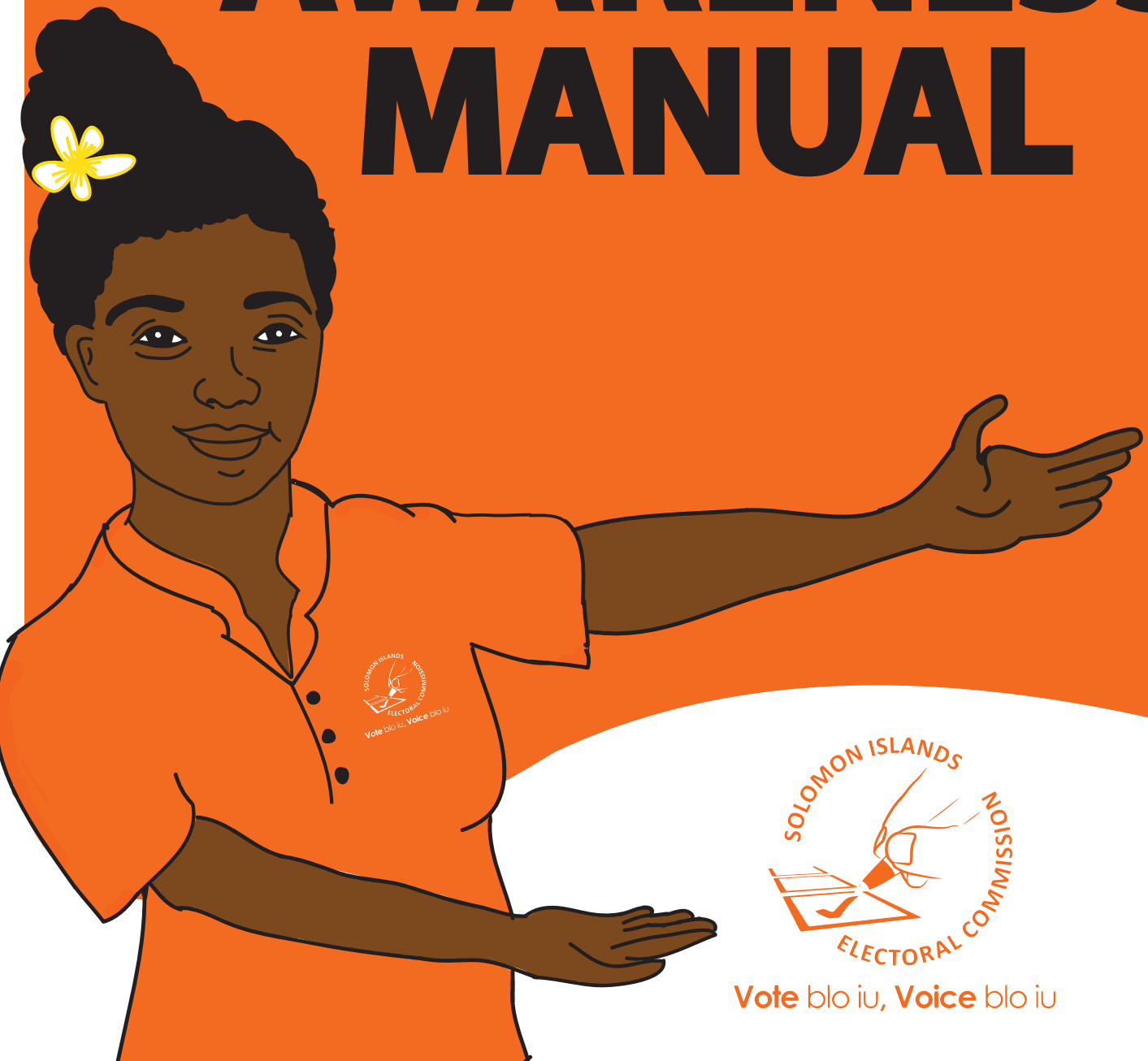




VOTERS

AWARENESS MANUAL



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

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Useful Key

 Learning Outcomes or List


 In this Chapter or Extracts

 Resources

 Duration Time

 Flip Chart or Paper

 Board

 Show Video

FOREWARD

The task of educating our people on the important subject of elections is an enormous challenge. Each year, the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission invests considerable resources in voter awareness and public outreach activities. Through radio programs, face to face awareness talks, school visits and our work with the media, O/SIEC is constantly engaged in educating the public about their rights and responsibilities as voters throughout the electoral cycle. It is important work and we are proud to do it.

But our officers cannot complete this enormous task alone. In our country of more than 900 different islands, with our many different languages and traditions, and with significant challenges in communications and transportation, voter education must become everyone's business.

It is with that in mind that our staff have designed this Voter Awareness Manual. It is our hope that this guide will assist ordinary citizens, be they members of civil society, non-government and faith-based organisations or community groups, be they candidates, agents or members of political parties, candidates, agents and ordinary members of the public to conduct community-level of voter awareness activities.

We have tried to make the manual as user-friendly as possible so that it is easy for you to adapt the information you find here to address the specific needs of your audience or community. One of SIEC's core values is continuous improvement, so if during your activities you think of ways that we could improve the information contained in this manual, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission on the following contact details:

Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission,



P O Box 1500, Vavaya Ridge, Honiara



Call Phone: + 677 21198 or + 677 21463 or



Send us an Email: info@siec.gov.sb/sielectoralcommission@gmail.com or



Visit our Website: www.siec.gov.sb for further information

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the support of our international partners who have assisted SIEC in the production of this manual. Technical Assistance has been provided by both the United Nations Development Program's UNDPs Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) which is supported by the Australian Government and the European Union, and the Electoral System Support Project (ESSP).

Thank you for joining us in our mission to ensure that every eligible voter has the information that they need to participate freely in our democracy. The time that you will spend planning, preparing and implementing the activities found in these pages is truly a service to this nation.

We wish you the best of luck in whatever voter awareness activities you choose to conduct.

God bless you and God bless Solomon Islands

Chief Electoral Officer

This manual is designed to assist civil society, non-government, faith-based and community organisations to run effective and professional voter awareness programs across Solomon Islands.

Using This Manual



In designing this manual, SIEC has aimed to present the electoral cycle, laws, policies, procedures and key awareness messages in a way that can be adopted by organisations and individuals to develop a program that incorporates their goals or mandate in conducting awareness programs and responds to audience needs. Just as each community is unique, each awareness program should be carefully targeted for its audience. We hope that this manual will be a starting point for you to design a presentation or program that suits the specific needs of your community.

The manual covers key areas in preparing, organising and delivering a successful presentation for voter and civic education facilitators. It highlights strategies and approaches that SIEC has, in its experience of conducting programs of this sort, found to be effective ways of communicating key messages about elections across Solomon Islands, especially to rural communities.

It is anticipated that after successful completion of the training workshop for this manual and using the presentation approach that this manual lays out, facilitators should be able to:

- Confidently deliver an effective and well run information program**
- Feel confident in their facilitation skills and understands the content of the information provided therein**
- Embrace and modify to suit its required civic education needs**

Each section begins with a summary of learning outcomes and a list of useful resources that might assist your audience in conceptualising the information in that chapter. Many of the resources are included in the manual and can be photocopied and distributed to participants if you feel that they will be useful. Alternatively, you can call the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission to access digital copies and, if available, printed materials.

Responsibilities as Facilitators

Voter awareness and civic education are crucial elements of a healthy democratic society. While you are playing an important role in providing this information to the community, that role carries significant responsibilities. In using this manual, SIEC awareness materials or other resources from SIEC you must at all times make it clear to your audience that you are not a representative of SIEC and while SIEC has provided you with information, your presentation represents the views of your organisation, not SIEC.

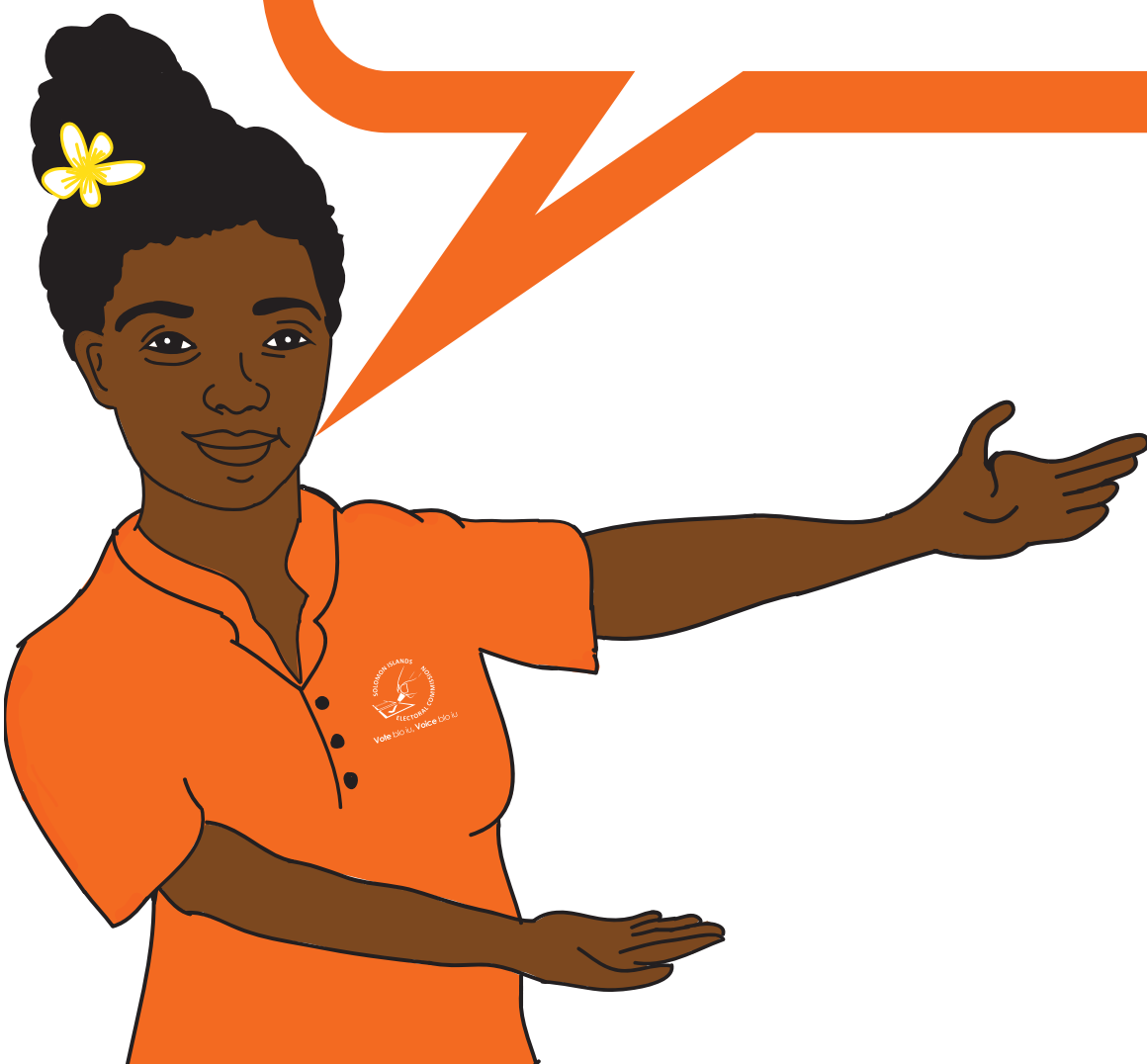
It is a serious criminal offence to impersonate a government official such as an SIEC officer. With that in mind, we would encourage you to, at the beginning of every awareness program, inform your audience of who you are, where you are from and what the mandate of your organisation is. You should then clearly state that while you will be using SIEC materials, you do not represent SIEC.

In addition to this, as the bearer of this important information, you are also responsible for the accuracy of the information that you provide. Always ensure that only correct information is given out. If you receive a question that you do not know the answer to, do not guess, do not make up an answer, simply and honestly inform participants that you don't know the answer but will follow up with SIEC to get them the information they need.

Finally, you have a responsibility to be fair in your work as advocates and gatekeepers of democracy. Every Solomon Islander has the same right to participate in our democracy and therefore everyone has the same right to fair and unbiased information. Your program must be accessible to all regardless of their views, social status or political affiliations. You must never allow political biases or campaigning to become a part of your voter awareness activities.

*Welkam,
My name is Sophie.*

*I will be helping to guide you
through this manual. Look out
for me in all chapters because
I will be highlighting some
important information for your
training.*

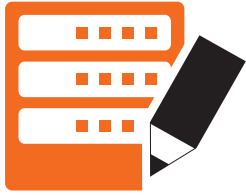


CHAPTER

1

preparation





Learning Outcomes

- Training is well organised



In this Chapter

- Community Acceptance
- Logistics
- Materials

In order for your voter awareness program to go as smoothly and effectively as possible, you will need to ensure that you are well prepared.



Good preparation takes time and effort

Community Acceptance

If your program is to be successful it is important that the community you intend to visit is aware of the program, that all people in the community that you target are able to attend and want to participate.

You must ensure that:

- Call ahead to explain what the program is and what you would like to do
- Consider how to best reach your targeted participants, and whether different social or demographic groups (such as men and women, youth and the elderly, or members of different churches) should be targeted separately or together – and if together, how you will work towards equitable participation by different social groups
- Discuss the program with community leaders, Church leaders, Chief or other key people.
- Establish the right time and day to visit the community. You want to make sure that all of your target participants have a chance to attend the training. If you organise the session at a time when most people are gardening or on a day when there is another important community event, it may have a negative impact on your training
- Make sure all participants are invited and that they know when the training will take place and what will be expected of them.

Logistics

It is important to make sure that all arrangements are in place ahead of your planned awareness program. Consider:

- Where will you conduct the program? Do you need to book a venue?
- Is the location you have chosen conducive to learning? Are there a lot of distractions?
- If you intend to conduct the program outside, what will you do if it rains?

Materials

Make sure that you have all the resources that you need in order to conduct the program well ahead of time. If you are designing your own learning tools to meet the very specific needs of your audience it is recommended that you trial them on a small test group before your planned activity. The SIEC Communications and Awareness Team is always happy to provide advice on materials or program content.

Alternatively, a comprehensive set of materials to support the lessons in this manual is available from SIEC upon request.

Whether you choose to develop your own program or rely heavily on this manual, make sure that you are well familiarised with your training notes well in advance of the training.

Key Message:



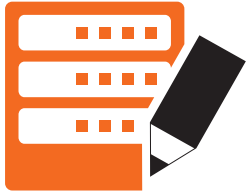
A well planned and prepared training will be more likely to succeed.

CHAPTER

2

Welcome





Learning Outcomes

- Participants feel welcome and have confidence in the facilitator and the information given during the session
- Participants feel the sense of positive and free interactive and learning atmosphere where respect is upheld.



In this Chapter

- Welcome
- Housekeeping
- Building confidence and understanding your audience
- Code of conduct

A well run and successful program needs a good start to the day.

It is your job as a facilitator to maintain the interest of your audience.

If the start of your program is uninteresting or not entertaining, you will be fighting to regain your participants' attention for the rest of the program.

Greet Participants

It is crucial that you begin with establishing a favourable atmosphere. Be at the program venue well before the starting time. If you are rushed in setting up the program or are busy completing unfinished jobs you will not be able to focus on making your participants feel welcome. It is important to calm any nervousness which may lead to loss of confidence from your participants, greet each participant with a smile and a handshake (if appropriate) as they arrive.

Settling down/ Housekeeping

Before going into the main part of the presentation, it is important that you brief your participants on any housekeeping matters that they may need to know about.

These may include:

- Logistic arrangements such as travel and accommodation
- Facilities (convenient rooms etc)
- Whether food will be provided or not.

It is also important that you let participants know how long the program will take, when each day or session starts and finishes and let them know break times for tea and lunch if applicable.



Building Confidence

Establishing trust among your audience or participants is very crucial in building confidence in the information that you are delivering. People gain trust by knowing each other personally. Tell your audience or participants who you are (organisation), what your mandate is and most importantly, why you part of this particular awareness program.

Inclusiveness

In an election, everyone's vote is of equal value, so it makes sense that in our voter awareness sessions, everyone should have an equal opportunity to participate.

Your job as a facilitator is to 'facilitate' an equal contribution from everyone. Draw more from your participants by providing an equal chance for them to contribute to the discussion, share their views, and participate in the role plays or activities. It is vital to the success of an awareness program that all participants feel comfortable participating as well as in asking questions. You may need to make special efforts to ensure that women, youth, and people with disabilities participate equally, including paying special attention to participants asking questions about how they have engaged or their lack of active participation. You should reflect on the ways that people have participated in voter awareness programming during each module, asking whether you have managed to get participation and engagement of women and youth equal to the numbers that are present or whether men are playing a disproportionate role in the module.

Ask yourself – and ask some people that have not participated - what you can do to get more participation from those that are less active.

Different people will have different needs and the appropriate approach may differ between communities, but it is vital that you, as a facilitator are sensitive to the needs of all of your participants. Some things to consider are:

- Will everyone feel free to participate openly?***
- Will women feel comfortable expressing their views in front of men?***
- Will young people feel able to ask questions in front of more senior community members?***
- Will the session be accessible to people with a disability? Can the session be presented in a way that makes it more accessible to people with a disability?***
- Will people with limited mobility be able to attend the session? Can other community members help them attend?***
- Inclusiveness is one of the cornerstones of democracy and should be promoted at all levels and in any public information program.***

Inclusiveness is one of the cornerstones of democracy and should be promoted at all levels and in any public information program.

Key Message:

Voter awareness programs must be equally accessible to all. You should always consider the needs of all people, including women, youths and people with disabilities in designing your program/activities. You should always consider whether women, youth, and people with disabilities are participating equally while you are carrying out programming.

You may need to adjust your facilitation, messages and the program to fully incorporate some social groups into activities.

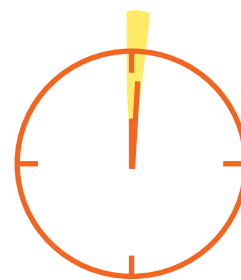


Adult Learning

Through SIEC's experience in conducting voter awareness activities, we have learned that one of the most effective tools for adult audiences is learning from experience. In most cases, audiences will be more interested in issues directly affecting their life. Generally, adults understanding of the world around them is drawn from much more experience than is the case with children. For that reason, it is very important that programs that target adults consider the experiences of your audience. A presentation that participants can conceptualise and relate to through their own experience will boost active participation and enable participants to follow your presentation and activities. Always emphasise each session's expected learning outcomes.

Code of Conduct

Establishing common ground rules and understanding to guide both participants and facilitators' interaction is imperative in promoting a positive and supportive environment that is conducive to learning. It is important that everyone knows what to do and what not to do, when and how to make contributions and when or where to support others in contributing. Make sure that the code has clearly noted the importance of ensuring the equal participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities – and concrete ways to encourage their participation.



1 min

Activity Time :



15 mins

Resources :



Flip chart paper



Marker Pen



Flip chart stand
or blu-tac/
cellotape

Activity 1: Code of Conduct

Instructions

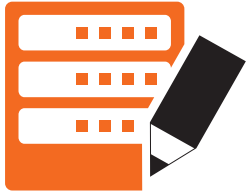
This can be done in many ways, but for this particular exercise, you will need a flip chart plain paper with a marker.

1. Write down 'ground rules or code of conduct' as the title on a plain paper and
2. Invite participants to think of values or behaviours that uphold respect, promote a positive environment and encourage active participation.
3. If participants are shy, you can break the silence by coming up with the first rule.
4. Explain why each suggested value or behaviour is important and how it affects the overall success of the training.
E.g. raise your hand if you want to speak- this ensures orderly discussion.

CHAPTER

3 democracy & governance





Learning outcomes

This section aims to help participants:

- Understand the concept of democracy and why we have elections
- Understand the Role of Members of Parliament
- Understand why voting is important.



In this Chapter

- Democracy and the Solomon Islands Constitution
- The Role of Parliament and MPs
- Why voting is important



Useful resources

- Parliament Fact Sheet No 1: What is Parliament?

The constitution is our nation's highest law and no other law can contradict it. It establishes Solomon Islands as a democratic nation.



It says

“All power in Solomon Islands belongs to its people and is exercised on their behalf by the legislature, the executive and the Judiciary”



What is Democracy?

This section aims to introduce participants to the concepts of democracy and governance. If eligible voters are to participate fully in elections, they will need to first understand democratic principles.

Ask Participants: What is Democracy?

Democracy refers to a system of government based on people's consent also known as the 'will of the people' simply put, democracy means rule by the people. Basic principles of democracy include the following

- Recognition that power belongs in the hands of the people
- The greatest possible freedom for all
- A just society
- The same rules for all
- Equality before the law, and
- Equal opportunity for all.

In most democracies, people govern themselves by electing representatives to make decisions for them.

Democracy and the Solomon Islands Constitution

When Solomon Islands achieved its Independence from the United Kingdom on July 7, 1978, the country, as an independent state was established under the constitution. The constitution starts with the following words:



“We the people of Solomon Islands, proud of the wisdom and the worthy customs of our ancestors, mindful of our common and diverse heritage and conscious of our common destiny, do now, under the guiding hand of God, establish the sovereign democratic State of Solomon Islands; As a basis of our united nation ”

The constitution is our nation's highest law and no other law can contradict it. It establishes Solomon Islands as a democratic nation. It says

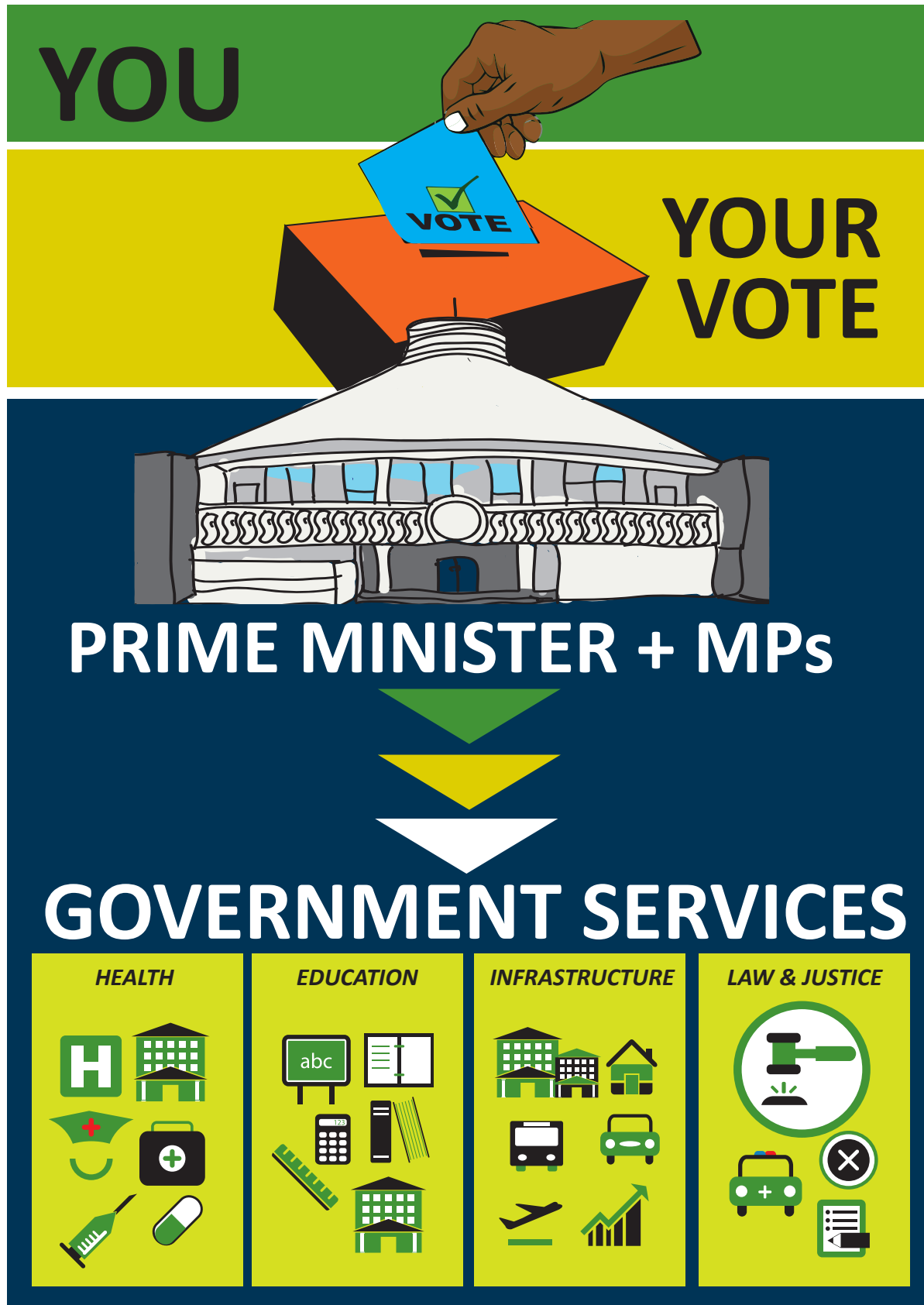


“All power in Solomon Islands belongs to its people and is exercised on their behalf by the legislature, the executive and the Judiciary”

The National Parliament

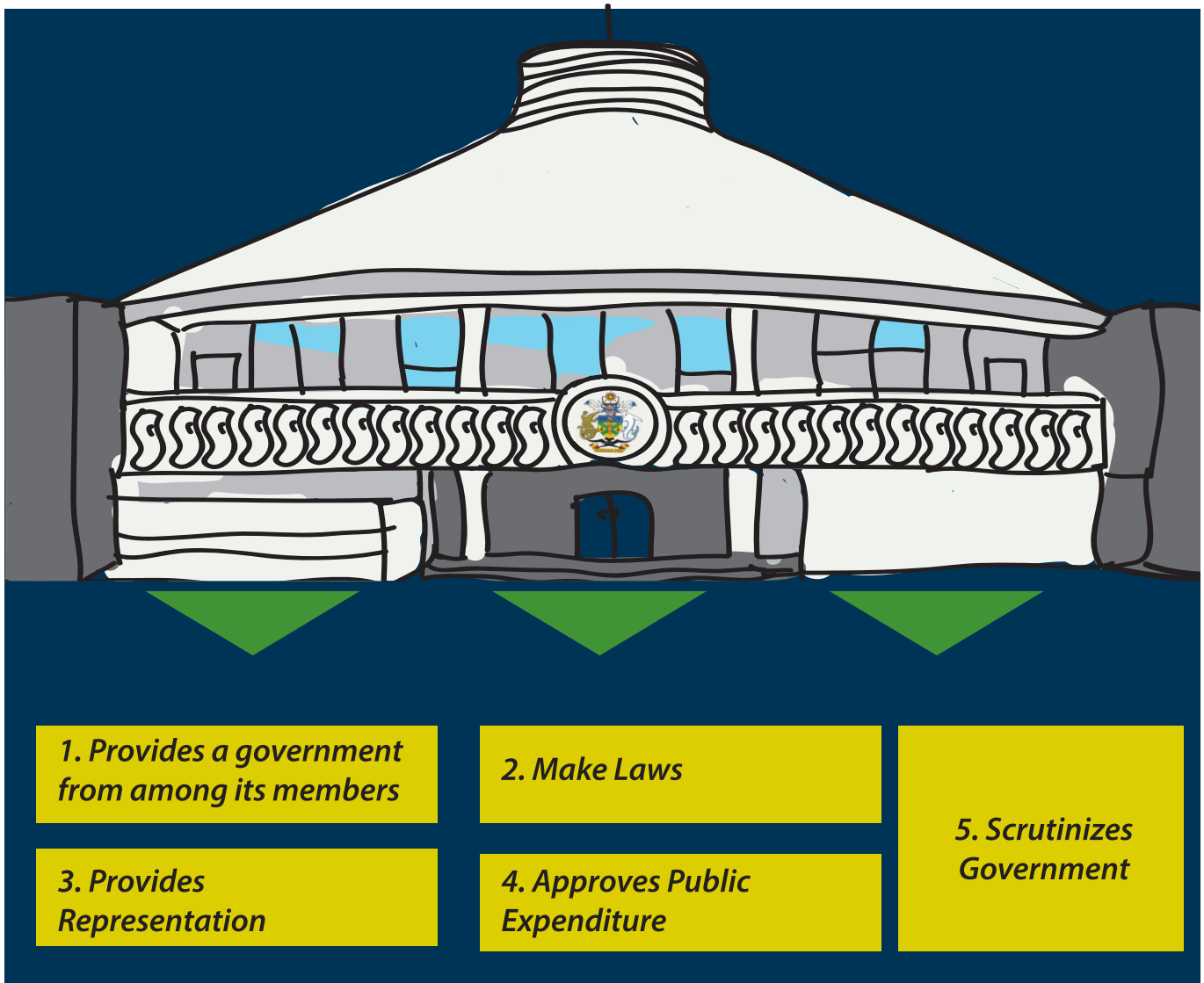
The constitution establishes the National Parliament of Solomon Islands giving it the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the country.

The National Parliament is made up of 50 representatives each one elected by a constituency throughout the country.



Functions of Parliament

Parliament performs a number of different roles. Some of its main functions are as follows:



1. Provides a government from among its members

The Government is made up of Members of Parliament. After a General Election, the MPs that have been elected determine who they would like to support as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is elected by Members of Parliament after an election. The MPs that support the Prime Minister become part of the Government, while the other MPs make up the Opposition and the Independent Group. The Prime Minister recommends MPs to the Governor General to formally appoint as Ministers of the Crown.

The Prime Minister must maintain the support of the majority of the Members of Parliament to continue in Government.

2. Make Laws

The constitution states that Parliament may make laws for the peace order and good government of Solomon Islands. It is an essential element of democratic societies that the people (voters) elect representatives (MPs) to make laws and that the people, in turn, recognize the laws made by the people they have elected. Parliament's power to make laws is extremely broad

3. Provides representation

Each Member of Parliament is elected by registered voters in a constituency to represent their interests. By convention MPs most ensure that they effectively represent the interests of their constituents through their work in Parliament. If constituents are not satisfied with the performance of an MP, they have an opportunity to remove that person from Parliament by voting for another candidate in the next National General Election.

4. Approves Public Expenditure

One of the key roles of government is to raise funds through taxation. Taxes are levied from individuals, businesses, foreign corporations and other entities. The Government then decides how this money should be spent by submitting a budget to be debated, scrutinized and ultimately passed by Parliament.

5. Scrutinizes Government

Members of Parliament who are not part of the Government will choose to either join the official opposition or sit as independent Members of Parliament. It is the job of the opposition and the independent MPs to carefully scrutinise the Government. They do this through asking questions during Parliamentary Question Time, speaking on motions in Parliament, carefully analyzing bills that the Government puts before Parliament and through the committee process. The scrutiny of opposition and independent MPs is a critical part of a healthy democracy as it provides a check and balance to the power of the government of the day.

Role of MP's

In Solomon Islands Members of Parliament play a number of different roles in society. They are leaders of their communities, they are legislators and they are negotiators. However, their main roles, under the constitution, follow the functions of Parliament.

Government, Opposition or Independent

Either forming part of the Government or contributing to the work of Government either as a Minister or as an ordinary member of the Government or scrutinising the Government as a member of the opposition or independent.

Making Laws

One of the principal roles of MPs is as a legislator. MPs should contribute to debates on new bills to make sure that new laws serve the interests of their constituents.

Providing representation

MPs fundamental responsibility is to their constituents. An MP must act in best interest of their constituents. If constituents are unhappy with their MP they will have a chance to elect someone else at the next election.

Key Message:

Members of Parliament have many roles but their most important responsibility is to represent their constituents. Your MP is your voice in how the country is run and what the law is.



Why Should I Vote?

Ask participants: Why should you vote?

People have many different reasons for voting. Some people choose not to vote at all, as voting is not compulsory in Solomon Islands.

Activity 2 : Why is Voting Important?

Activity Time :



45 mins

Resources :



"I'm Voting In The Election Because..."
Poster on pages 26 - 28



"I'm Voting In The Election Because..."
Video (4mins)

1. Display all of the "I'm voting in the election because...." posters.

2. Show the "I'm voting in the election because...." video (4mins)

Make the following points:

- Voting is the right of all Solomon Islands Citizens over the age of 18. Your vote is your voice in how the country is run. By voting, you are able to have your say in who will represent you in the National Parliament
- Many people have different reasons for wanting to vote. Some of those reasons are shown in the posters provided.

Ask participants:

Why do you want to vote?

Give time for any questions or comments the group has.



I am voting because....



I want our leaders to improve the government system, so services can reach rural people.

Francis, Western Province



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

I am voting because....



I want a leader who will help women and families in rural areas with sanitation, health and education.

Annie, Malaita Province



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu



I am voting because....



My village needs good roads and water supply, and solar power for people in my community.

Teiti, Western Province



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

Mi vot bikos....



Mi laekem MP fo help lo side lo transpot, fo oketa mere lo vilij, save kasem maket.

Elvis, Isabel Province



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

Mi vot bikos....



Mi vot bikos....



I am voting because....



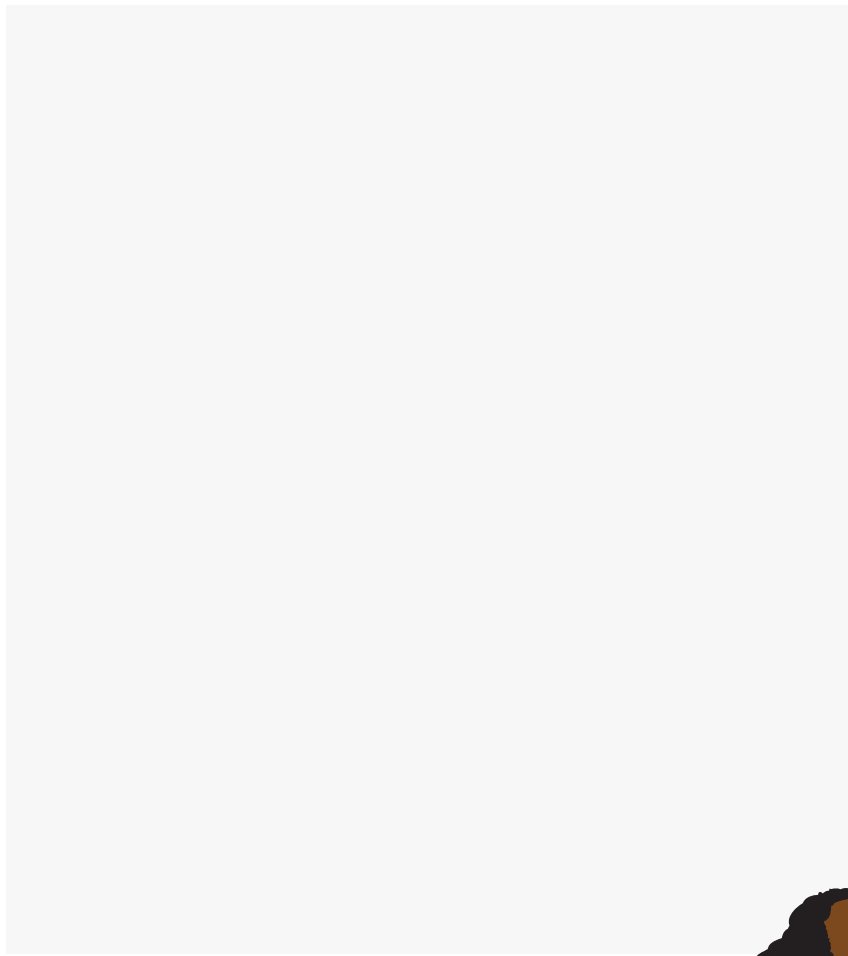
Mi vot bikos....



I am voting because....



Mi vot bikos....



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

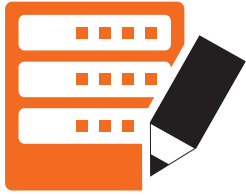


CHAPTER

4

voter registration





Learning outcomes

- Participants are encouraged to register to vote
- Participants understand how to register to vote
- Participants understand what happens during the “Revision Period”



In this Chapter

- Eligibility to register
- The Registration Phase
- Biometric Voter Registration
- The Revision Period



Useful resources

- Biometric Voter Registration Video

Voter Registration is the process in which citizens are registered in order to be authorised to vote in an election.



During voter registration, a “Voters List” is compiled that is used on Election Day to determine who is eligible to vote.

If your name is not on the list, you will not be allowed to vote.

Eligibility to Vote

According to the Constitution, to be eligible to register a person must be:-

- A Solomon Islands citizen (by birth or through legal acquiring)
- Must attain 18 years of age.

Note that disqualification from registration can occur on certain grounds, and this will be discussed later.

Voter Registration Timeframe

The Registration Period is the length of time during which any person who wishes to participate in the election can register. The Registration Period is set by the SIEC. The Registration Period is the only time that new voters can register and existing voters can update their details. People wishing to register outside of the period will not be allowed.

In Solomon Islands, voter registration happens periodically, usually in the year leading up to elections. In 2014, the voter registration period was 6 weeks, and the remaining process to complete of the Voters List took six months. Voter registration comprises a number of phases which are important to understand.

Voter Registration Phases

There are 3 different phases in the whole Registration process.

They are:

1. Voter Registration Phase

2. Exhibition Phase and adjudication (includes Omission and Objection)

3. Public Inquiry

Voter Registration Phases

This is the initial process where people who have turned 18, or who have not registered or who wish to change location of their registration can visit a registration centre and register.

Registration can only be done in this phase meaning if you have not registered at all in this phase you cannot register or take part in the later phases within the same registration period.

6 weeks

Voter Registration

Any registered person wishing to challenge somebody on the provisional list on grounds that a person's name appearing on the provisional list does not meet the registration requirements or qualifications can do so within this period. If a person has been registered but his or her name did not appear on the provisional list, he or she can file a claim of Omission on an Omission form (Form D) in order for his/her name to be reinserted back into the voters list.

Exhibition of the Provisional List

14 days

Omissions and Objections

After the registration phase, all the data that is collected from all voter registration centres (VRCS) is checked and compiled to an initial list called the provisional voters list (Form C) This is the list published for people to check that their registration details are correct or ensures that their registration have not been missed out.

All decision made at these hearing throughout the country during the public inquiry phase are final and are sent to SIEC data officers to make changes accordingly on the national voter registration list. The final voters list is then ready to be used on Election Day.

A week (s) or a month before polling day depending on any timeframe for each phase set by the Electoral Commission.

1 week(s) - 1

Month

Public Inquiry

28 days

After the Omission and Objection period closes, a list of all the omission and objection cases will be published for 10 days to notify those whose names are objected to of the venue, date and time of the hearing. Revising Officer within 28 day will conduct hearing into these claims and make decision on each case base on the evidence provided by these claimants.

Settlement of the final voters list

1 month

Election

1. Voter Registration Phase

This is the initial process where people who just turned 18, or who haven't registered or who wish to change location of their registration can visit a registration centre and register. Registration can only be done in this phase, meaning if you haven't registered at all in this phase, you cannot register or take part in the later phases. In 2014, the Solomon Islands introduced a Biometric Voter Registration to be used in this first phase.

Biometric Voter Registration System (BVR)

The BVR system uses technology (Laptop, Printer, Fingerprint scanner & camera) to capture some bio-features (body features such as eye patterns and thumbprint) along with the personal data of a person who registers in the process of registration. The purpose of adopting this system was to be able to manage registrations by using the unique bio-features to compare and contrast all the registration. Under BVR, each voter person can only register one time as each person's bio-data is unique. In doing this, an accurate list of electors is produced.

Voter Registration Centres (VRC)

- Voter Registration Centres are the venues in which registration occurs. Most VRCs are commonly used as polling stations. Venues for VRC are made known to people, in the leading up to the Voter Registration period.
- During voter registration period, an Assistant Registration Clerk Officer (ARCO) and two Assistant Registration Data Officer (DARO) are present in the VRC to help facilitate the process.

Voter Registration Process

In the VRC, the process for a person to register is as follows:

- i. First, the registration Form (Form B) must be completely and accurately filled with the help of the Assistant Registration Clerk Officer(ARCO)
- ii. After completion of Form B, you will be ushered to the DAROS with your Form B. Your particulars from the Form B will be entered into the BVR system by DARO 1.
- iii. Your photo will be taken and fingerprints are taken by DARO 2
- iv. From all the data captured, your voter ID card will be printed. Take the voter ID card and leave the VRC.



Vote lo'ka, Voice lo'ka



BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION

STEPS



SOLOMON ISLANDS ELECTORAL COMMISSION

MAKARA ROAD, P. O. BOX 1000, HO WANA, SOLOMON ISLANDS. PHONE: (877) 2114211/18. FAX: (877) 21111. EMAIL: ec@ecsc.gov.sb



www.ecsc.gov.sb

Exhibition
of the
Provisional
List

2. Revision Phase (Exhibition of List)

After the registration phase, all the data that is collected from all VRC is checked and compiled to an initial list called the Provisional Voters List (Form C). This provisional list contains names of all who have registered, and also contains information of people who have attempted to register more than once.

This list is published in each ward for public viewing for a period set by the Electoral Commission. During this time the public is encouraged to view the list and make appropriate changes to the list.

Any registered person can challenge the Provisional List or a person on the Provisional List on the following grounds:

- Is not a citizen of SI
- Has not attained 18 years
- Is not an ordinary residence in the area
- Is not of sound mind
- Registered more than once
- Is not the person s/he claims to be
- Is not qualified by the law
- Has applied to register but his/her name does not appear on the list.

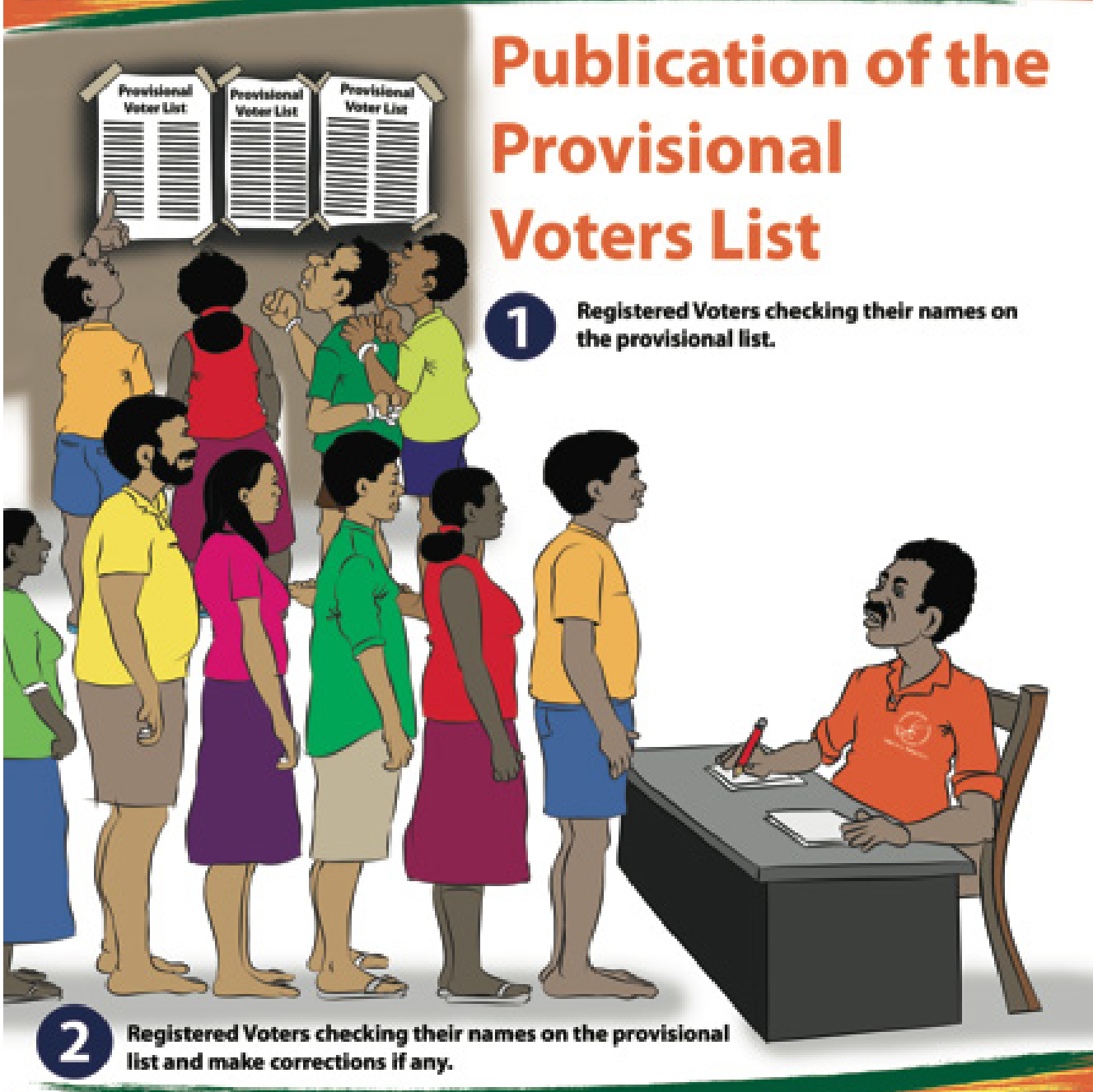
Key Message:

*If your name appears in **yellow** on the Provisional Voters List it means that you have attempted to register more than once.*

Only your first registration will remain on the final voters list.



BIOMETRIC
VOTER REGISTRATION



Publication of the Provisional Voters List

1 Registered Voters checking their names on the provisional list.

2 Registered Voters checking their names on the provisional list and make corrections if any.



SOLOMON ISLANDS ELECTORAL COMMISSION

VAVAYA RIDGE, P.O. BOX 1500, HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS



Vote bio lu, Voce bio lu

Omission and Objection

3. Omission and Objection

Any registered person wishing to challenge somebody on the Provisional List on the grounds noted above, can do so within this period.

- If the voter has registered but the voter's name is missing in the Provisional List, 'Notice of omission in the voters list' form is used
- If it is objecting to a person's registration, 'Notice of objection to retention of name on voters list' form is used

Key Message:



If you did not register during the Registration Phase, you cannot use the Omissions process to register.

Notice of Omission

When a person checks the list and finds out his/her name is missing in the particular place she/he has applied for, s/he can file an omission form for his/her name to be re-included in the list. Filling an omission form notifies the SIEC that a name has not been registered.

It is important to know that, only the person who has registered at the initial Registration Phase can lodge a Notice of Omission (Form D). Any person who didn't register during the Initial registration, cannot use Form D to register his/her name.

The cases in which a person can fill Omission Form:

- i. Person registered but their name is missing from Provisional List
- ii. Name spelt incorrectly on the Provisional List

Notice of Objection

In the case where a person whose name is on the Provisional list should not be there, any registered person of that village (ward) wishing to challenge the name for purpose of removal, s/he can do so by using a Notice of Objection Form. The Notice of Objection Form notifies the Returning Officer of the person's details and the reason why his/her name is objected to.

The grounds on which a person can be objected to:

- i. Not a citizen of SI
- ii. Has not attained 18 years
- iii. Not of ordinary residence in the place where they are registered
- iv. Registered more than once (SIEC will identify this and automatically remove all names except the first registration, if not objected to)
- v. Not of sound mind

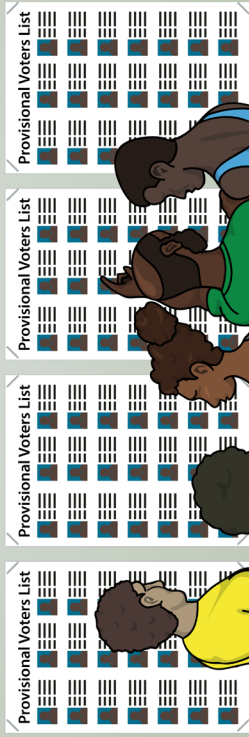


BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION

Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

EXHIBITION PHASE

1. Publication of the voter's list



7 DAYS

Registered Voters checking their names on the voter's list

2. Omissions & Objections

Registered Voters checking their names on the voter's list.



14 DAYS



SOLOMON ISLANDS ELECTORAL COMMISSION | VAVAVA RIDGE, P.O. BOX 1500, HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu





Public Inquiry

4. Public Inquiry

After the Omission and Objection period closes, a list of all the Omission and Objection cases will be published for 10 days to notify those whose names are objected or who have filed a Notice of Omission and Objection. Public hearings, conducted by the Revising Officer will take place after this.

During the public hearings, the Revising Officer will hear the cases in the presence of objectors or those being objected to in a setting similar to a local court. Those objecting to another person's registration, seeking to defend their own registration from an objector or prove that they have been omitted should bring any evidence that might assist the Revising Officer.

The Revising Officer will make judgements whether to retain the names or remove the names from the list according to his judgement of each case based on the evidence available.

At the completion of Public Inquiry, the list of the Revising officer's judgement with all the forms are sent to the SIEC Data office where appropriate changes are made to the Voters List.

Ordinary Residence

One of the most common issues to be raised during the Exhibition Phase is the issue of "ordinary residence". The Solomon Islands Constitution states that "No person shall be able to register in a constituency in which he is not ordinarily resident." However, the meaning of "ordinary residence" can cause some confusion. The High Court has considered the concept of ordinary residence and said that it may include

- Having a genealogical history or family connection
- Owning properties in a place
- Residing in a place

As you can see, the definition of ***'ordinary residence'*** is extremely broad.

Activity 3 : Check the Provisional Voters List

Activity Time :



45 mins

Resources :



Provisional
Voters List
Handout (Page
38)



Pens

Instructions

In this activity, you will conduct a mock registration exercise and ask participants to identify errors in a provisional voters list.

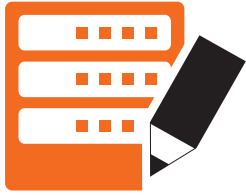
1. Ask all participants to 'register' as voters in your mock election.
2. Deliberately misspell some names
3. Deliberately leave one or two names off the list
4. Add some other made up names. You might like to use funny names or the names of celebrities to make sure they stand out to your participants
5. Post the Provisional Voters List up on a wall and ask participants to identify any potential omissions or objections.

CHAPTER

5

the election





Learning outcomes

- Participants be able to know what election is and why is it important.
- Participants be able to differentiate different types of elections in Solomon Islands, when they are held, their responsible Electoral Authority
- Participants be able to know and understand the election processes and procedures.



In this Chapter

- What is an election?
- Different Types of Elections
- Election Timetable
- SIEC Officers
- Candidate Nomination



Useful resources

- “She decides for us” Poster

Election is a vital event in any democratic country or society.

It is the process that gives the people the chance to decide on the type of leadership that they want and believe in to lead their country or society through the process of voting on an election day.

Election Management Bodies are the responsible authorities for administering election events. Solomon Islands Electoral Commission is the Electoral Management body that has the legal mandate to conduct and supervise National General Election in Solomon Islands.

What is an Election?

An election is a democratic process that gives citizens of a democratic country the opportunity to exercise their right to choose someone to represent them in Parliament and make decisions on their behalf in the development affairs of the country.

Types of Elections

Three (3) types and level of elections that are held in Solomon Islands. They are

1. National General Elections
2. Provincial Elections
3. Honiara City Elections

National General Elections

National General Elections are conducted to elect Members of Parliament who represent an electoral constituency. They fall within the legal mandate of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and are carried out in accordance with National Parliament Electoral Provision Act. National General Elections are held on a four-year electoral cycle within four months from the dissolution of the National Parliament.

Provincial Elections

Provincial Elections are conducted to elect Members of Provincial Assembly who represent an electoral ward within a constituency. It is held at the provincial level and it follows a staggered electoral calendar. It is within the mandate of Ministry of Provincial Government and institutional strengthening and it is supervised in accordance with the provincial government acts of parliament and other relevant election regulation.

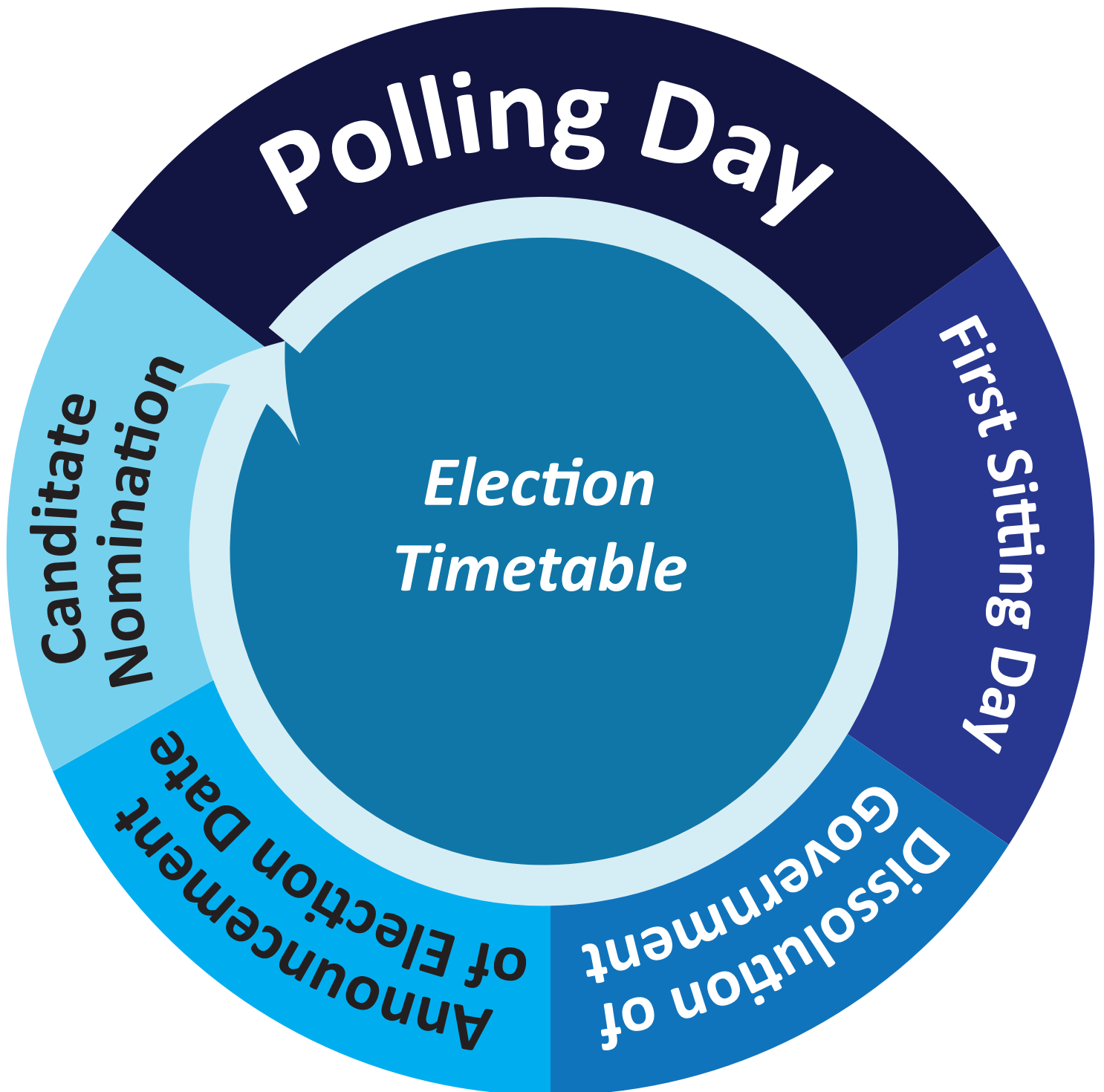
Honiara City Council Elections

Honiara City Council Elections are conducted to elect councillors representing each electoral ward within the Honiara City Electoral Boundaries. It is conducted under the Ministry of Home Affairs portfolio and in accordance with Honiara City Parliamentary Act and local government regulation.

Anyone who wants to contest in a provincial government election or Honiara City Council election should seek advice from these election authorities.

Election Timetable

Each Parliament must dissolve 4 years after its first sitting. Once Parliament dissolves the Governor General must appoint an Election Day within four months. Election or Polling Day must be 42 days from the date that the Governor General announces the date of the election. On an Election Day, all registered voters who have their name on the voters list go to their allocated polling stations to cast their vote.



SIEC Officers

During election periods, the staff of SIEC grows to more than 3000 people. The chart below shows the different levels of SIEC Officers that voters may come into contact with.

Open of Nominations

Candidate nominations open following the announcement of the election date. Intending candidates have only 14 days to file their nomination application forms.

Who can nominate as a candidate?

Candidate Qualification Criteria

According to the Constitution of Solomon Islands, there are only two eligibility criteria for contesting a National General Elections.

1. Being citizen of Solomon islands
2. Be 21 years and above

Key Message:

The above qualification criteria, provide an avenue for equal political participation by women and youth, religious or cultural groupings and therefore women and youth should be encouraged to participate by contesting elections.



Candidate Disqualification Criteria

Eligible candidates can also be disqualified from contesting in any particular election. The Constitution sets out that a candidate can be disqualified if he or she is:

1. Serving a foreign power
2. A public servant or officer
3. An undischarged bankrupt at the time of the election.
4. Certified insane or unsound mind by a medical practitioner
5. Under sentence of death or imprisonment including suspension sentence not exceeding 6 months
6. Has disqualified from been a member of parliament, de-registered as a voter or been banned from voting in an election or committed any offence in connection with the election.
7. Holding any position or carrying out any function that has a responsibility that has connection to the conduct of election or registration of voter

How to Nominate

Nomination application forms are made available during nomination period at the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission's Office. Application forms can also be obtained from responsible Returning Officers for each constituency in the Provincial Headquarters or in respective constituencies.

Validity of Nomination

- A nominator can only nominate one candidate
- A candidate must be nominated by three nominators
- All three nominators must be registered voters in constituency a candidates wants to stand.
- And proof of nomination fee payment must attach to the complete nomination application form before it can be accepted. Make sure complete nomination forms are submitted before 4pm on the closing day of nomination.

Nomination Fee

The nomination fee is SBD\$2,000. Payment of the nomination fee can be made in cash with the respective Returning Officer for each constituency or at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. A payment receipt must be attached to each complete nomination form as a proof of payment before it can be accepted.

Close of Nomination

Nomination closes 14 days after the election declaration date. All completed nomination application forms must be submitted to respective returning officer or assistant returning officer for any particular constituency before 4pm on the closing date.

Candidates' List

After the close of nominations, a draft list of nominated candidates is posted out in the communities for three days or for any period set by the commission for ineligibility check by voters. During this time a candidate has the chance to cancel or withdraw her/his candidacy if s/he wishes to.

Ballot Paper Draw

When and where is ballot paper draw conducted?

Ballot paper draw is conducted at 4:30pm on the day for the close of nominations. It takes place at nomination centres where nomination papers are received by the Returning Officers. This date should be communicated to all candidates who have lodged a nomination.

Why the Ballot Paper Draw is important?

The Ballot Paper Draw is very important to ensure there is fairness in determining the order of candidates' name placement order on the ballot paper. Who is at number one position and who is at the bottom of the ballot paper? Certain positions on the ballot paper are

perceived to be an advantage and therefore are usually preferred by certain candidates. To avoid candidates competing for these positions, ballot paper draw is conducted.

How the Ballot Paper Draw is conducted?

The Ballot Paper Draw is done in a random manner to make sure every candidate has an equal chance to be placed in each position in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper.

At the end of the day for the close of nomination, the Returning Officer writes down on a flip chart paper or white/black board the names of candidates according to the order in which nominations were received and displays the list to anyone who is present to witness the conduct of the Ballot Paper Draw.

1. Read out the list of the names of the candidates to everyone who is present
2. Show for everyone's inspection an empty box that will be used for the Ballot Paper Draw. Make sure everyone is satisfied that there is nothing inside.
3. Prepare equally sized cut paper, one for each candidate and show it to everyone who is present to verify that nothing is written on each.
4. Write the name of the first candidate on the first piece of paper.
5. Fold it into half and re fold into half again.
6. Place it inside the drawing box.
7. Do the same for the rest of the candidates.
8. Rotate /Shake the drawing box to ensure that all the content is well mixed.
9. Blind fold a public officer (preferably a junior staff) or an electoral officer who is present at the time of the draw who wishes to do so.
10. Ask the officer to draw one piece of paper from the box.
11. Read out the name of the candidate.
12. Returning Officer must ensure to write down the names according to the order they are drawn from the box. This is the order in which candidates' names will be printed and appear on the ballot paper used on Election Day.
13. You can use different people for each draw if there are many public officers present who wants to participate



OKETA WOMAN BLO IUMI LO KANDAREH INO MAN NATING TU YIA!

SHE...



CARES
FOR US

SHE...



EARNS
FOR US

SHE...



PROTECTS
US

SHE...



HEALS
US

SHE...



DECIDES
FOR US

**HAF-LO POPULATION BLONG IUMI OKETA WOMAN
BUT ONLY WANFALA WOMAN NOMOA INSAET LO PARLAMENT**



THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONFERENCE, 2ND - 4TH JUNE 2015

Activity Time:



15 mins

Resources :

Activity 4 : Eligible and Ineligible?

INSTRUCTIONS

Having explained the requirements for candidate nomination explain the circumstances of the four fictional candidates below.

Ask participants to identify which ones would be able to nominate as candidates and why.

{{ILLUSTRATE}}

A

Richard is 48 years old. He was born in the village and lived there for many years but was elected to Parliament in the last election. He has been a good MP but has not visited the village since his election. He is nominated by 3 businessmen from Honiara.

B

Lovelyn is 51 years old. She has worked as a senior Public Servant for many years, holding a number of important posts, most recently as a Permanent Secretary. Lovelyn is nominated by 3 people from her Church. They are all registered voters in the constituency that she wants to contest.

C

John is 21 years old. Despite his young age, John has done a lot to develop his community, helping people apply for agriculture grants to bring in more efficient farming techniques. As a result of Johns hard work, three local Chiefs have agreed to nominate him as a candidate for the National Parliament. Unfortunately, John was overseas during the voter registration period so is not on the Voters List.

D

Wendy is 35 years old. She is a very successful businesswoman and has a lot of money. However, 10 years ago, when a business failed, she declared bankruptcy. She has since rebuilt her business and has been nominated to contest the election by three registered voters.

ANSWERS

A. It depends on the nominators. If the businessmen are not registered in the constituency then the nomination is not valid

B. It depends on the status of her employment. Lovelyn would have to resign from the public service otherwise, she would be disqualified from nominating

C. Yes, only the nominators have to be registered. Candidates do not have to be registered under the National Parliament electoral Provisions Act

D. Yes if her bankruptcy is discharged.

Activity Time



30 mins

Resources :



Flip Chart
paper or Board



Marker/Chalk



Empty Box
(could be
ballot box or
cardboard box)



Scissors



A piece of cloth

Activity 4.1 : Nomination (Optional)

(Do which ever activity that is relevant to your purpose)

You can do exactly as in the steps above or do it in your style.

Make sure to highlight the main key importance of this exercise and that is,

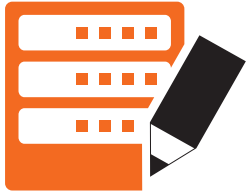
- **There is fairness in position of the candidates' names on the ballot paper.**
- **Everyone has an equal chance to be in each position by random approach.**
- **There is transparency in the process in the conduct of the drawing by allowing everyone to witness every step involved.**
- **Reemphasise that the order of the draw is exactly the order in which they will appear on the real ballot paper.**

CHAPTER

6

campaigning





Learning outcomes

- Participants understand the campaigning rules and election offences
- Participants Understand the Role of Political Parties



In this Chapter

- Campaigning Rules
- Election Offences
- Bribery and Card buying
- Political parties
 - o The Political Parties Commission
 - o Manifestos



Useful resources

- Election Offences Poster
- Bribery Video

Campaigning activities, speeches, rallies and other events are an important feature of a democratic system.



Voters need to know about all candidates' vision, policies and plans so that they can evaluate who they want to represent them in Parliament for what interests are they representing.

Campaigning

Candidates, candidates' agents and political parties all play a critical role in the election process. Campaigning activities, speeches, rallies and other events are an important feature of a democratic system. Voters need to know about all candidates' vision, policies and plans so that they can evaluate who they want to represent them in Parliament for what interests are they representing.

But, while campaigning is important, the National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act contains a number of rules that candidates and their agents must adhere to make sure that campaigning is fair and that voters feel free to choose the candidate that they think will best represent their interests.

Campaigning Rules

The following campaigning rules are prescribed by the National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act:

- It is an offence for a candidate to spend more than \$50,000 on his or her election expenses: s 45.
- It is an offence to commit bribery, treating or undue influence in relation to an election: s 70 to 73.
- It is an offence to act or incite others to act in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which a lawful public meeting was called: s78.
- It is an offence for a person, except a candidate, to wear or display any card symbol or emblem indicating support for a candidate or a political party within 50 yards of any polling station building: s 79.
- It is an offence for a person to make any public address indicating support for a particular candidate or political party within 200 yards of a polling station building: s 79.
- It is an offence for any person of customary authority or religious influence to prohibit or influence an elector not to vote: s 80.

Furthermore, the Electoral Commission has a policy that no electoral campaigning activities may be held within any premises used for electoral administration purposes.

Election Offences

Elections can be a very tense time for communities. Many people have very strong views about elections and the performance of leaders at the same time, there is a need for elections to be conducted in a way that is orderly, fair and allows every individual voter to make up their own mind about who they want to vote for.

It may be easiest to approach the issue of election offences by way of group discussion. The activity below outlines some tips as to how you can use SIEC's Election Offences Poster to guide a discussion on election offences.

Activity Time



30 mins

Activity 5 : Electoral Offences

1. Display all of the Electoral Offences Poster
2. Go through each asking those present what each means to them. Make sure they are clear about the meaning of each
3. Ask the group, "Which Offence do you think is the worst?" Ask them why? Allow several points of view and 5 minutes of discussion
4. Make the point that all offences are against the spirit of Solomon Islands democracy. All have a negative effect on the freeness and fairness of the election
5. Give time for any questions or comments the group has.

Electoral Offences

Offence	Explanation
Voting when not entitled	Anyone whose name is not on the final voters list. Even though you are on the list, you can be disqualified by a court ruling for committing election offense in the past and you cannot vote. You can also disqualified from voting or even registering to vote if a court sentenced you for a period of 6 months or more for any criminal offense committed or imprisoned.
Voting more than once	A person who is entitle to vote can only vote once on an election day. Fraudulently voting more than once is an offense.
Voting using another person's name	To deceptively vote in another person's name is an offense called impersonation. You're not allowed to vote on behalf of a family member, a friend, or a relative under any circumstances.
Giving false answers to questions put to a person applying for a ballot paper	To dishonestly answer 'proof of identity' questions asked by polling staff when suspicious of your actions when applying for a ballot paper. This is to ensure you are the right person before issuing you a ballot paper. Proof of identity questions seeks, your true name, village and or question on whether you have voted or not in this election. Misleading answers is likely to be an act to defraud the process, which is an offence.
Interfering with an elector when casting his/her vote or obtaining information from him/her as to the candidate he/she has voted for	To Interfere or disturb a voter when voting. Polling Staff and candidate's watchmen can only asked questions on proof of identity to determine whether voter is the true person claiming to be and that to ensure that that person is voting only once. Obtaining information from a voter on who he/she has or will vote for is also an offence. Your vote is secret and no one else should know.
Forging, counterfeiting, fraudulently defacing a ballot paper or the official mark on it	To forge, make copy of a ballot paper with the intention to defraud the voting process is exceedingly a serious criminal act that has severe consequences. To also deceptively ruining a ballot paper, with or without the official mark is a very serious offence where the intention to obstruct, impede, hinder and disrupting the voting process.
Fraudulently taking a ballot paper out of the polling station	Under the current electoral laws, no ballot papers are allowed to leave the polling station by voters (both spoilt and unspoilt) or even by polling officers without authorization, when voting is in process. To deceitfully remove a ballot paper out of the polling station is an offence.
Bribery, Treating or undue influence	<p>Bribing – use of money, promises or materials; buying of votes, with deceit intention to induce voting for, against a candidate or refraining from voting is an offence.</p> <p>Treating – any person who fraudulently gives, pays for, provides and promises some sort of entertainment, food, drinks corruptly influence voters to vote for or against any candidate or refraining from voting is an offence.</p> <p>Undue influence – It is an offence to make use of or threaten to make use of, by any force against anyone's will, cause violence or restraint, even causing injury or damage, cause harm or loss, to induce and compel a voter from voting, voting for a candidate or refraining from registering to vote or voting.</p>
Display of Candidate or Party Emblems in the vicinity of the Polling Place	It is legally required that within a polling station vicinity, 50-100m, there should not be any campaign materials – posters, banners, t-shirts, brochures, locally/hand crafted symbols etc or campaign speeches made, on polling day. Polling officials are required to remove such campaign materials before or when setting up the polling station. Polling officials can and has the legal mandate of removing such campaign materials.

Card Buying

With the introduction of the Biometric Voter Registration system, each registered voter was issued with a Voter ID Card. During the 2014 National General Election, there were a number of media reports suggesting that candidate's agents had bought cards from voters on the understanding that those voters would then vote for their candidate. While there were a number of media reports, no formal report was made to either SIEC or Police.

The SIEC's advice on this matter is as follows.

- While there is not a specific offence of card buying in the National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act it is likely that a candidate or agent seeking to buy a card could be charged with bribery under the Act.
- Voters should know that they do not need their cards to vote. If you have lost your voter ID card, simply go to the polling place and tell the polling assistant that your card is lost. They will check the picture of you on the roll and may ask you some questions. If your face matches the picture on the roll then you will be allowed to vote.

Out of Constituency Registration

In the 2014 National General Election, many people who stay in Honiara registered to vote in their home province/village by registering at the Out of Constituency Voter Registration Centre. SIEC often receives questions about out of constituency registration.

SIEC's advice on this matter is as follows.

- The law allows people to register in any place that they have a family or cultural connection to under the current definition of "ordinary residence".
- If people who usually stay in Honiara are on the voters list in your constituency they are within their rights to vote in your constituency.



ELECTION PENALTIES



Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu

OFFENCE	PENALTY
VOTING WHEN NOT ENTITLED	FINE OF UP TO \$3000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS
VOTING MORE THAN ONCE	FINE OF UP TO \$3000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS
VOTING USING ANOTHER PERSON'S NAME	FINE OF UP TO \$3000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS
GIVING FALSE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PUT TO A PERSON APPLYING FOR A BALLOT PAPER	FINE OF UP TO \$3000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS
INTERFERING WITH AN ELECTOR WHEN CASTING HIS/HER VOTE OR OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM HIM/HER AS TO THE CANDIDATE HE/SHE HAS VOTED FOR	FINE OF UP TO \$3000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS
FORGING, COUNTERFEITING, FRAUDULENTLY DEFACING A BALLOT PAPER OR THE OFFICIAL MARK ON IT	FINE OF UP TO \$5000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 6 MONTHS
FRAUDULENTLY TAKING A BALLOT PAPER OUT OF THE POLLING STATION	FINE OF UP TO \$5000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 6 MONTHS
BRIBERY, TREATING OR UNDUE INFLUENCE	FINE OF UP TO \$5000 AND/OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 6 MONTHS
DISPLAY OF CANDIDATE OR PARTY EMBLEMS IN THE VICINITY OF THE POLLING PLACE	FINE OF UP TO \$1000

OFFENCES MUST BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE OR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Vote blo iu, Voice blo iu



Office of the Solomon Islands
Electoral Commission
Department of Home Affairs
Vavaya Ridge, PO Box. 1500, Honiara
Phone 21198/21199, Fax 21463.

Political Parties

Political Parties Integrity Act 2014

The Political Parties Integrity Act 2014 was passed on 27 May 2014 and came into force on 30 June 2014. The Act provides for the registration and administration of political parties and is intended to promote good governance and to eradicate political malpractices in the Solomon Islands.

Registration requirements for Political Parties

In order to register as a political party under the Political Parties Act, a party must have

- 250 members that have completed formal membership declarations
- A political party must have a constitution, manifesto, policies and strategies that are consistent with the Act, its Regulations, and Standards of Integrity
- A party constitution that provides for effective control over the conduct of all members of the party, whether MPs or not
- A Manifesto statement of policies it will promote to the public during a campaign as to its intentions if elected

Integrity Standards

The Act issues a binding code of conduct for every registered political party. The Standards of Integrity is binding on the party, its members, Executives, officers, candidates, , agents and supporters of a registered political party. The conduct of registered political parties and their officers and candidates can be judged against the Integrity Standards.

Commission Members

- Sir Paul Tovua (KCMG)
- Mrs Ruth Liloqula
- Dr Patricia Rodie
- Rev. Bishop Philemon Riti OBE
- The Prime Minister will soon be recommending an other member to the Governor-General for appointment.

Funding

There is no public funding for party campaigning, but for every elected MP, parties can claim an administration grant of \$20,000 per year and for every elected woman MP an additional grant of \$10,000 per year.

All election contesting candidates, whether independent or party candidates, can only spend up to \$50,000 on their respective election campaigns. Parties can spend more on a campaign to promote the party but cannot spend more than \$50,000 on an individual party candidate. There is no limit to donations that can be made to political parties, but all donations must be declared by the parties in their post-election returns, in their quarterly returns and in their annual accounts. Donations from non-citizens and from overseas are permitted without limit, again provided they are declared. Donations to (i.e. expenditure by) individual members, whether party candidates or independents, must not exceed \$50,000 in total.

Candidate Selection

A registered political party can field candidates under its name in any election. Political party candidates have to be registered voters. (Unlike independent candidates who do not have to be registered voters.)

Every candidate, party and independent, must be qualified to sit as an MP under sections 48 and 49 of the Solomon Islands Constitution.

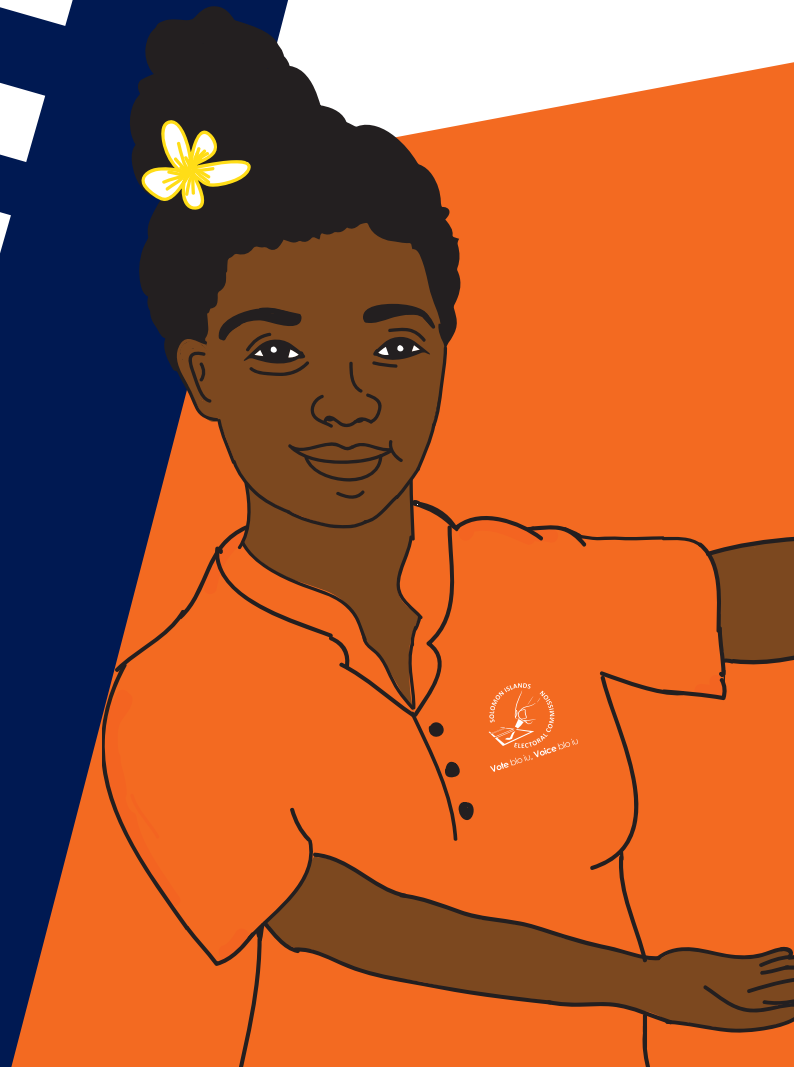
A party candidate must be a party member and must be selected by a democratic process provided for in the party constitution.

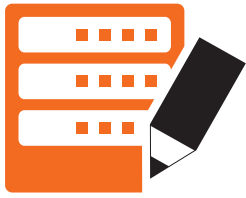
Each registered political party must select at least 10% women candidates if possible. The burden of proof rests on the party to show that an insufficient number of women have agreed to stand as a candidate under its banner.

CHAPTER

7

polling day





Learning outcomes

- Participants understand what to do on Election Day



In this Chapter

- Polling Stations
- Security Features
- How to vote
- Special Voting
- Secrecy



Useful resources

- How to Vote Poster
- How to Vote Video
- Security Video

Election Day is the decision making day where people go to their assigned polling stations to vote for the government of their country and therefore it is a very important day.

In Solomon Islands, people vote their Member of Parliament representatives on a National General Election Day.

Polling Stations

All voting must take place within an assigned polling station. A week before the Election Day, the Returning Officers will publish the list of electors in each polling station. It is important to check the names earlier to identify the polling station you will be voting in. You only vote in the polling station where your name is in.

Polling Hours

Polling Stations open at 7:00am and close at 5:00pm on the polling day. Voting is not allowed before the opening time, or after the closing time.

Key Messages:



You can only vote in the polling station that you are assigned. You must check the Voters List before Election Day to make sure you go to the right polling station.

Make sure you get to the polling station early. You cannot vote after the close of polls at 5pm.

Inside the Polling Station

Indelible Ink

Indelible Ink is used to mark the left little finger of each voter when they receive their ballot paper. This is done as an additional measure to make sure that every voter can only register once.

Ballot paper

The ballot paper is the tool that voters use to express their choice of candidate. The ballot paper contains the name and the symbol of the candidates contesting the elections for a particular constituency. Besides the symbol is a space or box given to put a mark on. It is encouraged that the mark to put at the box is a 'tick'. The ballot paper is printed on a special kind of paper that makes them very hard to copy or counterfeit.

Voting Screen

In the polling station, there is a voting screen in which you mark your ballot paper in secret. The voting screen is the cardboard box that you can use in marking your preferred candidate on your ballot paper. It is made in such a way that no one can see who you are voting for.

Ballot box

Once voters have marked their ballot paper they will put their ballot paper in the ballot box. The ballot box is a large plastic box that is translucent enough to see through yet it's not so clear to see the contents of the ballot papers.

The reason the ballots box is translucent is so that everyone can see that no false ballot papers have been put in before the opening of the polls or during polling operations.

Security Seals

Security seals are seals used to lock the ballot box. The seals are uniquely numbered, meaning there are no two seals that have the same number. There are six seals to lock the lid of the ballot box at the opening of the polling day, and the seventh seal is to lock the ballot paper slot at the closing of the polling day.

Before the seals are used on the ballot box, the numbers on the seals are recorded on a given form and verified by witnesses present. At the closing of polling day, the last seal is recorded on the form and verified again. These records will be checked against the ballot box seals during the counting day when the ballot box is opened.

Outside the polling station, the Voters List is displayed in which a voter must check her/his name. Other useful information such as candidate names and symbols, 'How to Vote' posters and election rules/offences is displayed outside the polling station.

Officials at the Polling Station

Electoral officials who are facilitating voters are

- i. One presiding Officer
- ii. Two Polling Assistants

Other personnel who have the right to be in a polling station are:

- i. Police – Security personnel who can be summoned to witness any special voting during the day.
- ii. Polling Agents – These are candidate agents

How to Vote

These are the steps that each registered voter must follow when they arrive at the polling station.

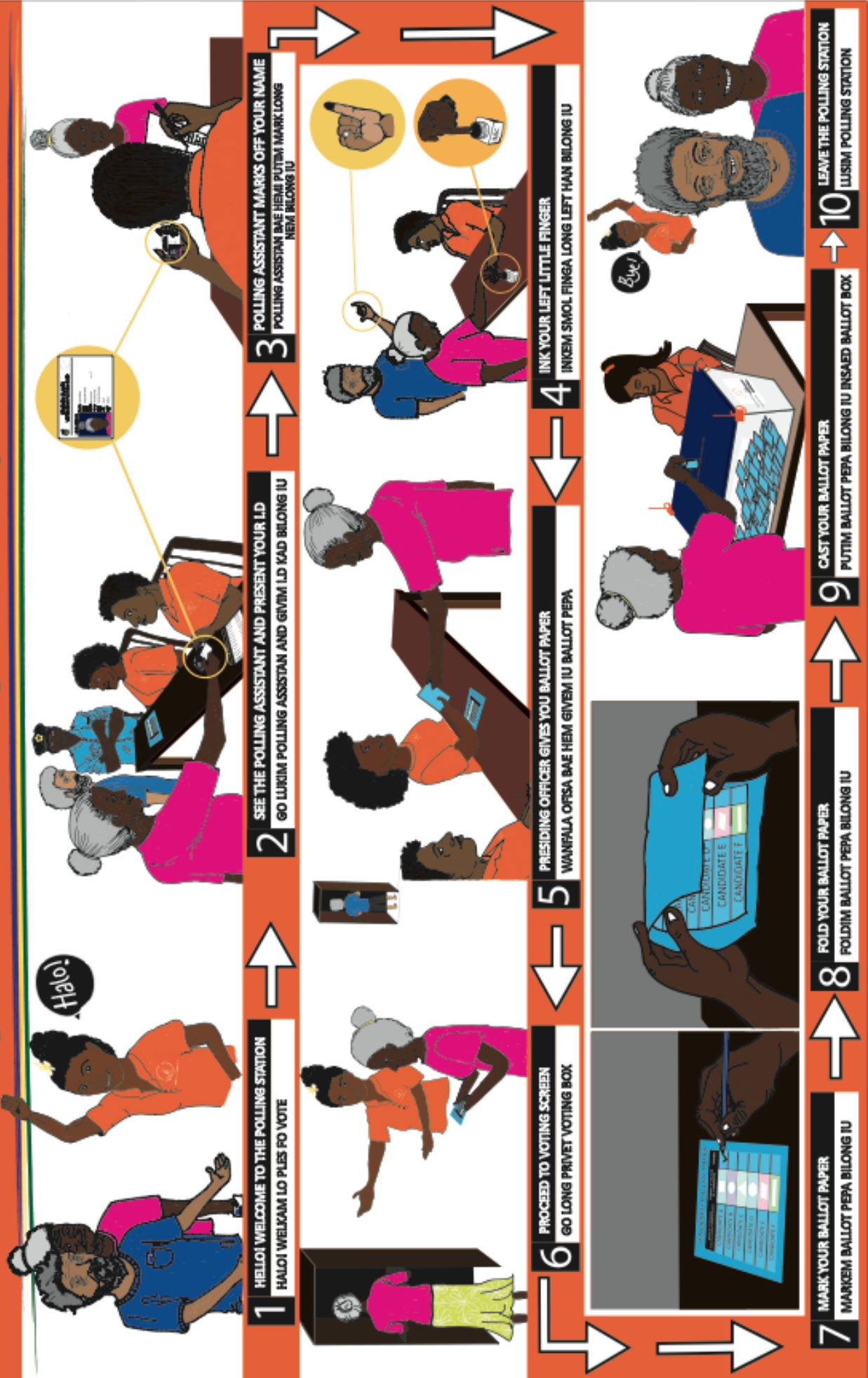
1. Check your name on the Voters List to ensure your name is there. If your name is not on the Voters List at a polling station, you will not be allowed to vote at that polling station.
2. Approach the Polling Assistant who will check your name on his/her list. Present your ID to him/her for voter verification. When Polling Assistant finds your name, s/he will cross off your name.
3. The Polling Assistant will apply ink to your left little finger. Make sure the inked finger is dry by rubbing it on a paper towel provided.
4. The Presiding Officer will issue you a ballot paper marked with his/her Official mark. Make sure you check that the Presiding Officer put his/her official mark on the ballot paper. The official mark section is at the bottom of the ballot paper. It is important to know that a ballot paper without an official mark are informal vote and are not counted.
5. Go to the voting screen and put a tick or mark on a box of your preferred candidate. Fold the paper in half. Note that if you make a mistake in marking our ballot paper you can take the ballot paper back to the Presiding Officer, who will issue a new one.
6. Go to the Ballot box, and drop your ballot paper in the box, voting is done. It is important to note that no ballot paper should be taken out of the Polling Station. When the ballot paper goes into the box, it cannot be returned.
7. Exit the Polling station



Vote Do U. Voice Do U

HOW TO VOTE

Office of the Solomon Islands
Electoral Commission
Department of Home Affairs
Suva Ridge, P.O. Box 1360 Honiara
Phone: 2175831195 Fax: 21603



Notes on the Voting Process

Valid Ballot paper

For a ballot paper to be considered a valid ballot paper, only one mark must be made to the square next to the symbol of the preferred candidate. Note that, only valid ballot papers will be counted for the final result.

Ballot papers are considered invalid when:-

- i. It is marked more than once.
The Returning Officer will invalidate whether it is a mistake or intended, any ballot paper that contains more than one mark.
- ii. The ballot paper has the name/ID or anything that can identify the Voter.
- iii. The ballot paper does not bear the Presiding Officer's official signature in the official mark box found at the bottom right corner of the ballot paper.

Spoilt Ballot papers

Spoilt ballot papers are ballot papers that are written off as spoilt by the Presiding Officer due to physical damage or improper information on an issued ballot paper. An example is when ballot paper is torn during its issue or a voter has unintentionally put a mark at a wrong candidate. These ballot papers must be given back to the Presiding Officer, and after crossing off as spoilt, are placed away separately. A new ballot paper will be re-issued.

Official Mark

On the bottom of the ballot paper there is a given space for 'Official Mark'. The Presiding officer put his official mark in the space provided before issuing the ballot paper. Every voter, in accepting a ballot paper from the Presiding Officer must check that the official mark has been made. It is important to check because a ballot paper with no official mark will be considered invalid, and cannot be counted.

Voter needing assistance

People who cannot read, or write or who are blind or with special needs can be assisted in Polling station in a different way. It is the responsibility of family members to bring any person with a disability who wishes to vote to the Polling station. During the marking of the ballot paper, if the person needs assistance with the marking of their ballot paper, the Presiding Officer will assist him/her in the presence of the Police Officer.

Activity Time:



45 mins

Resources :

You will need



1 Ballot box on a table



1 Voting screen
Ballot papers
(Example
Provided)



Two Tables
for the polling
station



Two tables for
the counting
station

Some chairs



Ink pad



Pens and rulers

Activity 6 : Mock Election Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Produce a voters list, you can use a workshop sign up sheet or the voters list you prepared in Activity 3 if you plan to conduct both activities
2. Appoint a person to act as the Returning Officer. They will be responsible for issuing ballot paper during voting and do the counting and declaring the mock election result.
3. Appoint two Polling Assistants- they will assist in marking voter's name who have voted off the voters list.
4. Explain the steps on the "How to Vote" Poster
 - 1) Check name on the list
 - 2) Apply for ballot paper
 - 3) Presiding Officer marks you off list
 - 4) Ink left little finger
 - 5) Official mark
 - 6) Receive ballot paper
 - 7) Got to voting screen
 - 8) Mark ballot paper at voting screen
 - 9) Fold ballot paper
 - 10) Put your ballot paper in ballot box
 - 11) Leave polling station
5. Ask Participants to queue in front of the Returning Officers table
6. For each participant, follow each of the steps
7. When every participant has voted, explain that the polls have now closed.

COUNTING PROCEDURE

8. Ask the Returning Officer to open the Ballot Box and sort ballots into piles according to which candidate is indicated on each ballot.
9. Ask the Returning Officer and Polling Assistants to count the number of ballots in each pile
10. Declare the candidate with the highest number of votes the winner group has.

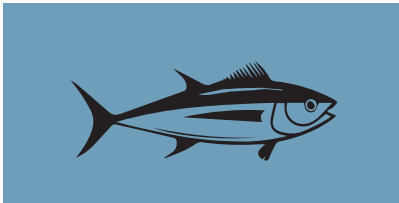
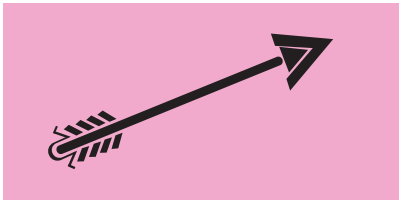
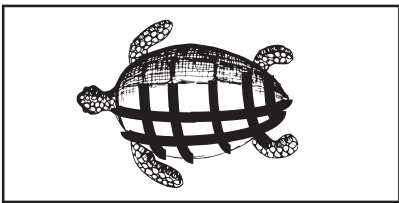
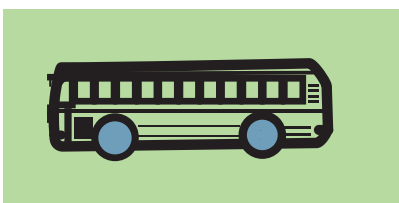




BALLOT PAPER

Year Eight Constituency

PUT A MARK IN THE BOX OF YOUR CHOICE

Vote For One Candidate Only

Candidate Name	Candidate Symbol	Mark
Freda, FISH		
Adam, ARROW		
Timothy, TURTLE		
Brenda, BUS		
Peter, PINEAPPLE		
Teresa, TREE		

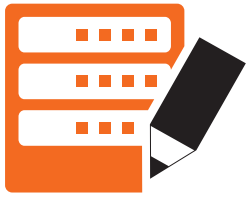


OFFICIAL MARK

CHAPTER

8 Results





Learning outcomes

- Participants understand the process and procedures of counting of votes.
- Participants understand and appreciate the measures taken to ensure there is vote secrecy all through the vote counting process thus election results are accepted.



In this Chapter

- Counting procedure
- Secrecy
- Announcement of Results



Useful resources

- Vote Secrecy Video
- Secrecy Poster

An election can only be referred to as successful and credible when the outcome is generally and widely accepted by the voting population.



To have a free, fair and credible election and to protect and maintain the secrecy of votes is one of the cornerstones of democracy and the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) has taken administrative measures to ensure there is transparency, accountability and integrity in the voting and counting procedures and processes from the opening of poll to and inside counting centre.

Transportation of Ballot Papers

After the close of polling, the Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officers accompanied by Police Officers transport all sealed ballot boxes with unused election materials and stationery, to counting centres.

Counting Venue

Counting centres are usually located in the provincial headquarters. All ballot boxes throughout each province are taken to one location in the provincial headquarter. Police Officers will make sure all ballot boxes arrive safely and intact.

It is very important that votes are counted in a way that is fair and transparent. All candidates counting agents, police officers and observers must be able to view the counting operation to make sure that everything is done properly and in accordance with the law.

Counting of votes is done according to polling stations in a constituency. There is a counting tally sheet that also available and it is used to record the number of votes won by each candidate for each polling station.

Where there is access to a computer and projector, this tally sheet is set up to display a progressive report of counts electronically. Votes gained are entered and display for everyone's view as votes won by candidates accumulated from one polling station to the next.

Verification of Votes Cast

Before a ballot box seal is cut open, the Returning Officer inspects the condition of the ballot box and verifies the serial numbers on the seals of the ballot box against the record of security seal serial numbers that is recorded on a security seal serial number record form at the opening and closing of the poll.

The security seals are cut open and the ballot box is emptied. The Returning Officer then shows the empty ballot box for everyone to witness. Counting Officers sort out all the ballot papers according to each of the candidates.

Counting Procedures (Three Counts)

When the sorting is done, the Retuning Officer rejects informal votes which must also be witnessed by a police officer. Counting involves with three counts each by a different counting official. First count, second recount and third and final recount. This is to ensure there is no intentional miscounts, mistakes or omissions.

Votes won by candidates are either recorded on a counting tally sheet or enter onto an electronic tally sheet that displays on the screen projected to everyone's view.

Observers/Police Officers

Police Officers

Police Officers are also present at the counting centres. They provide security for counting officials and ensure that election materials are safe and secure. Police Officers play a significant role in vote verifying process which is required by the law.

Election Observers.

Election observers can be from international organisations, national organisations, local groups, communities or institution. They are an important stakeholder of the whole electoral cycle. Their work has a significant impact on the credibility of an election and future improvement in the conduct of elections. Observers' presence at the counting is to make sure that counting is done in a transparent manner and most importantly, that voters' votes remain secret ensuring secrecy.

Secrecy

Secrecy of voters' votes is one of the most fundamental principles of an electoral management and is protected under Solomon Islands law.

Solomon Islands Electoral Commission goes to great lengths to ensure that votes are at all times kept secret and secure. SIEC does this through a range of procedural measures that have been developed to protect the secrecy of votes.

- The translucent Ballot Box,
- Voting Screen
- Ballot paper serial number
- Security seals
- Administrative accounting forms



SHOW: Vote Secrecy Video

Declaration

Once a count is complete, The Returning Officer announces total and final votes counts for each candidate and would declare the candidate with the most votes as the winner. Results are then printed, signed and sent to the Governor General who officially publishes the results in the Government Gazette and makes an announcement in the media.

Storage and Destruction

All election confidential materials are packed inside each respective ballot box. All ballot boxes are sealed and stored safely and securely under the custody of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission awaiting any election petition. All these election materials are destroyed six months after the date of the election unless otherwise directed by the High Court.

Election Petitions

An Election Petition is a court appeal taken against any winning candidates or an Election Officials or an Electoral Staff for any allegation of misconduct or infringement of electoral laws or regulations that is in enforced in the country during a particular election in the course of performing their duty in relation to the election.

Election petitions must be presented to the Attorney General within one month of the publication of the election result for the constituency. Petition cases can only be heard in the High Court of Solomon Islands.

Activity 7 : “Mr. Ballot Paper Final Destination”

Activity Time:



45 mins

Resources :



Flash Cards/
Paper Cut Out



Scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

For this activity, the facilitator will write down what are the next stages of the ballot papers journey after the close of voting on a polling day.

Make sure it is readable from the furthest sitting position.

Give these to some of the participants and asked them to stand in front, in any order holding the cards high and visible.

Ask the rest of the group to re-arrange their standing position according to the correct order which they think Mr Ballot paper go.

The participants rearrange their standing position themselves.

After the session, give them the right order and then explain what happen at each stage highlighting areas that ensures vote’s secrecy and security.

Here is the correct order of Mr Ballot paper’s journey:

1. **Close of Poll**
2. **Transportation**
3. **Counting Centres**
4. **Verifications**
5. **Counting**
6. **Result announcement**
7. **Storage**
8. **Petitions**
9. **Destruction.**

If you have more time, doing it as a group work is effective.

Each group has to do the rearrangement and do a presentation explanation why they think it is in the order and what happen at each stage

CHAPTER

9

after elections





Learning outcomes

- Participants understand how Government is Formed
- Participants understand MPs duties
- Participants understand the importance of acceptance of results



In this Chapter

- o Formation of Government
- o Political Parties and Coalitions
- o Acceptance of Results and Peacebuilding
- o MPs duties



Useful resources

- PPC Update poster

One of the purposes of holding an election is to form a government. The winner in an election whether from a popular single party with majority winning candidates or through a party coalition who come together to form a government.

The winning candidates then nominate and vote for their leader of most likely a ruling party which is the prime minister who then must win an absolute majority (50% +1 vote).

Formation of Government

The Prime Minister is elected by Members of Parliament after a National General Election. As there are 50 Members of Parliament a candidate for Prime Minister needs the support of 26 MPs

The government is also constituted from among the Members of Parliament. MPs that support the Prime Minister form the government and some are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister as Ministers of the Crown.

The House must have 'confidence' in the Government for it to continue in office. This is known as 'responsible government'. The Government, also known as the Executive, is then responsible for the administration of the country.

A defeat for the Government on a vote in the House does not mean that the House has lost confidence in the Government. It simply means that there is insufficient support in the House for that proposal. This is particularly the case in relation to constitutional amendments which may require the support of two-thirds or three-quarters of all the members of Parliament. If however a particular vote is identified as a confidence issue, a lost vote could lead to another party or coalition forming a Government or the need for an election. Matters relating to 'supply' of public funds are always matters of confidence because without funds of public expenditure the Government cannot function.

Political Parties and Coalitions

Under the Political Parties Act, two or more parties can enter into a coalition to form government. It would require a decision by the membership of each of the parties. Coalitions can be formed before or after an election, but must be notified to the Registrar at least 20 days before an election, if the coalition is to take effect immediately after the election, e.g. for the election of the PM. A coalition formed after the election must be notified to the Registrar within 7 days.

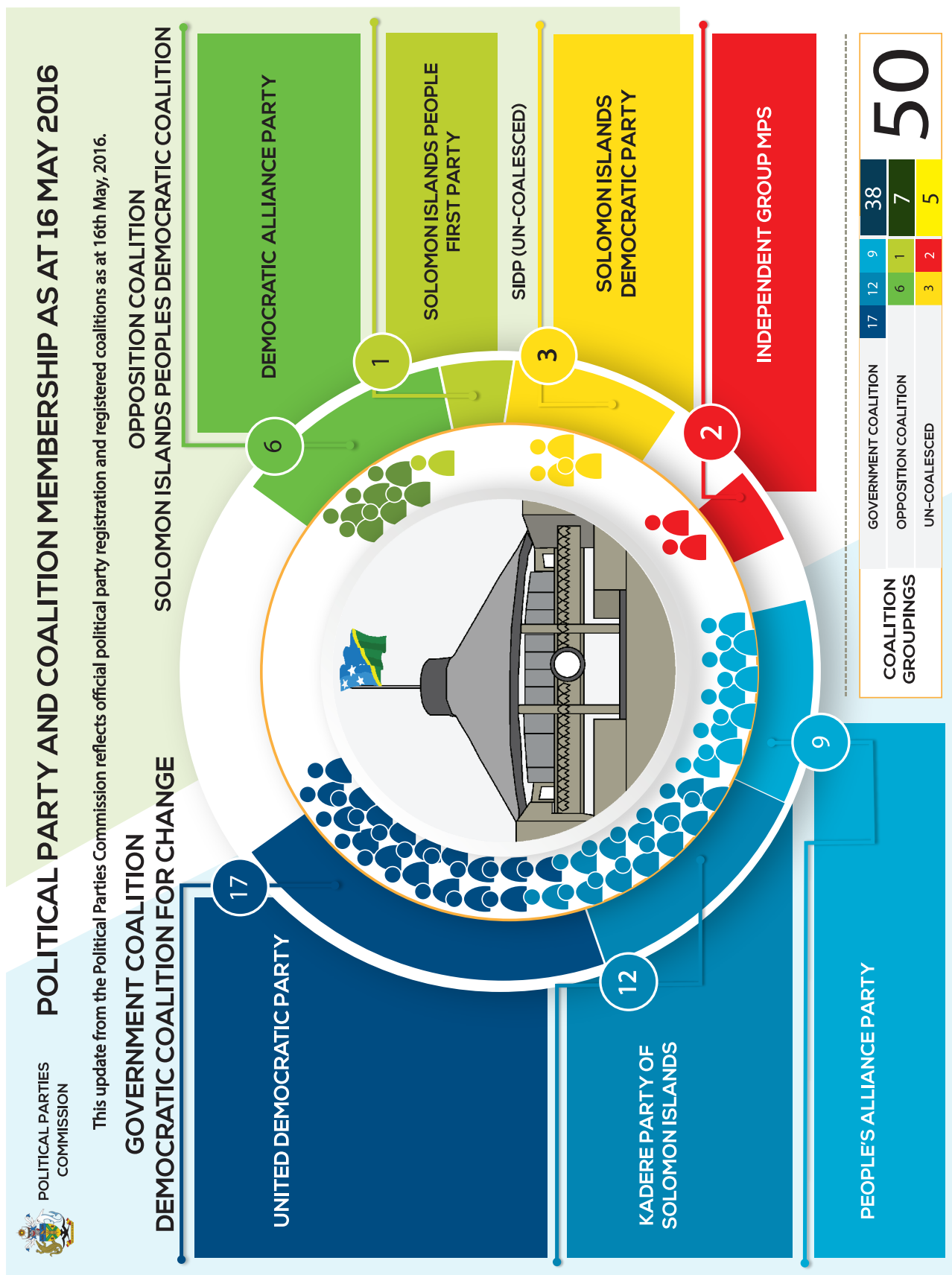
A diagram explaining political coalitions is included on the next page.

Acceptance of Results

Elections can be a very tense and divisive time for communities. Many people hold very passionate views about different leaders, leadership styles, policies and visions for the country/community. However, while these views are an important part of a vibrant democracy, it is important that after a credible election process, all people accept the result as the will of the people.

MPs Duties

After an election, it is the role of an MP to unify their constituency. That means representing all people in the constituency, not just the MPs supporters. All people have an equal right to representation, community benefits and government services. MPs have a responsibility to make sure that they do not show favouritism to supporters.



The Voter Awareness Program (VAP) Facilitators Manual is written by the Communication and Awareness team with assistance from the Training Unit at the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. It is beautifully designed and laid out by Millicent Designs.

It can be used or reprinted for wider distribution by any group or any person upon consultation and approval by the Solomon Islands electoral Commission.

This Voter Awareness Program (VAP) Facilitator’s Manual is designed for users who receive Voter Awareness Programs ‘train of facilitators’ training workshop from the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. The manual covers contents on the mechanic of voter registration and voting for the conduct of National General Election and some key information about governance in Solomon Islands governing institutions such political parties, National Parliament and the Electoral Commission.

It is important that users of this facilitators’ Manual do note that the contents of the manual are as the law as in its current with regards to the conduct of National General Election and any related activity and it may change from time to time as the law requires. Therefore it is crucial that users of this manual must make sure to confirm facts with Solomon Islands Electoral Commission before using its content.

