



REGIONAL VOTER EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM REPORT

Compiled by: Fidelis Leadership Institute (FLI)

Funded By: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)

Training Period: 10th – 20th November 2025

Districts Covered: Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara, Jinja, Arua, Gulu

Total Participants: 218

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Executive Summary

The Regional Voter Education Training Program conducted between 10th and 20th November 2025 was a coordinated civic education intervention implemented by Fidelis Leadership Institute (FLI) in partnership with the Electoral Commission (EC) and supported by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). The purpose of the training was to strengthen civic competence, build grassroots understanding of electoral processes, and enhance the readiness of citizens for the upcoming 2025/2026 electoral cycle.

The program reached 218 participants across six strategic districts, including Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara, Jinja, Arua, and Gulu. Participants represented a broad demographic: youth leaders, women's groups, civil society organizations, religious and cultural leaders, boda-boda associations, students, local council authorities, business leaders, and media practitioners. These groups collectively represent the most influential voices in community decision-making and voter mobilization.

The training content included practical demonstrations of polling procedures, the legal framework governing elections, campaign ethics, the roles of stakeholders, tallying procedures, election offences, conflict management, media responsibility, and community mobilization. Interactive sessions, scenario-based demonstrations, and moderated dialogues were used to ensure contextual and practical learning.

Across regions, the program achieved significant impact:

- 92% of participants reported improved understanding of the role of the EC and lawful electoral processes.
- 87% expressed confidence in their ability to educate their communities.
- 90% gained clarity on election offences and penalties.
- 100% committed to serving as ambassadors of peaceful participation.
- Regional radio and print media coverage extended the message to an estimated 300,000+ citizens.

The report integrates detailed district-level observations, participant feedback, and realistic recommendations tailored to the needs of communities. It concludes that Uganda's civic environment is better prepared for the forthcoming elections but emphasizes the need for sustained follow-up, targeted outreach, vernacular translations, and strengthened partnerships between EC, FLI, and local leaders.

Background

Our “Why” And “What We Do”

Uganda’s democratic processes rely heavily on effective civic education, which remains the cornerstone of meaningful participation. Despite national efforts, many communities continue to struggle with persistent misinformation, unclear understanding of electoral procedures, and limited access to accurate and timely information.

The youth who constitute the majority of the voting population often experience disillusionment with governance structures, leading to voter apathy or susceptibility to manipulation.

Against this backdrop, the Regional Voter Education Program was designed to close these gaps by delivering factual, practical, and citizen-friendly electoral information.

The program strategically targeted six districts across different regions to ensure geographical, demographic, and cultural diversity. This approach facilitated tailored sessions that addressed region-specific challenges, stakeholder dynamics, social attitudes, and historical contexts.

The initiative builds on FLI’s larger mandate of promoting ethical, informed leadership and complements EC’s constitutional duty to deliver free and fair elections. With the support of KAS, the program embodied international standards of civic empowerment, public accountability, and citizen participation.

FIDELIS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (FLI): BACKGROUND & ROLE.

FLI is a leadership development organization committed to nurturing ethical, value-based, and informed leaders across Uganda. Its programs address governance, civic education, conflict resolution, leadership training, and community transformation.

Its philosophy of Faithfulness, Availability, and Teachability (F.A.T.) has positioned it as a trusted civic education partner for government agencies, civil society, universities, youth organizations, and international donors.

Role in the Program

FLI served as the lead implementer, responsible for:

- Designing a standardized civic curriculum aligned with EC's electoral guidelines.
- Facilitating sessions across districts on campaign ethics, civic responsibilities, and election offences.
- Mobilizing stakeholders at regional and district levels.
- Leading scenario-based demonstrations and reflective dialogues.
- Documenting findings, participant commitments, and lessons learned.
- Producing this consolidated national report.

FLI's involvement ensured consistency, neutrality, and accessibility of electoral information across diverse communities.

ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF UGANDA (EC).

The Electoral Commission provided technical and procedural authority throughout the training program. Their participation ensured that communities received verified, up-to-date information based on existing laws, regulations, and upcoming electoral guidelines.

EC's Contributions.

- Led detailed explanations of polling-day procedures, including voter verification, ballot issuance, and counting.
- Provided clarifications on the responsibilities of returning officers, presiding officers, and polling assistants.
- Explained complaint-handling processes and legal remedies available to citizens.
- Addressed district-specific misinformation through Q&A sessions.
- Reinforced the importance of lawful participation and adherence to electoral guidelines.
- Their presence greatly enhanced credibility and fostered trust between citizens and electoral institutions.

ROLE OF KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG. (KAS)

KAS is a German foundation dedicated to promoting democracy, good governance, constitutionalism, and participatory politics. Through its commitment to empowering citizens and strengthening institutions, KAS supported this training as part of its broader mandate in Uganda.

KAS's Contributions:

- Provided financial support that enabled district mobilization, training logistics, and facilitator deployment.
- Ensured that the content remained non-partisan, inclusive, and aligned with democratic principles.

KAS's involvement elevated the program's structure, impact, and sustainability.

Methodology

The training used a participatory, experiential methodology that included:

Training Tools & Approaches:

- Presentations on electoral laws, polling procedures, and campaign ethics.
- Demonstrations of polling-day processes, including setting up of a mock polling station.
- Scenario-based role plays to simulate complaints, conflict incidents, and tallying scenarios.
- Group discussions allowing participants to contextualize learning using local examples.
- Open forums for Q&A with EC officials.
- Reflection sessions capturing lessons, fears, and areas requiring clarity.

Materials Provided:

- Voter education manuals
- Simplified polling flow charts
- Flyers on election offences
- Stakeholder role summaries
- Civic pledge cards
- Reflectors

District-By-District Findings And Detailed Analysis

MASAKA DISTRICT

Participants: 40 (27 women, 13 men)

Focus areas

In Masaka the training prioritized:

- a. A practical walkthrough of the polling-day sequence from registration to counting, with live role-plays to demystify the process for first-time voters.
- b. The roles and legal mandates of different stakeholders — electoral commission, security agencies, local council leaders and media — explained through locally relevant scenarios.
- c. Developing a “change-agent” mindset among students, equipping them with communication scripts and community mobilization tactics; and
- d. Media engagement strategies so community spokespeople can channel accurate electoral information through radio 8 and other local outlets. Emphasis was placed on translating technical procedures into everyday language so participants could confidently guide peers.

Achievements

The Masaka session yielded several measurable and behavioural outcomes. First, participants reported, and demonstrated during plenary, a markedly clearer comprehension of the polling flow: in a facilitated exercise, groups successfully simulated the sequence of voter identification, ballot issuance and ballot deposition with minimal prompting — evidence of practical learning.

Second, the training seeded a peer-mobilization plan: student participants drafted short action plans committing to hold three campus briefings each in the following month, identifying specific dates and liaison persons — a concrete output showing intent to cascade knowledge.

Challenges

Masaka's principal challenges were twofold. First, entrenched misinformation: prior to the training several participants expressed beliefs about unlawful or informal voting practices (e.g., multiple voting myths and fake tallying procedures) that required careful unpicking; these misconceptions are symptomatic of low baseline civic literacy and create vulnerability to manipulation. Second, language and reach limits: while the session succeeded with students and media, rural communities in surrounding parishes lack access to the same content in Luganda or vernacular formats, limiting scalability. Logistically, the one-day timeframe constrained opportunities for deeper legal examinations or small-group practice with older community.

Recommendations

- i. Localized follow-up workshops; organize half-day community sessions in three surrounding parishes using trained student cluster leads; translate materials into Luganda and deploy district language volunteers.
- ii. Peer trainer support pack ; provide each student cluster lead with a tool-pack (one-page polling checklists, myth-busting flyers, sample community mobilization script) and a small mobilization stipend to convene campus briefings.
- iii. Monitoring & mentorship; assign an FLI regional coordinator to mentor cluster leads for the first two months, tracking outputs and offering on-call support for difficult questions.

MBALE DISTRICT

Participants: 48 (21 women, 27 men)

Focus areas

Mbale's program emphasized

- a. A legal and procedural deep-dive into the ec's mandate voter registration, voter register maintenance, complaint handling and result declaration;
- b. Election-day conduct with an emphasis on lawful security engagement and non-interference;
- c. The role of cultural and community leaders in shaping civic norms; and
- d. Practical steps to "guard the vote" lawfully without obstructing ec processes. The training integrated sample complaint reporting flows and role plays involving local leaders to show how peaceful mediation can be mobilized during disputes.

Achievements

Participants in Mbale exhibited improved technical knowledge and procedural confidence. Notably, district local council leaders developed a draft memorandum outlining cooperation protocols with the EC and security agencies for the upcoming electoral period a practical governance tool that can streamline roles and minimize friction. Several community radio producers present committed to rebroadcast EC Q&A segments in evenings to reach working audiences.

Additionally, participants reported intention to form "voter protection committees" at parish level a clear sign of institutionalizing learning into local structures. Post-training feedback showed strong increases in self-reported confidence to report irregularities properly and refrain from vigilantism.

Challenges

Despite gains, Mbale faced resource and accessibility challenges. First, attendees repeatedly raised the need for materials in Lumasaba/Lugisu to reach peri-urban and rural listeners. Second, the time allocated to complaint handling demonstration did not permit thorough practice of realistic dispute scenarios; participants sought more role-playing on escalation paths and evidence gathering.

1. Translate materials into Lumasaba and distribute simplified complaint flow charts to LC offices and parish clerks.
2. Complaint practice clinics; schedule two practical clinics where participants simulate complaint filing, evidence documentation, and EC follow-up, facilitated jointly by EC officers and FLI trainers.
3. Parish focal point kit; supply 10 nominated “voter protection” focal persons with mobile credit, complaint forms, and referral contact lists to ensure rapid, documented reporting.
4. Transport support for remote participants; for future sessions, reserve a small transport stipend fund to guarantee timely arrival of key rural leaders.

MBARARA CITY

Participants: rcc, returning officer, university students (bsu, must), advocates, media, csos

Focus areas:

- a. Mbarara's session placed heavier emphasis on
- b. Electoral offenses and their legal penalties, explained by legal practitioners;
- c. The full polling cadence with emphasis on tallying, chain of custody for ballots, and post-poll reconciliation;
- d. Campaign conduct and finance basics so voters can identify illicit inducement; and
- e. Civic leadership; guiding students and local advocates on how to mobilize issue-based campaigns rather than personality-based mobilization.

Achievements

The quality of discourse in Mbarara stands out: legal practitioners translated penal provisions into practical examples, enabling participants to appreciate real legal exposure for offences such as personation and ballot tampering. This translated into a shift in attitude several student leaders pledged to repudiate vote-buying and to monitor campaign conduct proactively. The Returning Officer present confirmed that a liaison group would be formed with university administrations to coordinate voter registration drives, demonstrating institutional follow-through. The session also initiated a "campus civic code," a drafted set of behavioral expectations for student political activity to minimize violence and intimidation during campaigns.

Challenges

Mbarara's primary challenges include persistent myths about tallying and a demand for deeper legal literacy participants asked for written legal briefs and plain-English summaries of offences and sanctions. The university environment also raises the risk of politicized student groups; organizers noted the need to insulate civic education from partisan influences.



Recommendations

1. Produce plain-language legal briefs on election offences with Q&A for distribution in universities.

2. Campus Civic Code roll-out ; equip student leaders with facilitation training and a monitoring process to report violations without reprisals.

3. Sustained legal literacy series; organize monthly short clinics where a legal counsel answers campus questions on voter education.

JINJA DISTRICT

Participants: 40 (10 women, 30 men)

Focus areas

Jinja's agenda centered on

- a. Campaign Ethics Acceptable Campaign Behaviour, Candidate Rights, And Voters' Responsibilities.
- b. The Ec's Role And How Citizens Can Use Official Channels To Query Processes.
- c. How To Handle Campaign Disputes Non-Violently And
- d. The Importance Of Recording And Evidence Gathering When Witnessing Offences.

Achievements

Participants left Jinja with practical, replicable knowledge. Several community leaders committed to convening multi-stakeholder pre-campaign roundtables to set ground rules for conduct within their subcounties. Media houses represented at the training committed to running neutral, issue-focused profiles on candidates rather than sensationalized personality pieces. The training improved participants' appreciation for evidence — several attendees noted they would adopt simple documentation practices to support future complaints.

Challenges

Key barriers included a noticeable deficit in continuous engagement: participants requested that trainings not be “one-off” events given the complexity of campaign dynamics. Additionally, pervasive youth disengagement driven by disillusionment with politics means messaging must be reframed to show tangible links between electoral choices and service delivery.

Recommendations

1.Pre-campaign stakeholder roundtables; facilitate community roundtables prior to nomination and campaigning to agree on rules of engagement.

2.Youth re-engagement strategy; create targeted campaigns that highlight local service delivery outcomes tied to electoral promises to show the practical impact of voting.

ARUA DISTRICT

Participants: 30+ community leaders, youth, CSOs
Focus areas

In Arua, trainers stressed

- a. The civic value of cultural institutions in shaping peaceful electoral culture
- b. The mechanics of polling and tallying with practical examples to reduce suspicion
- c. The role of local leaders in dispute prevention and community reconciliation; and
- d. The need for localized, vernacular civic messaging to counter rumor networks.

Achievements

The training catalyzed notable community ownership. Cultural leaders openly committed to using traditional gatherings and radio call-in shows to disseminate non-partisan voter information. Several youth groups committed to running voter registration drives coupled with peace pledges. The cultural leader participation was especially important: their endorsement contributes to social norm shifts and legitimizes civic messages in their communities.

Challenges

Arua's environment is politically sensitive; historical tensions meant some participants were wary of open discussion. Rumor networks and informal talk shows on local stations frequently spread unverified claims undermining trust. Language diversity also requires multiple translations and culturally resonant messaging styles, increasing preparation complexity. There were also logistical difficulties in ensuring remote border communities had access to the training materials.

Recommendations

1. Cultural leader partnership framework; formalize agreements with cultural institutions to include civic messages in traditional forums and ceremonies.
2. Multi-lingual content production; produce short audio spots in Lugbara and other local languages for broadcast and distribution via mobile phones.
3. Community rumor rapid response; establish a simple rumor-tracking mechanism with radio producers and community focal points to verify, debunk, and re-broadcast correct information quickly.

GULU DISTRICT

Participants: 35+ youth groups, women's groups, business community, local leaders
Focus areas

Gulu's session emphasized:

- a. The importance of youth leadership as custodians of non-violent participation
- b. The technical steps of polling and tallying
- c. Identifying and reporting election offences and
- d. Integrating psycho-social considerations into civic education in post-conflict contexts to prevent escalation.

Achievements

Gulu produced both attitudinal and procedural gains. Youth representatives committed to establishing civic clubs in secondary schools and colleges to sustain the message. Participants demonstrated increased ability to distinguish between lawful observation and unlawful interference during polling — an important nuance in high-tension areas. The training also produced partnerships with local civil society groups to jointly monitor social media for misinformation and develop counter-messaging. Importantly, participants requested and secured a follow-up peacebuilding session to pair civic knowledge with conflict-de-escalation skills.

Challenges

Given Gulu's post-conflict context, emotional and historical grievances occasionally colored discussions; some attendees required time and skillful facilitation to move from anecdote to constructive action. There is also limited civilian capacity to monitor online misinformation and a shortage of digital literacy among older community members, which reduces the reach of online civic materials. Finally, resource constraints make it harder for follow-up activities to be resourced by local CSOs without additional funding.

Recommendations

1. Integrate peacebuilding modules with civic education so participants can apply de-escalation techniques in election contexts.

2. Digital literacy & social media monitoring training for youth monitors combined with simple reporting templates.

CROSS-REGIONAL SYNTHESIS ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES & PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS.

Across the six regions the program achieved a set of durable outcomes:

- Operational knowledge translated into practice. Training moved beyond abstract talk: participants successfully simulated polling procedures and complaint flows, drafted local action plans, and established concrete media linkages. This demonstrates not only comprehension but the ability to operationalize learning.
- Youth empowerment and leadership pipelines. Student clusters, campus civic codes, and school civic clubs were agreed upon at several sites, showing that the program seeded leadership structures which can sustain voter education beyond the one-day events.
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder collaboration. The trainings created new working relationships between EC, security agencies, CSOs and local leaders, reducing the institutional friction that often exacerbates electoral confusion.
- Media amplification. Stations across the regions committed airtime or re-broadcast rights, significantly increasing the reach of accurate electoral information to populations that rely on radio as their principal news source.

Cross-regional Challenges.

Several systemic barriers were common across districts and require coordinated solutions:

- Misinformation is pervasive and adaptive. False narratives were encountered in every district; they spread quickly through social and traditional media and are often more emotionally resonant than dry technical facts. Misinformation undermines trust and motivates behaviours (e.g., boycotts, vigilantism) that can destabilize polls.
- Language and accessibility gaps. English and central dialect materials do not reach many rural citizens. Without translations and vernacular content tailored to local idioms, training gains remain largely confined to towns and educated populations.
- Time constraints and depth of content. One-day workshops are effective for orientation but insufficient for deeper legal literacy, sustained behaviour change and confidence building to report offences. Participants repeatedly asked for follow-ups and practical clinics.
- Political sensitivity and safety. In some areas political tensions constrained open dialogue; facilitators had to carefully manage debates to avoid escalation, underlining the need for skilled, neutral moderators and safety protocols.



CONCLUSION

The Regional Voter Education Program significantly enhanced civic literacy, strengthened stakeholder collaboration, and empowered local communities across six regions in Uganda. Through a well-coordinated partnership between FLI, EC, and KAS, citizens gained the necessary knowledge and confidence to meaningfully participate in electoral processes. The program has laid a strong foundation for peaceful, informed, and accountable participation in the upcoming 2025/2026 elections.

Continued investment in follow-up trainings, vernacular materials, media partnerships, and youth mobilization will ensure long-term sustainability and wider impact across Uganda's communities.

Gallery









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