



Citizen's Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda

2012 -2013 ANNUAL REPORT

(BY THE CCEDU COORDINATION UNIT)



19th September, 2013: Democracy House, Nsambya - Kampala

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 19th August, 2013 CCEDU marked 4 years of existence; four years of work around the issue of electoral democracy in Uganda. Amidst the challenges that come along with spirited advocacy for genuine democracy, we continue to count – however small they may be, the achievements in the line of promoting transparency and integrity in the electoral democratic process in Uganda. We count these accomplishments with the broader, unwavering belief that collectively, there is more we can do to make and live our forefathers’ dream of a true democratic society.

Following the successful and impactful *‘Honour Your Vote’* nationwide voter education campaign ahead of the 2011 general elections; a number of pertinent issues regarding Uganda’s electoral process were identified. You will recall that, both local and international stakeholders who observed the 2011 elections highlighted the urgent need to deal with issues around the voters’ register; perceptions around the Electoral Commission, deployment of security agencies in elections and institutionalisation of a mechanism for transition especially at presidential level. I will remind you that the post-2011 election CCEDU convention that sat at Grand Imperial Hotel, Kampala on 7th April, 2011 pronounced itself on tailoring its program interventions to deal with those critical electoral issues as part of its 2011/16 CCEDU agenda.

For the reporting period 2012 – 2013, CCEDU undertook to broaden and strengthen the effectiveness of its electoral reform advocacy function, monitor electoral processes and build a robust coalition founded on its membership’s strength and resource.

Recognising that this was an uphill task, CCEDU as you will note, adopted a collaborative strategy together with various stakeholders to realise this agenda.

CCEDU has made deliberate efforts to collaborate with relevant non-state and state actors including: Electoral Commission of Uganda (EC), Parliament, Political Parties, Constitutional bodies such as the National Consultative Forum and Uganda Human Rights Commission; civil society organisations and the general public.

2.0 LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On May 24th, 2013, the membership meeting that sat agreed on a lean six (6) point agenda for the period 2012/13. The agenda covered the coalition's programmatic areas of interest as well as interventions around institutional building. Below are the actions that the coalition resolved to focus on during this reporting period:

2.1 *Programmatic agenda items:*

1. The Citizens' Electoral Reform Agenda (CERA) handbook that CCEDU had published in English be translated into four major vernacular languages – Luo, Luganda, Runyakitara and Ateso;
2. CCEDU popularises the reform proposals in the CERA in the Western, Eastern, Central and Northern regions;
3. CCEDU works with its media partners to convene media forums with a view of generating sustained public debate on key electoral reforms necessary before 2016;
4. CCEDU works with stakeholders including: Members of Parliament, the National Consultative Forum (NCF), individual political parties and the Electoral Commission (EC) to bring at least two of the CERA proposals on to the political and legislative agenda during this reporting period;
5. The coalition conducts local, regional and continental election observation missions with a view of collecting experiences to inform a potential 2016 general election observation exercise as well as generating content to strengthen CCEDU's electoral reform advocacy efforts.

2.2 *Institutional development agenda:*

6. CCEDU committed itself to building a strong and pro-active coalition of members able to support the CERA and implement electoral activities 2012/13.

3.0 Progress on the implementation of the six (6) point agenda 2012/13:

3.1 *Translation and printing of the CERA handbook*

In line with agenda item one (1), CCEDU through a competitive bidding process procured the services of **Harambe Girls Forum** to translate the English version of the CERA handbook into four major vernacular languages – Luo, Luganda, Runyakitara and Ateso. CCEDU printed 500 copies of each in the four local languages. A total of 2,000 copies were produced.

3.2 CCEDU goes regional with the CERA handbook

Runyakitara version

In June, 2012, CCEDU embarked on a nation-wide campaign to launch the Citizens' Electoral Reform Agenda (CERA) in the regions. CCEDU held a forum in Hoima, Bunyoro region to launch the Runyakitara version of the CERA Handbook on 16th June, 2012. This forum attracted one Member of Parliament, Tophas Kaahwa Byagira, over twenty district local councillors as well as over two hundred members of the public from Hoima, Masindi and Kibaale districts. In Bunyoro, the CERA agenda was launched by Commissioner Justine Mugabi of the Electoral Commission. Opinion leaders including: Bishop Zac Niringiye, Laywer Nicholas Opio and members of civil society reiterated the urgent need for electoral reform.

Ateso version

CCEDU launched the Ateso version of the Citizens Electoral Reform Agenda (CERA) in Ngora district on 1st October, 2012. Electoral Commission's Commissioner Stephen Ongaria pledged to continue collaborating with CCEDU, Parliament and the public to ensure that Uganda enjoys a cleaner, fairer and more effective electoral process come 2016 when the country goes to the general polls. Minister of State for Teso Affairs, Hon. Amongin Aporu Christine called upon citizens to mount pressure on their respective MPs to debate and pass the proposals there in.

Luo and Luganda versions

Between May and September, 2012 CCEDU also publicised the Luo and Luganda CERA versions in the North and Central regions respectively. CCEDU leveraged from membership driven specific actions such as the campaign on the restoration of presidential term limits to headline the rest of the reform issues in the CERA. Town hall meetings held in Gulu and Luwero during this period spoke to the CERA proposals and enlisted the public's comments and support.

Results of the CERA regional launches

Beyond popularising and enlisting the public's support for the CERA, the regional forums provided a platform through which members of the public questioned political leaders on a range of issues including electoral irregularities, service delivery and state responsiveness. Political leaders took advantage of the campaign to pledge improvements in the electoral process.

3.3 CCEDU convenes Media Forums to Popularize Key Electoral Reforms

In line with agenda point number 3; CCEDU convened six (6) media forums aimed at attracting media and stakeholder attention to selected electoral issues as well as generating sustained public debate on electoral reform during the reporting period. The initial media forum held on 11th June, 2013 brought together members of the media, MPs, and civil society leaders to discuss the CERA agenda. Throughout the media briefings, the proposal to reinstate term limits attracted a cross-section of interest groups including Members of Parliament, religious leaders and media practitioners. In subsequent CCEDU engagements many of the MPs from across the political divide pronounced themselves in support of the electoral reform campaign with specific focus on the proposal to restore term limits in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda.

Result of the media forums

The forums provided a window for CCEDU to consistently articulate and amplify the CERA proposals in the public domain as well as to actively broaden the debate on electoral reform beyond the framework of policy makers.

3.4 CCEDU Engages Stakeholders on the CERA

The Friends of CERA Parliamentary Forum

In line with agenda item number four (4) as agreed upon in the last membership meeting, CCEDU has strengthened its institutional relationship with the Parliament of Uganda. In this period, CCEDU identified and activated a *Friends of CERA* MPs group as a strategy of popularising the CERA within Parliament. *Friends of CERA* is a network of thirty (30) individual MPs who are keen on electoral reform debate. In this reporting period, CCEDU held over eight (8) interfaces with the *Friends of CERA*, beyond the advocacy nature of the meetings, the forums also generated ideas on how to translate the CERA into actual electoral amendments.

Result

We are pleased to report that in this period, the *Friends of CERA* together with CCEDU's Electoral Reform Taskforce were able to draft a motion and a Private Members Bill in respect of the reinstatement of presidential term limits in the Constitution.

4.0 CCEDU reactivates the Electoral Reform Taskforce

CCEDU reactivated the Electoral Reform Task force with the purpose of engaging Members of Parliament, the National Consultative Forum (NCF), individual political parties and the Electoral Commission (EC) on the CERA proposals. With effect from June 2013, the Electoral Reform Taskforce launched a campaign to aggressively market the CERA to various policy making institutions. On June 14th 2013, the ERTF met with the IPOD Council of Secretary Generals to introduce the CERA but also to discuss modalities of potential collaboration.

On 5th July, 2013 the ERTF convened a highly interactive multi-stakeholder meeting on electoral reforms – specifically on the need to reform or not to reform Uganda’s Electoral Commission ahead of the 2016 elections. The meeting attracted over 85 participants; Members of Parliament, representatives from civil society organizations, the media, the electoral commission and the students’ fraternity. The overwhelming arguments for the reform of the electoral commission and advocacy for other complimentary reforms were an indicator of mass support by the public to the CCEDU electoral reform advocacy campaign.

In the same spirit, the taskforce has lined up meetings with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, First Parliamentary Council, Human Rights Committee and other relevant bodies. These meetings are intended to push for key electoral amendments proposed in the CERA and in the Electoral Commission’s 2012/2016 Strategic Plan.

In order to strengthen the ERTF’s advocacy and lobbying function, CCEDU invested in research on specific electoral reform areas. CCEDU put together a briefing paper on the reinstatement of presidential term limits. The paper was used as a point of reference by the ERTF and the Friends of CERA as they drafted the bill on the restoration of presidential term limits. CCEDU is currently developing a working paper on the Independence of the Electoral Commission.

Result

CCEDU is developing a model law for an Independent Electoral Commission. The draft bill is set to be unveiled in a few weeks.

5.0 Electoral Observer Missions

CCEDU observes post 2011 By-Elections

Consistent with agenda point number five (5); CCEDU has since 2012 monitored nine (9) local MP by-elections in the following constituencies:

No.	Name of Constituency	Position	Date	CCEDU Observers
1	Bushenyi-Ishaka Municipality	MP	12 th June, 2012	10
2	Bukoto South	MP	12 th July, 2012	10
3	Kasese District	Woman MP	8 th August, 2012	37
4	Usuk County	MP	12 th September, 2012	10
5	Butambala	MP	12 th September, 2012	20
6	Kween County	MP	29 th November, 2012	24
7	Kamuli District	LC V	29 th November, 2012	23
8	Butaleja District	Woman MP	11 th February, 2013	43
9	Butebo County	MP	6 th June, 2013	24

In almost all by-elections monitored in this period, CCEDU noted an overall improvement in the administration and management of elections. In many instances, the Electoral Commission publicised the polling dates but also integrated a hotline for electoral complaints to be directed during the by-elections. Although there remains registration challenges such as missing names, photos and instances of multiple registration of voters, the responsiveness of the EC's complaints centre was able to mitigate the overall negative impact that such glitches could have had on the elections.

Throughout the by-elections monitored during the reporting period, CCEDU observers noted the increasing deployment of un-uniformed and unidentified security personnel at polling stations. Although these civilian dressed operatives did not seem to directly interfere with the voting process, they at most polling stations took on the role of questioning the credentials of election observers and/or party agents as well as organising queues of the voters. CCEDU consistently raised a red flag to this occurrence through the several post-by-election reporting meetings that it held with the EC. If this occurrence persists, such deployment of unidentified detectives is likely to draw anxiety from voters in subsequent elections. CCEDU will continue to call upon the EC and the Uganda Police Force to adhere to

the electoral laws of Uganda while managing election security especially as we draw closer to the 2016 general election.

Results of observing by-elections:

CCEDU utilised the by-election observation exercises as a training grounds for potential observers for the 2016 general elections. 201 members of CCEDU took part in the different by-election observation missions.

The by-election reports were distributed to various stakeholders including: the Electoral Commission, media, political parties and other civil society partners. CCEDU plans to share its election observation reports with other active stakeholders such as: the Uganda Police Force, and the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) given their prominent role in election management.

Regional Election Study Visits

CCEDU monitored and observed electoral processes in other African countries with a view of promoting exchange learning on best practices around electoral management.

The table below shows the four (4) regional elections which CCEDU monitored:

No.	Country	Nature of election	Date	Number of Observers	Sponsor
1	Sierra Leon	General election	17 th November, 2012	1	African Union
2	Ghana	General election	7 th December, 2012	4	USAID
3	Kenya	General election	4 th March, 2013	10	USAID
4	Zimbabwe	General election	30 th July, 2013	4	DGF

Results

Beyond documenting best practices in the management of electoral processes, CCEDU now boasts of formal partnerships with continental institutions like: the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) in Ghana; Election Observers Group (ELOG) in Kenya; and the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network (ZESN). CCEDU intends to exploit such partnerships to find solutions to "front-burner" electoral issues common in emerging democracies, share know-how, and develop specific technical skills to improve election-related programs.

From the comparative experiences drawn from this process, CCEDU has documented the emerging forms of electoral malpractices (E-rigging) as well as made technical recommendations on measures to deal with such practices (E-observation).

6.0 *Institutional Development:*

Office premises and staffing

In line with recommendation number six (6), CCEDU undertook to set up a fully-fledged secretariat and build a strong and active membership. During the reporting period, CCEDU has rented and furnished office premises (Democracy House, Plot 1111 Lulume Road, Nsambya, Kampala); hired four (4) permanent secretariat members (Coordinator, Head of Research and Advocacy, and two Project Associates); CCEDU has two volunteers.

Membership database and SMS Platform:

CCEDU is currently working on setting up a computerised membership database of all its 7,000+ members across the country and also establishing an SMS platform for its members. The platform is envisaged as a 2-way value added SMS facility that should facilitate regular communication with the CCEDU membership. The platform will carry a system that is able to send and receive messages. CCEDU anticipates that such a platform will improve membership information and communication for electoral advocacy participation.

Partnerships:

At institutional level, CCEDU has continued to strengthen its traditional linkages with media practitioners and institutions. As a result, CCEDU has in this reporting period been able to maintain a competitive presence in print and electronic media. CCEDU moved on to establish a website (www.ccedu.org.ug) and a facebook page (www.facebook.com/cceduganda).

The Electoral Commission (EC) has remained CCEDU's strong partner. As a line agency too, our institutional relationship with the EC has grown stronger over the years. Our points of convergence have been through our common desire to improve electoral processes in Uganda as well as our policy of constructive engagement.

Funding:

During the reporting period, CCEDU received financial, technical and in-kind support from various development partners. Please allow me extend my word of appreciation to the following partners:

- Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) – our main funding partners;
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID);
- African Union (Democracy and Elections Assistance Unit); and
- The Electoral Commission of Uganda (EC).

Looking Forward:

- In the current political context, how do we build a robust, effective coalition able to consistently command a strong voice on electoral issues?
- How can CCEDU overcome the several structural disincentives that curtail civic engagement with political and governmental actors?

Conclusion:

As I conclude, let me take this opportunity to remind members that the goal of CCEDU is to ensure integrity in Uganda's electoral process. This goal can only be realized through the collective effort of the CCEDU membership and the relevant stakeholders. With this in mind, it is our humble request that this meeting reflects on, and proposes concrete 2013/14 agenda points. We call upon members to support the CCEDU interventions at every level especially as we get closer to the 2016 general elections.

I thank you very much.