



Gender and Election Observation

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Gender, Women and Democracy

INTRODUCTIONS



GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION: OBJECTIVES

- Understand why gender is important for election observation
- Identify potential barriers to women's participation in electoral process generally and in Burma specifically
- Increase knowledge of how to incorporate gender aspects into election observation- including trainings, materials and reporting

GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION TOPICS

- Pre-Election Monitoring
- Short-term/Election Day monitoring
- Recruitment/Observer team composition
- Observation forms/checklists
- Training for observers/TOT
- Observer reporting

KEY TERMS

- **Gender**
- **Sex**
- **Gender equality**
- **Gender Equity**



**What is an example of a
gender norm for women
in Burma?**

Why GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

- Domestic observers should assess the quality of women's participation in each stage of the electoral process as part of their assessment of the quality of an election
- Key opportunity to evaluate and strengthen women's participation in politics, as well as the participatory quality of an election

Why GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

- Democratic elections should be **inclusive**, transparent and accountable
- **Inclusive** elections are those that enable men and women to participate (50/50)
- The principle of inclusion is not only about enabling but also **taking positive action** to address particular barriers women might face

Why GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

Democratic elections must include women's equal participation in every phase of the election, including pre-during and post-as:

- Voters
- Candidates
- Election administrators
- Observers

PRE-ELECTION: women as voters, candidates & workers

- Documentation
- Registration
- Voter Education
- Nomination process
- Campaigns
- Election Workers



PRE-ELECTION: women as voters

- Observing the inclusiveness of voting requires assessing whether norms and policies exist to guarantee men and women have:
 - Access to voter registration locals
 - Access to voter registration and verification process
 - Access to complaint process

PRE-ELECTION: women as voters

- Women face significant barriers to participation as voters during registration and voting
- Physical, legal, logistical, historical/traditional, social and cultural barriers



PRE-ELECTION/E-Day: INSTITUTIONAL/PROCESS BARRIERS

- **Voter registration Documentation** requirements difficult for women to provide due to loss or lack of papers/conflict or internal displacement
- **Location and hours** of registration centers and polling stations can also cause obstacles for women including transportation or limits on freedom of movement, domestic and childcare responsibilities as well as work schedules;
- **Concerns about security** at polling/registration stations may dissuade women;
- **Conditions** at registration or polling stations-long lines, weather, surroundings

PRE-ELECTION/E-Day: What to Observe?

- Assess if women are disproportionately affected by problems with voter registration process:
- Do identification requirements have a negative impact on women?
- Is the registration location accessible for women?
- Is disaggregated data available to allow for a practical analysis of women's participation?
- Do women face threats of violence at registration? (Nigeria-Bar)

Burkina Faso

- For Burkina Faso's 2012 presidential election, women faced greater obstacles because of a requirement that citizens obtain a birth certificate before they could register
- Significant numbers of women lacked birth certificates because parents often would not bother to get one for girl children
- This requirement presented a burdensome requirement on women and could effectively disenfranchised them if not addressed

PRE/E-DAY: SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS FOR WOMEN

- **Time** constraints-domestic duties;
- Lack of awareness of **ballot secrecy**/fear that secrecy of vote may be compromised; perception that they may face retaliation for independent choices from family;
- Prevalence of **family and proxy voting**, pressure to vote along family/tribal/ethnic lines; and
- Social norms may create a **sense of disempowerment** for women or restrict choices and/or restrict women's freedom of movement

POTENTIAL BARRIERS: Legal/Social-cultural?

- Do women in Burma face Barriers to Registering to Vote?
- Do identification requirements pose a problem for women?
- Are there access barriers or other process issues in Burma (location)?
- Are there social norms that will impact women's knowledge, desire or ability to participate in Burma as voters or candidates (time, confidence..)?

PRE-ELECTION: VOTER EDUCATION

- **Observers can analyze voter education programs to determine if particular needs of women and whether they are being addressed (Previous questions)**
 - ✓ Who is responsible for voter education?
 - ✓ What are the key messages on them?
 - ✓ Do they sufficiently to address the specific needs of the electorate-male and female?

Exercise: Assess Voter Education



PRE-ELECTION: WOMEN CANDIDATES

- Observing the inclusiveness of elections for candidates involves paying attention to norms and practices that affect equity in men and women's ability to run for public office, & can include:
 - Electoral systems
 - Nominating procedures
 - Political party practices
 - Political-electoral financing systems
 - Media/social media coverage

PRE-ELECTION: WOMEN CANDIDATES

- Key aspect monitors can assess is election coverage by media—including social media—of female candidates
- Fair coverage?
- Equal coverage?
- Coverage of women's priority issues or *hair*?



PRE-ELECTION: WOMEN CANDIDATES

Example from Burma of unfair
coverage of female
candidates?



PRE-ELECTION: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

- Assess the number of Women in election administration
- How many women are in Leadership and decision-making roles?
- Women should have ability to participate as election observers, commission members, poll workers etc.



PRE-ELECTION: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

- Assess the election administration body's awareness of barriers for women
- Gauge the responsiveness of those bodies to any related issues that arise.



Back To: Burkina Faso

- The Ministry of the Interior responded to issue of birth certificates by implementing a mobile registration initiative in the five regions with the lowest registration rates.
- This helped 16,000 women seeking to register to obtain birth certificates first.

PRE-ELECTION

Interview Key Stakeholders

- Important to utilize women's organizations as a source of information on gender-related issues in pre-election phase
- Women's organizations are especially useful in contexts where official data on women's participation is non-existent inaccessible

PRE-ELECTION

Interview Key Stakeholders

- What are women's voter participation rates? How do they compare to men's?
- Are there unique barriers to women's electoral participation? Have there been any threats unique to women?
- Previous voter education and outreach programs? By whom?

ELECTION DAY: THE VOTE

- ✓ Is the polling station secure? Safe?
- ✓ How many women on polling station committee?
- ✓ What is sex of chairperson of committee
- ✓ How many women party poll-watchers?
- ✓ Do women voters' understand the procedure?
- ✓ Is there sex disaggregated voter c

ELECTION DAY: THE VOTE

- ✓ Voters turned away-how many women?
- ✓ Is the secrecy of the vote protected?
- ✓ Are there instances of family or proxy voting?
- ✓ Are there instances of violence against voters or workers? Is yes, what types?
- ✓ What are the voter rates at the central and regional levels?

METHODOLOGY: DOMESTIC OBSERVATION

- **Step 1** is to identify these issues/challenges for a particular context for women
- **Step 2** is to identify key questions to include to assess women's ability to participate
- Questions on all checklists and incident report forms

Ubicación y registro general				
Municipio:				Período
Aldea:				Fecha
Instrucciones:	Llene el formulario con base a la discusión grupal, entrevistas individuales y sus observaciones. En los casos de respuestas positivas a preguntas que tienen el fondo gris deberá llenar el			Código del observador
A. Violencia verbal				
A.1	¿En el último mes en la comunidad algún candidato o simpatizante político ha amenazado o intimidado verbalmente a otras personas por motivos políticos? (Seleccione todos los que apliquen)			Verificado
	Sí, a hombres	Sí, a mujeres	Sí, a LGBTI	No, ninguno
A.2	¿En el último mes algún candidato o simpatizante político ha motivado a personas de la comunidad para que actúen de forma violenta? (Seleccione todos los que apliquen y llene F2)			Verificado
	Sí, a hombres	Sí, a mujeres	Sí, a LGBTI	No, ninguno
A.3	¿En el último mes en la comunidad algún candidato o simpatizante político ha hecho comentarios racistas en contra de otras personas? (Seleccione todos los que apliquen).			Verificado
	Sí, contra hombres	Sí, contra mujeres	Sí, contra LGBTI	No, ninguno
A.4	¿En el último mes en la comunidad algún candidato o simpatizante político ha hecho comentarios de acoso sexual en contra de?: (Seleccione todos los que apliquen).			Verificado
	Sí, contra hombres	Sí, contra mujeres	Sí, contra LGBTI	No, ninguno
A.5	¿En el último mes algún candidato o simpatizante político en la comunidad ha hablado mal o negativamente para desprestigiar a otros candidatos y simpatizantes políticos? (Seleccione todos lo que apliquen)			Verificado
	Sí, contra candidatos /	Sí, contra mujeres	Sí, contra candidatos /	No, ninguno

RECRUITMENT OF OBSERVATION TEAMS



- Gender balance of team members
- Recruitment strategy needs to consider particular barriers for women
- Recruitment messages target women

TRAINING FOR OBSERVERS

- Highlight importance of monitoring men and women's participation in election
- Build understanding of potential barriers and how to monitor them-where to look for them
- Include background information on women's status in country
- Observer manuals should provide guidance on questions

OBSERVATION STATEMENTS

- Participation of women as voters, candidates, workers
- Number of women elected (vs. previous elections)
- Number of women in election administration
- Gender-related security incidents/VAW-E



GENDER AND ELECTION OBSERVATION *REVIEW*

- Why women's participation is important
- Barriers to women's participation in Burma
- Issues to monitor/questions to ask
- Gender in recruitment, training and Reporting

THANK YOU

