



Interface Nord-Sud et forum d'échanges sur les questions de société et d'auto-développement

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Report of Training Workshop of Organisations within the Civil Society on Electoral Sensitization and Observation

Date: from the 8th to 10th September 2011

Lieu : Notre Dame De Perpétuel premises of Mbalmayo

SUPERVISED BY : PNUD, ONG HORIZONS FEMMES AND TRANSPARENCY INTER. CAMEROUN

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Training of Trainers in view of Electoral sensitization and observation.

EXPECTED RESULTS : 50 OCS notably those associations of persons with disabilities were trained.

PERSPECTIVES : The trained leaders will in turn train volunteers who will be deployed in the field during the elections. This phase will be supported by PNUD and TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL CAMEROUN. (After two training sessions this perspective shall be undertaken)

The day of 8th September 2011

The Workshop started a bit late at 9H : 37mins with the following :

- A Word of welcome from the Director of Transparency international Cameroun in the person of
- He later introduced Mr Simon pierre who outlined the objectives :
 - Train responsible Trainers ;
 - 100 trainers in two sessions 50 / group, one of which started yesterday and will be held from 8th to 12th and the second to be held from 12th to 14th September 2011 to restore them on the field for observation and sensitization;
 - To master the legal tools for observation in the electoral field.

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Presentation of the different participants and setting up some rules in order for the workshops to take place properly:

Switch off Phones or put them on vibration;
Raising hand to speak and speak only when authorized;
Be specific and concise;
Not to be self censored but respect one another.

- **Presentation of Sandrine Touko from Transparency International on the techniques of animation and the training of adults**

Through an explanatory table, a distinction is made on the fact that, referring to the child we talk about pedagogy while for adults is andragogy. Hence based on this distinction, we will know how to teach and adult or inculcate knowledge in him.

Pratice of andragogy : some tips and tricks as to recognize oneself as a learner/teacher, for example based on the experience of participants, giving a lot of examples, etc. ...

Some techniques: brainstorming, team work, visual communication.

Then, a trainer who will be a facilitator must have the following qualities: a good team management skill, a productive spirit, well organised ideas and good communication skills. He should have adaptable tools for the target population.

- **After the coffee break which took place at about 11H 30 mins then followed the presentation of Dr Alain Wandji on the actors of the electoral process**

Its objective was to identify the electoral actors and their respective roles. We were able to distinguish between institutional actors, whose missions benefit from a legal framework and non-institutional actors.

Five themes of reference were divided to five groups for a more participatory work.

- Theme 1 : Citizen and political party

The interveners were able to demonstrate that the citizen is a vital link in the electoral process and can intervene in several domains: voter, animator, facilitator, candidate etc.....

They then demonstrated the role of socialization and political training of political parties. A link of correlation was shown.

- Theme 2 : Elecam and the Constitutional Counsel

It is therefore a question of defining the responsibilities of these two actors, Elecam created by the law of 29 December 200.... composed of an electoral counsel of 18

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members in charge of control and supervision of elections and a general directorate of elections in charge of electoral logistics.

The Constitutional Counsel is an emanation of the constitution of 18 January 199.... made up of 11 members appointed for a six-year mandate. It is in charge of electoral disputes and the proclamation of results.

➤ Theme 3 : Media and Trade Unions

An overall classification of the media which are information vectors and trade unions which deal with conversion needs of their members in political aspiration through mobilizations, claims, training, etc.

The only danger for them is to let themselves be manipulated and sometimes to give in to partisan manipulation, so they must try to be impartial.

➤ Theme 4 : President of the Republic and Public Administration

It was decided that the President of the Republic promulgates the election laws and convene the electorate.

Public Administration in turn has diverse and varied roles such as Mincom is responsible for the distribution of airtime.

MINATD is responsible for security and serves as a relay as well as play the part of an intermediary.

➤ Theme 5 : Church, NGOs and International Community

The role of these actors in the electoral process has been highlighted by clarifying the high risks of influence hence; actors should be impartial so as not to influence voters.

Then followed module 3 presented by Mr Simon Peter in the absence of the electoral counsel (which was hindered).

It consisted of the presentation of the different phases of the electoral process in Cameroon: the pre-electoral and post electoral phases.

To a large extent, it should be noted that the success or failure of the electoral process is conditioned by the nature and quality of legal body.

As concerned Election observers, the Ministry of National Administration gives authorization to the Nationals observers while the Ministry of External Relations who gives them authorization to international observers.

After three hours of lectures, a lunch break was merited.

After this was the fourth module

- **The right of Women and Civic participation** presented by Prof. Thérèse Atangana Amougou

The presentation was much more focused on the gender issue to bring up some ambiguities.

So contrary to what is often seen, the equality often sought for is not a mathematical equality but equality of opportunity.

We noted that the Professor mastered her topic by giving concrete examples of the women who were present, hence the overall satisfaction of participants.

The exchanges were particularly interesting that many participants had a background on the issue, and this has allowed exchanges that enlightened the participants even more. It is about creating a collective and individual awareness, to work fundamentally for the welfare of families in gender complementarity.

Hence, **DEMOCRACY CONSOLIDATES WITH GENDER AND AS A CONSEQUENCE WITH MEN AND WOMEN !!!**

- Do not lose sight of the fact that **among one out of two men is a woman!!!**

The Day of 9th September 2011

The Workshop started at 9H00 with:

- **A Word of welcome from Mr Alain Blaise Batongué, a journalist of Quotidien Mutation**, who addressed the participants on the crucial role which the media play in the impartial and fair coverage of electoral processes.

His module enabled us to understand the effects of the media in electoral processes and the commitment of journalists who can sometimes play an impartial role especially when they are influenced.

Also copies of a document were distributed to participants for more edification.

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At the end of his presentation a series of questions/answers gave the participants a better understanding of the role played by journalists and the media in the electoral process.

After this was a 30 minutes coffee break. **Dr Joseph Oye of Sightsavers was absent, so his representative in the person of Mr Cyrille Evini presented on the theme : Taking into consideration persons with disabilities in the electoral process.**

It was therefore a question of him speaking on the issue of disability and encouraging persons with disabilities to take part in the electoral process.

The Coordinator of Fondation Kana was delegated to present the activity of sensitization of persons with disabilities for 10 minutes and this experience was shared with all the participants.

Some very important points were noted during the presentation of Mr Evini of SIGHTSAVERS

Analysis of the situation

- Persons with disabilities and their families and relationships are an important electoral pool,
- Many Persons with disabilities are not interested in politics,
- Marginalization of persons with disabilities in the electoral process: the lack of targeted strategies to facilitate their participation,
- physical and behavioral barriers to accessibility

What can OCS for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities?

- Promote the inclusion of positive actions related to the participation of persons with disabilities in politics, public life and in the programs of political parties,
- Target persons with disabilities who are often the marginalised group, in the framework of their participatory actions, support and monitoring of the electoral operations,
- Mobilise and support persons with disabilities to withdraw their voter's card and to effectively vote,
- Take special note of those to be integrated in the electoral process particularly the participation of persons with disabilities,
- Take into consideration the approach to disability in all operations and reports,
- Promote the representation of persons with disabilities at all level of the electoral process,
- Sensitize the authorities on the importance of ratifying the United Nations Convention relating to the Right of persons with disabilities,

Example of reasonable planning in the framework of the electoral process

- Accessible communication: giant prints, braille, audio, sign language ;
- Infrastructure planning: ramps, brightness, contrast, etc ;
- Height of the ballot boxes,
- Tactile ballot papers,
- Displacement facilities for persons with disabilities on the day of vote.

The issue of disability is of interest to every citizen and even if we do not wish to do anything for the latter, we could do it for ourselves because we must one day become one either through morphologic changes in our system as a result of age or through an accident.

After this was a lunch break followed by the presentation of **Mr Simon Pierre NANITELAMIO of PNUD** on the **International Norms with respect to the Electoral Process**.

He explained the implication of the different international partners and the United Nations in the supervision of the elections.

It was clear that the United Nation can take part in an electoral process if and only if the country in question solicits their presence.

He equally explained that Cameroon is one of the rare African country which auto-finance her elections.

The following points were highlighted:

➤ **Who are Electoral Observers?**

These are competent persons in electoral matters whose mission is to closely monitor the progress of the electoral process in a country **to ensure that it takes place in conditions of freedom, regularity and honesty which globally conforms to international norms and standards.**

- Election observation actually constitutes the application of current rules in the electoral process in various domains of life in the society. Indeed, in all countries, for the important acts of private and public life, a witness must not only authenticate the reality of the act, but also compliance with the standards that govern it.
- Regarding the elections, the election observer becomes the privileged official witness of the most important event in the democratic life of a country.
- It is noted that the cooperation of governments with election observation missions is generally accompanied by the cooperation of political parties involved in the

electoral battle, while the public opinion does not only admit the presence of election observers, but solicit for it more and more.

This presence is the guarantee for the voters of their choice and their protection against arbitrary, which is always possible from the government or political parties.

His presentation took place in an interactive manner so that each participant asked as many questions as possible and at the end; this training module was distributed to all participant for a better understanding.

The next speaker was **Dr Justice DIFFO, who elaborated on the electoral process in the Cameroonian context.**

She started by defining this: **Observation of Human Right in question ...**

- **Observation** consists of **assessing the electoral process in accordance with international principles that govern free and democratic elections and the legal system of the country where they take place, provided that, ultimately, it is the citizens that determine the credibility and legitimacy of an electoral process.**

The following remark was highlighted:

- A democratic election, that is to say transparent, open, fair and equitable, is that which takes full account of "human rights" in all phases of the electoral process: **before, during and after elections.**

Questions relating to human rights followed there after :

- **The parties, the candidates and militants, do they have equal security?**
- **Are the electors the right to freely vote without fear nor intimidation?**
- **Is the secret of scrutiny observed?**
- **La conduite de l'ensemble du scrutin a-t-elle été de nature à éviter les fraudes et les irrégularités ?**
- **Have all the major national actors publicly accepted to submit to the results of the elections?**
- **Moreover, is there an existing consensual charter of good electoral behaviour?**
- **What are the preoccupations of the international community?**

Just like the other facilitators, a question/answer session gave room to better understanding.

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And this was how this second day ended.

The day of 10th September 2011

The workshop started at 9H 00 with:

A review of the second day's activities was done and immediately after which **Pr Alain Didier OLINGA spoke to the participants on the management of electoral disputes in Cameroon:** critical state and perspectives with regards to peaceful elections and the respect of human rights.

It was a question of making an Environmental scan of the critical state of elections in Cameroon and give the various disputes that we can have during elections. Litigation in respect of abbreviations for parties, publication lists etc.

The presentation took more than two hours since it was edifying due to its relevance. As an observer it is important to master some possible rules.

For which concerns the practical observers which we suppose to be, then followed Mr Peter Essoka with a presentation on the behaviour of an observer. What is his role? What should he do on the day of vote? How should he behave? Who suppose to give him the authorization? and so on.

So an observer's guide was distributed with practical cases during the morning hours for the induction process to be complete.

This is how after two days about 50 OCS among which was Fondation Kana were trained for this first phase while waiting for an invitation from the organisers for the follow up of activities.