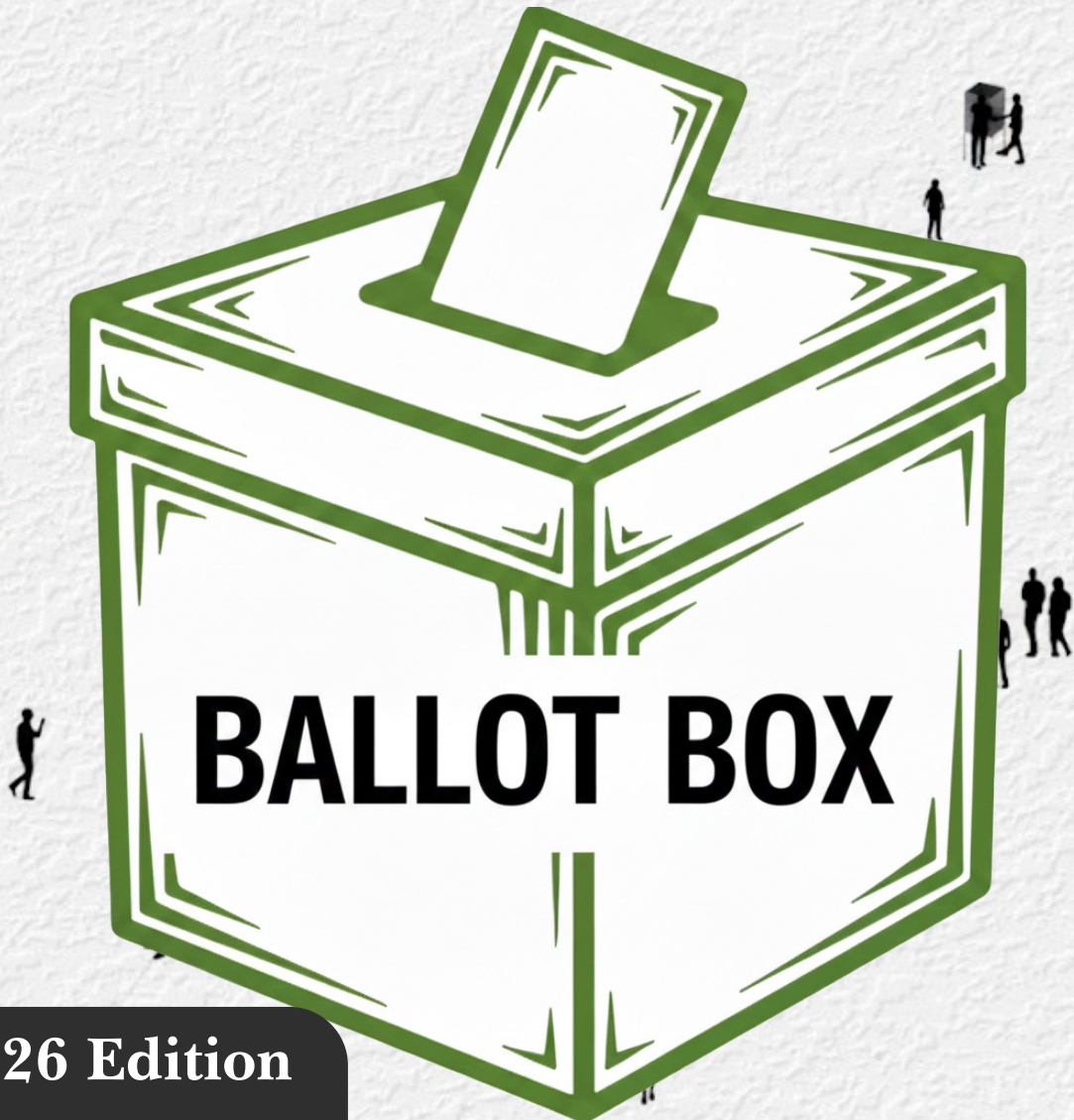




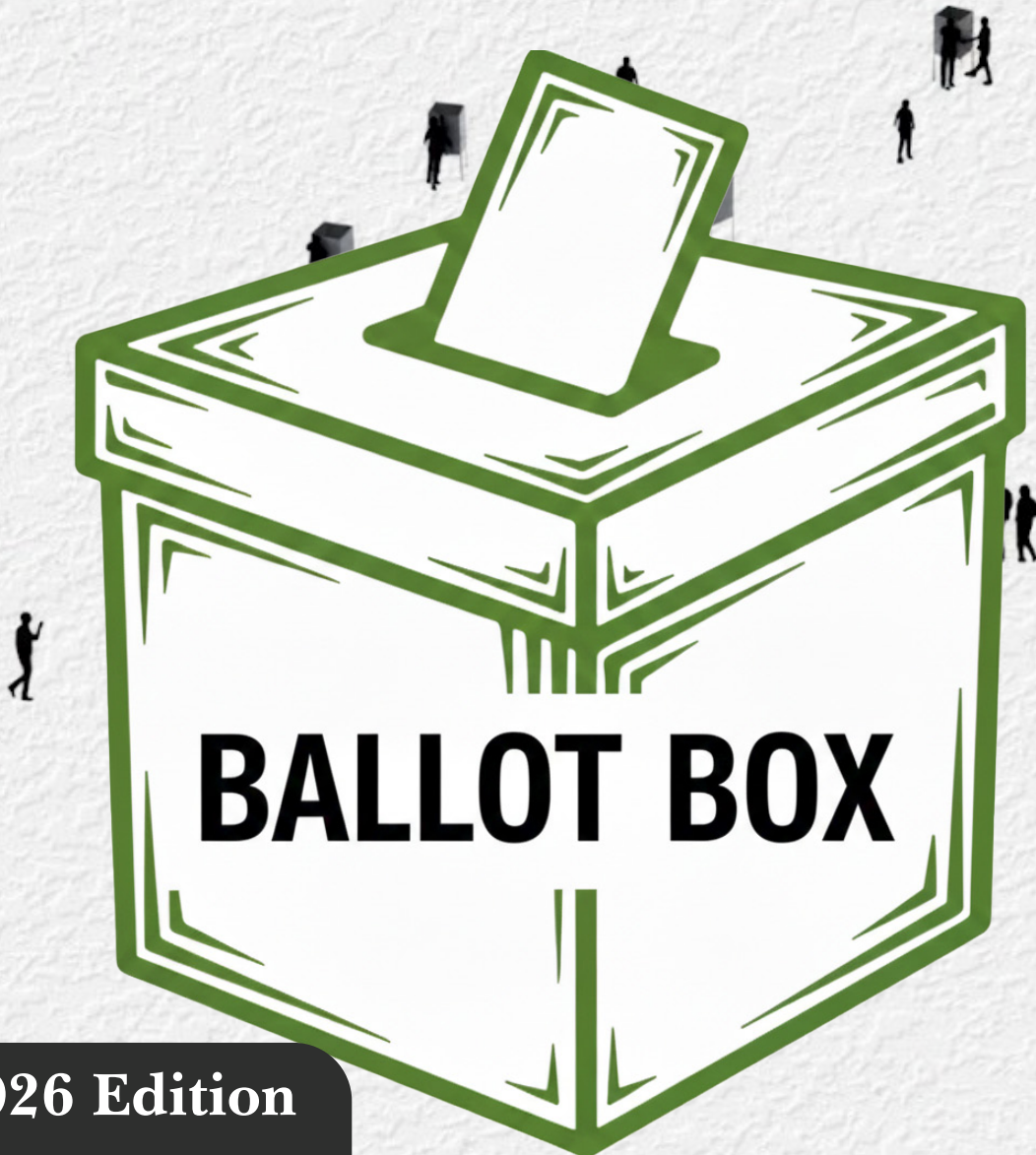
NATIONAL VOTER EDUCATION MANUAL



2026 Edition



NATIONAL VOTER EDUCATION MANUAL



2026 Edition

Acknowledgment

We wish to thank the Hon. Chairman (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, and, indeed, members of the Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), of the Commission, for providing purposeful leadership and guidance.

INEC acknowledges the collective efforts and contributions of institutions and individuals whose expertise, insights, and commitment made the review and updating of this National Voter Education Manual possible.

INEC appreciates the technical collaboration and professional support provided by Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI), whose research depth, civic education experience, and practical understanding of Nigeria's democratic landscape contributed significantly to strengthening the clarity, relevance, and accessibility of this Manual. KDI's role in supporting the review process helped ensure that the Manual reflects contemporary civic and voter education standards while remaining responsive to local realities.

The Commission also acknowledges the support of the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO) for providing financial assistance that enabled a structured and standards-based review of the Manual.

INEC further recognises the contributions of stakeholders from government institutions, civil society organisations, media practitioners, and subject-matter experts who participated in technical consultations, reviews, and validation processes during the development of this Manual.

The Commission remains grateful for these partnerships and reaffirms its commitment to continuous improvement of voter education as a cornerstone of credible elections and democratic participation in Nigeria.

Preface

Voter education remains a cornerstone of credible elections and meaningful democratic participation. As Nigeria’s electoral processes continue to evolve, it has become increasingly important that citizens are equipped with accurate information, practical knowledge, and a clear understanding of their civic and electoral responsibilities.

This National Voter Education Manual represents a deliberate effort by INEC to enhance the quality, relevance, and reach of voter education across the country. The review and update of the Manual became necessary due to significant developments in Nigeria’s electoral framework, particularly the enactment and implementation of the Electoral Act 2026, as well as emerging global trends in civic engagement, digital communication, and electoral integrity.

The Manual is designed to serve a wide range of voter education stakeholders, including INEC staff at all levels, National Orientation Agency personnel, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), educators, youth groups, community leaders, the media, and other partners engaged in civic and voter education. It provides structured guidance on civic education, voter education and enlightenment, electoral processes, inclusion, media engagement, election security, and participatory democracy, using clear and accessible language to enhance understanding among diverse audiences.

In reviewing this Manual, particular attention was paid to inclusivity, accessibility, and contemporary communication realities. Issues such as youth participation, digital misinformation, the use of civic technology, inclusion of persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and voters in hard-to-reach communities have been more deliberately addressed. These additions reflect the Commission’s commitment to leaving no eligible voter behind.

The successful development of this Manual benefited from structured technical inputs and stakeholder consultations. The contributions of partners who supported the review process strengthened its clarity, coherence, and alignment with both national priorities and international best practices in voter education. It is our expectation that this Manual will serve not only as a reference document, but as a practical tool that supports consistent, accurate, and effective voter education

nationwide. Through its use, INEC reaffirms its commitment to building an informed electorate, promoting peaceful participation, and strengthening public trust in the electoral process.

Malam Mohammed Kudu Haruna

Chairman, Information Voter Education & Publicity Committee (IVEC)

Foreword

Democracy thrives when citizens are informed, engaged, and confident in the systems that govern their participation. Voter education is therefore not an optional activity, but a fundamental responsibility of electoral management bodies committed to credible, transparent, and inclusive elections.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is pleased to present this revised National Voter Education Manual as part of its continuing efforts to deepen democratic culture and strengthen electoral participation in Nigeria. This Manual builds on previous editions, while responding to legal, technological, and societal changes that now shape the electoral environment, most notably the Electoral Act, 2026.

The revised Manual provides comprehensive guidance on civic and voter education, electoral processes, the role of institutions, inclusion of marginalised groups, media engagement, election security, and dispute resolution. It also reflects the realities of modern elections, including the growing influence of digital platforms, the spread of misinformation, and the critical role of young people in sustaining democratic values.

INEC recognises that credible elections depend not only on sound administration, but also on an electorate that understands its rights, responsibilities, and the importance of peaceful participation. This Manual is intended to support that understanding by providing accurate, consistent, and accessible information for voter education practitioners and the general public alike.

The Commission appreciates the constructive engagement of stakeholders who contributed technical expertise and practical insights during the review process. Such collaboration strengthens institutional outputs and reinforces shared responsibility for democratic development.

As Nigeria continues its democratic journey, INEC remains committed to continuous learning, improvement, and innovation in voter education. It is our hope that this Manual will serve as a trusted guide for all those working to inform citizens, promote inclusion, and uphold the integrity of elections.

Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN

Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment	3
Preface	4
Foreword	5
Table of Contents	6
List of Abbreviations	15
Introduction	17
Rationale, Purpose, and Scope of the Manual	19
What You Will Learn	20
How to Use This Manual	21

Module I: Foundations of Civic and Voter Education

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results		24
1.1	What is Civic Education?	25
1.2	What is Voter Education?	26
1.3	What is Voter Information?	26
1.4	Distinction Between Civic Education and Voter Education	27
1.5	Why Civic and Voter Education Matter	28

Module II: Civic Education and Democratic Citizenship

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 30

2.1	Civic Education Models	31
2.2	Civic Knowledge	32
2.3	Democracy and Governance	33
2.4	Meaning of Democracy	33
2.5	Democratic Systems	35
2.5.1	Representative Democracy	35
2.5.2	Barriers to the Success of Representative Democracy	37
2.5.3	Direct or Participatory Democracy	38
2.6	Challenges to Democracy	38
2.7	Good Governance and Governance Systems	39
2.7.1	Governance Systems	40
2.7.2	Principles of Good Governance	43
2.8	Citizenship and Democracy	44
2.9	Deprivation of Citizenship	45
2.10	Rights of Citizenship in a Democracy	45
2.11	Responsibilities of Citizenship in a Democracy	46
2.12	Obligations of the State in a Democracy	46
2.13	Youth Participation and the Future of Democracy	47
2.14	Civic Responsibility in the Digital Age	48

Module III: Voter Education – Building an Informed and Responsible Electorate

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 55

3.1	Voter Education Beyond Voting	56
3.2	Aim of Voter Education	57
3.3	Benefits of Voter Education	57
3.4	Who Conducts Voter Education	59
3.5	Voter Education Channels and Strategies	61
3.5.1	Television	61
3.5.2	Radio	61
3.5.3	Digital Voter Education, Civic-Tech Tools, and Misinformation Counter Strategies	62
3.5.4	Public Enlightenment	62
3.5.5	Stakeholder Engagement	62
3.5.6	Integration and Implementation of Civic and Voter Education in Schools	63
3.6	National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP)	63
3.6.1	Composition of NICVEP at Various Levels	64
3.6.2	Functions of NICVEP	65
3.7	INEC Citizens Contact Centres (ICCC)	66
	Design of ICCC	68
3.8	Content of Voter Education Programmes and Events	68

Module IV: Elections in a Democratic System

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 74

4.1	What is an Election?	75
4.2	Election Principles	75
4.3	Electoral Rights	76
4.4	International Instruments Creating Electoral Rights	77
4.5	Electoral Systems	78
4.6	The Electoral Cycle	79
4.7	Types of Elections in Nigeria	81
4.8	Eligibility to Contest Elections in Nigeria	82
4.9	Who is a Voter and the Rights of Voters	83
4.10	Why Vote	84
4.11	Nigerian Legal Framework for Elections	84
4.12	The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999	87
4.13	The Electoral Act, 2026	88
4.14	Judgements and Pronouncements of the Supreme Court of Nigeria	88
4.15	INEC Regulations and Guidelines	89
4.16	Other Laws Affecting Elections	89

Module V: Election Management Bodies in Nigeria

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 92

5.1	Why Electoral Management Matters	93
5.2	Evolution of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria	94
5.3	Types of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria	95
5.4	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	95
5.4.1	Composition and Structure of INEC	95
5.4.2	Functions of INEC	97
5.5	State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs)	99
5.5.1	Composition and Structure of SIECs	99
5.5.2	Functions of SIECs	99
5.6	The Relationship Between INEC and SIECs	100
5.7	Electoral Officials and Their Duties	100

Module VI: The Electoral Process in Nigeria

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 106

6.1	Pre-Election Phase	107
6.2	Election Day Activities	108
6.3	Post-Election Phase	111
6.4	Margin of Lead Principle	111
6.5	Electoral Offences	112
6.6	Citizens as Watchdogs and Reporting Violations	113

6.7	Electoral Dispute Resolution	113
6.7.1	Types of Electoral Disputes	114
6.7.2	What the Electoral Act Says about Disputes and How the Legal System Handles Disputes	115
6.7.3	Mechanisms for Resolving Electoral Disputes	115
6.7.4	Valid Reasons to File a Post-Election Petition (Grounds of Petition)	116

Module VII: Inclusion in Voter Education

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 118

7.1	Why Inclusion Matters	118
7.2	Understanding Marginalised Groups	119
7.3	Women	120
7.3.1	Why Target Women	120
7.3.2	Barriers to Women's Participation	120
7.4	Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	121
7.4.1	1 Barriers to PWD Participation	122
7.4.2	Legal Framework for Inclusion in Nigeria	122
7.4.3	Disability Assistive Aids and Devices	123
7.4.4	Creating Access for PWDs	124
7.5	Youths and Democratic Participation	124
7.5.1	Voter Education Targeting Youths	125
7.6	Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	126
7.6.1	Classification of IDPs	126
7.6.2	Inclusion of IDPs in the Electoral Process	126

7.6.3	Framework for Voting by IDPs	127
7.6.4	Regulations for Voting by IDPs ²⁴	127

Module VIII: Political Parties and Elections

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 129

8.1	Meaning of Political Party	130
8.2	Conditions for Registration of a Political Party	131
8.3	Political Parties and Elections	132
8.4	Qualification of New Political Parties to Contest in a General Election	132
8.4.1	Political Parties Sponsoring Candidates at Elections	132
8.4.2	Canvassing for Votes and Mobilising Citizens	133
8.4.3	Withdrawal of a Duly Nominated Candidate from an Election	133
8.4.4	Changing a Duly Nominated Political Party Candidate	133
8.4.5	Extension of Time for Nomination of Candidates	133
8.5	Political Party Funding and Campaign Finance	134
8.5.1	Campaign Spending under Nigerian Law	134
8.6	Period of Political Party Electioneering Campaigns	135
8.6.1	Security During Electoral Activities	135
8.6.2	Use of the Media by Political Parties	135
8.7	Political Parties Code of Conduct	135
8.7.1	Establishment of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC)	135

Module IX: Media, Information, and Elections

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 137

9.1	Why Media Matters in Elections	137
9.2	Functions of the Media in the Electoral Process	138
9.3	Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fake News	138
9.4	Digital Engagement and Responsible Communication	139

Module X: Elections and Security

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 142

10.1	Security Threats During Elections	142
10.2	Providing security during elections	143
10.3	10.3 Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)	144
10.4	Conducting elections in conflict-prone areas	146
10.5	The Election Management System	146
10.6	Basic Security Tips for Election Day	147

Module XI: Planning and Facilitating Voter Education Activities

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results 150

11.1	Planning Voter Education Events	151
11.2	Facilitation Techniques and Outreach Methods	155
11.3	Tools and Materials for Voter Education	159
11.4	Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning	161
Strengthening Democratic Culture Through Voter Education		

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
APC	All Progressives Congress
APO	Assistant Presiding Officer
AREVO	Assistant Revision Officer
AU	African Union
BVAS	Bimodal Voter Accreditation System
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDS	Community Development Service
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
DPI	Disabled Peoples' International
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMB	Election Management Body
EO	Electoral Officer
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FEDECO	Federal Electoral Commission
FEC	Federal Electoral Commission
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FOSIECOM	Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions
GID	Gender and Inclusivity Department (INEC)
ICCC	INEC Citizens Contact Centre
ICCES	Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Committee
IVED	INEC Voter Enrolment Device
KDI	Kimpact Development Initiative

LGA	Local Government Area
MDA	Ministry, Department, or Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NECON	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
NICVEP	National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity
NIN	National Identification Number
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PoA	Plan of Action
PO	Presiding Officer
PR	Proportional Representation
PPA	Place of Primary Assignment
PWD	Person(s) with Disabilities
PVC	Permanent Voter's Card
RA	Registration Area
REC	Resident Electoral Commissioner
REVO	Revision Officer
RO	Registration Officer
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
SMS	Short Message Service
SPO	Supervisory Presiding Officer
TV	Television
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization



Introduction



Voter education is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance. It enables citizens to understand their civic rights and responsibilities, the electoral process, and the institutions that manage elections. An informed electorate is more likely to participate peacefully, make reasoned choices, and contribute to the legitimacy and credibility of electoral outcomes.

INEC, in line with its constitutional and statutory mandate, has consistently prioritised voter education as a core component of election administration. This National Voter Education Manual provides structured guidance for the design and delivery of civic and voter education across Nigeria. It reflects the Commission's commitment to promoting inclusive participation, strengthening public trust in the electoral process, and supporting democratic consolidation.

This revised edition responds to significant developments in Nigeria's electoral environment, particularly the enactment and implementation of the Electoral Act, 2026, evolving electoral practices, and emerging challenges such as digital misinformation, declining civic engagement, and the need for broader inclusion of marginalised groups. It also aligns voter education approaches with contemporary global standards while remaining grounded in Nigeria's legal, social, and cultural context.



Rationale, Purpose, and Scope of the Manual

Rationale

The need to periodically review and update voter education materials arises from changes in electoral laws, institutional reforms, technological advancements, and societal dynamics. Since the publication of the previous voter education manual in 2021, Nigeria has adopted a new **Electoral Act, in 2022 and now 2026**, introduced enhanced electoral technologies, and experienced shifting patterns of political and electoral communication and participation.

These changes require voter education content that is accurate, current, accessible, and responsive to the realities faced by citizens. Without updated guidance, voter education efforts risk inconsistency, misinformation, and reduced effectiveness. This Manual, therefore, provides a unified and authoritative reference to support coherent voter education delivery nationwide.

Purpose

The purpose of this Manual is to:

- Provide clear, accurate, and standardised guidance on voter education in Nigeria
- Support INEC, partner institutions, and voter education practitioners in delivering consistent messages to the public
- Enhance citizens' understanding of democratic principles, electoral processes, and legal frameworks
- Promote peaceful participation, inclusion, and respect for electoral laws
- Strengthen public confidence in elections through knowledge-based engagement

Scope

This Manual covers the full spectrum of voter education, including:

- Civic education and democratic values
- Voter education and voter information
- Electoral laws, institutions, and processes
- Roles of election management bodies and stakeholders
- Inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and rural communities
- Media engagement, digital communication, and misinformation awareness
- Election security, electoral offences, and dispute resolution
- Planning and facilitation of voter education activities

The Manual is designed for use before, during, and after elections, recognising that voter education is a continuous process rather than a one-time intervention.



What You Will Learn

This Manual is structured to build knowledge progressively and practically. Users and readers will gain a clear understanding of:

- The meaning and importance of civic education, voter education, and voter information
- How democracy functions and the role citizens play beyond voting
- The legal and institutional framework governing elections in Nigeria
- The stages of the electoral process and what is expected of voters at each stage
- How voter education can be delivered through traditional, digital, and community-based channels
- Ways to promote inclusion and reach groups that are often underserved

- How to recognise and respond responsibly to misinformation and electoral risks
- The responsibilities of institutions, communities, and individuals in sustaining credible elections

By the end of this Manual, readers should be better equipped to participate in elections responsibly, support voter education efforts, and contribute to peaceful and credible democratic processes.

How to Use This Manual

This section guides facilitators, Corps members, election educators, and partner institutions on how to apply the contents of this manual effectively, responsibly, and consistently across different contexts.

This manual is designed as a **practical reference and facilitation guide** for civic and voter education activities. While it is structured in modules, it is not intended to be read or delivered rigidly from start to finish. Users are encouraged to adapt the sequence and depth of modules based on audience needs, timing, and context, while preserving factual accuracy and institutional neutrality.

Intended Users of the Manual

User Group	How the Manual Should Be Used
INEC staff (national, state, LGA)	Reference for standardized voter education delivery and coordination
NYSC Corps members	Practical guide for CDS-based voter education and community outreach
Civil society partners	Alignment tool for voter education programmes consistent with INEC standards
Media and educators	Source of accurate electoral information and civic education framing
Community facilitators	Guide for structured, neutral, and inclusive engagement

Modular Application

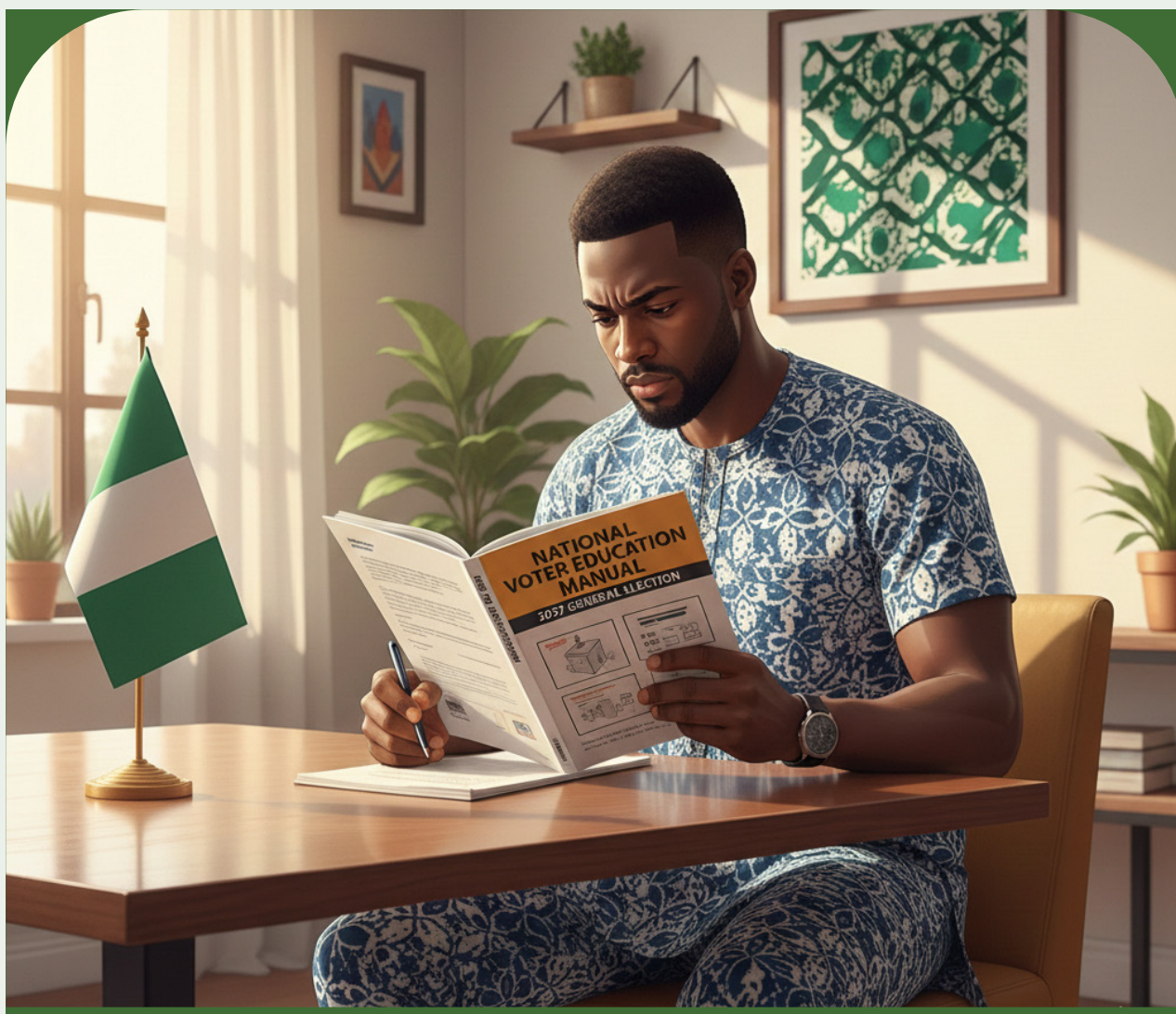
Each module can be:

- Used independently for targeted engagements (e.g., youth outreach, PWD sessions)
- Combined with other modules for comprehensive programmes
- Adapted into short sessions, workshops, or digital formats

Authority and Compliance

All information in this manual is subject to:

- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.
- The Electoral Act, 2026.
- INEC Regulations, Guidelines, and official directives





Module I:

Foundations of Civic and Voter Education



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Civic and voter education form the foundation of meaningful democratic participation. Free, fair, and credible elections depend not only on strong institutions and sound laws, but also on citizens who understand their rights, responsibilities, and the processes through which leaders are chosen. The quality of public participation in elections is closely linked to the level of knowledge, awareness, and confidence citizens have about the democratic system.¹

As democratic systems evolve and electoral processes become more complex, the need for clear, accurate, and continuous civic and voter education has grown. Citizens require reliable information to navigate electoral procedures, assess political choices, and engage peacefully and responsibly. This module introduces the core concepts of civic education, voter education, and voter information, and explains how they work together to strengthen democracy.

Objectives of the Module

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain the meaning and scope of civic education
- Explain the meaning and scope of voter education
- Clarify what voter information entails and how it differs from voter education
- Distinguish clearly between civic education and voter education

Explain why civic and voter education are essential to democratic governance and credible elections

Expected Results

At the end of this module, readers are expected to:

- Have a clear understanding of civic education, voter education, and voter information
- Understand the relationship and distinctions between civic education and voter education
- Appreciate the importance of informed citizen participation in elections
- Understand why civic and voter education are continuous processes that support democratic stability



1. 1 What is Civic Education?

Civic education refers to the process of equipping citizens with the knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes required to participate effectively in public life and democratic governance. It focuses on helping individuals understand how political systems work, what their rights and responsibilities are, and how they can contribute constructively to their communities and the broader society.

In democratic systems, civic education goes beyond basic awareness. It supports citizens to think critically about governance, respect the rule of law, engage peacefully with differing views, and participate responsibly in public affairs. Civic education reflects political diversity and encourages inclusion, dialogue, and tolerance.

Broadly, civic education pursues three interrelated goals:

First, it introduces citizens to the structures, rules, and institutions of democratic governance, including constitutions, laws, public offices, and decision-making processes. This helps citizens understand how authority is exercised and how accountability works.

Second, it promotes democratic values such as respect for human rights, political tolerance, trust in democratic processes, adherence to the rule of law, compromise, and peaceful coexistence.

Third, it encourages active and informed participation in civic life. This includes participation in elections, community engagement, public dialogue, advocacy, and other lawful democratic activities that strengthen governance.

Civic education is continuous in nature. It begins early in life and extends throughout adulthood, adapting to changes in society, governance, and technology.



1.2 What is Voter Education?

Voter education is a specialised component of civic education that focuses specifically on the role of citizens as voters. While civic education addresses broader issues of governance and citizenship, voter education concentrates on preparing citizens to participate effectively and responsibly in elections.

Voter education provides information and guidance on issues such as:

- Who is eligible to vote
- How and where to register as a voter
- Voting procedures on election day
- The roles of political parties and candidates
- Electoral offences and prohibited conduct
- The responsibilities of election management bodies
- The importance of respecting election outcomes and legal processes

Voter education also seeks to shape positive attitudes toward elections by building confidence in the process, encouraging peaceful participation, and reinforcing the importance of individual votes. It supports citizens to make informed choices based on issues, policies, and credibility rather than misinformation or inducement.

Unlike civic education, voter education is often intensified around electoral periods, but it remains relevant throughout the electoral cycle, including pre-election, election day, and post-election phases.



1.3 What is Voter Information?

Voter information refers to the provision of specific, factual, and time-bound details that enable eligible citizens to participate in a particular electoral event. It is usually disseminated shortly before and during elections.

Voter information typically includes:

- Dates and times of elections
- Locations of polling units
- Types of elections being conducted
- Identification and documentation requirements
- Voting methods and procedures
- Instructions for special categories of voters

Unlike civic education and voter education, voter information is narrowly focused and event specific. Messages are developed for each election and may change from one electoral cycle to another. While preparation may take time, voter information campaigns are usually implemented within a limited timeframe to respond to immediate electoral needs. Voter information supports participation but does not on its own address broader democratic values or long-term civic engagement.



1.4 Distinction Between Civic Education and Voter Education

The table below highlights the key distinctions between civic education and voter education:

Dimension	Voter Education	Civic Education
Design	Public education focused on the mechanics and processes of elections	Public education focused on the political system, governance, and citizenship
Purpose	To empower citizens with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as voters	To empower citizens to understand how political power is exercised and how to engage responsibly
Focus	Voter registration, voting procedures, electoral offences, roles of electoral bodies	Systems of government, democratic values, rights, responsibilities, governance, and nation-building

Timing	Often intensified around elections	Continuous and long-term
Scope	Election-specific participation	Broad democratic participation beyond elections

While distinct, civic education and voter education are complementary. Effective voter education is strengthened when citizens already possess a solid civic foundation.

1.5 Why Civic and Voter Education Matter

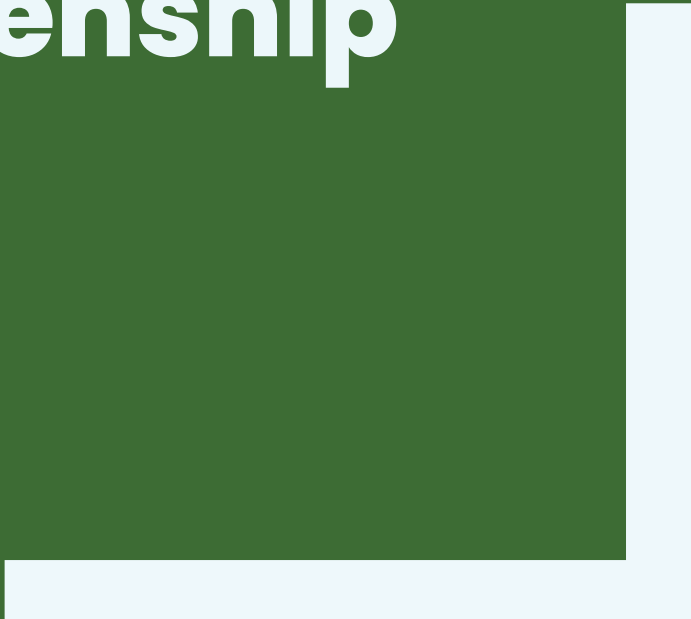
Civic and voter education matter because democracy depends on informed and engaged citizens. Electoral laws, institutions, and technologies can only function effectively when people understand how to use them responsibly.

Civic education builds the long-term values and knowledge that sustain democratic culture, such as respect for rights, peaceful coexistence, and accountability. Voter education ensures that citizens are prepared to participate correctly and confidently in elections, reducing errors, misunderstandings, and conflict.

Together, civic and voter education:

- Improve the quality of participation in elections
- Promote peaceful and inclusive electoral processes
- Strengthen trust in democratic institutions
- Reduce vulnerability to misinformation and manipulation
- Support accountability and good governance

In this sense, civic and voter education are not one-time interventions but ongoing investments in democratic stability and development.²



Module II:
**Civic Education
and Democratic
Citizenship**

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Civic education and democratic citizenship are central to sustaining any democratic system. Beyond elections, democracy relies on citizens who understand how governance works, who recognise their rights and responsibilities, and who can participate constructively in public life. Civic education supports political maturity, informed judgment, and peaceful engagement, enabling citizens to relate democratic principles to their everyday experiences.

This module deepens understanding of democracy, governance, citizenship, and participation. It explains how democratic systems function, why representative democracy requires informed citizens, and how civic education strengthens democratic stability over time. The module also prepares readers to understand democracy as a shared responsibility between citizens and the state.

Objectives of the Module

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain the concept of civic education and its models
- Develop understanding of civic knowledge and its role in political participation
- Define democracy, governance, and democratic systems
- Explain representative and participatory democracy
- Examine citizenship, rights, responsibilities, and state obligations
- Highlight the role of youth and digital citizenship in modern democracies

Expected Results

At the end of this module, readers are expected to:

- Understand the meaning and purpose of civic education

- Appreciate the link between civic knowledge, participation, and democracy
- Understand democratic systems and how representative democracy operates
- Recognise the role of citizenship in democratic governance
- Develop awareness of responsible participation in both offline and digital civic spaces



2.1 Civic Education Models

Civic education does not follow a single universal model. Its content and emphasis vary across countries depending on constitutional structures, historical experiences, social values, and governance priorities. In most democratic systems, civic education includes constitutional principles, political institutions, rights, and active citizenship. In some contexts, it also integrates moral education, national values, or peacebuilding objectives. Effective designs increasingly blend knowledge, values, skills, and participatory practice to reflect local realities and contemporary challenges such as digital citizenship, social cohesion, and democratic resilience^{3 4}.

Globally, civic education models commonly include:

1. **Knowledge-based models**, which emphasise constitutions, laws, institutions, electoral systems, and policy processes, are typically taught through structured curricular sequences and inquiry with primary sources⁵.
2. **Values-based models**, which focus on democratic values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, accountability, and the rule of law⁶.
3. **Skills-based models**, which build capacities for analysis, dialogue, civil discourse, collective problem-solving, and leadership through pedagogies such as simulations and role-play⁷.
4. **Participatory models**, which encourage experiential learning through debates, simulations, community engagement, and civic action⁸.

Many countries adopt a blended approach, combining these models to reflect local realities. Civic education is most effective when it is inclusive, culturally relevant, and responsive to societal needs such as peaceful coexistence, national integration, and democratic resilience.



2.2 Civic Knowledge

Civic knowledge refers to an understanding of political rights, institutions, processes, and democratic principles, as well as the skills required for peaceful social and political engagement. It forms the core of civic education and directly influences the quality of participation in democratic life⁹.

Research consistently shows strong links between civic knowledge and political engagement. Recent findings from the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study in 2022, covering 24 education systems, report robust associations between students' civic knowledge (tested via standardised items) and their self-reported likelihood of future civic engagement, including voting intentions, issue engagement, and community participation¹⁰. ICCS 2022 finds that students with stronger civic understanding report greater trust and lower alienation regarding democratic institutions. UNESCO's recent Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development emphasises that rights-based, knowledge-rich curricula can mitigate cynicism and foster constructive engagement with governance systems¹¹.

So, civic knowledge:

- Helps citizens understand how public policies affect their personal and collective interests.
- Enables individuals to evaluate political choices more consistently over time.
- Provides the framework needed to interpret political events and public information accurately.
- Reduces alienation and mistrust by strengthening understanding of public institutions.
- Promotes support for democratic values such as tolerance, equality, and accountability.

- Increases the likelihood of participation in elections, community dialogue, and civic action.

Civic education often targets different groups within society. These include citizens who are disengaged from politics, those who are informed but inactive, those who are capable of rational judgment, and those who are actively involved in political life. Effective civic education supports political independence and maturity across all groups.



2.3 Democracy and Governance

Democracy and governance are closely linked concepts that shape how societies are organised and how public authority is exercised. Democracy refers to how authority is derived from the people, while governance relates to the processes, institutions, and practices through which that authority is applied to manage public affairs. Together, they shape how decisions are made, implemented, and reviewed within a society.

Democratic governance refers to the interaction between state institutions and citizens in decision-making, policy implementation, and oversight. It is built on key principles such as legitimacy, accountability, transparency, participation, and adherence to the rule of law. These principles determine whether governance is considered effective, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the population.

The quality of governance can be assessed by examining how power is exercised, how public resources are allocated and managed, and how well the rights and freedoms of individuals are protected. Good democratic governance strengthens development outcomes, enhances social stability, and builds public trust. It does so by ensuring that decisions are made inclusively, implemented responsibly, and evaluated openly.



2.4 Meaning of Democracy

Democracy has been described in various ways across time and cultures. At its core, democracy is a system of government in which citizens choose their leaders through regular, free, and fair elections and retain the right to replace them through lawful means. **It is commonly described as government of the people, by the people, and for the people.**

The concept of democracy originated in **ancient Greece**, particularly in the city-state of **Athens around the 5th century BCE**. The word democracy comes from the Greek words:

- **demos** – “the people”
- **kratos** – “power” or “rule”

So, democracy literally means **“rule by the people.”**

In ancient Athens, citizens (adult male Athenians) participated directly in decision-making through assemblies where they debated laws, policies, and public matters. Although this early form excluded women, slaves, and foreigners, it laid the foundation for modern democratic thought, emphasizing participation, equality, and civic responsibility.

Over centuries, democracy evolved, especially with:

- the **Magna Carta (1215)** in England, which limited royal power
- the rise of **parliaments** in Europe
- the development of **constitutional democracy** after the American (1776) and French (1789) revolutions

Today, democracy has expanded worldwide and is built on principles such as:

- 1 **Popular Sovereignty:** Power ultimately belongs to the people. Leaders govern *with the consent of the governed*.
- 2 **Free and Fair Elections:** Citizens choose their leaders through regular elections that are competitive, transparent, and free from manipulation.
- 3 **Rule of Law:** Everyone, including those in power, is subject to the law. Decisions are made according to established rules and procedures.
- 4 **Protection of Rights and Freedoms:** Democracy safeguards fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, association, religion, and the press.
- 5 **Participation and Inclusion:** Citizens are encouraged to take part in public life—voting, debating, holding leaders accountable, or engaging in civic activities.
- 6 **Accountability and Transparency:** Elected officials must explain their decisions and can be removed from office if they fail to perform.

Democracy also relies on institutions that balance power among the executive, legislature, and judiciary, and on an active relationship between government and civil

society. It provides a framework for managing public affairs, protecting human dignity, and promoting sustainable development.



2.5 Democratic Systems

Democratic systems describe how authority and participation are structured within a democracy. Although all democracies share common principles, participation, representation, rule of law, and rights, they vary in how they organise power, conduct elections, and make decisions. Democratic systems can be grouped into **three broad categories**:

1. **Direct Democracy**
2. **Representative Democracy**
3. **Hybrid and Specialised Democratic Forms** (e.g., liberal and illiberal, Federal and Unitary Democracy)



2.5.1 Representative Democracy

Representative democracy is the most widely practised form of democracy globally. Citizens elect representatives to make laws, implement policies, and oversee governance on their behalf. This system allows large populations to participate indirectly in decision-making through elected institutions.

Key features include:

- Regular elections
- Separation of powers
- Accountability of representatives
- Protection of minority rights

Representative democracy depends heavily on informed citizens who can assess leadership performance and participate meaningfully in elections.

Representative democracy has several sub-types:

2a. Parliamentary Democracy

How it Works

- Citizens elect parliament; parliament selects the Prime Minister.
- The executive (government) is drawn from the legislature.
- The government can be dissolved by a vote of no confidence.

Examples: United Kingdom, India, Canada, Australia, Germany.

Strengths

- Flexible and stable government.
- The executive is accountable to parliament.
- Encourages coalition-building.

Weaknesses

- The Prime Minister can have too much power if the ruling party has a large majority.
- Smaller parties may dominate coalition governments.

2b. Presidential Democracy

How it Works

- The President is elected directly by citizens.
- Clear separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary.
- Fixed terms of office.

Examples: United States, Brazil, Nigeria (formally), Mexico.

Strengths

- Strong legitimacy due to direct election.
- Separation of powers prevents concentration of authority.

Weaknesses

- Risk of executive-legislative gridlock.
- “Winner-takes-all” elections may marginalise minorities.

2c. Semi-Presidential Democracy

How it Works

- A president exists *alongside* a prime minister.
- President: elected directly
- Prime Minister: dependent on parliamentary support
- Power is shared between the two.

Examples: France, Portugal, Finland.

Strengths

- Balances authority between the president and parliament.
- Reduces the chances of a political stalemate.

Weaknesses

- Can lead to confusion during “cohabitation” (when the president and PM come from different parties).
- Power struggles may occur.

2.5.2 Barriers to the Success of Representative Democracy

Representative democracy depends on institutions, laws, and informed participation. Several barriers can limit its effectiveness if not addressed systematically.

- **Institutional barriers** may include weak enforcement of laws, limited independence of institutions, or unclear accountability mechanisms. When institutions do not function as intended, democratic outcomes can be undermined.
- **Socio-economic barriers** such as poverty, inequality, and limited access to education or information can restrict participation. Citizens who struggle to meet basic needs may find it difficult to engage consistently in civic life.
- **Political and social barriers** include polarisation, intolerance, exclusion, and

mistrust. When public discourse becomes divisive or inaccessible, cooperation and consensus-building become more difficult.

Addressing these barriers requires long-term commitment to civic education, inclusive policies, transparent governance, and peaceful dialogue.

2.5.3 Direct or Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy emphasises direct citizen involvement in decision-making beyond elections. Citizens engage through consultations, public forums, referenda, community initiatives, and civil society activities.

Participatory democracy strengthens inclusion and responsiveness by allowing citizens to contribute to policies that affect their lives directly. It complements representative democracy rather than replacing it.



2.6 Challenges to Democracy

Democracy faces challenges in many parts of the world, particularly in societies undergoing political, economic, or social transition. These challenges do not negate the value of democracy but highlight areas where democratic systems require strengthening, adaptation, and sustained civic engagement. Common challenges include:

Institutional and Structural Barriers

Barrier	What It Means in Practice
Weak Institutions	When public institutions like the courts, election bodies, or local councils lack independence, resources, or credibility, it becomes harder to protect citizens' rights and ensure fairness.
Lack of Rule of Law	If laws are not applied equally to everyone, or some people are "above the law," citizens can lose confidence in the system.
Corruption	When public resources are misused for personal gain, it reduces trust in governance and makes citizens feel their voices do not matter.

Socio-Economic Barriers

Barrier	What It Means in Practice
Poverty and Inequality	People who struggle to meet basic needs may find it difficult to focus on civic issues or participate in decision-making. Inequality can also make some groups feel excluded from opportunities.

Limited Access to Information	Without access to accurate and timely information, citizens cannot make informed choices or hold leaders accountable.
--------------------------------------	---

Political and Cultural Barriers

Barrier	What It Means in Practice
Authoritarian Tendencies	When leaders ignore democratic norms or centralise too much power, it limits citizens' voices and the system's checks and balances.
Polarisation and Divisions	Deep political, cultural, or regional divisions can weaken unity and make it harder to solve common problems together.
Limited Civic Engagement	If people feel their participation will not make a difference, they may disengage from civic activities, weakening the democratic process.

External and Contextual Barriers

Barrier	What It Means in Practice
External Influence	Interference from outside actors — such as foreign governments, interest groups, or corporations — can affect national decision-making.
Security Challenges	Conflict, violence, or insecurity can make it unsafe for people to participate in elections, attend community meetings, or speak openly.

Understanding these challenges helps citizens engage constructively, support reforms, and contribute to solutions that strengthen democratic practice over time.

2.7 Good Governance and Governance Systems

The Meaning of Good Governance: The concept of governance refers to the broad processes, structures, and relationships through which decisions are made, authority is exercised, and public affairs are managed.¹² It encompasses the entire decision-making cycle from the conceptualisation of policies, through formulation and implementation, to monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. Governance involves the various actors in society, government institutions, civil society, the private sector, and citizens, who

influence public life and shape social and economic development.

According to the African Union, governance has historically been associated with rule and control, particularly the way power is exercised within political institutions. Governance, therefore, refers to the political, economic, and administrative authority used to manage a country’s affairs at national and sub-national levels.¹³ This includes how resources are distributed, how public services are delivered, and how rights and obligations are upheld.

Similarly, governance may be understood as the manner in which government institutions manage and allocate a country’s social and economic resources in domestic politics. This highlights that governance can be effective or ineffective, inclusive or exclusive, transparent or opaque, depending on how institutions operate and how decision-makers use their authority.¹⁴

Consequently, governance can be classified as **good** or **bad**:

- **Good governance** promotes participation, justice, efficiency, accountability, and sustainable development.
- **Bad governance** is characterised by corruption, mismanagement, lack of transparency, exclusion, and abuse of power.

2.7.1 Governance Systems

Governance systems refer to the various arrangements through which authority is organised and exercised within societies. Over time, different political systems have emerged, each with distinct philosophies, power structures, and historical origins. The following provides a detailed overview of major governance systems.

- **Aristocracy:** Aristocracy originally meant “rule by the best”—a system where leadership was vested in individuals considered morally and intellectually superior. Over time, the term evolved to describe rule by a hereditary elite or privileged class, typically distinguished by noble lineage, social status, or significant influence. Aristocracy often features hierarchical structures and limited public participation, making it a contrast to democratic systems.
- **Oligarchy:** Oligarchy is a system where power is concentrated in the hands of a small, powerful group. This group may be defined by wealth, military

strength, education, family networks, corporate interests, or religious authority. Oligarchic rule is commonly inherited across generations, and political decisions typically reflect the interests of the elite rather than those of the broader population. Oligarchies often overlap with other systems such as aristocracy (rule by noble elites), plutocracy (rule by the wealthy), military juntas, technocracy, or theocracy.

- **Representative Democracy:** Representative democracy is a governance system where citizens elect leaders who make decisions on their behalf. It rests on the principles of:

- popular sovereignty
- constitutionalism
- protection of individual rights
- rule of law
- separation of powers
- accountability through elections

Representative democracy is a core component of both presidential and parliamentary systems. While leaders exercise authority, citizens retain influence through elections, civic participation, and public oversight.

- **Constitutional Governance:** In constitutional governance, the authority of government is defined, limited, and regulated by a constitution. The constitution establishes:

- separation of powers
- rights and freedoms of citizens
- institutional responsibilities
- checks and balances
- legal procedures

This arrangement promotes predictable, lawful, and accountable governance, protecting society from arbitrary or unchecked power.

- **Authoritarianism:** Authoritarianism is a system where political power is concentrated in the hands of a single ruler, a small group, or a dominant party. Unlike totalitarian regimes, some social and economic institutions may operate with limited autonomy. However, political opposition is restricted, and civil liberties are often curtailed. Authoritarian leaders are accountable mainly to internal elites rather than the public, and legal constraints on their power tend to be weak or ineffective.
- **Totalitarianism:** Totalitarianism represents an extreme form of authoritarian rule. In a totalitarian system, the state seeks to control every aspect of public and private life, including:
 - education
 - economy
 - media and communication
 - culture and religion
 - family life
 - personal beliefs and behavior

Totalitarian regimes employ surveillance, propaganda, coercion, and rigid ideological control. They tolerate no political competition and demand total loyalty to the state.

- **Dictatorship:** A dictatorship is a system where supreme power is exercised by a **single individual**—the dictator. Dictatorial rule is typically characterised by:
 - absence of constitutional limits
 - arbitrary decision-making
 - suppression of dissent
 - rule without the consent of the governed

Dictatorships may arise through coups, revolutions, military domination, or the gradual erosion of democratic institutions.

- **Monarchy:** Monarchy is a governance system where sovereignty is held by a single ruler, the monarch. Monarchs usually inherit their position and rule for life, although elective monarchies also exist. Forms of monarchy include:
 - **Absolute Monarchy** – the monarch holds full political power.
 - **Constitutional Monarchy** – the monarch serves as a ceremonial head of state, while political authority rests with elected institutions.
 - **Elective Monarchy** – monarchs are chosen through election, not inheritance (e.g., historical Holy Roman Empire).
 - **Plutocracy:** Plutocracy refers to a system where the wealthy exercise dominant political power. Although not typically a formal political ideology, it describes societies where economic elites wield disproportionate influence over public policy, often resulting in inequality and exclusion.



2.7.2 Principles of Good Governance

Good governance is grounded in a set of interdependent principles that ensure fairness, accountability, responsiveness, and sustainable development. These principles form the foundation of effective democratic systems.¹⁵

1. **Legitimacy:** Governments derive authority from the consent of the governed, reflected in public trust, electoral participation, and social acceptance of leadership.
2. **Rule of Law:** All individuals and institutions are subject to the law. The legal system protects rights, ensures fairness, and provides mechanisms for justice.
3. **Participation:** All citizens regardless of gender, class, or status, should have meaningful opportunities to engage in decision-making at local, regional, and national levels.
4. **Transparency:** Decision-making processes must be open, clear, and accessible. Free flow of information strengthens trust and enables informed participation.
5. **Responsiveness:** Institutions should respond effectively to the needs, concerns, and interests of stakeholders, mediating differences to achieve a broad

consensus on public priorities.

6. **Equity:** Good governance ensures equal access to opportunities, resources, and public services for all individuals, promoting fairness and inclusion.
7. **Competence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency:** Governance should produce outcomes that meet societal needs while making optimal use of available resources. This includes sound policy formulation, effective implementation, and high-quality service delivery.
8. **Accountability:** Public officials and institutions must be answerable for their actions, decisions, and performance. Accountability strengthens transparency, integrity, and trust.
9. **Strategic Vision:** Leaders and citizens should share a long-term perspective on development, governance reforms, and sustainable progress. Strategic vision ensures continuity and coherence in public policy.



2.8 Citizenship and Democracy

Citizenship is the foundation of democracy. It defines the legal and political relationship between individuals and the state and provides the basis for participation in public life. A citizen is recognised by law as a member of a state and is entitled to rights while also expected to fulfil certain responsibilities. Citizenship connects individuals to shared institutions, values, and collective decision-making processes.

What does it mean to be a citizen in a democratic country like Nigeria?

Being a citizen is more than holding a green passport or shouting, “I’m proudly Nigerian.” It means you belong to this country legally, politically, and morally. You share in its identity, and you also share in its responsibilities.

A citizen is someone who is recognised under the law as a member of the country. This recognition gives you certain rights (like voting and freedom of speech) and also certain responsibilities (like obeying laws and paying taxes). Citizenship ties us together under the same Constitution, the same flag, and the same future.

According to the Nigerian Constitution (Chapter III), you can become a citizen through:

- **Birth:** If you were born in Nigeria or to Nigerian parents (Section 25)
- **Registration:** If you apply to be Nigerian and meet certain conditions (Section 26)
- **Naturalisation:** If you’ve lived in Nigeria for years, obeyed the law, and earned citizenship status (Section 27)¹⁶

2.9 Deprivation of Citizenship

In most democratic systems, citizenship is protected by law and can only be withdrawn under specific legal conditions. Deprivation of citizenship is generally limited to cases defined by constitutional or statutory provisions and subject to due process.

In rare cases, a person's Nigerian citizenship can be taken away. This usually happens when:

- A person becomes a citizen through naturalisation or registration, but fails to meet the legal conditions (e.g. they didn't renounce another nationality as required- section 28)
- The President withdraws their status due to criminal activity, disloyalty, or behaviour that clearly undermines the Nigerian state

However, **citizenship by birth cannot be revoked**; it's your permanent legal identity. The existence of such provisions underscores the importance of lawful conduct, allegiance to constitutional principles, and respect for the state's legal framework.

These safeguards reinforce the principle that citizenship carries both rights and responsibilities.

2.10 Rights of Citizenship in a Democracy¹⁷

Democratic citizenship guarantees a range of fundamental rights that protect dignity, freedom, and participation. These rights are usually enshrined in constitutions and international human rights instruments.

The Nigerian Constitution gives every citizen a set of fundamental rights in Chapter IV the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, specifically from sections 33 to 46. These are legal protections that guarantee your dignity, voice, and freedom.

These include:

- **Right to life:** No one can unlawfully take your life.
- **Right to dignity of the human person:** You deserve respect and must not be tortured or enslaved.
- **Right to personal liberty:** You are free to live, work, and move lawfully.

- **Right to fair hearing:** You are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.
- **Freedom of expression:** You have the right to speak and express your views.
- **Freedom of movement:** You can travel and live anywhere in Nigeria.
- **Freedom from discrimination:** No one can treat you unfairly based on gender, religion, ethnicity, or background.
- **Right to vote and be voted for:** You can participate in elections when eligible.
- **Right to own property:** You can buy and own land or buildings legally.
- **Freedom of religion and thought:** You can practice any faith or none.

These rights enable citizens to engage meaningfully in democratic life. When protected and respected, they form the legal and moral foundation of democracy.

2.11 Responsibilities of Citizenship in a Democracy

Citizenship involves duties as well as rights. Democratic systems rely on citizens who act responsibly, respect the law, and contribute to social harmony. Here's what responsible citizenship looks like:

Social Responsibilities

- Respect the Constitution and uphold the rule of law
- Respect other people's rights, beliefs, and freedoms
- Promote peace and unity – online and offline
- Speak constructively, even when criticising the government
- Avoid hate speech, religious intolerance, and tribalism

Economic Responsibilities

- Pay your taxes and utility bills
- Use public services responsibly

- Avoid vandalism and waste

Political Responsibilities

- Vote in credible elections
- Join civil campaigns and advocacy efforts
- Report corruption or misconduct
- Educate others about their civic rights

Responsible citizenship strengthens democratic institutions and helps maintain a stable and inclusive society.

2.12 Obligations of the State in a Democracy

Democracy is based on a reciprocal relationship between citizens and the state. While citizens fulfil civic responsibilities, the state has obligations to govern fairly, transparently, and in the public interest.

Core obligations of the state include:

- Protecting fundamental rights and freedoms
- Upholding the rule of law and ensuring equal justice
- Providing security and maintaining public order
- Delivering public services effectively
- Managing public resources responsibly
- Ensuring credible, inclusive, and transparent elections
- Promoting inclusion, equity, and national cohesion

When these obligations are met, public trust increases and democratic governance becomes more sustainable.



2.13 Youth Participation and the Future of Democracy

Young people play a central role in shaping the future of democracy. Across the world, youth make up a significant share of the population and, in many countries, a growing proportion of eligible voters. Their participation brings new ideas, energy, innovation, and perspectives into democratic systems. Nigeria has one of the youngest populations in the world. Youth make up over 60% of the total population and over 35% of the registered voters towards the 2023 elections. That means no movement, no reform, and no election can succeed without young people. However, barriers such as limited access to civic education, economic pressures, mistrust in institutions, and exclusion from decision-making spaces can reduce youth participation. Civic education helps address these challenges by equipping young people with knowledge about democratic processes, confidence to engage constructively, and skills to participate responsibly.

Ways to participate now:

- Register, vote, and get others to do the same
- Lead voter education in your community, CDS group or PPA
- Volunteer with civil society groups or electoral observer missions
- Start a campaign on an issue that affects your host community
- Engage constructively on social media, amplify facts, not fake news
- Attend town halls, ask questions, and demand transparency

Youth participation in democracy goes beyond voting. It includes engaging in civic dialogue, community problem-solving, public policy discussions, advocacy, volunteering, digital engagement, and leadership within formal and informal institutions. When young people are informed and engaged, democratic systems become more responsive and inclusive.

2.14 Civic Responsibility in the Digital Age

Democracy in a Digital Environment: Digital technologies have transformed how citizens receive information, express opinions, and participate in public life. Social media platforms, messaging apps, search engines, and online communities now function as key civic spaces. While these tools offer opportunities for inclusion and participation, they also introduce risks to democratic integrity. Responsible digital citizenship requires awareness of how information is created, shared, amplified, and sometimes manipulated in online spaces.

Information Integrity During Elections: Information integrity refers to the accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness of information in the public space, especially during elections. Protecting information integrity is a shared responsibility involving institutions, media, technology platforms, and citizens.

Responsible Digital Citizens contribute to information integrity by:

- Sharing accurate and verified information
- Relying on official and credible sources
- Avoiding sensational or emotionally charged content
- Avoiding spreading hate speech or incitement
- Engaging respectfully with differing opinions
- Promoting peace, inclusion, and democratic values
- Supporting credible civic and voter education initiatives

Through informed and ethical digital engagement, citizens help strengthen democracy and protect the integrity of elections.

Understanding Information Disorders: To participate responsibly, citizens must understand different forms of false or harmful information:

- **Misinformation** refers to false or inaccurate information shared without the intention to cause harm. For example, sharing an incorrect election date, believing it to be true.
- **Disinformation** refers to false information deliberately created and shared to mislead, manipulate opinions, or cause harm. This may include

coordinated campaigns during elections.

- **Malinformation** involves information that may be true but is shared in a way intended to cause harm, such as releasing private information to intimidate or discredit individuals.

A clear understanding of these distinctions helps citizens respond appropriately and avoid unintentionally spreading harmful content.

- **Deepfakes:** Advances in artificial intelligence have introduced new challenges to information integrity. AI tools can generate realistic text, images, audio, and videos, sometimes referred to as synthetic media or deepfakes. Deepfakes may be used to:
 - Misrepresent public figures or candidates
 - Spread false statements or fabricated events
 - Undermine trust in legitimate information

The presence of AI-generated content means that citizens must rely on verification rather than appearance alone when evaluating digital information.

- **Political Microtargeting and Online Influence:** Political microtargeting involves using personal data to deliver tailored political messages to specific groups or individuals. While targeted communication is not inherently harmful, a lack of transparency or misuse of data can reduce fairness and informed decision-making. Citizens should be aware that online content may be customised to influence opinions and should seek information from multiple credible sources before forming conclusions.

Not everything you see online is true. In fact, one of the biggest threats to credible elections today is the spread of **misinformation** (false information shared without harmful intent), **disinformation** (false information spread deliberately to deceive) and deepfakes.

Fake news can spread like wildfire through WhatsApp broadcasts, edited videos, social media bots, or even doctored screenshots. It can confuse voters, incite violence, discredit institutions, or discourage turnout. During elections, this can seriously damage public confidence in the process.



How to Spot Fake News:

Check	What to Look For
Source	Is the information coming from a trusted news platform? Avoid anonymous forwards or sites with no clear ownership.
Headline	Is it too shocking, emotional, or extreme? Clickbait is a red flag.
Date	Is the story old or recycled to fit a new situation?
Author	Is there an identifiable writer? Fake stories usually hide behind vague names.
Cross-Check	Has any mainstream outlet confirmed it? Can you verify it on platforms like Dubawa, Africa Check, or Google Fact Check?

What You Can Do:

- **Pause before sharing:** If it sounds too wild to be true, it probably is.
- **Educate your circle:** Talk to family, friends, and neighbours about how to verify content.
- **Use your platform:** Share fact-checked information through your CDS group, school, or religious community.

Factchecking 101: How to Verify News, Images, and Videos

False information spreads fast. But you don't need to be a journalist to fight it. You just need the right tools and steps. Here's how to break it down.



Step 1: Check the Source of the News

What to Do	Why It Matters
Look at who posted or published the story. Is it a known news outlet, or a random blog or account?	Reliable sources are usually transparent. If a story has no byline, contact info, or looks suspicious, it's worth questioning.
Check the "About Us" page on the website.	See if the outlet has real editors, an address, and past work you can verify.
Watch for parody or satire sites (e.g. The Onion, Wazobia Jokes)	Many fake stories are just jokes taken seriously.

Tip: A trending tweet doesn't make it true. Viral doesn't equal verified.

Step 2: Read Beyond the Headline

- Don't just react to the headline. Click and read the full story.
- Look for quotes, sources, data, and dates. Are they recent? Are they real?
- Watch for emotionally charged language meant to provoke, not inform.

Ask Yourself: "Is this meant to inform me or manipulate me?"

Step 3: Check the Date

- Old stories often get reshared as if they're new.
- Images from years ago can resurface during a crisis or election to mislead.

Tip: Copy the headline and paste it in Google News, then filter by date.

Step 4: Verify Images Using Reverse Image Search

Images are powerful – but they're often stolen, photoshopped, or taken out of context.

Tool	How to Use It
Google Reverse Image Search (images.google.com)	Upload or paste the image link to see where else it has appeared. You may find it's from another country or years ago.
Tineye.com	Especially good for tracing older photos.
Yandex Images (yandex.com/images)	Often gives better results for regional or African images.

Tip: If a photo claims to be from "today's protest" but shows up in a 2018 story, that's fake context.

Step 5: Verify Videos – Frame by Frame

Videos are harder to fake, but they can still be misused. Here's how to check:

1. **Look for signs of editing** – are there jump cuts, voiceovers, or subtitles added?
2. **Use InVID tool** (<https://www.invid-project.eu/tools>) – It helps:
 - o Break the video into keyframes.
 - o Run reverse image searches on those frames.
 - o Check metadata and timestamps.
3. **Search keywords from the video description on YouTube or Google** – sometimes the same footage has already been debunked.

Tip: Don't trust a shocking video without checking who posted it first and when it first appeared online.

Step 6: Cross-Check With Fact-Checking Platforms

These platforms do the heavy lifting. Use them to verify viral claims:

Platform	What It Does
Dubawa.org	Debunks false stories, especially in West Africa.
AfricaCheck.org	Investigates political, health, and economic claims.
FactCheckHub.com	Tracks fake news in Nigeria and across Africa.
AFP Fact Check, BBC Reality Check, Snopes.com	Global fact-checkers with regional updates.

Tip: If a story feels fishy, paste the claim in Google with the word “fact-check” after it. e.g. “INEC rigging 2023” fact-check

Step 7: Spot Red Flags in Content

Red Flag	What It Means
ALL CAPS or too many exclamation marks	Meant to trigger emotions, not inform.
“SHARE THIS QUICKLY!”	Urgency is a tactic used in hoaxes.
No source or fake quote from “a friend of INEC” or “someone in government”	Always verify before resharing.
Edited screenshots of tweets, fake websites	Check the official page of the person or platform first.




Final Rule: Don't Spread What You Can't Confirm

Sharing unverified content makes you part of the problem. When in doubt, leave it out — or better, correct it.



Module III:

Voter Education – Building an Informed and Responsible Electorate



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Voter education is a central pillar of credible elections and democratic sustainability. Elections do not succeed only because ballots are cast; they succeed when citizens understand the process, trust its integrity, and participate responsibly before, during, and after elections. As electoral systems become more complex and information environments more crowded, the need for structured, continuous, and inclusive voter education has become increasingly important.

This module explains voter education as a deliberate and continuous process that equips citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to participate meaningfully in elections. It situates voter education within broader democratic practice, clarifies its goals, identifies its benefits, and outlines the institutional arrangements and strategies for delivering effective voter education in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Module

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain voter education as a continuous democratic process, not a one-time election activity
- Clarify the aims and benefits of voter education to citizens and institutions
- Identify the institutions and stakeholders responsible for voter education
- Explain the channels and strategies used in delivering voter education
- Outline the role of inter-agency coordination in voter education delivery

Expected Results

At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand voter education beyond the act of voting

- Appreciate the importance of voter education to credible elections and democratic stability
- Identify the key actors responsible for voter education
- Recognise appropriate channels and strategies for effective voter education delivery
- Understand the role of coordinated institutional efforts in voter education

3.1 Voter Education Beyond Voting

Voter education goes far beyond informing citizens about election dates or polling locations. It is a structured process of providing citizens with accurate, timely, and relevant information that enables them to participate effectively in the electoral process before, during, and after elections.

At its core, voter education empowers citizens to understand:

- Why elections matter in a democratic system
- How individual participation influences collective outcomes
- What procedures guide voter registration, accreditation, voting, collation, and results declaration
- What behaviour is lawful and what constitutes electoral offences
- How to engage peacefully and responsibly throughout the electoral cycle

Voter education helps citizens move from passive participation to informed engagement. It supports informed choice by ensuring voters understand the roles of elective offices, the responsibilities of elected representatives, and the implications of electoral outcomes. It also builds confidence in the electoral process by reducing errors, misunderstandings, and misinformation that can undermine trust.

International electoral best practices recognise voter education as an essential component of electoral integrity and democratic legitimacy, particularly in plural and diverse societies.

3.2 Aim of Voter Education

The primary aim of voter education is to ensure that citizens understand the electoral process and are able to participate in elections confidently, correctly, and responsibly. By improving citizens' understanding of electoral processes, voter education reduces errors, discourages malpractice, and strengthens public trust in elections.

Specifically, voter education aims to:

- Make information on the electoral process accessible to the electorate
- Equip citizens with practical knowledge of electoral procedures
- Encourage informed decision-making based on issues rather than inducements or misinformation
- Reduce invalid votes and procedural mistakes
- Promote peaceful participation and discourage electoral violence
- Foster respect for electoral laws and institutions

Voter education also supports long-term democratic development by nurturing a civic culture of participation and accountability. When citizens understand both their rights and responsibilities, they are better positioned to engage constructively with electoral institutions and political actors.

In line with global democratic standards, voter education is most effective when it is continuous, inclusive, non-partisan, and adapted to the needs of different population groups.

3.3 Benefits of Voter Education

Effective voter education delivers benefits at the individual, community, and institutional levels. It strengthens both the quality of participation and the credibility of electoral outcomes.

Benefits to Citizens

Voter education enables citizens to:

- Understand their civic and electoral rights and obligations
- Participate confidently in voter registration and voting processes
- Make informed choices based on issues, policies, and competence
- Recognise and resist electoral manipulation, vote buying, and misinformation
- Engage peacefully and responsibly throughout the electoral process

Benefits to the Electoral Process

For the electoral system, voter education:

- Reduces procedural errors and invalid votes
- Enhances compliance with electoral laws and guidelines
- Improves trust in electoral institutions and outcomes
- Supports peaceful elections by reducing tension and misinformation
- Strengthens transparency and accountability

Benefits to Democracy

At a broader level, voter education:

- Encourages sustained civic engagement beyond election day
- Breaks cycles of apathy, fear, and disengagement
- Builds democratic values such as tolerance, inclusion, and respect for the rule of law
- Reinforces the relationship between elections, governance, and development

These benefits underscore why voter education is recognised globally as a cornerstone of democratic consolidation, particularly in emerging and transitional democracies.

3.4 Who Conducts Voter Education

Voter education is a shared democratic responsibility coordinated by the INEC and supported by a wide range of institutional and non-institutional actors. While INEC holds the primary legal mandate, effective voter education relies on collaboration, coordination, and complementary roles across sectors.

1 **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):** By virtue of **Section 2(a) and (b) of the Electoral Act, 2026**, INEC is constitutionally and statutorily responsible for:

- Conducting voter and civic education
- Providing accurate, timely, and official information on electoral processes
- Developing voter education materials and guidelines
- Coordinating voter education activities nationwide

INEC's voter education activities are designed to be non-partisan, inclusive, and accessible, ensuring that all eligible citizens are adequately informed.

2 **Government, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs):**

INEC partners with MDAs to support voter education through public communication, community mobilisation, and integration into existing programmes. Key agencies include:

- National Orientation Agency (NOA)
- Federal and State Ministries of Information
- Federal and State Ministries of Education
- Youth and Women-focused agencies

These institutions help extend voter education messages to grassroots communities using trusted public platforms.

3 **Political Parties:** Political parties are expected to educate their supporters on how to vote, follow rules, and participate peacefully. While many focus only on campaigning, they are also responsible for voter sensitisation.

4 **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs):** Civil society organisations play a vital complementary role by:

- Conducting grassroots voter education
- Reaching marginalised and hard-to-reach populations
- Adapting voter education messages to local contexts
- Supporting innovation in civic-tech and youth engagement

CSOs operate within frameworks provided by INEC and are expected to maintain neutrality and accuracy.

5 **Media Organisations:** The media serve as a critical conduit for voter education by:

- Disseminating voter information
- Hosting civic education programmes
- Providing platforms for public dialogue and clarification

Responsible media engagement supports transparency and public confidence in elections.

6 **Educational Institutions:** Schools and tertiary institutions contribute by:

- Integrating civic and voter education into curricula
- Promoting democratic values among young people
- Preparing future voters through structured learning

7 **Traditional, Religious, and Community Leaders:** Community leaders play an important role in:

- Mobilising local participation
- Providing trusted platforms for voter education
- Encouraging peaceful and inclusive engagement

8 **Youth, Corps Members, and Educators:** NYSC Members are part of the voter education ecosystem. You are a local influencer with a platform in your PPA, CDS group, school, or neighbourhood.

3.5 Voter Education Channels and Strategies

INEC adopts a multi-channel approach to voter education to ensure wide reach, inclusiveness, and effectiveness. Different channels serve different audiences and contexts, and a combination of methods is often required.

3.5.1 Television

Television remains a powerful tool for voter education due to its wide reach and visual impact. INEC uses television for:

- Public service announcements and jingles
- Educational programmes and interviews
- Visual demonstrations of voting procedures

Television content is particularly effective in urban and semi-urban areas and is often broadcast in multiple languages to enhance accessibility.

3.5.2 Radio

Radio is one of the most effective voter education channels, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. Its strengths include affordability, accessibility, and linguistic diversity.

INEC uses radio to:

- Broadcast voter education messages in local languages
- Host phone-in programmes and town-hall discussions
- Reach audiences in markets, transport hubs, and homes

Radio remains essential for inclusive voter education in communities with limited internet or television access.

3.5.3 Digital Voter Education, Civic-Tech Tools, and Misinformation Counter Strategies

Digital platforms have become central to voter education, particularly among young people. INEC leverages digital tools to:

- Share timely voter information via websites and social media
- Engage citizens through interactive content
- Counter misinformation and false narratives

Key digital platforms include:

- Social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp
- INEC's official website and online portals
- Civic-tech platforms that support voter education and factchecking

Digital voter education also involves proactive misinformation counter strategies, including:

- Publishing verified information promptly
- Clarifying rumours and false claims
- Encouraging responsible information sharing

3.5.4 Public Enlightenment

Public enlightenment activities complement media outreach by bringing voter education directly into public spaces. These activities include:

- Billboards, posters, and handbills
- SMS voter alerts and reminders
- Community forums, roadshows, and market outreaches

Public enlightenment strategies are designed to reinforce key messages and reach citizens who may not engage with formal media.

3.5.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement strengthens voter education by fostering dialogue and trust. INEC engages:

- Traditional institutions
- Religious organisations
- Labour and professional groups
- Women, youth, and disability-focused organisations

These engagements serve as feedback mechanisms and help refine message delivery and content relevance.

3.5.6 Integration and Implementation of Civic and Voter Education in Schools

Integrating civic and voter education into educational institutions (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary educational institutions) promotes early civic awareness and long-term democratic engagement. Key activities include:

- Curriculum development and alignment
- Distribution of educational materials
- Teacher and facilitator training

This approach ensures that civic learning becomes a continuous process rather than a periodic intervention.

3.6 National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP)

Providing civic and voter education in a complex and diverse society requires coordination across multiple institutions. To ensure coherence, consistency, and national coverage, the Independent National Electoral Commission collaborates with relevant stakeholders through the National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP).

NICVEP serves as a structured coordination platform that brings together public institutions, media regulators, civil society actors, and information agencies to jointly plan, implement, and review civic and voter education initiatives. The committee exists

at the national, state, and local government levels, ensuring that voter education strategies are aligned while remaining responsive to local contexts.

NICVEP strengthens voter education by reducing duplication of efforts, harmonising messaging, and ensuring that accurate and consistent information reaches citizens through multiple trusted channels.

3.6.1 Composition of NICVEP at Various Levels

National Level: At the national level, NICVEP is composed of representatives from institutions with mandates related to public communication, civic orientation, education, and democratic participation.

These include:

- Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
- National Orientation Agency (NOA)
- Federal Ministry of Information and communications
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
- Federal Ministry of Education
- Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development
- National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)
- Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)
- Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)
- Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)
- News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)
- Nigerian Guild of Editors
- Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ)
- Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)

This broad composition ensures that voter education messaging benefits from regulatory oversight, professional standards, and national reach.

State Level

At the state level, NICVEP typically includes:

- INEC, with the Resident Electoral Commissioner as Chairperson
- State Ministry of Information
- State Ministry of Women's Affairs
- National Orientation Agency
- State-owned radio and television stations
- Other relevant state-level agencies

State-level NICVEP adapts national voter education strategies to state-specific realities, languages, and communication channels.

Local Government Level

At the local government level, NICVEP comprises:

- INEC, with the Electoral Officer as Chairperson
- Chief Mobilisation Officer of the National Orientation Agency
- Local Government Information Officer

This level ensures that voter education reaches communities directly and reflects local contexts, concerns, and communication patterns.

3.6.2 Functions of NICVEP

NICVEP performs several critical functions that strengthen voter education delivery nationwide. These include:

- Coordinating civic and voter education activities among participating institutions
- Harmonising voter education messages to ensure consistency and accuracy
- Advising INEC on effective communication strategies and outreach methods
- Facilitating information sharing and collaboration among stakeholders
- Supporting the mobilisation of communities through trusted institutions
- Reviewing voter education outcomes and identifying gaps or emerging needs



To identify organizations and agencies capable of undertaking voter education and/or contributing resources to voter education activities



To relate with member organizations and agencies and ensure that they contribute their quota to voter education



Assist in the provision of materials for voter education as well as their distribution and dissemination to target groups



To monitor the implementation of voter education strategies to ensure the realization of set goals



To encourage the pooling of resources and proper utilization of all available channels and platforms for voter education



To relate with member organizations and agencies and ensure that they contribute their quota to voter education

3.7 INEC Citizens Contact Centres (ICCC)

INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC) was established by the Commission to enable two-way Communication between INEC and Nigerian citizens. The ICCC was established to offer the public constant access to the Commission with enquiries and is a centre for the exchange of information between the Commission (INEC) and the public.

The Independent National Electoral Commission engages the public directly through its Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC). The centre offers the public constant and instant access to the Commission for enquiries and exchange of information. Such interactions include the following areas:

- Coverage of all the Commission's events and upload in real time on all social media platforms.
- Surfing the internet daily to pick out content relating to INEC for necessary action;
- Taking complaints from citizens and providing the feedback via the Commission's hotlines and social media platforms;
- Sending INEC's Notices, Statements, Clarifications, rebuttals on the website and all social media platforms;

- Complementing the Situation Room staff during elections;
- Engaging in online voter education on INEC social media platforms.

ICCC enables two-way communication between INEC and members of its various publics. Its principal function is to offer the public constant access to the Commission's policies and to exchange information with stakeholders. It is a pre-election, Election Day and post-election period facility for effective public interaction.

INEC Citizens Contact Centre is designed as a daily Situation Room, a channel for continuous communication and exchange of information principally with Citizens, but also with other stakeholders in the electoral process.

The Centre's operation is locked into the 3 phases of the electoral cycle:

- **Pre-Election Period:** Opens 9 am to 5 pm.
- **Election Period:** The Centre is open around the clock.
- **Post-Election Period:** Opens 9 am to 5 pm.

Benefits of the new media as a Platform for Engagement: Web and text messaging platforms are used for engagement because they are cheap and afford citizens the opportunity of direct interaction with the Commission. New media transmit content through connection and conversation and enable people around the world to share, comment on, and discuss variety of topics.

The Commission's Social Media Accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube) provide the people opportunity of getting responses to inquiries, reports, complaints and queries about any aspect of the electoral process. INEC New media platforms ensure a speedy feedback and offer online users the opportunity to react to our articles and stories.

We use the App to educate users (citizens) on election procedures; rules and regulations, and it also provides opportunities for citizens to interact with the Commission with ease via the INEC hotlines and social media accounts of their choice that is linked to the application.

Where to find the App: The App is operational only on Android phones (at the moment) and can be downloaded from the Google play store.

It is important to note that interface between the voters and the Citizens Contact Centre is a continuous process before, during and after elections as this enhances voter education and enables voters to utilize the Centre to its full capacity.



ICCC Details:

Channel	How to Reach INEC
Phone	Call 0700-CALL-INEC (0700-2255-4632)
Email	iccc@inecnigeria.gov.ng
Website	www.inecnigeria.org
Mobile App	Download the "My INEC" app on Google Play Store
Social Media	@Inecnigeria (X, Facebook, Instagram)

3.8 Content of Voter Education Programmes and Events

The content of voter education programmes and events is designed to equip citizens with the knowledge and confidence required to participate meaningfully in elections. INEC's voter education content is structured to be accurate, accessible, and responsive to the electoral calendar.

Core content areas typically include:

- Voter registration procedures, including eligibility requirements and timelines
- Accreditation and voting procedures on election day
- Rights, duties, and responsibilities of voters
- Roles and responsibilities of political parties and candidates
- Identification and prevention of electoral offences
- Mechanisms for reporting irregularities and complaints
- Promotion of peaceful participation and non-violence
- Inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons

Key dates, locations, and logistics related to electoral activities

Content of Voter Education Programmes and Events

Electoral Phase	Voter Education Focus	Detailed Content and Explanation	Why This Phase Matters
Pre-Election Phase	Voter registration and eligibility	Voter education at this stage explains who qualifies to vote, the legal voting age, citizenship requirements, and the need to register within stipulated timelines. It clarifies continuous voter registration, transfer of registration, replacement of lost PVCs, and how to verify voter details on the register.	This phase determines who is legally included in the election. If citizens miss registration or verification steps, they are excluded from voting regardless of interest or motivation.
	Understanding the electoral process	Citizens are educated on the full electoral cycle, including party primaries, candidate nomination, campaigns, election timelines, and the roles of INEC and other stakeholders. This helps voters understand that elections are a process, not a single-day event.	Understanding the process reduces confusion, suspicion, and misinformation before election day.

	Political parties and candidates	Voter education provides neutral information on the role of political parties, how candidates emerge, and why party manifestos matter. It encourages voters to assess candidates based on competence, plans, and integrity rather than inducements.	Informed choice begins before election day. This phase shapes voter decision-making.
	Electoral offences and vote buying	Citizens are informed about prohibited acts such as vote buying, multiple registration, impersonation, hate speech, violence, and misuse of campaign funds, including penalties under the Electoral Act, 2026.	Early awareness discourages participation in illegal practices and builds a culture of lawful participation.
	Peaceful participation and inclusion	Messages emphasise tolerance, non-violence, inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons. Special guidance is provided on accessible voting arrangements.	This phase sets the tone for peaceful and inclusive elections.
	Information integrity	Voters are taught how to identify misinformation, disinformation, and fake news, especially online. They are encouraged to rely on verified sources such as INEC platforms and official announcements.	Prevents manipulation and panic that can disrupt elections.

Election Day Phase	Accreditation and voting procedures	Voter education explains step-by-step what happens on election day, including arrival at the polling unit, accreditation, use of BVAS, ballot issuance, voting, and ballot secrecy.	Clear understanding reduces delays, errors, and voter frustration at polling units.
	Rights and responsibilities of voters	Citizens are reminded of their right to vote without intimidation, their duty to follow lawful instructions, and the importance of orderly conduct at polling units.	Reinforces lawful behaviour and protects the integrity of the vote.
	Secrecy of the ballot	Voters are educated on why voting is secret, how to properly thumbprint or mark ballots, and why showing a marked ballot is prohibited.	Protects voters from coercion and vote buying.
	Role of election officials and security	Voter education clarifies the roles of presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, observers, party agents, and security personnel, including what each can and cannot do.	Reduces conflict arising from misunderstanding roles at polling units.

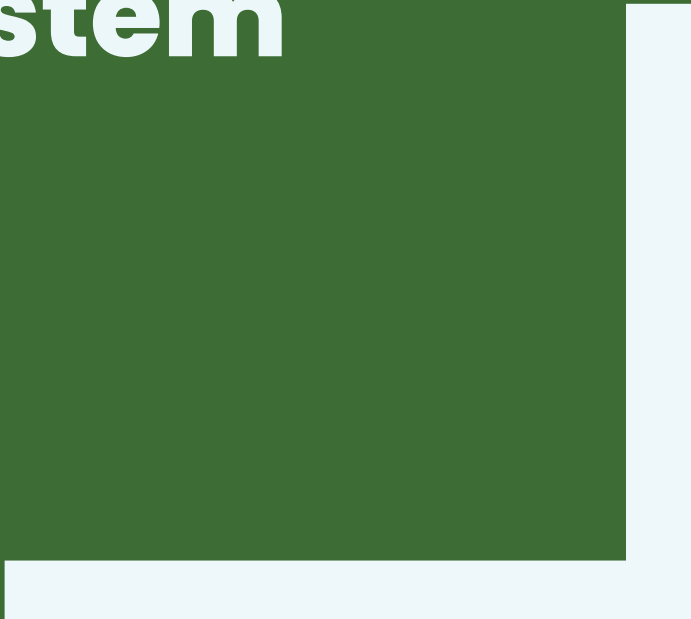

	Reporting incidents	Citizens are informed about how and where to report incidents such as violence, intimidation, malfunctioning equipment, or misconduct, including INEC hotlines and official channels.	Enables real-time response and accountability.
Post-Election Phase	Counting and collation of results	Voter education explains how votes are counted at polling units, how results are recorded, transmitted, and collated at higher levels, and why transparency at this stage matters.	Builds trust in the credibility of results.
	Announcement of results	Citizens are educated on who is legally authorised to announce results and why unofficial result declarations are prohibited.	Prevents confusion, misinformation, and premature celebrations or protests.
	Electoral disputes and petitions	Voter education explains what constitutes an electoral dispute, who can file a petition, timelines, and the role of election tribunals and courts.	Channels grievances into lawful mechanisms rather than violence.
	Acceptance of outcomes and civic responsibility	Citizens are encouraged to respect lawful outcomes, remain peaceful, and continue civic engagement beyond elections through advocacy, monitoring, and community participation.	Democracy continues after voting ends.

	<p>Accountability and governance follow-up</p>	<p>Post-election education highlights the importance of tracking campaign promises, engaging elected officials, attending town halls, and using lawful means to demand accountability.</p>	<p>Reinforces the link between elections and governance.</p>
--	--	--	--

Why This Structured Approach Matters: Organising voter education content around the pre-election, election day, and post-election phases ensures that citizens receive the right information at the right time. It prevents information overload, improves message relevance, and strengthens trust in the electoral process. The overall goal of voter education programmes is not only to inform citizens but also to build trust in the electoral process and encourage lawful, peaceful, and informed participation.

Note: Voter education messages are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in electoral laws, technologies, and procedures





**Module IV:
Elections in a
Democratic
System**

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Elections are a defining feature of democratic governance. They provide a lawful and peaceful means through which citizens choose their representatives, renew political leadership, and express consent or disapproval of those who govern them. In democratic systems, elections are not isolated events, but structured processes guided by laws, principles, institutions, and citizen participation.

This module explains elections as a core democratic mechanism. It introduces learners to election principles, electoral rights, electoral systems, and the electoral cycle, while situating elections within both international democratic standards and Nigeria's legal and institutional framework. The module also builds understanding of why participation matters and how elections contribute to legitimacy, accountability, and stability.

Objectives

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain what elections are and why they are central to democracy
- Outline the principles that guide democratic elections
- Describe the electoral rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Explain electoral systems and the electoral cycle
- Introduce the legal and institutional framework governing elections

Expected Results

At the end of this module, learners should be able to:

- Understand elections as a democratic process rather than a single event
- Identify key principles and rights that underpin credible elections

- Recognise different electoral systems and how they shape outcomes
- Appreciate the importance of participation and lawful conduct in elections

4.1 What is an Election?

An election is a formal process through which citizens choose individuals or political parties to hold public office or make decisions on their behalf. In democratic systems, elections provide legitimacy to governments by ensuring that authority is derived from the consent of the people.

Elections allow citizens to:

- Select representatives at regular intervals
- Renew or withdraw mandates based on performance
- Influence public policy and governance direction

The United Nations emphasizes that elections are a core feature of legitimate governance and essential for expressing the will of the people¹⁸. Democratic elections must be conducted within a legal framework, administered by impartial institutions, and supported by informed and active citizens. Without elections, democratic governance cannot function effectively.

4.2 Election Principles

Democratic elections are guided by universally recognised principles. These principles ensure that elections genuinely reflect the will of the people and protect citizens from coercion, exclusion, or manipulation. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21) and summarised by POLYAS, the core election principles include¹⁹:

1. **Regular and periodic elections:** Elections must be held at constitutionally defined intervals to ensure continuity and accountability in governance.
2. **Genuine elections:** Elections must offer real choices, with outcomes that can lead to a change in leadership where voters so decide.
3. **Universal suffrage:** All eligible citizens have the right to vote without discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, or social status.
4. **Equal suffrage:** Each vote must carry equal weight, ensuring fairness in representation.

5. **Secret ballot:** Voting must be conducted in a manner that protects voter privacy, preventing intimidation or undue influence.
6. **Freedom of participation:** Citizens must be able to register, campaign, vote, and express political opinions without fear.

These principles are reflected in international instruments and regional democratic frameworks. Similarly, the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa has four broad principles of democratic elections²⁰:

1. Democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any representative government.
2. Regular elections constitute a key element of the democratization process and therefore, are essential ingredients for good governance, the rule of law, the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, stability and development.
3. The holding of democratic elections is an important dimension in conflict prevention, management and resolution.
4. Democratic elections should be conducted:
 - freely and fairly
 - under democratic constitutions and in compliance with supportive legal instruments
 - under a system of separation of powers that ensures, in particular, the independence of the judiciary at regular intervals, as provided for in the National Constitutions.
 - by impartial, all-inclusive, competent, accountable electoral institutions staffed by well-trained personnel and equipped with adequate logistics.

4.3 Electoral Rights

Electoral rights are political rights that enable citizens to participate in elections and public affairs. These rights are fundamental to democratic citizenship and are protected by both international law and national constitutions.

Electoral rights include:

- The right to register as a voter when eligible
- The right to vote in free and fair elections
- The right to be voted for, subject to legal qualifications
- The right to access information about candidates, parties, and the electoral process
- The right to participate in political activities peacefully
- The right to associate politically and express political opinions.

Electoral rights impose corresponding responsibilities, including compliance with electoral laws and respect for the rights of others.

Note: The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) states that *“the right to vote and be elected in genuine, periodic elections is intrinsically linked to other human rights,”* such as freedom of expression, association, movement, and freedom from discrimination²¹.

4.4 International Instruments Creating Electoral Rights

Electoral rights are not only protected by national laws but are also grounded in international and regional agreements that establish global standards for democratic participation. By ratifying these instruments, countries commit to respecting political rights, inclusion, equality, and credible elections.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)** affirms that every person has the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. It establishes that the will of the people is the basis of governmental authority and that this will be expressed through periodic, genuine elections conducted by universal and equal suffrage and secret ballot.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)** builds on the UDHR by making these rights legally binding on State Parties. It guarantees citizens the right to participate in public affairs, vote and be elected in genuine elections, and have equal access to public service.

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)** obliges States to remove barriers that prevent women from participating fully in political and public life, including voting, contesting elections, and holding public office.

At the regional level, the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)** affirms the right of every citizen to participate freely in the government of their country and to enjoy equality before the law.

These instruments collectively provide the normative framework that guides electoral laws, policies, and practices across democratic systems.

4.5 Electoral Systems

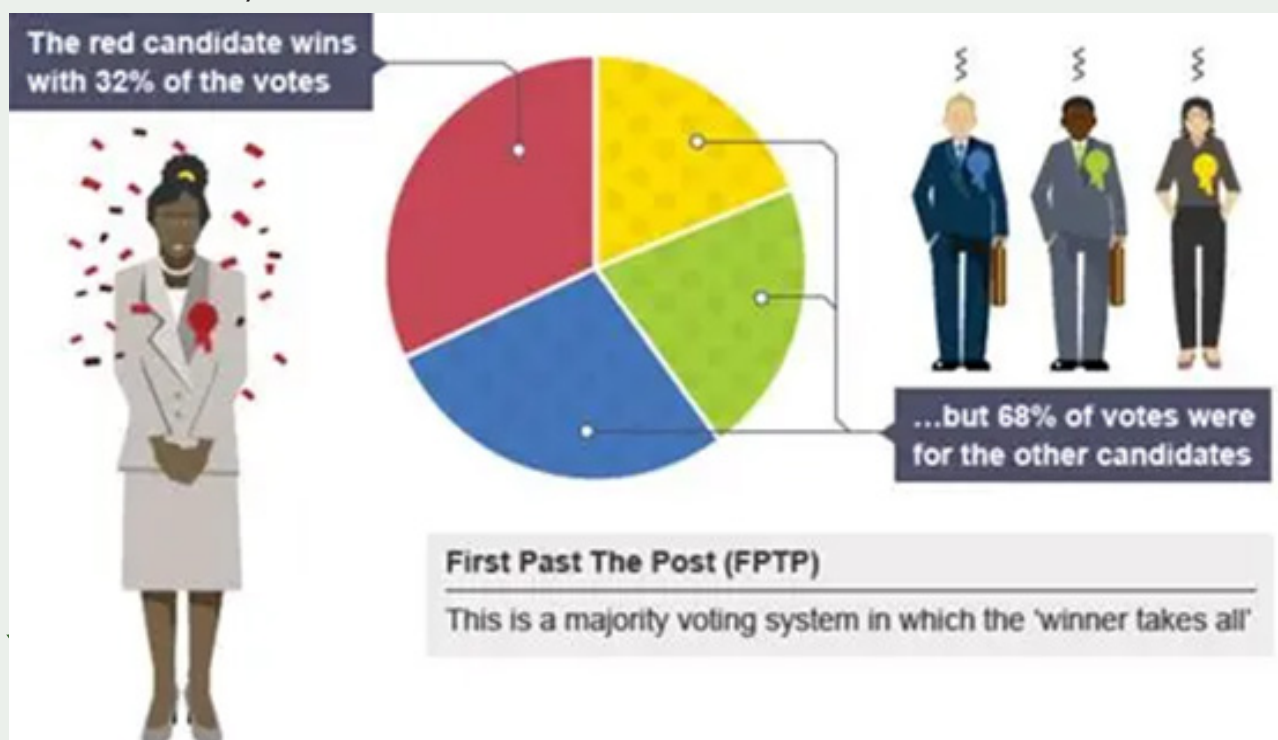
An electoral system is the set of rules that determines how votes are translated into electoral outcomes. It shapes how representatives are chosen and how political power is distributed.

Electoral systems influence:

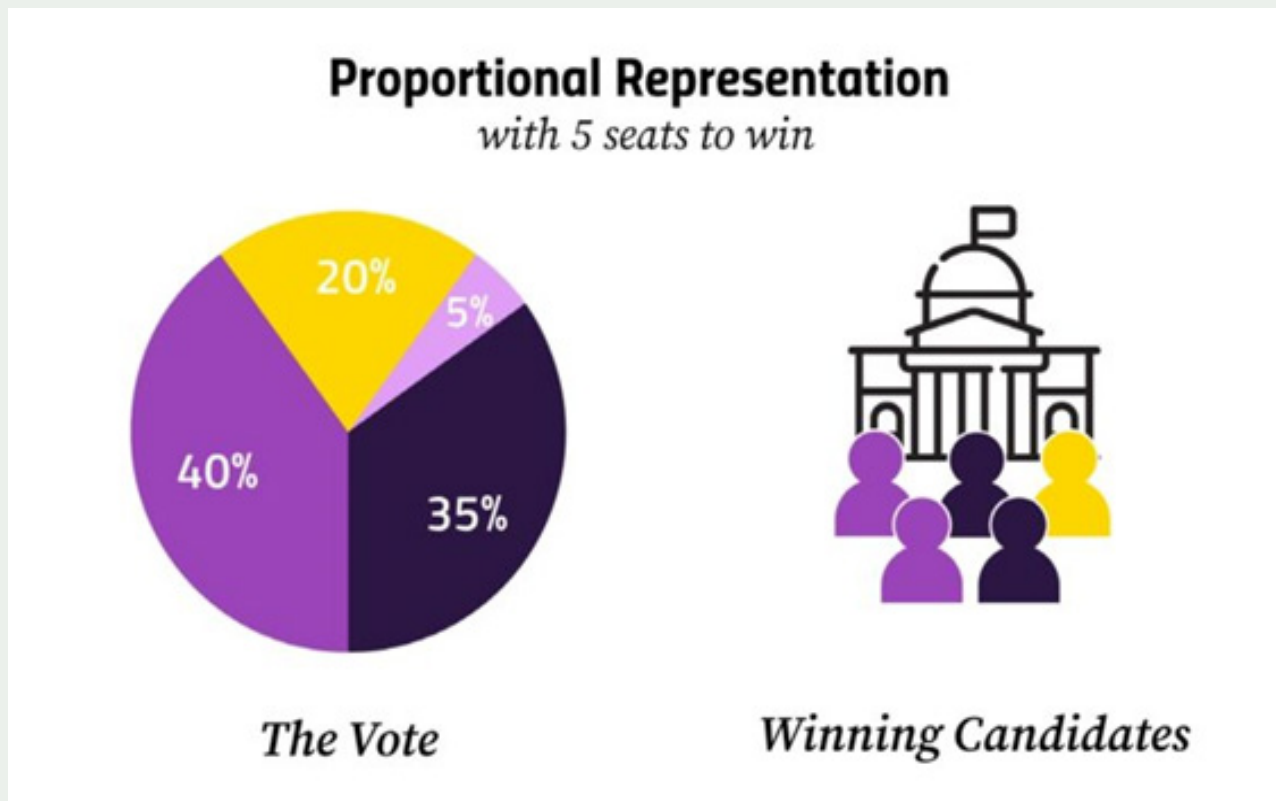
- Representation of political parties
- Inclusiveness of minority interests
- Stability of government
- Voter behaviour and participation

Common electoral system categories include²²:

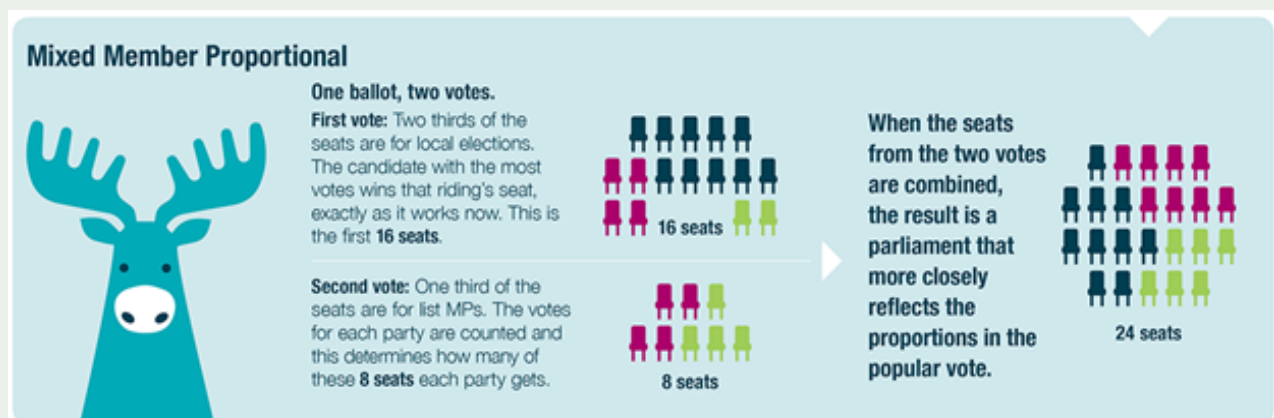
Plurality or Majority systems: These systems often use single-member constituencies, where the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. Nigeria operates a First-Past-The-Post system for most elections.



Proportional Representation systems: Seats are allocated to political parties based on their share of the total votes. These systems aim to reflect voter preferences more proportionally.



Mixed systems: These combine elements of both plurality and proportional representation, balancing constituency representation with proportional outcomes.



Each system has advantages and trade-offs, and no single system suits all democratic contexts.

4.6 The Electoral Cycle

The electoral cycle presents elections as a continuous process rather than a one-day event. It highlights the interconnection between legal, administrative, political, and civic activities before, during, and after elections. The electoral cycle has three broad phases:

1. **Pre-election phase:** This includes voter registration, voter education, political party activities, candidate nomination, campaign regulation, and logistics planning.
2. **Election phase:** This covers voting, counting, collation, and announcement of results.
3. **Post-election phase:** This involves dispute resolution, reviewing processes, implementing reforms, and preparing for the next cycle.

The Electoral Cycle Approach to election administration is “a shift towards a longer-term vision of electoral support.” The Electoral Cycle Approach emerged as the reference methodology in 2006²³.



According to the Electoral Knowledge Network²⁴, an adequate understanding of the various components, stages and entry points of an ideal electoral cycle helps planning. The electoral cycle approach is a key instrument to facilitate understanding of the interdependence of different electoral activities, helping EMB officials to plan and allocate resources for specific activities in a timelier fashion²⁵.

4.7 Types of Elections in Nigeria

Elections in Nigeria take different forms depending on the level of government, timing, and purpose. Each type serves a specific democratic function and is governed by the Constitution, the Electoral Act, 2026, and INEC regulations.

- **General Elections:** General elections are nationwide elections conducted to elect the President, State Governors, members of the National Assembly, and members of State Houses of Assembly. These elections are usually conducted in a sequence within a defined election period.
- **Presidential Elections:** These elections are held to elect the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The President serves as both Head of State and Head of Government and is elected through a nationwide vote.
- **Gubernatorial elections:** These elections are held to elect the State Governors. It is conducted within the particular states where the governor will govern.
- **Off-cycle Elections:** Off-cycle elections are governorship elections conducted outside the general election cycle due to court decisions that altered the tenure of a sitting governor. These elections follow their own fixed timelines based on constitutional provisions.
- **Primary Elections:** Primary elections are internal party elections conducted by political parties to select candidates who will represent them in general elections. Although organised by political parties, primaries are regulated by law and monitored by INEC to ensure compliance with legal requirements.
- **By-elections:** A by-election is conducted to fill a vacancy in an elective office that occurs between general elections. Such vacancies may arise due to death, resignation, recall, or disqualification of an elected official.
- **Run-off Elections:** Run-off elections occur when no candidate meets the constitutional threshold required to be declared winner in an election,

particularly in presidential or governorship elections. Additional rounds of voting are conducted until a candidate satisfies the legal requirements.

- **Supplementary Elections:** Supplementary elections are conducted in polling units where voting could not be completed or was cancelled due to disruptions such as violence, over-voting, or logistical failures, and where the number of affected voters could change the overall result.
- **Local Government Elections:** These elections are conducted by State Independent Electoral Commissions to elect officials into local government councils, using the voter register compiled by INEC.
- **Referendum or Plebiscite:** A referendum is a direct vote by citizens on a specific issue, such as constitutional amendments, recalls, or major public decisions. Although not frequently used in Nigeria, referenda remain a recognised democratic tool globally.

4.8 Eligibility to Contest Elections in Nigeria

Eligibility to contest elections ensures that candidates meet the minimum legal and ethical standards required for public office. The Constitution and the Electoral Act specify qualifications and disqualifications for elective positions.

A person is generally disqualified from contesting an election if the individual:

- Has been adjudged to be of unsound mind by a competent court
- Is under a sentence of death or imprisonment imposed by a court
- Has been convicted of offences involving dishonesty, fraud, or breach of the Code of Conduct within a period of less than ten years prior to the elections.
- Has been declared bankrupt under Nigerian law
- Has not retired, resigned or withdrawn appointment from the Civil or Public Service of the Federation at least 30 days before the date of the election
- Is a confirmed member of a secret society

- Has been indicted for embezzlement or fraud by a Judicial Commission of Inquiry or Administrative Panel of Inquiry or Tribunals of Inquiry or Federal or State Government laws and such indictment has been accepted
- Has presented a forged certificate to the Independent National Electoral Commission
- Appeals in respect of being a lunatic, unsound mind, death sentences or imprisonment, and fraud cases are pending in any court.

These provisions exist to protect the integrity of elections and ensure public trust in leadership selection.

4.9 Who is a Voter and the Rights of Voters

A voter is a citizen who is legally qualified to participate in an election. In Nigeria, a person qualifies as a voter in an election or referendum if the individual:

- Is a Nigerian citizen
- Has attained the age of 18 years
- has registered as a voter at a registration centre in the constituency he/she wants to vote in (convenient to him/her);
- has a Permanent Voter's Card and his/her details appear in the register of voters at the centre he/she wishes to vote.
- appears in person with his/her voter's card at the polling station where he/she registered as a voter.

Rights of Voters

Voters are entitled to several legally protected rights, including the right to:

- Receive information about the electoral process
- Access information about political parties and candidates
- Participate freely in campaigns and political discussions
- Vote at the polling unit where registered
- Be assisted to vote where permitted by law

- Enjoy the secrecy of the ballot
- Be treated with dignity and without discrimination

These rights reinforce participation and protect voters from intimidation or exclusion.

4.10 Why Vote

Voting is one of the most direct ways citizens participate in governance. It allows individuals to influence leadership choices and public policy direction through lawful and peaceful means.

Voting matters because:

- It confers legitimacy on elected leaders
- It allows citizens to reward performance or demand change
- It strengthens accountability and democratic continuity
- It ensures representation of diverse interests in governance

While some citizens may feel discouraged due to past experiences or mistrust, elections remain the primary mechanism through which collective choices are expressed. Each election presents an opportunity for renewal, participation, and civic responsibility.

4.11 Nigerian Legal Framework for Elections

The legal framework for elections in Nigeria consists of several layers of law and regulation that work together to govern electoral processes. This framework ensures clarity, consistency, and accountability in the conduct of elections.

At the top of this framework is the **Constitution**, which establishes democratic principles and institutions. Below the Constitution are **statutes**, such as the Electoral Act, enacted by the legislature. Supporting these are **regulations, guidelines, and procedures** issued by INEC to operationalise the law.

Courts, particularly the Supreme Court, play a crucial role by interpreting electoral laws and resolving disputes. Their decisions form part of Nigeria's electoral jurisprudence and guide future conduct.

Understanding this hierarchy helps citizens, political actors, and election officials appreciate how elections are regulated and why compliance with each level of law is essential.

The Electoral Laws – A Snapshot	
Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes the innate characteristics of the country and its sovereignty; outlines the rights and responsibilities of its citizens – as such it is the supreme law. • Establishes the country’s governance structure. • All other laws must adhere to the constitution. • The constitution should reflect and adhere to a country’s international obligations.
International Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans-border agreements that have different impacts on the country’s law, depending on the treaty language and the way a country’s constitution manages them. • Sometimes only a limited degree of compliance with treaties, and some treaties that enshrine fundamental rights are not always followed through in the signatory nation’s constitution, or through domestic enforcement. • No legal way to enforce compliance, unless the treaty sets up a dispute resolution process.
Statutes / Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutes are enacted by the legislative branch of government and govern a wide range of issues that require regulation in a modern, democratic state – including elections. • Must adhere to the constitution and international law. • Can be amended by the same process as first enacted and enforced by a country’s enforcement agencies.

<p>Common law/ Case law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common law is law made by the courts, not legislature, and is not a level of hierarchy per se. • It consists of the judgments of courts, to interpret the wording of statute law, to protect the principles of natural justice, to fill a gap in the law, or to deal with an unforeseen situation not covered by statute. • A judgment of a court may award damages, punishment, sanction or other remedial action, enforced by a country's enforcement agencies.
<p>Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form of delegated legislation, developed and enacted by ministers, Heads of Departments, or by an independent body or commission, to administer their responsibilities • Must adhere to the constitution, international law, and governing statute, and can be enforced in the same way as statutory law. • Provide detail on the administration of principles in the law. • A violation of a regulation can be treated as an offense and enforced as such.
<p>Procedure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A procedure is a description of the required steps necessary to complete a process. • Procedures are generally written by an administrative body to ensure that the law and regulations are applied consistently and fairly to all parties. • Enforcement of a procedure is generally achieved by requesting compliance as a condition of completing a process or receiving a benefit (for example, emergence of a candidate) – rather than sanction or punishment.

<p>Code of conduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written set of rules, principles or standards to govern the behavior of certain groups. • It is a best practice for EMBs to develop codes of conduct to govern actors, such as candidates, media, election observers, security personnel, election officials e.t.c. • Enforcement of codes of conduct depends on whether they are considered “soft” or “hard” laws. Codes of conduct are considered “soft law” when they are not passed by a law-making body and thus rely on voluntary compliance.
<p>Guidelines, Instructions, Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms such as “guidelines” and “instructions” are uncertain in meaning and can result in ambiguity, particularly with regard to enforceability. • “Policies” are broad, informative statements of intent regarding principles to be followed, priority of programs. • These should not be used as if they were elements of the structure of the hierarchy of laws.

4.12 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999

The Constitution is the supreme law governing elections in Nigeria. It guarantees the right of citizens who have attained the age of 18 years to vote and be voted for, subject to lawful qualifications.

Key electoral provisions of the Constitution include:

- Establishment of INEC and State Independent Electoral Commissions
- Qualifications and disqualifications for elective offices
- Tenure of elected officials
- Delimitation of electoral constituencies
- Procedures for recall and impeachment
- Supremacy of constitutional provisions over all other laws

By defining the structure of government and the relationship between citizens and the state, the Constitution provides the foundation upon which all electoral processes are built.

4.13 The Electoral Act, 2026

The Electoral Act, 2026 provides detailed legal rules governing the conduct of elections in Nigeria. It updates and strengthens previous electoral laws by introducing clearer procedures, stronger sanctions for offences, and improved transparency mechanisms.

The Act regulates:

- Voter registration and voter information
- Conduct of political party primaries
- Campaign finance and spending limits
- Election day procedures, collation, and declaration of results
- Electoral offences and penalties
- Use of technology to support electoral processes

Electoral offences such as vote buying, impersonation, violence, illegal declaration of results, and falsification of documents attract clearly defined penalties. These provisions are designed to protect the credibility of elections and deter misconduct.

4.14 Judgements and Pronouncements of the Supreme Court of Nigeria

Judgements of the Supreme Court form an important part of Nigeria's electoral legal framework. When laws are unclear or disputed, courts interpret their meaning and application.

Supreme Court decisions:

- Clarify ambiguous provisions of electoral laws
- Resolve disputes arising from elections and party primaries
- Set binding precedents that guide future electoral conduct

Once the Supreme Court interprets a point of electoral law, that interpretation remains authoritative unless amended by legislation. This judicial role strengthens legal certainty and protects democratic principles.

4.15 INEC Regulations and Guidelines

INEC is empowered under the Electoral Act 2026, in section 151, to issue regulations, guidelines, and manuals to give practical effect to the law and ensure uniform application across the country.

These instruments provide:

- Detailed procedures for voter registration, voting, collation, and result management
- Codes of conduct for electoral officials
- Operational rules for the use of electoral technology
- Standards for transparency and accountability

Some INEC regulations and guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- Manuals for election officials
- Manual for political party and their activities
- Procedures for opening and closing polls
- What to do if elections are disrupted
- Security protocols and handling of sensitive materials

These manuals are binding on officials and are essential for the smooth and credible conduct of elections.

4.16 Other Laws Affecting Elections

In addition to national electoral laws, other legal instruments influence electoral processes in Nigeria.

- **State Electoral Laws:** The various State Independent Electoral Commission laws regulate the conduct of elections into local government councils across the country. The State Independent Electoral Commissions make use of the register

of voters compiled by INEC to conduct their elections. Provisions regarding qualifications and disqualifications in the state laws reflect provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, and the Electoral Act 2026. In the case of the area councils, the Electoral Act, 2026 is the governing legal instrument.

- **Political Party Constitutions and Guidelines:** Political parties have their individual constitutions, which govern their activities. The political parties also issue guidelines for their internal activities, including the process of electing their leaders and conducting primary elections for selecting the candidates they want to sponsor. The constitutions of the political parties must therefore be obeyed to ensure that any action of the political party is not challenged in court. Compliance with both the party constitution and guidelines for elections makes these two documents part of the legal framework for elections in Nigeria. It is to be noted that non-compliance with the party constitution and election guidelines affects the fortunes of political parties. Political parties that do not comply with their constitutions and election guidelines in selecting their candidates for election may lose the election they won at the polls, when they are stripped of the win due to either internal challenge or allegation of fraud by the Courts, if challenged.

Together, these laws reinforce order, internal democracy, and accountability within the broader electoral system.





Module V:

Election Management Bodies in Nigeria



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Election Management Bodies are institutions established by law to organise, administer, and supervise elections in a manner that reflects the will of the people. In a democratic system, elections are not self-executing, they require professional institutions with legal authority, operational independence, technical capacity, and public trust. Election Management Bodies exist to provide this structure and to ensure that elections are credible, transparent, inclusive, and compliant with the law.

Nigeria operates a decentralised electoral management system made up of one national Election Management Body and thirty-six State-level Election Management Bodies. Together, these institutions are responsible for managing elections across different tiers of government in line with constitutional and statutory mandates.

This module explains why electoral management matters, traces the evolution of election administration in Nigeria, describes the structure and functions of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the State Independent Electoral Commissions, and clarifies the roles of electoral officials across the electoral cycle.

Objectives

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain why credible electoral management is central to democracy and good governance
- Describe the evolution of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria
- Explain the structure, composition, and legal mandate of INEC and SIECs
- Clarify the relationship between INEC and SIECs
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of electoral officials at different stages of the electoral process

Expected Results

At the end of this module, readers should be able to:

- Explain the role of Election Management Bodies in ensuring credible elections;
- Distinguish between INEC and SIECs and understand their respective mandates;
- Identify key electoral officials and understand their responsibilities before, during, and after elections;
- Appreciate how professional electoral administration strengthens public trust in elections.

5.1 Why Electoral Management Matters

Elections are the primary mechanism through which citizens choose their representatives and hold leaders accountable. For elections to be credible, they must be organised by institutions that are impartial, professional, transparent, and trusted by the public. Electoral management matters because it directly affects the integrity of the electoral process and the legitimacy of elected governments.

Effective electoral management ensures that:

- Eligible citizens are able to register and vote without discrimination
- Political parties and candidates compete on a level playing field
- Votes are counted accurately, and results reflect the choice of voters
- Disputes are minimised through clear procedures and lawful conduct
- Public confidence in democracy is strengthened

Where electoral management is weak, elections are more likely to be disputed, manipulated, or rejected by the public. Strong electoral management reduce the risk of violence, build institutional credibility, and support peaceful democratic transitions.

Globally, best practices emphasise the independence of Election Management Bodies, clear legal mandates, professional staffing, and transparency in operations. Nigeria's

electoral system reflects these principles through constitutional provisions and the Electoral Act, 2026.

5.2 Evolution of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria

Nigeria’s electoral administration has evolved over time in response to political changes, constitutional reforms, and lessons from past elections. Since the 1950s, different Election Management Bodies have been established to conduct elections under both civilian and military governments.

The evolution of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria reflects the country’s broader democratic journey, including transitions between parliamentary and presidential systems, periods of military rule, and the consolidation of democratic governance under the Fourth Republic.

Historical Overview of Election Management Bodies²⁶

Period	Election Management Body	Key Responsibility
1958–1959	Election Commission of Nigeria (ECN)	Conducted the 1959 federal elections
1960–1965	Federal Electoral Commission (FEC)	Conducted post-independence federal and regional elections
1978–1983	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	Conducted elections for the Second Republic
1987–1993	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	Implemented transition programme and conducted multiple elections
1995–1998	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON)	Conducted elections under military transition programme
1998–Present	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	Conducts national elections under the Fourth Republic

The establishment of INEC in 1998 marked a shift toward a permanent, constitutionally protected electoral institution with nationwide presence and operational continuity. INEC has since conducted all federal and state elections under the Fourth Republic.

5.3 Types of Election Management Bodies in Nigeria

Nigeria operates a dual-level electoral management structure consisting of:

- The Independent National Electoral Commission;
- State Independent Electoral Commissions;

Each body has a distinct legal mandate and jurisdiction defined by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

Election Management Body	Level	Elections Conducted
Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	Federal and State	Presidential, National Assembly, Governorship, State Houses of Assembly, Area Council elections in FCT
State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs)	36 States	Local Government Area elections

Although both bodies manage elections, they operate independently within their respective constitutional mandates.

5.4 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The Independent National Electoral Commission is the national Election Management Body responsible for organising and supervising elections into federal, state, and FCT area council elective offices, excluding local government area elections in the states.

INEC is established by the Constitution (as amended) and derives its operational powers primarily from the Constitution and the Electoral Act, 2026.

5.4.1 Composition and Structure of INEC

INEC is composed of:

1. A Chairman, who serves as the Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chief Returning Officer
2. Twelve National Electoral Commissioners
3. A Secretary, who serves as the Chief Accounting Officer and administrative head.

The Secretary is appointed by the Commission for a term of 4 years and may be renewed only once for a similar term of 4 years.

The Chairman and National Commissioners are appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the Senate, following consultation with the Council of State. Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) are appointed for each state and the Federal Capital Territory and serve as the chief electoral officers at the state level. The RECs are not members of the Commission and are appointed by the President, subject to the confirmation of the Senate. Members of the Commission and RECs have 5 years tenure. The President retains the option of renewing the tenure of a Chairman, a member of the Commission, or the Resident Electoral Commissioner for a further one term only.

The INEC Chairman, National Commissioners and RECs can be removed from office by the President, acting on an address supported by a two-thirds majority of the Senate, due to misconduct or inability to discharge the functions of their offices.

INEC operates a three-tier structure:

- National Headquarters in Abuja
- State Offices in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory
- Local Government Area offices in all 768 Local Government Areas and 6 Area Councils in the FCT

• Level	Description	Key Officers
National Headquarters (Abuja)	The policy-making and leadership hub of INEC. This is where the Commission develops electoral frameworks, guidelines, and national-level strategy.	INEC Chairman, 12 National Commissioners, Secretary to the Commission, Directors of departments
State Offices (36 States + FCT)	Each state has a fully operational INEC office responsible for conducting elections in that state.	Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Administrative Secretary, Department Heads

Local Government Area (768 Local Government Areas and 6 Area Councils in the FCT)	These offices bring INEC’s operations to the grassroots. They are essential for voter registration, logistics, and election day coordination.	Electoral Officer (EO), Support Staff
--	---	---------------------------------------

This structure ensures nationwide coverage and decentralised implementation of electoral activities.



Why This Structure Matters:

This system ensures INEC is present in every corner of Nigeria — from Abuja to remote villages — enabling it to manage logistics, registration, and election-day operations with reach and responsiveness.

5.4.2 Functions of INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission derives its powers and responsibilities primarily from the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act, 2026. These instruments establish INEC as an independent body responsible for the administration, regulation, and supervision of elections in Nigeria. INEC’s functions extend across the entire electoral cycle and are designed to guarantee electoral integrity, operational transparency, and public confidence.

Core Functions of INEC

Functional Area	Description
Conduct of Elections	Organises, undertakes, and supervises elections to the offices of the President and Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors, National Assembly, and State Houses of Assembly, and FCT Area Council elections.
Voter Registration	Arranges and conducts the Continuous Voter Registration exercise and maintains, updates, and revises the national Register of Voters.
Political Party Registration and Regulation	Registers political parties, monitors their organisation and activities, including congresses, conventions, primaries, and campaign conduct.
Campaign Monitoring and Finances	Monitors political campaigns and enforces compliance with campaign timelines, finance limits, and code of conduct provisions under the Electoral Act, 2026.
Voter and Civic Education	Conducts voter and civic education programmes to promote informed participation and democratic values.
Election Regulations	Issues regulations, guidelines, and manuals for the effective implementation of the Electoral Act, including procedures for voting, collation, and result management.
Administer the Electoral Workforce	Recruit, train, and deploy both permanent and ad-hoc staff for elections.
Prosecute Election Offenders	Investigate and prosecute election-related offences in order to deter malpractice and strengthen electoral integrity.
Referenda	Conducts referenda as required by the Constitution or an Act of the National Assembly.

These functions position INEC not only as an election organiser but also as a regulator, educator, and custodian of electoral integrity.

5.5 State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs)

State Independent Electoral Commissions are constitutionally established bodies responsible for conducting elections into Local Government Areas within the states of the federation.

Each state has one SIEC, created under Section 197 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. While SIECs operate independently of INEC, their mandates are complementary within Nigeria's federal structure.

5.5.1 Composition and Structure of SIECs

The composition and structure of each SIEC are determined by the laws enacted by the respective State Houses of Assembly, in line with constitutional provisions.

Composition

Element	Description
Chairman	Appointed by the State Governor, subject to confirmation by the State House of Assembly.
Members	Not fewer than five and not more than seven members, as provided by state law.
Secretary	Administrative head of the Commission, responsible for day-to-day operations.

Structure

SIECs typically operate a two-tier structure:

- State Headquarters
- Local Government Area offices

This structure allows SIECs to administer local government elections across all local councils within their states.

5.5.2 Functions of SIECs

Function	Description
Conduct of Local Elections	Organises, undertakes, and supervises elections into Local Government Areas (Except FCT Area Council).

Voter Register Usage	Utilises the Register of Voters compiled by INEC for local government elections.
Advisory Role	Provides advice to INEC on voter registration issues and electoral ward delineation, where applicable.
Voter Education	Participates in voter education and public enlightenment activities at the local level.

SIECs play a critical role in deepening grassroots democracy by ensuring that local governance structures are filled through electoral processes.

5.6 The Relationship Between INEC and SIECs

INEC and SIECs are independent constitutional bodies with distinct mandates. Neither institution exercises control nor supervision over the other. Their relationship is defined by cooperation, coordination, and technical support.

Nature of the Relationship

Area	Description
Independence	SIECs are not subordinate to INEC and operate independently under state laws.
Technical Support	INEC provides technical assistance and advisory support to SIECs when requested.
Register of Voters	INEC supplies SIECs with the Register of Voters for use in local government elections.
Collaboration	Both bodies engage through platforms such as the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions (FOSIECOM) for knowledge sharing and capacity building.

This cooperative relationship supports consistency in electoral standards while respecting constitutional autonomy.

5.7 Electoral Officials and Their Duties

Electoral officials are the human backbone of election administration. Although many officials serve across multiple phases of the electoral cycle, their responsibilities vary depending on whether the activity relates to voter registration, pre-election preparation, election day operations, or post-election processes.²⁷ Below is a full, detailed, and

phase-by-phase description of the duties of electoral officials:

The table below simplifies the roles of key electoral officials across different phases.

Electoral Officials and Responsibilities by Phase

Electoral Official	Pre-Election Phase	Registration Phase	Election Day Phase	Post-Election Phase
INEC Chairman	Provides national leadership and oversight; issues policy direction	Oversight	Serves as Returning Officer for Presidential election	Oversees post-election reviews and reforms
National Commissioners	Supervise clusters of states; policy guidance	Monitoring	Monitor compliance and field activities	Election evaluation
Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC)	Coordinates election planning and logistics at state level	Chief Registration Officer for the state	Supervises conduct of elections in the state	Manages storage and custody of materials
Electoral Officer (EO)	Coordinates LGA-level preparations	Supervises CVR centres	Supervises polling and collation in LGA	Secures materials and submits reports
Registration Officer (RO)	Preparative support	Registers voters, captures biometrics and assists in claims and objections	Not applicable	Not applicable
Supervising Presiding Officer (SPO)				

Presiding Officer (PO)	Training and briefing	Not applicable	Manages polling unit operations	Submits result sheets and materials
Assistant Presiding Officer (APO)	Training	Not applicable	Assists accreditation, voting, and counting	Supports documentation
Collation Officer	Preparation for collation	Not applicable	Collates and transmits results	Secures collation records
Election Monitor	Monitor pre-election logistics	Monitor CVR activities and compliance	Monitor Polling units and collation. Escalate operation issues and report irregularities.	Compiles monitoring reports for institution learnings and reforms
Election Observers	Observes pre-election logistics	Observes CVR	Observes polling and collation	Reports observations
Returning Officer				

Election Day Technical Support Staff Responsibilities by Phase²⁸

Electoral Official	Pre-Election Phase	Registration Phase	Election Day Phase	Post-Election Phase
Registration Area Technical Support Staff (RATechs)	Provides refresher training for the Presiding Officers at the Registration Area Centre (RAC);	N/A	i) Provides support on the use of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) ii) Fixes malfunctioning BVAS; iii) Configures a new BVAS for any polling unit with a malfunction BVAS; and (iv) Verifies and confirms the Polling Unit results uploaded at the Polling Unit by Presiding Officers on the INEC result viewing portal (IReV).	N/A
Local Government Area/Area Council Technical Support Services	N/A	N/A	Assists the LGA/Area Council Technical Supervisor in providing support to the RATechSS in a Local Government Area/Area Council.	N/A

Local Government Area/Area Council Technical Supervisor	N/A	N/A	Coordinates and supervises technical issues at the LGA/ AC.	N/A
State Technical Supervisor	N/A	N/A	Coordinates and supervises technical issues at the State.	N/A
State ICT Supervisor			Coordinates and supervises all ICT activities in the state during an election.	



Module VI:
The Electoral
Process in
Nigeria

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

The electoral process describes the full sequence of activities through which citizens choose their representatives and exercise political authority in a democracy. Elections are not limited to voting day alone. They involve structured actions before, during, and after elections, guided by law, procedures, and institutional responsibilities.

This module explains the electoral process as a cycle, clarifies what happens at each phase, and highlights the role of citizens in supporting credible elections through lawful participation, observation, and accountability.

Objectives

This module aims to enable readers to:

- Understand the full electoral process from preparation to dispute resolution
- Identify activities that take place before, during, and after elections
- Understand how votes are cast, counted, collated, and declared
- Recognise common electoral offences and why they undermine elections
- Appreciate the role of citizens as lawful observers and reporters of violations
- Understand how electoral disputes are resolved through legal mechanisms

Expected Results

At the end of this module, readers should be able to:

- Explain the stages of the electoral process clearly
- Describe what happens on Election Day at polling and collation levels
- Identify lawful and unlawful electoral practices

- Understand how electoral disputes are handled under the law
- Engage responsibly in elections as voters, educators, or observers

6.1 Pre-Election Phase

The pre-election phase lays the groundwork for credible elections. This phase includes voter registration, candidate nomination, voter education, campaign activities, and logistical preparations by INEC. Weaknesses at this stage often affect the integrity of Election Day and post-election outcomes.

- **Voter Registration:** Voter registration enables eligible citizens to be recognised as voters and issued Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). Registration is continuous and managed by INEC to ensure inclusiveness and accuracy of the voters' register.

To register, an individual must:

- Be a citizen of Nigeria
- Be at least 18 years old
- Present themselves physically at a designated INEC registration centre
- Provide acceptable identification and biometric data
- Collect a Temporary Voter Card, later replaced by a PVC

Voter registration ensures that elections reflect the will of eligible citizens and prevents impersonation or multiple voting.

- **Replacement of PVCs:** Where a PVC is lost, damaged, defaced or stolen, the voter must apply in person at an INEC office or visit cvr.inecnigeria.org.
- **Candidate Nomination and Party Primaries:** Political parties nominate candidates through internal primary elections. These may be **direct** primaries, or **consensus**, depending on party rules. INEC monitors party primaries but does not conduct them. Only candidates duly nominated

by political parties and submitted to INEC can contest elections.

Voter Rights During the Pre-Election Phase

Registered voters have the right to:

- Access accurate electoral information
- Participate in campaigns without intimidation
- Inspect the voters' register and raise claims or objections
- Receive voter education on procedures and rights

Voter education at this stage focuses on awareness, inclusion, and confidence-building, especially for first-time voters.

Importance of Participation: Participation during the pre-election phase strengthens the credibility of elections. Registering early, collecting PVCs, attending civic and voter education sessions, and verifying voter information reduce errors and disputes later in the process..

6.2 Election Day Activities

Election Day is the main event, but it's also the most sensitive and highly organized phase of the electoral cycle. Everything builds up to this day. For many voters, it's their most visible form of civic participation

A. Voting in Nigeria – How It Works

Nigeria uses the **Re-Modified Open Secret Ballot System**. This means:

- You **vote in secret** (inside a private voting cubicle).
- You **cast your ballot in the open** (by dropping it into the ballot box in front of others).
- Your vote remains confidential, and the process is transparent.

To vote, you must:

- Be **registered at the polling unit** (PU) you want to vote in.
- Present your **Permanent Voter's Card (PVC)**.
- Ensure your name appears on the **INEC register** at that PU.

B. What Happens at the Polling Unit?

1. Arrival

- Queues and Priority Lines
- Identification and Accreditation
- Ballot Issuance
- Marking Your Choice
- Casting Your Vote

C. Counting and Announcement of Results

2. After Polls Close

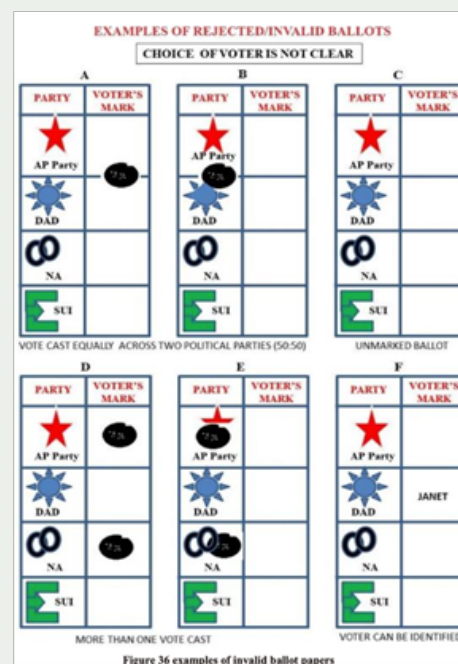
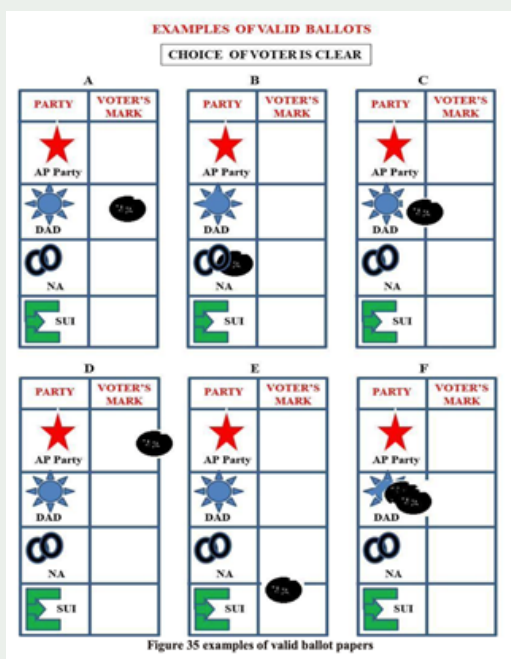
- All unused ballot papers are **cancelled** and recorded.
- INEC officials check:
 - Total number of accredited voters
 - Total votes cast
 - The above figures should tally with the accreditation figures.

3. Sorting the Votes

- Ballot boxes are opened.
- Votes are sorted based on the party or candidate marked.
- Invalid or spoiled ballots are put in a separate pile.

4. Reasons a Vote May Be Rejected:

- No thumbprint or multiple thumbprints
- Writing on the ballot
- Thumbprint outside the box PO



Source: INEC Election Officials' Manual 2023

5. Recording Results

- Results are recorded on the polling units' results sheets, the Presiding Officer shall electronically transmit the results to the IReV portal, while the physical Form EC8A remains the primary record in cases of transmission failure.
- Rejected and spoiled ballots are noted.
- Final results are recorded on the **Result Poster and pasted** at the PU.

6. Departure to Ward Collation Centre

- The PO, with other officials and security, transports all materials to the **Registration Area (Ward) Collation Centre** for the next stage.

D. Collation of Results

The process of adding up all the votes from polling units.

Where Final Collation Happens:

Election Type	Final Collation Point
Councilor (FCT election)	Ward Collation Centre
Area Council Chairman (FCT election)	Area Council Collation Centre
State Assembly	LGA/Constituency Centre
House of Reps	Constituency Collation Centre
Senate	Senatorial District Centre
Governorship	State Collation Centre
Presidential	Final Collation by INEC Chairman in Abuja

Each level aggregates results from below and forwards them upwards until the national level (for presidential elections).

E. Declaring Winners

INEC declares winners based on **specific criteria**:

Office	Requirement to Win
Councillor/Rep/Assembly/Senate	Simple majority (highest number of votes)
Governor	Majority votes and 25% in at least two-thirds of LGAs
President	Majority votes and 25% in two-thirds of 36 states + FCT

6.3 Post-Election Phase

The post-election phase begins immediately after results have been declared and extends through dispute resolution, judicial review, and institutional learning. This phase is critical for consolidating public trust, addressing grievances lawfully, and improving future elections.

Once results are announced, political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, observers, and citizens review the conduct of the election against legal and procedural standards. Where stakeholders are satisfied, the process ends peacefully. Where concerns arise, the law provides structured avenues for redress.

Post-election activities include the issuance of certificates of return, archival of election materials, evaluation of electoral performance, and the resolution of disputes through courts and tribunals. INEC also undertakes post-election reviews to identify operational gaps, improve logistics, and strengthen future electoral administration.

6.4 Margin of Lead Principle

The Margin of Lead principle is a critical aspect of Nigerian electoral law that determines whether a winner can be declared in an election or if a supplementary election is needed. It is a safeguard designed to protect the integrity of elections where elections are postponed, voided, or not held in line with the Electoral Act. It applies when the number of PVC collected in affected polling units exceeds the margin between the leading candidate and the runner-up.

In such situations, declaring a winner immediately could disenfranchise voters whose polling units' elections are postponed, voided, or not held in line with the Electoral Act. To prevent this, INEC may declare the election inconclusive and schedule supplementary elections in the affected areas.

The principle ensures that eligible voters, where disruptions occur, have meaningful opportunities to determine the outcome and that results reflect the true will of the electorate rather than administrative or security disruptions.

6.5 Electoral Offences

Electoral offences are actions that violate the electoral laws and undermine the integrity of the electoral process. These offences can be committed by various individuals, including voters, candidates, political parties and election officials. The Electoral Act,

2026 (Sections 118 to 133) outlines a range of these offences and specifies the sanctions for each.

Here are some electoral offences and their penalties:

Offence	What it means	Penalty
Multiple registration	Registering more than once using fake names or false details	Up to ₱100,000 fine or 12 months in prison or both
Vote buying or selling	Offering or receiving money, food, gifts, or any reward to influence votes	Up to ₱5,000,000 fine or 24 months in prison or both
Impersonation	Pretending to be someone else to vote or register	Up to ₱2,000,000 fine or 12 months in prison or both
Offence on election day (Snatching of election materials)	Fighting, threatening, or disrupting voting activities	A fine of ₱500,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months for each offense. Snatching or destroying election materials carries an additional penalty of 24 months imprisonment.
Threats or intimidation	Forcing or scaring people into voting a certain way or staying away	Up to ₱2,000,000 fine or 3 years in prison
False information	Submitting fake documents or lying during registration or collation	A fine not exceeding ₱100,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.
Illegal result declaration	Announcing unofficial or fake results	4 years in prison

6.6 Citizens as Watchdogs and Reporting Violations

Citizens play an essential role in safeguarding electoral integrity beyond casting votes. Acting as lawful watchdogs means observing electoral processes, identifying irregularities, and reporting them through approved channels without confrontation or violence.

Responsible observation includes paying attention to voter accreditation, ballot

issuance, counting procedures, result recording, and the behaviour of electoral officials and party agents. Citizens must avoid interfering with election officials or disrupting polling activities.

Violations should be reported to INEC, security agencies, or other designated platforms such as the INEC Citizens Contact Centre. Reporting should be factual, timely, and free

 **Where to report:**

Channel	How to Reach INEC
Phone	Call 0700-CALL-INEC (0700-2255-4632)
Email	iccc@inec.gov.ng
Website	www.inecnigeria.org
Mobile App	Download the “My INEC” app on Google Play Store
Social Media	@inecnigeria (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)

By reporting violations responsibly, citizens support transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement of electoral processes.

6.7 Electoral Dispute Resolution

Electoral dispute resolution provides a lawful mechanism for addressing disagreements arising from electoral processes. It ensures that grievances are resolved through institutions rather than through violence or self-help. Electoral disputes are not just complaints. They are serious legal challenges that can affect the legitimacy of an election and even lead to reruns.

Election dispute resolution can be achieved through:

1. Election Alternative Dispute Resolution (EADR)

6.7.1 INEC Election Alternative Dispute Resolution (EADR):

INEC ADR refers to the Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

What INEC ADR Does

INEC ADR is a system set up to resolve election-related disputes quickly and amicably without going to court. Its main role is to reduce tension, prevent violence, and ensure a smooth electoral process.

Key Functions of INEC ADR

1. Handles Electoral Complaint: Receives complaints arising from:

- i. Voter registration (CVR, PVC issues)
- ii. Political party activities
- iii. Campaign conduct
- iv. Election day processes
- v. Result collation disputes (where applicable)

2. Provides Non-Judicial Resolution

- i. Uses dialogue, mediation, conciliation, and negotiation instead of litigation.
- ii. Encourages parties to reach a mutual understanding.

3. Promotes Peaceful Elections

- i. Prevents escalation of minor disputes into violence or court cases.
- ii. Helps maintain law and order during elections.

4. Engages Stakeholders that Works with:

- i. Political parties
- ii. Candidates
- iii. Security agencies
- iv. CSOs
- v. Election observers
- vi. INEC officials

5. Speeds Up Conflict Resolution

- i. Faster than court processes.
- ii. Allows INEC to address complaints in real time, especially during elections.

6. Strengthens Electoral Integrity

- i. Builds trust in INEC's processes.
- ii. Encourages transparency and accountability.

What INEC ADR Does Not Do

- i. It does not replace election tribunals or courts.
- ii. It cannot overturn election results.
- iii. It handles disputes within INEC's administrative powers.

6.7.2 Election Petition

An **election petition** is a formal way to challenge the **result** or **process** of an election in court. It allows a candidate or party to ask the court to:

- Cancel the election
- Declare another candidate the rightful winner
- Order a rerun

6.7.3 Types of Election Petition

A. Two Main Types of Election Petition:

1. Pre-Election Petition

- These happen *before* the election.
- They often involve issues within political parties (e.g. faulty primaries or party leadership disputes).
- Also includes disputes about voter registration, candidate nomination, party substitution, or INEC's pre-election decisions.

Who can file?

- A candidate (aspirant) in the party's primary
- A political party

Where are they filed? According to the Electoral Act 2026, this suit can only be filed at the Federal High Court

2. Post-Election Petition

- o These happen *after* the election has been conducted.
- o Usually, challenge the conduct of the election or the result.

Who can file?

- A political party
- A candidate in the election

Who must be listed in the case?

- INEC
- The declared winner (plus their political party)

If either INEC or the declared winner is not listed, the case will be thrown out.

This is non-negotiable.

6.7.4 Valid Reasons to File a Post-Election Petition (Grounds of Petition)

According to the Electoral Act, you can file a petition if:

Reason	Example
The election was filled with corrupt practices or non-compliance with the electoral laws.	Vote buying, ballot box snatching

The declared winner didn't win majority of lawful votes

Wrong tally of votes or illegal votes counted

How Long Do You Have to File?

- **Pre-election matters:** Must be filed within **14 days** of the issue or action
- **Election petitions:** Must be filed within **21 days** after INEC announces results
- The courts must deliver **judgment within 180 days** of filing
- Appeals must be filed within **14 days** and decided within **60 days**

This timeline ensures that election matters don't drag endlessly in court.

What Happens After You File a Petition?

The case goes to an **Election Petition Tribunal** or court. If the court finds your case convincing, it can:

- **Void the election**
- **Order a fresh election**
- **Declare a new winner**

Election petition cases take top priority over other civil matters in court.





Module VII:

Inclusion in Voter Education



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Inclusive voter education is fundamental to democratic legitimacy. An electoral process that excludes sections of the population, whether intentionally or by design, weakens public confidence, distorts representation, and undermines the principle of political equality. Voter education, therefore, must move beyond general messaging to deliberately reach groups that face structural, social, economic, physical, or informational barriers to participation.

This module examines why inclusion matters in voter education, identifies groups that are frequently marginalised, and explains tailored approaches for ensuring that women, persons with disabilities, youths, internally displaced persons, and residents of rural or hard-to-reach communities are fully informed and able to participate meaningfully in the electoral process. All references to legal provisions align with the Electoral Act, 2026 and related frameworks.

Objectives of the Module

This module aims to explain the rationale for inclusive voter education, identify the specific needs and barriers faced by marginalised groups, outline strategies for targeted voter education, and strengthen the capacity of facilitators to design and deliver inclusive voter education programmes.

Expected Results

At the end of this module, participants should understand why inclusive voter education is essential, recognise the different categories of marginalised voters and the obstacles they face, and be able to plan and conduct voter education activities that respond to the needs of diverse groups without discrimination.

7.1 Why Inclusion Matters

Democracy rests on the principle that all eligible citizens have equal rights to participate in choosing their leaders. Inclusion in voter education ensures that this principle translates into practice. When information about registration, voting procedures, rights, and responsibilities fails to reach certain groups, exclusion occurs even if the law formally guarantees participation.

Inclusive voter education improves voter turnout, reduces invalid votes, strengthens trust in electoral institutions, and enhances the legitimacy of election outcomes. It also prevents the concentration of political power among groups with better access to information, resources, or mobility. Inclusion, therefore, is not charity or accommodation but a constitutional and democratic obligation.

When you include more people, democracy grows stronger. When you exclude them, it becomes weaker, unfair, and incomplete.

7.2 Understanding Marginalised Groups

Marginalised groups are not defined solely by numbers but by the barriers they face in accessing electoral information and participating fully in elections. These barriers may be physical, social, cultural, economic, institutional, or informational.

In the context of voter education, marginalised groups commonly include women, persons with disabilities, youths, especially first-time voters, internally displaced persons and communities in remote or underserved locations.

Group	Why They Face Barriers
Women	Cultural norms, safety concerns, unequal access to info/resources
Persons with Disabilities	Poor access to polling units, no braille or sign language support
Internally Displaced Persons	Displacement, lack of documentation, poor representation
Youth	Excluded from leadership, dismissed as apathetic or unserious

Each group faces distinct challenges that require deliberate and context-sensitive voter education strategies rather than generic messaging.

Why Should We Target Them in Voter Education?

Targeted voter education helps to:

- Close knowledge gaps that keep these groups uninformed
- Increase their confidence to vote or run for office
- Break social or cultural stereotypes that discourage participation
- Build a more representative democracy that reflects every voice

You cannot have inclusive elections without inclusive education.

7.3 Women

Women constitute a significant proportion of the voting-age population yet remain underrepresented in political participation and leadership. Effective voter education must therefore address women as a priority group, recognising the diversity of their experiences across age, location, literacy levels, disability status, and socio-economic background.

7.3.1 Why Target Women

Targeting women in voter education aims to increase their participation as voters, candidates, and political actors. Women’s participation strengthens democratic decision-making by broadening perspectives, reflecting household and community needs, and promoting social accountability.

International human rights instruments affirm women’s equal political rights, while national frameworks recognise the importance of gender inclusion for democratic development. Excluding women from electoral participation undermines the democratic character of the state and weakens governance outcomes.

7.3.2 Barriers to Women’s Participation

Women face multiple, overlapping barriers that limit their engagement in elections. These include social and cultural norms that restrict women’s mobility or discourage political involvement, economic constraints that limit access to resources required for participation, and information gaps arising from lower exposure to civic education.

Additional barriers include insecurity at polling units, lack of gender-sensitive facilities, family pressure leading to proxy or family voting, limited access to political party structures, and inadequate mentorship and sponsorship for female aspirants. In some contexts, fear of violence, harassment, or stigma discourages women from participating openly.

Challenges Women Face in Elections

Barrier Type	Description
Legal	Lack of quotas or supportive laws for female inclusion
Economic	Campaigning costs are often too high for women
Cultural	Some communities discourage women from public roles
Safety	Election violence and harassment discourage women voters and candidates

Knowledge Gap	Rural and older women often lack access to voter information
Systemic Bias	Political parties rarely support women aspirants with resources

Voter education programmes targeting women must address these barriers by providing clear information, safe engagement spaces, relatable messaging, and reassurance about electoral protections and rights.

INEC’s Gender Policy: What’s Being Done?²⁹

INEC has a gender policy aligned with international human rights standards like CEDAW, UDHR, and the African Charter. INEC has identified four policy implementation objectives based on the overall goal that reflects its institutional responsibilities and roles under its regulatory mandate with regard to the broader electoral environment. These objectives include:

- Ensuring that INEC policies, plans, processes and operations are gender responsive.
- Encouraging gender equity and balance within political parties, especially in the identification of candidates in line with the provisions of their statutes.
- Increasing budgetary provision and mobilising partners to effectively provide funding for gender sensitive actions within their purview.
- Supporting an enabling legislative environment to achieve gender equality and bridging gaps in political representation in elective posts at all electoral levels.

7.4 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from electoral participation not because of their impairments but because of environmental, attitudinal, and institutional barriers. Inclusive voter education recognises disability as a rights issue rather than a welfare concern.

What is Disability? “Disabilities are a social consequence of impairments (such as deafness, paralysis, albinism or blindness)”. Therefore, disability can be said to be the outcome of the interaction between the impaired individual, society, and the environment.

Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) says persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The World Health Organisation defines ‘impairment’ as any loss or abnormality of psychological or anatomical structure or function, and ‘disability’ as any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. Also, ‘handicap’ is defined as any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for that individual. The definition of disability from the Disabled Peoples’ International is also apt. It defines disability as “the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others, due to physical or social barriers.”

These definitions show that impairment in itself does not make one disabled; the barriers that exist, such as the unavailability of braille, sign language interpreters, audio records, and pictorials, hinder persons with disabilities from living normal lives like others.

7.4.1 Barriers to PWD Participation

Barriers faced by persons with disabilities include inaccessible voter education materials, the absence of sign language interpretation, lack of braille or audio formats, inaccessible registration and polling locations, negative attitudes, and inadequate awareness among electoral officials and communities.

Communication barriers prevent access to critical information, while infrastructural barriers limit physical access to polling units. Technological barriers arise when assistive tools are unavailable or poorly integrated into electoral processes.

Type of Barrier	Examples
Attitudinal	Stigma, stereotyping, gender bias, family shame, exclusion
Institutional	Weak laws, inaccessible political parties, low government responsiveness
Communication	No sign language at campaigns, lack of braille, inaccessible language
Infrastructural	No ramps, narrow doorways, stairs at polling units
Technological	Lack of assistive devices (tactile ballot guides, magnifiers, audio)

7.4.2 Legal Framework for Inclusion in Nigeria

The inclusion of persons with disabilities in electoral participation is supported by international and national legal instruments, including the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act 2026, and the Discrimination

against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018. These instruments affirm the right of persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in political and public life.

INEC’s Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Electoral Process provides operational guidance for implementing these rights in practice.

7.4.3 Disability Assistive Aids and Devices

Inclusive voter education incorporates assistive aids such as braille materials, tactile ballot guides, sign language interpretation, audio recordings, pictorial guides, ramps, rails, and priority voting arrangements. These aids enhance independence, preserve vote secrecy, and reduce reliance on third-party assistance.

Assistive devices should be matched to specific impairments and deployed alongside clear explanations of their use during voter education sessions.

Assistive Devices and Tools for PWDs

DISABILITY	ASSISTIVE AID/DEVICE	HOW TO OPERATE
Albinism	Magnifying glass to make symbols and alphabets bold	Hold handle, place reading material underneath
Cognitive impairment	Picture/animation- Showing step by step activities on election day	Persons with cognitive impairment can find this useful with the help of their caregiver
Hearing impairment	In the absence of a Sign Language interpreter, Pictures/animation, short video clips can help	Once a person with hearing impairment is identified, these devices can be handed over to him/her
Physical impairment	Ramps and rails make mobility easier.	This device is placed across slightly elevated surfaces to allow Persons with disabilities (PWDs) access Polling areas

Sight impairment	<p>Braille is used for persons with sight impairment that can read the braille. Short audio clips in local dialect can assist those not learned.</p> <p>A tactile ballot guide can be used by persons with poor vision to prevent invalid votes.</p>	<p>Persons with sight impairment who have been trained to read the braille can be given the aid, but others can be assisted by their assistant usually their trusted family member.</p>
Spinal cord injury	<p>Persons with spinal cord injury can perform all activities but due to their condition, they cannot stand or sit for long hours.</p>	<p>Such persons should be quickly attended to if identified.</p>

7.4.4 Creating Access for PWDs

Creating access requires a twin-track approach. One track focuses on targeted voter education for persons with disabilities using appropriate formats and channels. The second track integrates persons with disabilities into mainstream voter education activities as participants, trainers, and facilitators.

This approach promotes inclusion, reduces stigma, and reinforces the principle that persons with disabilities are active citizens rather than passive beneficiaries.

7.5 Youths and Democratic Participation

Young people represent a significant share of the voting-age population and remain central to the sustainability of democratic systems. Their participation shapes political culture, strengthens accountability, and determines whether democratic institutions remain responsive over time. Despite this, youth engagement in electoral processes often fluctuates, with gaps between eligibility, registration, and actual turnout.

Barriers to Youth Participation

Challenge	Impact
Lack of trust in politicians	Belief that votes don't matter leads to apathy
Poor access to information	Especially in rural areas with no internet
Exclusion from decision-making	Feeling sidelined by older political elites

Exploitation	Youths are sometimes recruited to engage in election violence
---------------------	---

Youth-focused voter education addresses this gap by equipping young people with practical knowledge about electoral processes while reinforcing the relevance of participation to their daily lives. Many young voters encounter elections for the first time with a limited understanding of registration procedures, voting requirements, or the broader implications of electoral choices. Others disengage due to frustration, misinformation, or lack of trust in political institutions.

Voter education targeting youths therefore, emphasises clarity, relevance, and accessibility. It explains electoral procedures in simple terms, connects civic participation to issues that affect education, employment, security, and social inclusion, and promotes peaceful, lawful engagement rather than confrontation or withdrawal.

7.5.1 Voter Education Targeting Youths

Effective youth voter education begins early and continues beyond election periods. It combines formal civic learning with informal engagement spaces where young people naturally interact. Messages are designed to be practical, relatable, and solution-oriented, avoiding alarmist or adversarial tones.

Channels for youth voter education include schools, tertiary institutions, vocational centres, youth organisations, community forums, radio programmes, and digital platforms. While social media plays a major role in youth engagement, it does not replace traditional media, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Radio remains a critical tool for reaching young people outside urban centres.

How to Get Youths Interested in Elections

Strategy	Examples
Use of Pop Culture	Host campus townhalls with music, poetry slams, sports events, celebrities and social media influencers.
Digital Platforms	Engage with youth via TikTok, Twitter/X, Instagram, WhatsApp groups
Peer Education	Train youth volunteers to speak with friends, classmates, or corps members
Community Integration	Go to where youth gather campuses, markets, parks, game zones
Radio & Local Media	Radio remains powerful, especially for rural youth

Youth voter education also addresses the risks of political manipulation. Young people are sometimes targeted for misinformation, voter inducement, or election-related violence. Responsible voter education clarifies legal consequences, promotes non-violence, and encourages constructive participation such as voter mobilisation, election observation, and issue-based advocacy.

7.6 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internal displacement presents unique challenges to electoral participation. Displacement disrupts access to registration centres, polling units, information channels, and community networks that ordinarily support voter education. As a result, internally displaced persons may face higher levels of political exclusion unless specific measures are taken.

Inclusive voter education recognises that displacement does not remove citizenship rights. IDPs remain entitled to participate in elections and must receive timely, accurate information adapted to their circumstances.

7.6.1 Classification of IDPs

Who is an IDP?

An Internally Displaced Person is someone who has been forced to flee their home but has not crossed national borders. IDPs can live in camps or with relatives in other communities.

Internally displaced persons are broadly classified based on location. Intra-state IDPs are displaced within their state of habitual residence, while inter-state IDPs are displaced to states other than their state of origin.

IDP Type	Description
Intra-State	Displaced within their own state. They vote in all elections.
Inter-State	Displaced to another state. They can vote only in presidential elections.

This distinction has direct implications for voter education content, voting eligibility, and electoral arrangements.

7.6.2 Inclusion of IDPs in the Electoral Process

The inclusion of IDPs requires coordinated voter education that explains where and how displaced voters can register, collect Permanent Voter Cards, and vote. For intra-state

IDPs, participation typically covers all elections conducted by the Commission using existing voter records. For inter-state IDPs, participation is usually limited to presidential elections, in line with the Electoral Act, 2026 and INEC regulations.³⁰

Voter education messages for IDPs must clarify these distinctions to prevent confusion, frustration, or misinformation. Engagement with camp leaders, humanitarian agencies, and community-based organisations supports effective outreach and trust-building.

How IDPs Vote

- **Intra-State IDPs** vote using their PVCs and are included in the RA (Registration Area) results
- **Inter-State IDPs** vote in special centres, and their votes are merged at the state level during presidential elections

INEC ensures this by:

- Creating IDP Voting Centres in collaboration with camp authorities
- Issuing special result forms for IDP centres
- Working with security agencies to ensure safe elections in camps
- Using accreditation machines specially configured for IDP polling

7.6.3 Framework for Voting by IDPs³¹



The Electoral Act, 2026 provides a legal basis for ensuring that displaced persons are not disenfranchised due to emergencies or natural disasters. Building on this, INEC developed a dedicated framework and regulations to guide registration, polling, collation, and result transmission in IDP locations.

This framework introduces special arrangements such as Registration Area-based voting, additional voting points where required, tailored result forms, and enhanced security measures. Voter education under this framework focuses on practical guidance, timelines, and reassurance about the integrity and confidentiality of the process.

7.6.4 Regulations for Voting by IDPs³²

INEC Regulations for Voting by Internally Displaced Persons set out definitions, classification criteria, voting eligibility, registration procedures, security arrangements, and result management protocols. These regulations emphasise coordination with stakeholders, continuous voter registration for displaced populations, and adaptation of logistics to camp settings.

Voter education facilitators working with IDPs must be familiar with these regulations to provide accurate guidance and avoid raising unrealistic expectations.



Module VIII:
Political Parties
and Elections

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

Political parties play a central role in the functioning and stability of democratic societies. They serve as organised platforms through which citizens aggregate interests, articulate political ideas, and compete for political power through elections. By structuring political competition, political parties shape how citizens engage with governance and influence the quality of democratic participation.

In the quest to gain control of government, political parties act as vehicles for mobilising citizens around political agendas, policy alternatives, and leadership choices. Their conduct before, during, and after elections has a direct impact on public trust, political stability, and the credibility of the electoral process.

This module examines political parties within the electoral process. It explains the meaning, features, and functions of political parties, outlines the constitutional and legal provisions governing their formation and operations, and highlights their responsibilities during elections, including their growing role in voter education and democratic consolidation.

Objectives: The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain the critical roles political parties play in democracy and in the electoral process.
- Identify the defining features of political parties.
- Explain the core functions of political parties.
- Outline the statutory provisions guiding the formation and registration of political parties in Nigeria.

Expected Results: By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand the role political parties play in a democracy and within the electoral process.
- Identify political parties based on their defining features.
- Explain the functions of political parties.
- Understand how political parties are formed and regulated in Nigeria.

8.1 Meaning of Political Party

A political party is an association of citizens, duly registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission, formed for the purpose of sponsoring candidates for elective public offices. Political parties exist to nominate candidates for elections and to organise political competition within a constitutional framework.³³

Under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a political party includes any association whose activities involve canvassing for votes in support of candidates seeking election to the offices of President, Vice President, Governor, Deputy Governor, membership of a legislative house, or a local government council. Political parties, therefore, constitute the primary vehicles through which citizens participate in representative governance.³⁴

Beyond contesting elections, political parties perform broader democratic functions. They aggregate and represent political interests, articulate policy alternatives, provide platforms for political education, and act as intermediaries between citizens and government.

Characteristics of Political Parties

Political parties share several defining characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of political associations.

- **Organisation:** Political parties possess structured organisational frameworks. Some are ideologically driven and built around shared political beliefs, while others emerge from economic interests, historical experiences, or broad coalitions of citizens. The degree of organisation may vary, but effective parties maintain functional national, state, and local structures that enable sustained political engagement beyond election periods.
- **Manifesto:** A party manifesto outlines its vision for governance and policy priorities. It explains what the party stands for, the values it promotes, and how it intends to improve the welfare of citizens if elected. Manifestos provide voters with a basis for comparing political alternatives and holding parties accountable for campaign promises.
- **Membership:** A political party derives strength from its membership base. Membership registration enables participation in internal party processes, including primaries and policy discussions. In a democracy, parties are expected to reflect social diversity and maintain a national outlook in both composition

and ideology.

- **Sound Economic Base:** Political parties require adequate financial resources to operate effectively. Legitimate sources of funding include membership dues, donations, fundraising activities, investments, and lawful public grants where applicable. Transparent and accountable party financing supports credibility and internal stability.
- **Internal Democracy:** Internal democracy is essential to the legitimacy of political parties. Members should have the freedom to express opinions, contest leadership positions, and participate in decision-making processes. Regular internal elections, clear constitutions, and enforceable rules help manage disagreements peacefully and sustain party cohesion.

8.2 Conditions for Registration of a Political Party

The Independent National Electoral Commission is empowered by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to register political parties that meet prescribed conditions. These include:

- Submission of the names and addresses of national officers to INEC.
- Evidence that the governing body includes members drawn from at least two-thirds of the states of the federation.
- Open membership to all Nigerian citizens without discrimination based on origin, sex, religion, or ethnicity.
- Submission of minutes of the National Executive Committee meeting approving the party's name, constitution, manifesto, and symbol.
- Registration of the party constitution with INEC.
- Use of a name and symbol that do not convey ethnic or religious meanings.
- Location of the party headquarters in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
- Provision in the party constitution for regular elections into executive and governing bodies.

8.3 Political Parties and Elections

Political parties provide voters with structured choices by presenting candidates and policy platforms for public consideration. Through elections, parties enable citizens to express preferences and participate in governance decisions. Party identification influences voting behaviour and shapes public perceptions of the political system.

During elections, political parties are expected to conduct their activities in accordance with the law. This includes organising transparent primaries, presenting credible candidates, communicating manifestos clearly, and mobilising support through lawful and peaceful means. Responsible party conduct enhances electoral credibility and political stability.

Political parties also have civic responsibilities beyond winning elections. The Electoral Act, 2026 encourage political parties to contribute to voter education by promoting awareness of electoral procedures, encouraging peaceful participation, and discouraging misinformation and electoral malpractice. When parties invest in voter education, they help strengthen informed participation, reduce confusion at polling units, and build public confidence in the electoral process.

The public image of a political party is therefore shaped not only by electoral success but also by how responsibly it engages citizens, respects democratic norms, and supports electoral integrity.

8.4 Qualification of New Political Parties to Contest in a General Election

Political associations seeking to participate in a general election must apply for registration as political parties not later than twelve months before the scheduled election. Only parties duly registered by INEC are eligible to sponsor candidates for elections.

8.4.1 Political Parties Sponsoring Candidates at Elections

Political parties sponsor candidates by nominating them on prescribed forms and submitting such nominations to INEC. Candidates must be members of the sponsoring party and must meet nomination requirements set by the Commission.

Lists of nominated candidates must be submitted to INEC at least one hundred and twenty days (120) before the election. Independent candidacy is not permitted under Nigerian law.

8.4.2 Canvassing for Votes and Mobilising Citizens

Political parties mobilise citizens by enrolling members, nominating candidates, conducting campaigns, and encouraging participation in elections. Campaign activities are expected to be issue-based, peaceful, and compliant with electoral laws and regulations.

8.4.3 Withdrawal of a Duly Nominated Candidate from an Election³⁵

A nominated candidate may withdraw from an election by submitting a written notice signed by the candidate and forwarded through the sponsoring party to INEC. For withdrawal to be valid, the notice must reach the Commission not later than ninety days before the election.

8.4.4 Changing a Duly Nominated Political Party Candidate

Substitution of a nominated candidate is permitted only in cases of death or voluntary withdrawal within the legally prescribed period. Any substitution must comply strictly with timelines set out in the Electoral Act 2026.

If a nominated candidate dies after submission of nomination papers but before voting begins, INEC must confirm the death. Upon confirmation, the election is postponed, and a new date is fixed within fourteen days. The original voter register remains valid for the rescheduled election.

8.4.5 Extension of Time for Nomination of Candidates

For legislative positions, where only one candidate remains validly nominated after withdrawals, that candidate may be declared elected without a poll.

For executive positions such as Chairman, Governor, or President, INEC extends the nomination period by seven days if only one candidate is nominated. If only one candidate remains after the extension, a poll is conducted in which voters vote “Yes” or “No”. The candidate must secure a majority of affirmative votes and meet statutory requirements to be declared elected.

8.5 Political Party Funding and Campaign Finance

Political parties may raise funds through lawful sources such as membership dues, donations, and investments. Donations must come from identifiable individuals or entities. An individual's contribution to a candidate's election expenses shall not exceed N500,000,000 (Five Hundred Million Naira). The Electoral Act 2026 regulates both individual contributions and total campaign expenditure to promote transparency and fairness.

8.5.1 Campaign Spending under Nigerian Law

The Electoral Act, 2026 sets expenditure limits for candidates contesting different offices, including presidential, gubernatorial, legislative, and local government positions. These limits aim to reduce the undue influence of money in politics and promote a more level playing field.

- **Presidential Election:** The maximum a presidential candidate can spend is **N10,000,000,000** (Ten Billion Naira).
- **Governorship Election:** For a governorship candidate, the limit is **N3,000,000,000** (Three Billion Naira).
- **Senatorial Election:** A candidate for a Senatorial seat can spend up to **N500,000,000** (Five Hundred Million Naira).
- **House of Representatives Election:** The spending limit for a House of Representatives candidate is **N250,000,000** (Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira).
- **State Assembly Election:** If you're running for a seat in the State Assembly, you can spend up to **N100,000,000** (One Hundred Million Naira).
- **Chairmanship Election (Area Council):** The limit for a chairmanship election to an Area Council is **N100,000,000** (One Hundred Million Naira).
- **Councillorship Election (Area Council):** For a Councillorship election to an Area Council, a candidate can spend up to **N10,000,000** (Ten Million Naira).

8.6 Period of Political Party Electioneering Campaigns

Political parties may commence public campaigns one hundred and fifty (150) days before an election and must stop campaigning at least twenty-four hours before Election Day.

8.6.1 Security During Electoral Activities

Provision of security during campaigns is the responsibility of the Nigeria Police Force. The use of armed private security, masquerades, or abusive language during campaigns constitutes an offence. Political parties are required to notify the police in advance of rallies to enable adequate security arrangements.

8.6.2 Use of the Media by Political Parties

It is an offence to deny any political party or candidate access to the media. Where access is denied, affected parties may notify INEC and the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission for appropriate intervention.

8.7 Political Parties Code of Conduct

The Political Parties Code of Conduct provides a framework for constructive engagement among political parties and between parties and INEC. It promotes adherence to the rule of law, responsible campaigning, peaceful conduct on Election Day, respect for post-election processes, and accountability in party finance.

8.7.1 Establishment of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC)


To support implementation and enforcement of the Code of Conduct, the Inter-Party Advisory Council was established at national, state, and local government levels. IPAC comprises representatives of registered political parties and INEC.

A Technical Working Committee of IPAC monitors compliance, investigates violations, resolves inter-party disputes, and recommends sanctions or remedial actions to INEC. Through IPAC, political parties contribute collectively to electoral stability, dialogue, and democratic consolidation.



Module IX:

Media, Information, and Elections



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

This module examines the role of the media in democratic elections, with emphasis on information integrity, accountability, and responsible digital engagement. It recognises the growing influence of both traditional and digital media in shaping voter perception, participation, and trust in the electoral process.

Objectives: The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain why the media is central to democratic elections.
- Describe the functions of the media before, during, and after elections.
- Highlight the risks of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news.
- Promote responsible digital engagement for civic and voter education.

Expected Results: By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand how media influences electoral behaviour and public trust.
- Identify the core functions of the media in elections.
- Recognise misinformation and respond responsibly.
- Use digital platforms constructively to support credible elections.

9.1 Why Media Matters in Elections

The media plays a critical role in shaping political awareness, public opinion, and electoral participation. Through radio broadcasts, television programmes, newspapers, social media platforms, and digital content, citizens receive information that influences how they understand candidates, electoral rules, and democratic responsibilities.

Throughout the electoral cycle, the media becomes one of the primary channels through which voters access information about voter registration, campaign activities, polling procedures, election results, and dispute resolution. The quality, accuracy, and balance of media coverage directly affect public confidence in elections. Responsible media conduct strengthens trust in democratic institutions, while irresponsible reporting can deepen suspicion, tension, and conflict.

For young people in particular, media platforms serve as the dominant space for political engagement. Digital content, peer-shared information, and online conversations now shape civic awareness and participation at an unprecedented scale.

9.2 Functions of the Media in the Electoral Process

The media performs multiple functions that are essential to credible elections. These functions cut across traditional and digital platforms.

Media Function	Description	Democratic Value
Information dissemination	Providing timely, accurate, and accessible election-related information	Enables voters to make informed decisions and understand their rights and obligations
Accountability and oversight	Monitoring candidates, political parties, electoral institutions, and security agencies	Exposes misconduct, promotes transparency, and deters abuse
Platform for public debate	Hosting interviews, debates, analyses, and public discussions	Encourages issue-based politics and comparative evaluation of choices
Citizen mobilisation	Encouraging voter registration, turnout, and peaceful participation	Strengthens inclusion and democratic participation

Traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers remain essential, particularly in rural and low-connectivity areas. Social media and online platforms have expanded access, especially among young voters, but also require higher levels of responsibility and verification.

9.3 Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fake News

Misinformation, disinformation, and fake news pose significant threats to electoral integrity. These practices can confuse voters, inflame tensions, suppress participation, and undermine trust in institutions.

This section should be read together with **Module II, Section 2.15: Civic Responsibility in the Digital Age**, which provides detailed guidance on identifying false information, understanding its impact, and responding responsibly.

9.4 Digital Engagement and Responsible Communication

Digital engagement refers to the use of online platforms and tools to share information, interact with citizens, promote participation, and support informed electoral choices. In voter education, digital engagement enables wider reach, faster dissemination, and interactive communication.

Platform	Application for Voter Education
WhatsApp	Sharing verified flyers, reminders, short videos, infographics, and INEC deadlines through groups and status updates
Instagram	Posting short videos and visual explainers on registration, voting procedures, and misinformation awareness
TikTok	Creating concise educational content that addresses myths, voter apathy, and election processes
X (formerly Twitter)	Sharing real-time updates, engaging verified election information, and promoting civic conversations
Facebook	Hosting live civic education sessions, documenting community outreach, and managing discussion groups
YouTube	Publishing structured explainers, testimonials, and voter education series



Digital engagement should promote dialogue rather than confrontation. Responsible online participation involves verifying information before sharing, avoiding inflammatory language, respecting differing views, and prioritising peace and accuracy. Through responsible digital communication, citizens contribute to free, fair, and credible elections.

- Over 70% of registered voters are under 35. Digital outreach can activate this base.
- Youth trust peer-shared content more than official statements.
- Elections are increasingly discussed and shaped online, especially during misinformation crises.

Digital engagement is not just about posting content. It's about creating a two-way

conversation. When you use your voice online to ask questions, explain the voting process, or correct false information, you contribute to free, fair, and informed elections.





Module X: Elections and Security

Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

This module explains the relationship between elections and security, highlighting common security threats and practical measures citizens can take to stay safe. It emphasises the shared responsibility of institutions, security agencies, political actors, and citizens in ensuring peaceful elections.

Objectives: The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain why security is essential to credible elections.
- Identify common election-related security threats.
- Highlight key security challenges in Nigeria's electoral context.
- Provide practical safety guidance for voters, observers, and civic educators.

Expected Results: By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand the importance of election security.
- Recognise security risks during elections.
- Adopt safe practices during election-related activities.
- Know how and where to report security incidents.

10.1 Security Threats During Elections

Election period is a time when people make their voices heard, but unfortunately, it can also be a period of tension, which is why security matters. Security during elections is about keeping people safe, protecting election materials, and ensuring that votes are cast in peace without fear, violence, or threats.

What is Electoral Violence?

Electoral violence can be defined as any form of behaviour arising from any form of physical, psychological and structural force to cause damage to property, kill or injure an individual or group, aimed at intimidating and blackmailing such group or individual before, during and after elections in order to influence the outcome of the election.

Why is Election Security Important?

Election security helps protect:

- **Voters:** People who want to vote freely without being harassed or attacked.
- **Electoral staff:** INEC officials, ad-hoc staff, and volunteers who work hard on election day.
- **Election materials:** Ballot boxes, result sheets, and voting devices that must not be tampered with.

Common Security Threats to Watch Out For

Threat	What It Means
Violence	Fights between supporters of different political parties, or attacks by hired thugs.
Intimidation	Forcing people to vote a certain way or scaring them away from polling units.
Snatching of ballot boxes	Disrupting the voting process by stealing or destroying ballot boxes.
Attacks on INEC officials	Preventing election workers from doing their job through threats or physical assault.
Fake security agents or impersonation	Individuals pretending to be officials to cause confusion.
Militia or cult group activity	Groups that use fear or violence to control election areas.

10.2 Providing security during elections

The Manual for Elections issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission requires that the provisions of security agents in every polling unit and at other levels of election activity be part of the required personnel. It shall be the responsibility of the Security Agent to ensure that the conduct of the poll, collation and declaration of results are carried out without any disturbance or threat to peace.³⁶

The Security Agents shall:

- Provide security at the polling units and collation centres to ensure that polling, counting of ballots, collation and declaration of results are conducted without breach of peace
- Take necessary measures to prevent violence or any activity that can threaten or disrupt elections

- Comply with any lawful directive issued by or under the authority of the Commission
- Ensure the safety and security of all election materials by escorting and guarding the materials as appropriate
- Protect election officials at the polling stations and collation centres
- Arrest, on the instruction of the Presiding Officer or other INEC officials, any person(s) causing any disturbances or preventing the smooth conduct of proceedings at the polling units and collation centres
- On the instruction of the Presiding Officer, stand at the end of the queue of voters at the polling unit, if any, at the official close of voting so that any person entering the polling unit after this time is not allowed to vote
- Accompany the Presiding Officer to deliver the election results, ballot boxes and other election materials safely to the RA/Ward Collation centre
- Accompany Collation Officers to deliver collated election results to Returning Officers.

Furthermore, the following are some crucial roles that security plays in the electoral process:

- Safeguarding of lives and properties of citizens during the electoral process.
- Ensuring the safety of electoral officers before, during and after elections.
- Providing security for candidates during rallies, congresses, conventions, electioneering campaigns and elections.
- Ensuring and preserving a free, fair, safe and lawful atmosphere for campaigning by all parties and candidates without discrimination.
- Maintaining peaceful conditions, law and order around the polling and counting centres.
- Providing security for electoral officials at the voting and counting centres.
- Ensuring the security of election materials at the voting centres and during transportation.
- Ensuring the security of all electoral materials, personnel and citizens during registration of voters, update, revision and any other electoral event.

10.3 Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)

The Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), is an administrative organ established by the Commission to assist it in coordinating the security of elections. It is established as a channel through which the Commission can collaborate with security agencies to secure the electoral process.

Composition of ICCES

ICCES is made up of the following 21 members at the national level

- The Hon. Chairman and National Commissioners, (INEC)
- The Secretary, INEC
- National Security Adviser (NSA)
- Inspector-General of Police
- The Chairman, Police Service Commission
- The Director General, State Security Services (DSS)
- The Chief of Army Staff
- The Chief of Naval Staff
- The Chief of Air Staff
- The Commandant General, NSCDC
- The Chief of Defence Intelligence Agency
- The Comptroller General, Nig. Immigration Service
- The Comptroller General, Nigeria Correctional Service
- The Corps Marshal, FRSC
- The Chairman/Chief Executive, NDLEA
- The Director General, NIA
- The Comptroller General, Nig. Customs Services
- The Director General, NYSC
- The Hon Minister, Fed. Min. of Interior
- The Comptroller General, Fed. Fire Service
- The Hon. Minister, Min. of Police Affairs
- The Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- The Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)
- The Director General, National Orientation Agency

- The National Coordinator Presidential Task Force on COVID, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation
- The ICCES has state and local government-level representation. While the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission is the Chairman of the Committee at the National level, the Commissioners of Police at the State level hold the position of co- chair with the Resident Electoral Commissioners. The Local Government Electoral Officers coordinate the work of the Committee at the local government areas and the area councils.

Functions of the ICCES

- The collaboration with relevant agencies enables the Commission to carry out the following functions in relation to security of the electoral process:
- Coordinate the design of an election security management for INEC
- Develop locally focused plans for providing security before, during and after elections
- Harmonise the training, deployment and action of security personnel on election duties
- Advise State INEC on rapid response to security threats around elections, including voter registration
- Ensure a reduction in transaction costs to INEC of dealing with individual security agencies on issues of elections
- Assess existing security threats across the States that have implications for elections and produce a Red, Amber and Green electoral security map, which is regularly updated
- Evaluate the performance of security agencies on election duties and recommend improvements and sanctions, where necessary.

10.4 Conducting elections in conflict-prone areas

INEC follows specific protocols to conduct elections in conflict-prone areas. Working through the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), the Commission conducts security assessments, develops risk mitigation plans, and coordinates with security agencies for the safe deployment of personnel and materials. Polling units may be relocated to safer areas where necessary, and elections may be postponed in locations where violence or threats make voting impossible, in line

with Section 24 of the Electoral Act 2026. INEC also engages local leaders and peace committees to promote safety, voter confidence, and peaceful participation.

10.5 The Election Management System

An Election Management System (EMS) is a set of processes, functions and information within an electoral/voting system that defines, develops, and maintains election databases; performs key election events and organises functions; formats and counts ballots; consolidates and reports results, as well as holds, as much as possible, audit trails in the entire electoral process

The EMS Project addressed these challenges by developing a broad framework for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of electoral processes. In particular, it identified electoral tasks and activities across the electoral cycle so as to map and sequence them in order to substantially improve coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of electoral services. The Commission has been using the EMS to determine areas of need in matters of election security.

10.6 Basic Security Tips for Election Day

Here are practical ways to stay safe during outreach or election activities.

Before You Go Out

Tip	What to Do
Know the terrain	Understand your polling unit or outreach location. Learn the route, nearest police post, and safe zones.
Stay updated	Check credible radio or online news updates before you leave.
Plan your transport	Have a reliable and safe way to move to and from the location. Avoid depending on strangers.
Charge your phone	Make sure your phone is fully charged and have backup airtime/ data.
Dress smart	Wear comfortable clothes, carry ID if you're an observer, and avoid political colours or logos.
Avoid moving alone	Always go with at least one other person, especially if you're on duty or reporting incidents.

While at the Polling Unit or Outreach Location

Tip	What to Do
Stay alert	Watch your environment. If you notice strange gatherings, arguments, or unrest, quietly withdraw.
Avoid arguments	Do not engage in political debates or try to correct others aggressively. Your safety comes first.
Identify security presence	Know who the police or security agents are in your area. Locate the nearest officer you can run to in an emergency.
Stay hydrated	Carry water, face mask, and small snacks if you will stay long.
Report threats early	If you hear about plans for violence, intimidation, or fake news, alert authorities or civic tech platforms immediately.
Don't stay late	Once voting ends and crowding starts around counting or result declaration, plan to exit if you're not an accredited observer.

What Not to Do on Election Day

Don't	Why
Don't wear campaign shirts or party regalia	It could make you a target in a politically tense area.
Don't record or photograph voters without permission	It could provoke suspicion or tension.
Don't stay in large crowds unnecessarily	Crowds can become flashpoints for violence.
Don't confront armed individuals	Always retreat and call for help if you sense danger.
Don't post fake or unconfirmed news online	You may be spreading panic or misinformation.





Module XI:

Planning and Facilitating Voter Education Activities



Introduction: Objectives and Expected Results

This module translates the concepts covered in Modules I to X into practical action. It is designed as a facilitator's guide for planning, delivering, monitoring, and improving voter education activities at community, institutional, and outreach levels. The focus is on structured preparation, effective facilitation, appropriate tool selection, and learning-driven reporting.

Objectives: The objectives of this module are to:

- Strengthen facilitators' capacity to plan voter education activities systematically.
- Equip facilitators with practical facilitation and outreach techniques suited to diverse audiences.
- Provide guidance on selecting and using voter education tools and materials effectively.
- Introduce simple but robust approaches to monitoring, reporting, and learning from voter education activities.

Expected Results: By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Design voter education activities that are context-specific, inclusive, and goal-oriented.
- Facilitate voter education sessions confidently using participatory methods.
- Deploy appropriate voter education tools and materials responsibly.

Document activities, assess outcomes, and apply lessons to improve future engagements

11.1 Planning Voter Education Events

Effective voter education begins with deliberate planning. Planning determines whether an activity is impactful, inclusive, and credible or fragmented and ineffective. A well-planned voter education event aligns objectives, audience needs, content, logistics, and follow-up actions.

Understanding the Purpose of Planning

Planning voter education activities helps facilitators move beyond ad hoc sensitisation to structured civic engagement. It ensures that messages are accurate, lawful, audience-appropriate, and aligned with the electoral calendar. Planning also reduces risks, improves coordination with stakeholders, and strengthens accountability.

A voter education plan should answer four core questions:

- 1 Who are we engaging?
 - 2 What do they need to know or do differently?
 - 3 How will we engage them effectively?
 - 4 How will we know if the activity worked?
- **Identifying the Target Audience:** Different voter groups require different approaches. Planning starts with defining the primary and secondary audiences, based on age, gender, location, literacy level, disability status, and electoral relevance.

Audience Category	Key Characteristics	Planning Implications
First-time voters	Limited electoral experience	Use simple language, demonstrations, and Q&A
Women voters	Time and mobility constraints in some contexts	Flexible timing, safe venues, gender-sensitive facilitation
Youth groups	High digital engagement, peer influence	Interactive methods, digital tools, relatable examples
Persons with Disabilities	Diverse access needs	Accessible venues, assistive materials, support persons
Rural communities	Limited media access	Use local language, radio, town-hall formats

IDPs	Displacement-related barriers	Camp-based outreach, trauma-sensitive facilitation
------	-------------------------------	--



Note: This is not only limited only to the above table

- *Defining Clear Objectives: Every voter education activity must have clearly defined objectives that are realistic and measurable. Objectives should focus on knowledge, attitude, or behaviour change. For example, increasing awareness of PVC collection deadlines, improving understanding of voting procedures, or discouraging electoral violence.*
- *Aligning with the Electoral Cycle: Planning must reflect the phase of the electoral process. Pre-election activities focus on registration, voter rights, and peaceful participation. Election-day engagement emphasises procedures and safety. Post-election activities address dispute resolution, accountability, and democratic continuity.*
- *Stakeholder Mapping and Coordination: Effective planning includes identifying relevant stakeholders such as INEC offices, community leaders, youth associations, women’s groups, security agencies, media actors, and civil society partners. Early engagement prevents duplication, builds trust, and improves turnout.*
- *Logistics and Risk Considerations: Planning should account for venue suitability, accessibility, timing, materials, facilitator roles, security context, and contingency arrangements. Poor logistics often undermine good content.*

Facilitator Risk and Context Assessment Guide

Electoral environments differ widely across communities. This guide helps facilitators assess local conditions before conducting voter education activities, ensuring safety, relevance, and effectiveness.

Pre-Activity Risk Assessment Checklist

Risk Area	Key Questions to Consider
Security	Has the area experienced recent political tension or violence?
Information environment	Are rumours, fake news, or misinformation circulating?
Accessibility	Can women, PWDs, elderly persons attend safely and comfortably?
Community relations	Are traditional or community leaders informed and supportive?
Timing	Does the activity conflict with cultural, religious, or market events?
Location	Is the venue neutral, accessible, and non-partisan?

Risk Mitigation

If risks are identified:

- Adjust timing or location
- Limit session size
- Focus on information delivery rather than discussion
- Engage local authorities or community leaders where appropriate
- Prioritise facilitator and participant safety over programme completion

Voter Education Planning Checklist

Planning Element	Key Questions to Confirm	Status
Purpose and objectives	Are objectives clear and linked to voter needs?	
Target audience	Have specific groups been identified and understood?	

Content focus	Is the content accurate and phase-appropriate?	
Venue and timing	Is the location accessible, safe, and convenient?	
Facilitation team	Are roles clearly assigned among facilitators?	
Materials	Are tools prepared and suitable for the audience?	
Stakeholder engagement	Have relevant actors been informed or involved?	
Security considerations	Are risks assessed and mitigation planned?	
Monitoring plan	Is there a way to document attendance and outcomes?	

Simple Voter Education Event Planning Template

Planning Component	Description
Activity title	Name of voter education session
Location and date	Venue, community, and schedule
Electoral phase	Pre-election, election-day, or post-election
Target audience	Specific group(s) to be engaged
Objectives	What participants should know or do after
Key messages	Core voter education content
Facilitation methods	Discussion, demonstration, media, role play
Materials required	Flyers, posters, devices, forms
Facilitators	Names and assigned roles
Expected outcomes	Knowledge gained, actions planned
Monitoring notes	Attendance, feedback, observations

11.2 Facilitation Techniques and Outreach Methods

Facilitation is the bridge between voter education content and voter understanding. Even the most accurate information will fail to influence behaviour if it is poorly delivered or does not use practical examples that connect to the realities of participants. This section focuses on how facilitators can communicate electoral information clearly, respectfully, and effectively across different contexts.

Role of the Voter Education Facilitator

A voter education facilitator is not a lecturer, campaigner, or partisan actor. The facilitator’s role is to guide learning, clarify processes, encourage participation, and build confidence in democratic engagement. Facilitators must remain neutral, factual, and inclusive at all times. Trust is the foundation of effective facilitation, especially in politically sensitive environments.

Effective facilitators listen actively, manage group dynamics, and adapt messages without altering their accuracy or neutrality. They create a safe space where participants feel free to ask questions, express concerns, and share experiences without fear of judgment or intimidation.

Principles of Effective Facilitation

Good facilitation rests on clarity, respect, participation, and accuracy. Facilitators must use simple language, avoid technical jargon, and translate concepts into everyday experiences. Respect for cultural, religious, and social contexts strengthens message reception. Participation deepens learning by turning passive listeners into active contributors. Accuracy preserves institutional credibility and prevents the spread of misinformation.

Facilitators should always cross-check information with official INEC guidelines, the Electoral Act 2026, and approved voter education materials.

Participatory Facilitation Techniques

Participatory techniques help learners retain information and apply it practically. These techniques work best when adapted to audience size, literacy level, and time available.

Technique	How It Works	When to Use
Guided discussion	Facilitator asks structured questions and manages dialogue	Community meetings, youth forums

Demonstration	Step-by-step illustration of registration or voting process	First-time voters, PWD sessions
Role play	Participants act out election scenarios	Violence prevention, dispute awareness
Question and answer	Open floor for clarification	End of sessions or after presentations
Storytelling	Real-life examples linked to electoral processes	Rural communities, low-literacy groups
Visual explanation	Use of posters, charts, or pictorials	Mixed literacy audiences

Managing Group Dynamics

Facilitators must manage dominant voices, encourage quieter participants, and prevent discussions from becoming partisan or confrontational. Clear ground rules should be stated at the beginning of each session, including respect for differing views and non-partisanship.

When misinformation or false claims arise, facilitators should correct them calmly using verified facts rather than confrontation. Emotional sensitivity is essential when discussions touch on past violence, exclusion, or disputed elections.

Outreach Methods for Different Contexts

Voter education outreach extends beyond classrooms or halls. Effective facilitators select outreach methods that align with community realities.

Outreach Method	Description	Best Use Case
Town-hall meetings	Community-wide interactive forums	Rural and peri-urban communities
School and campus sessions	Structured engagement with students	Youth and first-time voters
Market outreach	Short, repeated messaging in public spaces	Informal workers, women traders
Religious and traditional platforms	Engagement through trusted leaders	Faith-based or traditional communities
Door-to-door outreach	Small-group or household engagement	Hard-to-reach or distrustful communities

Digital outreach	Online sessions, short videos, live chats	Urban youth
-------------------------	---	-------------

Ethical and Safety Considerations

Facilitators must prioritise safety and neutrality. Activities should never be conducted in volatile settings without risk assessment. Facilitators should avoid political symbols, slogans, or endorsements. Personal opinions must never replace verified information.

Sensitive topics such as electoral violence, fraud, or disputes should be handled factually, without naming individuals or inflaming tensions. Facilitators should know when to pause, redirect discussion, or end a session if tensions rise.

Why Ethics and Neutrality Matter

Civic and voter education must build trust, not suspicion. Facilitators act as neutral conveyors of information, not advocates for political outcomes. Ethical conduct protects both the integrity of the electoral process and the personal safety of facilitators.

Core Ethical Principles for Voter Education

Principle	Practical Application
Political neutrality	Do not endorse, oppose, or promote any political party or candidate
Accuracy	Share only verified information consistent with INEC guidelines
Impartiality	Treat all participants equally, regardless of political views
Respect	Encourage dialogue without ridicule, intimidation, or coercion
Confidentiality	Do not disclose personal voter information or private opinions
Safety consciousness	Withdraw from activities if tensions escalate

Prohibited Conduct

Facilitators must not:

- Campaign or canvass for votes
- Use partisan symbols, slogans, or colours
- Influence voting choices
- Engage in political arguments or confrontations

Clarifying the Boundary Between Voter Education and Political Activity

Why This Clarification Is Necessary

Voter education is often misunderstood as political mobilisation. Clear boundaries protect facilitators and maintain public confidence in INEC and its partners.

What Voter Education Is and Is Not

Voter Education	Not Voter Education
Explaining voting procedures	Persuading people on who to vote for
Clarifying voter rights	Promoting political interests
Encouraging participation	Mobilising support for parties
Promoting peaceful conduct	Defending political actors

Facilitators must consistently reinforce this distinction during engagements.

Facilitation Readiness Checklist

Area	Key Question	Status
Neutrality	Am I presenting information without bias?	
Accuracy	Are my facts aligned with INEC guidelines and law?	
Audience awareness	Do I understand participants' context and needs?	
Method selection	Are facilitation methods suitable for this group?	
Group management	Have I set clear ground rules?	
Safety	Is the environment secure for discussion?	

Sample Session Flow Template

Session Stage	Description
Opening	Introduce purpose, ground rules, and facilitator role
Icebreaker	Short activity to build comfort and participation
Core content	Presentation using participatory techniques
Engagement	Discussion, demonstration, or role play
Clarification	Address questions and correct misconceptions

Key takeaways	Reinforce essential messages
Close	Share next steps and support channels

11.3 Tools and Materials for Voter Education

Tools and materials support facilitators in translating complex electoral information into clear, memorable, and practical knowledge. The choice of tools should always align with INEC-approved content, the Electoral Act 2026, and the specific needs of the target audience. Effective tools do not replace facilitation skills but strengthen message delivery, comprehension, and recall.

Categories of Voter Education Tools

Voter education tools can be grouped into physical, digital, and interactive resources. Each category serves a distinct purpose and works best in specific settings.

Tool Category	Description	Appropriate Context
Printed materials	Flyers, posters, manuals, handbills	Community outreach, schools, markets
Visual aids	Flipcharts, pictorial guides, infographics	Low-literacy or mixed-literacy groups
Demonstration tools	Sample ballot papers, mock BVAS, voting cubicles	Practical voter training sessions
Audio-visual tools	Radio jingles, short videos, public address systems	Large or mobile audiences
Digital tools	Websites, social media content, messaging apps	Youth and urban audiences
Accessibility tools	Braille guides, audio recordings, sign language support	PWD-focused sessions

Digital and Civic-Tech Tools

Digital tools have become central to modern voter education, especially for young people. Platforms such as NaijaElections.ng, INEC social media handles, and INEC Citizen Contact Centre channels provide verified information and real-time updates.

Digital tools support interactive learning through short videos, infographics, quizzes, and live engagement. Facilitators should encourage participants to rely on verified sources

and avoid forwarding unconfirmed information.

Digital Tool	Use in Voter Education
WhatsApp	Group updates, reminders, fact-check flyers
Instagram and TikTok	Short explainers and myth-busting videos
X (formerly Twitter)	Real-time updates and official announcements
YouTube	Longer explainers and recorded sessions
INEC ICCC	Reporting inquiries and incidents

Accessibility and Inclusion Tools

Inclusive voter education requires deliberate adaptation of materials. Braille guides, tactile ballot guides, audio explanations in local languages, and sign language interpretation enable full participation of persons with disabilities.

Facilitators should identify accessibility needs in advance and plan appropriate accommodations. Inclusion improves overall quality and credibility of voter education efforts.

Criteria for Selecting Tools and Materials

Tools should be selected based on accuracy, clarity, cultural appropriateness, and accessibility. Materials must be current and reflect the Electoral Act 2026 and the latest INEC guidelines. Outdated or unofficial materials should not be used.

Facilitators should also consider durability, ease of transport, and cost when planning outreach in multiple locations.

Voter Education Materials Checklist

Item	Verified	Suitable for Audience	Available
INEC-approved content			
Printed handouts			
Visual aids			
Demonstration tools			
Digital links or QR codes			
Accessibility materials			

Tool Adaptation Template

Audience	Adaptation Needed	Tool Used
First-time voters	Simplified visuals	Pictorial posters

PWDs (visual)	Audio or braille	Audio guide
Youth groups	Short digital content	Social media reels
Rural communities	Oral and visual	Flipcharts, radio

11.4 Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning

Monitoring, reporting, and learning ensure that voter education activities are effective, accountable, and continuously improved. For INEC-led or INEC-supported voter education, these processes help track reach, assess understanding, identify gaps, and strengthen future interventions. Monitoring focuses on implementation, reporting documents outcomes, while learning improves practice over time.

Purpose of Monitoring and Reporting in Voter Education

Monitoring helps facilitators confirm that activities take place as planned and reach the intended audience. Reporting provides structured documentation that supports institutional memory, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. Learning turns experience into improvement by identifying what worked, what did not, and why. Together, these processes help INEC and partners demonstrate compliance with mandates under the Electoral Act 2026, improve public trust, and refine voter education strategies ahead of future elections.

What Should Be Monitored

Monitoring should cover inputs, processes, outputs, and immediate outcomes. Facilitators should focus on practical indicators rather than complex measurements.

Monitoring Area	What to Track
Participation	Number of participants, gender, age group, inclusion of PWDs
Content delivery	Topics covered, accuracy, alignment with INEC guidelines
Engagement	Questions asked, participation in discussions or demonstrations
Accessibility	Use of inclusive tools, language clarity, physical access
Logistics	Venue suitability, materials availability, time management

Reporting Voter Education Activities

Reports should be factual, concise, and timely. They should reflect what actually happened, not what was planned. Reports help supervisors, departments, and partners understand field realities and make informed adjustments.

A standard voter education report should include background, activity details, outcomes, challenges, and recommendations.

Voter Education Activity Report Template

Section	Description
Activity title	Name and type of voter education activity
Location	State, LGA, community, or institution
Date and duration	When and how long the activity held
Target audience	Youth, women, PWDs, IDPs, mixed group
Number reached	Total participants, disaggregated where possible
Key topics covered	Registration, voting process, voter rights, security
Tools used	Printed materials, demonstrations, digital tools
Key questions raised	Common concerns or misunderstandings
Challenges	Logistics, misinformation, low turnout
Observations	Behavioural or knowledge changes noticed
Recommendations	Improvements for future activities

Learning and Continuous Improvement: Learning is an intentional process of reflecting on experience to improve future voter education. Facilitators should review reports regularly to identify trends and recurring issues such as misinformation patterns, common procedural misunderstandings, or barriers faced by specific groups.

Learning should not focus on blame but on practical adjustment. For example, repeated confusion about accreditation procedures may indicate the need for more demonstrations rather than more lectures.

Feedback and Knowledge Sharing: Feedback from participants is a valuable learning tool. Facilitators should encourage questions, short reflections, or informal feedback at the end of sessions. Feedback can be verbal, written, or collected digitally depending on the context.

Sharing lessons across teams and institutions improves consistency and quality. Coordination meetings, debrief sessions, and internal summaries help spread effective

practices and reduce repeated mistakes.

Learning Questions Facilitators Should Ask

Reflection Area	Guiding Question
Relevance	Did the content match participants' real concerns?
Clarity	Which topics were most misunderstood?
Method	Which tools worked best for this audience?
Inclusion	Who was missing or underrepresented?
Improvement	What should be changed next time?

Using Monitoring and Learning to Improve Future Elections

Data and insights from voter education activities should inform future planning cycles. Findings can guide the design of new materials, choice of outreach channels, timing of campaigns, and focus areas for specific groups such as youths, women, or IDPs.

When systematically applied, monitoring, reporting, and learning transform voter education from one-off activities into a sustained institutional practice that strengthens electoral participation, credibility, and public confidence.



Endnotes

- 1 Hassan, Idayat and Yusuf, Shamsudeen (n.d), Electoral Integrity, Country Case Study: NIGERIA, EISA, pp. 18-20 available online @ <https://www.eisa.org/pdf/nigcase-study.pdf>
- 2 See, Yoldaş, Ö.B. (2015), Civic Education and Learning Democracy: Their Importance for Political Participation of Young People, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier Ltd, p. 546
- 3 National Democratic Institute. (2024). Civic education program guidance. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Version%20English_Updated2.0.pdf [ndi.org]
- 4 Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Losito, B., Agrusti, G., Damiani, V., & Friedman, T. (2023/2025). Education for citizenship in times of global challenge: IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2022 international report. IEA/Springer. <https://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/2023-12/ICCS-2022-International-Report.pdf>; <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-65603-3>
- 5 Halverson, L. R., Tucker, E., & Smith, G. H. (2024). Teaching civics: An overview of instructional strategies using primary sources, role-play and simulations, and academic service learning for teaching civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Utah Valley University Center for Constitutional Studies. https://www.uvu.edu/ccs/docs/teaching_civics_halverson_tucker_and_smith_2024.pdf
- 6 NDI 2024 (n-1)
- 7 Halverson (n-3)
- 8 Allen, D., Blauw, M., Burton, R., Dunn, J., Green, V., Heinesen, A., Humphries, R. D., Jagroo, M., Kunzman, H., Rose, J., & Clay Roy, E. (2025). Experiential civic learning for American democracy: A portrait of the field. Council on Civic Strength / Harvard Ash Center. <https://ash.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Experiential-Civic-Learning-White-Paper-FINAL.pdf>
- 9 Council of Europe. (2018). Reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Vols. 1–3). <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture>
- 10 <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/fed-uc.2020.606326/pdf>
- 11 UNESCO. (2024b). Recommendation on education for peace, human rights and sustainable development: An explainer. https://unesco.org.uk/site/assets/files/1853/recommendation_on_education_for_peace_human_rights_and_sustainable_development.pdf
- 12 Powley, Elizabeth and Anderlini, S.N. (2007), Democracy and Governance, Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action, Updated Edition, Initiative for Inclusive Security @ <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/101864251-Toolkit-for-Advocacy-and-Action.pdf>]
- 13 Africa Union (2019), The Africa Governance Report: Promoting African Union Shared Values, (2019), p. 19]
- 14 Dunu, Ifeoma (2013), Good Governance in Nigeria: What Role for the Media, *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 9, No. 32, p. 181]
- 15 Africa Governance Report, p. 19]
- 16 See ss. 25-30, 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Cap C23, LFN

2004]

17 See Fundamental Rights, ss. 33-45, Chapter IV, 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Cap C23, LFN 2004]

18 United Nations – Elections and Rule of Law - <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/governance/elections/>

19 POLYAS – Core Election Principles - <https://www.polyas.com/legal-framework/election-principles>

20 African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, AHG/Decl.1 (XXXVIII), 2002, online @ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/RuleOfLaw/CompilationDemocracy/Pages/AHG.aspx>]

21 OHCHR – Elections and Human Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/elections>

22 With material from: Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., Ellispp, A.et al (2008), Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook , International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 27-29

23 Electoral Knowledge Network, online @ <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/focus-on-effective-electoral-assistance/the-electoral-cycle-approach>

24 Ibid

25 ibid

26 NEC History, online @ <https://www.inecnigeria.org/home/inec-history/>

27 [Ibid, paragraph 15, Part I, Third Schedule]

28 INEC 2023 Manual for election officials pg 5

29 [INEC Gender Policy, online @ <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Independent-National-Electoral-Commission- Gender-Policy.pdf>]

30 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Framework For Voting by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS), December 2018, Online @ <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FREAMEWORK-FOR-IDP-VOTING-.pdf>

31 Electoral Act 2026

32 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Regulations For Voting By Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS), online @ <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REGULATIONS.pdf>

33 [See s. 221, 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Cap 234, LFN 2004]

34 [Ibid, s. 229]

35 S. 29, Electoral Act 2026

36 FOREWARD, Basic Security in Election Duties training manual, Independent

With Support from

