

14. ELECTION PLEDGES

MAKE ELECTIONS COUNT

IN A NUTSHELL

Politicians may be running for office – but they shouldn't be able to hide. During the lead-up to elections, candidates are in the spotlight and this is a good time to hold them accountable for their campaigning and election promises.

Election pledges, or signed promises, can be used to have your community stand for elections that are fair and free of corruption.

You can make election pledges happen in your community to raise awareness about the serious problem of vote buying and selling – a very common form of corruption during elections.

REMEMBER

Before getting started on planning, it's important to verify that this activity is in line with your national and local laws and to check what legal permits, if any, are required. You should also let your parents know what you have planned. If you're not permitted to carry out this task, please refer to our other youth activities.

HOW DO YOU SET IT UP?

- 1. Build a team:** Gather a reliable team of people who want to ensure this year's elections are clean and fair.
- 2. Define your objectives – be specific:** Identify the problems in this electoral environment (like vote buying) and your proposed solutions (promote the pledge to individual candidates or voters).
- 3. Get equipped:** Find out what resources are available to you and use them.
- 4. Start preparations:** Train staff and volunteers. Meet regularly.
- 5. Get to work!** Develop a campaign planner and timeline that everyone on the team can access.
- 6. Make a plan:** Decide how to talk to voters and how they can get in touch with you.
- 7. Make your pledge:** Write an election pledge for voters. You want to keep the language simple and concise, as well as making sure there are plenty of copies for voters so you don't run out. Be sure there's also space in the document for participants' signatures.
- 8. Spread the word:** Publicise the campaign and gather support before the launch. Then unveil the campaign!
- 9. Celebrate your success!** Write a brief report for a broad audience. Publicise the success of your programme through your networks – and even pitch the results to news outlets.

14. ELECTION PLEDGES

WHY DO IT?

- An election pledge is a simple and uncomplicated tool to raise awareness about corruption in elections.
- Election pledges also remind the community of their power to contribute to a clean election.

YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Be professional. Be credible. Follow through on the election pledge project to the end.
- Make a thorough plan, a feasible budget (including how you'll get money for printed materials), and a detailed schedule.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?

- Monitoring electoral processes can be extremely powerful, but depending on the level of sophistication, such processes usually require a lot of time and people. Be sure you have both.
- An election pledge may not deter people from selling and buying votes – even if it does raise awareness about the issue – because it is based on an honesty system. Consider following up with pledge signers to see if they honoured their promise.

IDEA IN ACTION

Solomon Islands: Clean Election Pledge

A group of young volunteers established the “Clean Election Campaign” in the Solomon Islands. Their approach was to gather voter pledges, each being a promise to not take part in corrupt activities during that year's election.

Their pledge states: “I pledge that I will reject all bribes. I will not accept any false promises. I will not sell my vote. I will not involve myself in any corrupt activities during, before and after the elections. And also I pledge that I will use my full conscience to decide on my vote and ask God to help me to decide my vote. And I pledge that I will only vote for an honest leader.”

What should a pledge in your country say?

Find out more: www.cauxforum.net/node/22741