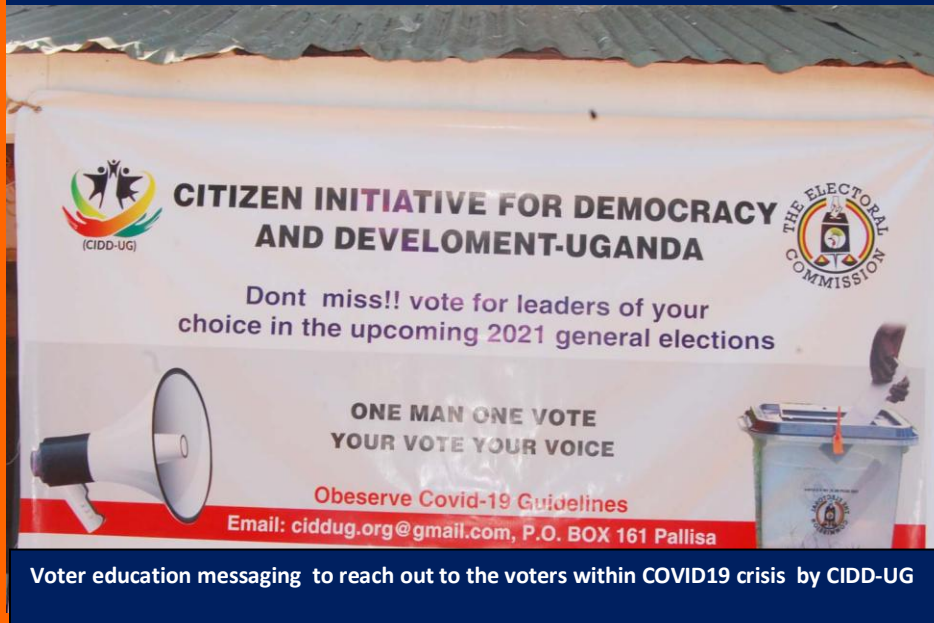




CIDD-UG NEWSLETTER

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CIDD-UG Creates a platform for Enhancing Election Stakeholder Dialogue to ensure Transparency of Election activities and process for a Free, Fair & credible 2021 General Elections within COVID-19 Crisis.



It is barely five months to the elections where Ugandans shall be deciding on their next leadership yet there are still un answered questions of whether or not the 2021 General election will be free, fair and credible.

On 16th JUNE 2020, the Electoral Commission launched the revised election road map and proposed digital Political campaigns ahead of the 2021 General Election. According to the electoral body, the administrative changes announced were designed with a view of integrating amendments that promote health and safety measures to control spread of COVID-19. Basing on that situation, Electoral Commission announced that election campaigns will be conducted in

accordance with the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures to enhance safe participation by stakeholders.

Whereas the Electoral Commission had good reason in proposing Digital campaigns, Political Parties and the electorate who are keen to exercise their constitutional Right received this with mixed reactions and viewed the action as being unfair and unconstitutional because it does not conform to provisions in **section 21 of the presidential elections Act, section 20 of the parliamentary elections Act and section 122 of the Local Government Act** on campaigns meetings and rallies. They argued that the proposed Digital campaigns in the framework of the revised roadmap lacks supportive legislative framework as well as required infrastructure to ensure free, fair, inclusive and credible electoral process. This is what **CIDD-UG** anticipates will greatly affect achievement of citizen participation in the electoral process which is a basic condition, principle and benefit for democracy, as the adage goes “Democracy starts at home and can only function if the citizens believe in and share its values”.

For purposes of mending the situation to create greater acceptance for collective responsibility in ensuring a free, fair, inclusive, and credible electoral process within COVID-19 crisis, CIDD-UG, a lead regional civic education agency in partnership with FOWODE, conducted stakeholder conversations and radio talk shows in Eastern Uganda, to share information and answer some unresolved election questions. We then laid strategies on how to Mobilize and enhance greater citizen

Engagement in the 2021 General electoral process within COVID-19 Crisis.

Whereas we reached over 1000 listeners through a radio talk show, the



Participants during Regional Electoral Stakeholder Engagements Dialogue at Country Inn Hotel – Pallisa

activity of Regional election stakeholder interaction brought together **30** key election stakeholders in the four Districts of Pallisa, Kibuku, Butebo and Budaka, in Bukedi sub region. The election stakeholders include Electoral Commission returning officers, Political Party representatives, CSOs, Police, District Local Government leaders, the Media, religious and opinion leaders. The key issues of having the young people who have turned into the voting age actually appear in the National voters register and lack of clear strategies of engaging people with disability, but also youth and women on access to electoral information was raised and discussed.

The meeting also emphasized on the issue of improving access to political and electoral information for young people and women in the region which was sighted to have been very poor and likely to affect the quality of their decision come January 2021.

The gender officer at CIDD-UG Mrs. Migamba Scovia called upon stakeholders during her submission to prioritize the most suitable channel of delivering this information to young people and women if at all the 2021 General elections are to make meaning to young people and women.

One of the concrete resolutions arrived at during this meeting was that CSOs, Political Parties, religious and other civic leaders should ensure sustained civic and voter education around the revised Electoral Commission roadmap and COVID-19 campaign guidelines to ensure safe inclusive electoral processes.

The Electoral Commission officials present in the meeting to prioritize the issue of access to information for people living with disability for national level election policy engagement.



Mrs. Migamba Scovia-Gender Officer at CIDD-UG

The Key immediate Outcomes of the Electoral Stakeholder Dialogue and Media Engagements were:-

- (1)** Enhanced awareness among political parties and CSOs on the revised Electoral Commission roadmap, COVID-19 safety measures and campaign guidelines.
- (2)** Fair trust and understanding was reached between the Electoral Commission, political parties and CSOs through peaceful engagement for free and fair 2021 General elections in the region with the electoral body opening up for meaningful partnerships in the electoral processes.

(3) Consensus was built on how to share vital 2021 general election information by Electoral Commission to reduce possible violence that could arise from poor information sharing

Change Story

I would like to thank CIDD-UG and FOWODE the organizers of this regional election stakeholder's engagement meeting. For sure as a rural woman, it has helped me to learn more about the 2021 General elections



since the outbreak of COVID-19 had stifled access to information. Almost all the questions I had come with have been answered in this engagement. I want to appeal to the public to stop voting because of money and as women we need to vote wisely” and vote leaders who will come back to us.

I’m however still wondering how the Electoral Commission shall address the issue of youths whose names are not appearing in the national voters register and yet they have now attained voting

age”, asked **Agwang Margaret Aisu-Pallisa.**



L-R; The returning officers for Kibuku and Pallisa & key stakeholders pose for group photo after Regional Election stakeholder engagement meeting at country in Hotel -Pallisa

Media Engagement



Top row L-R; The ED CIDD-UG Mr. Ejauten Fred, Obore Sarah coordinator Kadama Widows Association & a moderator during radio talk show to disseminate the revised EC Road Map

During the third quarter, CIDD-UG also conducted media campaign and reached over **3000** young people and women but also interested them to participate in the upcoming 2021 general elections. The Regular media engagement served as an avenue for dissemination of the revised 2021 election road map to the voters and illiterate population, a proportion of which is usually comprised of marginalised groups. The media campaign was equally used to answer election related FAQ like, *what is a scientific election? How deferent is it from the previously held elections? Who is responsible for guarding the votes under scientific election? If I don't have a national ID, shall I be allowed to vote? If I do not have a mask will I be allowed to vote?* This resulted into clarity on the part of listeners on the FAQ but also contributed to building their confidence in the election processes within COVID-19 crisis.

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