for the question is that there are many ways to promote universal registration -- organizing workshops of this kind for others, taking others with us to register, offering to drive others to register, posting posters and reminders, speaking to local groups about the importance of registration in a democracy to ensure our having leaders who represent the views of the majority of the citizens and will get them the services they need, raising the issue with neighbors -- in short, making others aware. If the above responses are not given, ask probing questions until you get proper responses. Stress the importance of registering.

### **PART I: WHY REGISTER?**

#### ***How can we stop the break-down of services which this story describes?***

A key thing to do is to vote in order to elect the people who run our services. As we heard in the story, we can only vote during elections if we are on the register list, so all qualified Ghanaian citizens should register and get others to do so too.

#### ***Who is qualified to vote?***

Every Ghanaian citizen of 18 years or more by September 30, 1995 can register.

## PART II: REGISTRATION STEPS

The workshop leader introduces the topic and goes to the poster on voter registration steps, pointing to the poster in describing each step. Today, we will be discussing registration steps and some important questions and answers will be read out to you. A new voter registration process will commence in September, 1995. For two weeks, eligible citizens all over Ghana will be able to register. This new voters' register will result in a master voters' register signifying who can vote in presidential and parliamentary elections in 1996 and subsequent elections like District Assembly elections.



• Each registration centre will be staffed by three registration officials. In addition, this year, the Commission will permit up to four party agents to be present at every registration centre to monitor the whole process. The registration officials responsible for conducting registration include:

- A registration officer responsible for the operation of the registration centre and charged with recording names and other personal information about each eligible voter.
- A registration Assistant responsible for shading the information recorded on each voter into the proper boxes on the registration form so the information can be captured by an electronic scanner and computerized.
- A registration Assistant responsible for laminating each voter ID card to protect the card from deterioration.

Pause for 2 minutes and wait for questions. Discuss questions if any, and find solutions or answers to them. Refer to the attached Registration Questions and Answers for additional information.

Explain that it is not cumbersome to register.

The chart illustrates the different steps each voter will go through. You can go and register at the centre near where you live. On your arrival at the polling station, your left thumb is checked for electoral stain. If there is no stain thereon, the chief registration official will take the applicant's personal registration information, and then the applicant puts his or her left thumbprint on the form to complete registration. At this point, the registration officer will apply electoral stain to signify the person has registered. Thereafter, the registration form is handed to the registration assistant for shading, and then to another for lamination. If the applicant will get a thumbprint card, he or she thumbprints the identity card, or for a photo ID card gets his or her picture taken, after which the card is laminated and the new voter takes the card home. Or if the photo cannot be taken on that day, the applicant gets a receipt telling him or her when to return to the same centre for the photo to be taken.

I will like to remind you that registration starts from September 15 to 30, 1995, every day from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

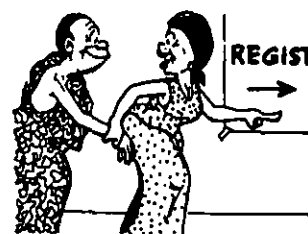
Remember, it's quick and simple to register and it's your civic duty to do so.

Thank everyone for listening. Encourage them to be sure to register and take everyone eligible among their families and neighbors with them when they go.

### AND AFTERWARD - -

Please write to the Commission and notify The Chairman about your meeting: when it was held, how many people came, how it went, and suggestions for the future.

**Thank you very much!**





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