



Who is the King Maker in Nigeria: The Voter or the Godfather?

Briefing Note On Voter Education and the 2015 Elections in Nigeria

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACN-Action Congress of Nigeria
APC All Peoples Congress
APGA- All Progressive Grand Alliance
CBOsCommunity-based Organisations
CPC Congress for Progressive Change
CSOs - Civil Society Organisations
CVR - Continuous Voter Registration
EKSU - Ekiti State University
IDPs Internally Displaced Persons
INEC Independent National Electoral Commission
INGOs - International Non-Governmental Organisations
NHRC - National Human Rights Commission
NOA - National Orientation Agency
NUJ Nigerian Union of Journalists
PAC - Progressive Action Congress
PDP People's Democratic Party
PVC - Permanent Voter Card
USA - United States of America
VE- Voter Education

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Introduction

Nigeria is among five West African countries that will hold elections in 2015. The other countries are Burkina Faso¹, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Togo. According to the timetable released by Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the general elections will commence in February 14, 2015, with voters first casting ballots to choose the country's president and the new members of the National Assembly. These elections are important in Nigeria's march towards democratic strengthening, and will further evident the uninterrupted and growing demands for democracy in the country, since the transition to civilian administration in 1999. However, the overwhelming influence of political godfathers and moneybags in the electoral process pose

incredible threats to democratic survival. A constellation of factors are responsible for this deplorable situation. Poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, voter apathy, mandate theft, election violence, and other forms of election misconduct have had displeasing impacts on Nigeria's elections in the past. It is also worth noting that lack of strategic voter and civic education is an aggravating factor. Ordinarily, the voter in any democratic dispensation should be the kingmaker and determines the outcome of the election. However, in the Nigerian context, there is a clear tension between the voter and the godfather, and after analysis, it becomes obvious that the latter holds the ace as to who is elected into office.

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This briefing note discusses the current trends and possible scenarios in the lead up to the 2015 general elections and emphasizes the need for improved voter education. It further highlights challenges

voter education faces and offers recommendations to reverse the current political trend in which the godfather is the kingmaker instead of the voter the latter will thereby regain ownership of the electoral system to the detriment of godfathers and moneybags.

Voter education and the 2015 general elections: Issues

Voting and election are virtuous features of the modern democratic society². To appreciate the connection between voting and election, eligible voters must

be enlightened and sensitized about their rights and obligations, the modus operandi of the electoral process, the informed and non-prejudicial choices they make during election,

¹The political crisis in Burkina Faso is witnessing new developments following the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré on Thursday October 30th, 2014. See CDD Press Release "CDD calls on Burkina Faso Military to Hand over Power to Civilians immediately" November 13th, 2014, available online at <http://www.cddwestafrica.org/index.php/en/news/229-handover-to-civilians>

²Jibrin Ibrahim and Terfa Hemen 'Introduction: 2011 and the Protection of the People's Mandate The CDD Experience' in Jibrin Ibrahim, Idayat Hassan and Nengak Gondy From Direct Capture to Mandate Protection: Field Experiences from the 2011 Nigerian Elections (2014) Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development, 5.

amongst others. This is what is commonly referred to as “Voter Education”. By educating voters, they will meaningfully participate in elections; and turnout will also increase, thereby providing a frame for protecting, sustaining and institutionalizing a culture of credible elections and popular participation in governance.

In Nigeria, the number of registered voters increased from 57,938,945 in 1999 to 73,528,040 in 2011, and dropped to 70,383,427 in 2014³. While the increase from 1999 to 2011 may be attributed to the country's rising demography and the improved consciousness of citizens to participate in the electoral process, it has had little or no positive effect on the voter turnout. During the presidential elections held between 1999 and 2011, voter turnout only increased by 1.4 per cent, which is insignificant compared to

the increase in the number of registered voters recorded for the same period. Low voter turnout is not beneficial for Nigeria's quest for credible elections and the strengthening of democratic structures, mainly because it creates loopholes for politicians to creatively redistribute unused votes to their advantage.

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Similarly, the proportion of votes counted as invalid has increased but not proportionate to the increase in the number of registered voters recorded between 1999 and 2011. Unlike the 1999 election that had 431,611 invalid votes, the 2011 election recorded 1,259,506 invalid votes, which is roughly a 300 per cent increase. Nigeria's latest staggered elections also recorded a high number of invalid votes. In the 2012 Ondo State governorship election,

624,659 votes were cast with 30,415 votes declared invalid⁴. The trend continued in the Anambra State governorship election held on November 16th, 2013, out of the 442, 242 votes cast, a total of 16,988 were also declared invalid⁵.

Election violence seems to be a commonplace phenomenon in Nigeria's electoral history. Existing narratives has attributed the problem to the nature of the political competition; weak institutionalization of the democratic ethos; ethnicity and religious bigotry; illiteracy, amongst others. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the phenomenon is partly a testimony to the

³Nigeria Current "2015": Registered Voters Drop To 70.4m, Polling Units Rise To 150,000' available online at <http://www.nigeriancurrent.com/ck85-politics/2015-registered-voters-drop-to-70-4m-polling-units-rise-to-150000> (accessed 7 November, 2014).

⁴Kazeem Lamidi and Oluyemi Fagbohun, "A Psychological Analysis of the 2012 Gubernatorial Election in Ondo State, South-Western Nigeria" (2013) *Advances in Arts, Social Sciences and Education Research Journal*, Volume 3 (1) 359-363.

⁵INEC "Results for 2013 Anambra Gubernatorial General Elections" available online at http://www.inecnigeria.org/?page_id=31 (accessed 24 October 2014).

failure of voter education, which as mentioned earlier plays a defining role in shaping the participation of eligible voters in an election⁶.

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Since the mid-seventies, politicians have urged their followers to vote along religious lines Muslims are told to vote for Muslims while Christians are told to vote for Christians⁷. In the 2011 Presidential election, CPC's candidate, Muhammad Buhari, emerged victorious in twelve northern states, mainly Muslim states while Goodluck Jonathan of PDP emerged victorious in the Southern and North Central states, with large Christian populations. This perspective prejudicial to the strengthening of the Nigerian democracy still remains strong in the heart of politicking and political campaign strategies for the upcoming 2015 general elections.

Since independence, Nigeria's politics has been reduced to mere contest between individuals, religious or ethnic groups battling for access and/or control over state resources in contrast to ideal tenets of democratic governance or issue based politics. Nigerian political parties over the years lack concrete political manifestoes and ideology. The distinguishing factor in elections is usually the candidates themselves. But even at this level, there is no concrete engagement between candidates and the electorates. With the formation of All Progressive Congress (APC), the political rivalry between the ruling party and the opposition has become more intense as several indicting, injurious and slanderous statements have emanated from both Peoples Democratic Party and APC's secretariats, with a view to discredit each other⁸. Opposing statements from citizens who

overtly express their support to either of the parties complicate matters. In addition, the persistence of communal/religious clashes, and more recently the violent confrontations between farmers and herdsmen in the northern part of the country; as well as some other social problems susceptible of luring citizens into violence may encourage an outbreak of violence during the 2015 general elections.

Another issue that is detrimental to the credibility of the elections is the manipulation by politicians of some economically deprived electorates. They are talked to into selling their voter's cards or given money and food items to vote for a specific candidate. For instance, in the lead up to the 2013 Anambra State

⁶A cursory review of voter education curriculum reveals that while it preaches anti-violence, basic messaging such as how winners emerge, declaration of results are not captured. For instance, during our observation exercise in Osun State, the CDD team ran into voters wildly jubilating the victory of one of the candidates in the election based on the release of results of two of the local governments with the highest numbers of registered voters. This trend is not alien as a cursory look into the triggers of the 2011 post-election violence reveals similarities in messaging from all political parties. However, it should be noted that the popularity of candidates does not translate into votes. In addition, constitutional provisions on how winners emerge and the procedure for the declaration of results are not adequately captured in voter education program curriculum.

⁷Hyacinth Kalu The Nigeria Nation and Religion (2011) Indiana: iUniverse, 2.

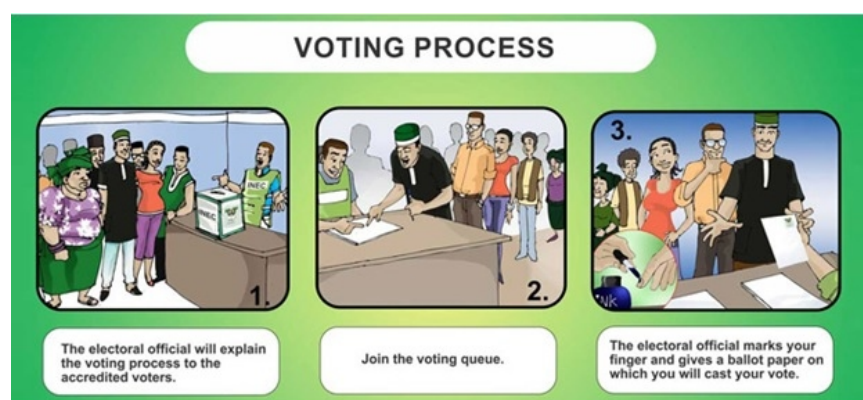
⁸The All progressive Peoples Congress is a merger of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)

Gubernatorial Election, reports abound in which people sold their voter's cards for a meagre five thousand Naira (N5000.00)⁹. By the same token, the sharing of rice and other food items in the recent gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun states have led to the emergence of the phraseology 'stomach infrastructure'. If politicians distribute food items and other material articles during elections with the belief that they can induce potential voters to vote for their parties, rather than conducting a fruitful issue-based campaign, that raises the fundamental question of the democratic worth of voters and the quality of their votes.

It is also important to note that voter education campaigns currently run by Nigerian CSOs and INEC is flawed in several aspects due to lack of funds and limited inputs from voters themselves. This is mainly because INEC is currently underfunded to carry out an effective voter education, and the Nigerian CSOs financial capacity is also increasingly challenged, mainly due to lack of adequate funding, inadequate deploying of the exercise, and more importantly, the ineffective

message sent to voters. In fact, civil society programming is more and more centralised with national CSOs taking lead. Though it is somehow a welcome development, it also represents a challenge as the local level groups, namely CBOs get excommunicated in the process, thereby leading to loss of local content and peculiarities which remains highly important within the present insecurity context plaguing the polity. On top of the late release of funding, by donor agencies, the front line role of development partners in the design and delivery of voter education programming removes the agency and input of local indigenous groups.

to conduct voter and civic education activities. For many years, INEC has partnered with several stakeholders of the electoral process, especially CSOs, to provide the electorate with basic information on the collection of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and Continuous Voters Registration (CVR); to explain to eligible voters their rights and obligations during elections, and how they thumbprint on ballot papers, etc. To boost voter education programming



Who has the responsibility to conduct voter education?

By the virtue of Section 2 (1) of the Electoral Act of 2010 (as amended), INEC is responsible and has the power

ahead of the 2015 elections, the Commission inaugurated a National Inter-agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity in May 2014 to provide a platform for proper co-ordination and synergy in efficiently

⁹Emmanuel Aziken & Vincent Ujumadu, Anambra: Sale of voters' cards boom <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/10/anambra-sale-voters-cards-booms/>

¹⁰INEC inaugurates advisory committee on voter education, available online at <http://www.punchng.com/news/inec-inaugurates-advisory-committee-on-voter-education/> (accessed 6 November 2014).

INEC has also been at the forefront of the campaign for the complimentary role of political parties and other relevant stakeholders in voter education programs

enlightening Nigerians on the electoral process¹⁰. INEC is also contemplating to adopt a certain number of strategies designed to reach out to voters in rural areas across the country to educate them on voting processes.

INEC has also been at the forefront of the campaign for the complimentary role of political parties and other relevant stakeholders in voter education programs. This has been consistently affirmed by the Commission. According to INEC's Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, voter education "is a joint responsibility, the political parties also have a responsibility and we have stakeholders in the democratic process."¹¹ It is no surprise that the National Chairman of the Progressive Action Congress (PAC), Chief Agadenyi Charles Nwodo,

reaffirmed such a stance. He posited that political parties, civil societies, religious and traditional institutions, as well as NOA should collaborate with the electoral body in this regard¹².

Political parties are conventional means for the conquest of power. They compete in elections to attain their goal. Similarly, Nigerian political parties engage in a political contest for power control. So, for the country to have credible general elections in 2015, they are tasked to carry out an effective political mobilisation campaign and good enlightenment programmes that will enhance their chances at the polls. Further, that could help the electoral process become transparent and credible. In an analysis of the 2011 Presidential Election, Adegbola Ojo emphasizes the importance of voter education in opposition parties winning the elections. He opined that opposition parties would have increased their

chances of winning the elections if they had not solely relied on INEC to encourage people to go out and exercise their civil rights. Most crucially, he stated that voters who were highly unlikely to go out and vote were located in the opposition strongholds¹³. On the whole, Nigerian political parties did not manage to mobilize the electorate for a higher voter turnout. So, over the past elections, voter education program in Nigeria has been reduced to chanting the failure of opposition parties.

CSOs are also committed to mitigating the poor record of voter turnout and other challenges for more credible elections in Nigeria. With the support of some International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and donor agencies, CSOs' programming have focused on educating Nigerians on the procedures and guidelines for elections; their rights with regard to the current electoral laws; and

¹⁰Okon Bassey "2015: Jega Advocates Aggressive Voter Education" 12 October 2012, available online at <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/2015-jega-advocates-aggressive-voter-education/127989/> (accessed 24 October 2014).

¹¹Premium Times "Political party seeks priority for Voter Education" September 20th, 2012, available online at <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/100860-political-party-seeks-priority-for-voter-education.html> (accessed on October 24th, 2014).

¹³Adegbola Ojo "How to vote or how not to vote: revisiting voting patterns and voters behaviour during Nigeria's 2011 Presidential Election" 2012, available online at www.nigerianclassification.com (accessed October 24th, 2014).

about strategies for protecting their mandate. This, to a large extent, has unequivocally had positive implications on the general conduct of elections in Nigeria. Evidently, through robust and constructive participation of citizens, the 2011 general elections results was adjudged to have reflected citizens' choice, though with minimal improvement in voter turnout¹⁴.

However, what is missing in the voter education campaign is the involvement of corporate bodies in its implementation across the country. In developed democracies, the private sector's technical and funding supports to voter education programs are remarkable. For example, in USA, the Kids Voting projects raised approximately \$12 million in cash and in kind from the private sector in 1998. These projects that are principally sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight

Foundation received additional sponsorship from several major corporations in the USA, including Ford Motor Company; J. C. Penny Company, Inc.; Knight Ridder Inc., and others¹⁵.

life. In Nigeria, political parties and candidates accord little or no attention to good party manifestos, and to the moral integrity of candidates contesting for



From stomach infrastructure to issue-based politics

Money politics, vote buying and godfather's brokerage function have taken a centre stage in Nigeria's political

public offices in winning elections. They rather often resort to vote-buying, which has recently taken many forms, ranging from giving of gifts such as soaps, bags of rice, gallon of kerosene, etc., to handing money to voters. This phenomenon is anchored on what has been termed godfather's

¹⁴See for example Idayat Hassan and Shamsudeen Adio Yusuf "2011 General Elections: Field Notes on Mandate Protection in the South- South Nigeria", in Jibrin Ibrahim, Idayat Hassan and Nengak Gondyi From Direct Capture to Mandate Protection: Field Experiences from the 2011 Nigerian

¹⁵Elections (2014) Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development 69-87

Marilyn Evans "Encouraging Political Participation in the Next Generation: Kids Voting USA" available online at <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/public-perspective/ppscan/74/74047.pdf> (accessed October 24th, 2014).



close down their businesses to fund elections. And when elections are won, those who invested their monies have to receive considerable returns for investment. Such a culture of expensive electioneering does not favour people freely expressing their will in the ballot, without any form of financial inducement. Hence, money becomes the determining factor of how the electorate chooses their candidates in a specific election.

Challenges and possible solutions to voter education

brokerage function. Godfathers are generally money bags who bankroll the election of their preferred candidates to the detriment of the voter's right to elect a candidate of choice. Their influence is also seen at party primaries where they pay delegates in hard currencies to secure the election of their candidates in semi-democratic primaries that use a so-called consensual vote, or zoning arrangements to choose party candidates for the

elections¹⁶.

In the last governorship polls conducted in the states of Anambra, Ekiti, Ondo and Osun, there were reports of vote-buying. All parties allegedly distributed material goods and money as well to bribe voters. In total disrespect for the Electoral Act of 2010 (as amended), incumbent political parties deployed huge state resources for electioneering while opposition parties raise funds from cronies to ensure victory at the polls. This makes political office in Nigeria an enterprise investment with the highest investor making the most gains. Politicians sell their properties and

There are several issues that hinder voter education in Nigeria. INEC, which is principally saddled with the responsibility of conducting voter education, has, in several forums, complained about the lack of adequate finance it needs to perform well its role. The Commission has often stated that funds allocated to voter education are not enough. Moreover, going by the present responsibilities of the commission, there are doubts whether it has enough capacity, especially in terms of personnel, to effectively carry out his mission.

See for example, Eric Osagie and Ihenacho Nwosu "Ciroma's bombshell: Obasanjo, Jonathan Bought PDP Delegates with Dollars in 2011" January 12th, 2013, available online at: <http://sunnewsonline.com/new/?p=15480> (accessed October 24th, 2014).

The voter education programmes currently developed also needs to be revisited as most of them are limited in scope and are not context or issue specific, and often dwell on teaching electorates how to vote correctly; what and what not to do on Election Day, and in certain instances before Election Day. Expanding the scope of the curriculum of voter education will be helpful. Engaging the electorate, educating them on the need to understand the issues, to rise above the stereotypical reasons for voting along the lines of ethnic, regional or religious sentiments must deeply be ingrained in voter education curricula. Moreover, enhancing the knowledge of citizens on how people win elections must be a key component of voter education; this will help stop pre-emptive mind-set or notions that often lead to violence¹⁷. More innovative campaign strategies and methods must be devised by all responsible parties. They should show more innovation and go beyond the traditional printing of posters and leaflets.

To make voter education

To make voter education programmes more effective, CSOs should engage in expanding efforts towards educating the electorate at the grassroots' level

programmes more effective, CSOs should engage in expanding efforts towards educating the electorate at the grassroots' level. Workshops in plush hotels, in state capitals are not enough; outreach to the rural communes must also be intensified. The hurriedly implemented programmes that often take place a few weeks to elections leave little room for trickle down effects. Civil society organisations should design and implement perennial voter education programmes in Nigeria, pre-dating and post-dating Election Day. While in recent years the use of social media has created some traction among the populace, going forward, it must be recognised that a huge part of the electorate does not have access to the internet. It is therefore crucial to design voter education programmes that take into cognizance this segment of the electorate, and put in place methods to evaluate their knowledge of the voting process.

The conceptualisation and design of voter education programmes and materials should be done in an inclusive way that involve

youth CBOs, thereby giving them the opportunities to influence the proposed projects. The current top-down approach where donor communities dictate how, where, and when voter education projects can be carried out is a source of concern. It removes local organisations' agency and limit the meaningful participation of potential voters at the grassroots level. These issues were already raised in 2011; however, there is still a status quo as we approach the 2015 general elections¹⁸.

A failure in voter education: unfolding scenarios

While democratic governance has had its longest spell since independence, challenges are still abound. The ills and ugly incidences of the 2011 elections despite all the accolades are still fresh in memory¹⁹. There are

¹⁷For instance the legal provision that to emerge as the winner of a presidential election, a candidate must poll majority of the votes and 25percent in 24 states of the federation.

¹⁸Jibrin Ibrahim "The Future of Elections Mandate Protection" in Jibrin Ibrahim, Idayat Hassan and Nengak Gondyi (eds) From Direct Capture to Mandate Protection: Field Experiences from the 2011 Nigerian Elections (2014) Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development, 193; Zakary Okwori "Training Manual on Election Mandate Protection for Grassroots Organisations (2009) Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development 3-4.

¹⁹The election was adjudged as a remarkable departure from the failure of the past elections in Nigeria's election history by the international communities, Nigerians amongst others.

instances of INEC organisational and logistical problems on Election Day, cases of electoral malfeasance, misconduct of INEC officials, post-election violence, and low voter turnout, amongst others, are obvious realities of the 2011 general elections. Given these, there is a need to immediately

elections through context and issue specific voter education; thumbing it right, clearing the stereotyped mind-sets that determine voting patterns in these violence-prone areas that we stand a chance of burying the violent acts we witnessed in 2011. A recent assessment by the CLEEN Foundation revealed that several states in Nigeria have a

and encourage voter turnout, there is a strong possibility that the elections be declared inconclusive, especially if the turnout is relatively low.

General voter apathy

While Nigerian voters are getting more involved in the electoral process, voter apathy still remains an issue. According to Professor Attahiru Jega, "there is still a high degree of apathy, an intolerably high percentage of voided votes traceable to limited knowledge and awareness, too few females are participating in elections as candidates and other disadvantage groups still feel left out of the process²¹." An INEC commissioned study of voter apathy during the 2011 elections pinpointed failed promises, electoral corruption and violence as the major reasons for electoral apathy²². Respondents identified politicians, government, and INEC as the main actors responsible for voter apathy, with the latter ranking highest on the list²³. So, the indifference the electorate show vis-à-vis the elections emanates from the actions of the political class and the



Voter education and election violence

Lack of effective voter education may lead to increased violence in the 2015 general elections. It is only by intensely engaging with the entire Nigerian populace and educating them on the necessity of peaceful

high risk of witnessing electoral violence during the 2015 general elections²⁰. The fact that some of these states were engulfed in the 2011 violence aggravates the prospect of such a prediction. Already, some of the states in question have fallen victim to the Boko Haram insurgency that threatens the peaceful conduct of the elections. Unless context specific voter education programs are designed in these states to avert/minimise violence

²⁰These include Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Kaduna, Kano, Zamfara, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Enugu, Imo and Lagos States. See CLEEN Foundation "Election Security Threat Assessment Towards 2015 Elections" (2014) Monograph Series No 22 at 14.

²¹Leadership Newspaper, "Jega Decries Voter Apathy in Nigeria". June 5, 2014, available online at <http://leadership.ng/news/373436/2015-jega-decries-voter-apaty-nigeria> (accessed October 24, 2014).

²²INEC "Voter Apathy and the 2011 General Elections" July 2011 at 9.

²³Ibid at 11



to those IDPs to encourage them to participate in the elections and also to avoid that the incoming administration faces a legitimacy issue due to their non-participation in the elections. It is the responsibility of the Nigerian government to ensure that all her citizens, including IDPs, exercise their voting rights. Moreover, INEC should come up with an immediate plan detailing how IDPs will participate in the upcoming elections.

Nigerian government in general. The fact that elected politicians and the government in general are still not able to meet the demands of the people continues to be the main reason why voters do not fully involve themselves in the electoral process.

primary concerns of IDPs living in camps are security, food and shelter, they should not be denied the opportunity to vote. This means that voter education programmes should be extended

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and voter education

The Boko Haram insurgency has caused a series of challenges to the security of Nigeria, including a high number of internally displaced persons in north-east Nigeria²⁴. Whether the 2015 elections will take place in that part of the country is subject to debate. Although the



²⁴We note the IDP situation is not limited to the Boko Haram insurgency but includes victims of the flood disaster, Plateau, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Benue, other ethno-religious conflicts. The IDPs and the 2015 general elections will be in our upcoming briefing note on IDPs.

Probable scenarios in the 2015 general elections

1. Poor voter education; increased invalid votes, low voter turnout and higher stakes on electoral violence.
2. IDPs not specifically targeted; low voter turnout; inconclusive election or legitimacy problems for the incoming administration
3. No specific voter education programming in identified hotspots; low voter turnout; outbreak of election violence before, during and after the elections.
4. No synergy between national and local NGOs programming; local content lost; increased voter apathy and violence
5. Voter education curriculum remains same; no improved messaging on how to vote; how winners emerge; how results are proclaimed; how electoral justice is served; status quo ante maintained; stakes on violence higher; low voters turnout; increased invalid votes.
6. Late release of funding by donor agencies minimal impact of voter education.

Conclusion and recommendations

Voter education (VE) involves information about voting as a civic duty, voting and human rights, the roles, responsibilities and rights of voters, the relationship between elections and democracy, the condition for democracy; the importance of the vote and the secrecy of the ballot. If we critically look at the expected outcome(s) of VE, we may agree that it cannot be a one-off exercise. It entails continuous effort by those charged with raising eligible voters' consciousness, their knowledge and understanding of the electoral process and procedures; and their proper participation in the process as well. In this regard, voter education differs from voter information because its activities are deployed for a long-term effect and transcend giving information about voter registration, type of election, time and

date, place for the election etc. So, it can be inferred that, in the long run, nobody benefits from a well-educated set of electorates more than political parties as they are the entities that field candidates for elections and seek political power. True political power belongs to the people and not to money bags and godfathers. Therefore, recognising the different channels through which the electorates, in different parts of the country, can be reached is important. For instance, television and social media as means of communication can be effective in some areas, but largely ineffective others.



In view of the analysis, the need to make voter education a continuous process in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Therefore, government and other agencies responsible for voter education should stop delaying such a necessary engagement with voters. However, that requires an innovative and carefully designed strategy that will yield good results and thereby curtail the anomalies recorded during previous elections. If not, the

consequences may even be worse than those identified for the 2011 elections, mainly because the stakes get higher everyday as the elections draw closer. Eventually, it is the electorate that should be the kingmaker and not the godfather who ultimately feeds on the ignorance and incapacitation of the voter in the Nigeria of today.




²⁵ Okechukwu Ibeanu "Conceptualising the Specificities of Direct Capture in the 2007 Elections" in Jibrin Ibrahim and Okechukwu Ibeanu (eds) *The 2007 Nigerian Election and the Subversion of Popular Sovereignty* (2009) Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development, 9 - 29.

From the foregoing, CDD makes the following recommendations




A) The Nigerian Government:

-  Should increase the current financial allocation to INEC to allow the Commission to conduct effective voter education.
-  Should establish an Electoral Offences Commission to ensure that those who commit electoral offences are held accountable.

B) The Independent National Electoral Commission:

-  INEC should intensify its collaboration with organisations like National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Federal Ministry of Information and umbrella bodies such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ). INEC should also work with CSOs in radio and television programmes designed to increase voter education in Nigeria.
-  The INEC should partner with CSOs to develop context specific voter education materials incorporating issues from pre, during, and post elections.
-  INEC should take the lead in the re-orientation of the Nigerian public from voter education to civic education.






C) The Political Parties:

-  Political parties must deepen voter education among their members as they are the major beneficiaries during elections.
-  Political parties should concentrate on developing issue-based policies in their manifestoes and campaign only on issues as a means of attracting votes during election.
-  Political parties should mobilise their supporters and members to enhance their chances at elections.

D) National Human Rights Commission:





-  The NHRC should embark on voter education by highlighting issues related to electoral justice and electoral offences.
-  The NHRC should amplify its electoral impunity campaign (e.g continue publishing the names of those indicted by Nigerian courts for electoral malpractices in previous elections).

E) Civil Society Organisations and Professional Bodies

-  CSOs should devise conventional and unconventional means of reaching out to voters to exercise their mandates in a way that positively influences the outcome of elections.
-  CSOs should concentrate on working with local partners to develop issue- based civic education materials.
-  CSOs should include post-election mandate protection as a core component of election cycle projects.
-  CSOs must prioritise socio, cultural and political contexts in their voter education messaging.
-  CSOs should deliberately target their voter education exercises at the grassroots level so as to meet the larger and uninformed populace.



F) Donor Agencies and Development Partners:

-  Should fund voter education projects that are inclusive, representative of the target population and empowers youths, women, persons with disabilities, local communities and disadvantaged Nigerians and help them to exercise their civic mandates.
-  Should empower CSOs at the grassroots level to develop context specific voter education programmes.
-  Should support the activities of NGOs and CSOs working at the grassroots level to design and implement voter education programme.
-  Donor agencies should ensure that voter education programmes are funded timely to allow for trickle down effects especially at the grassroots level.

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