



# **Inclusive Electoral Literacy: Informal Education Channels**

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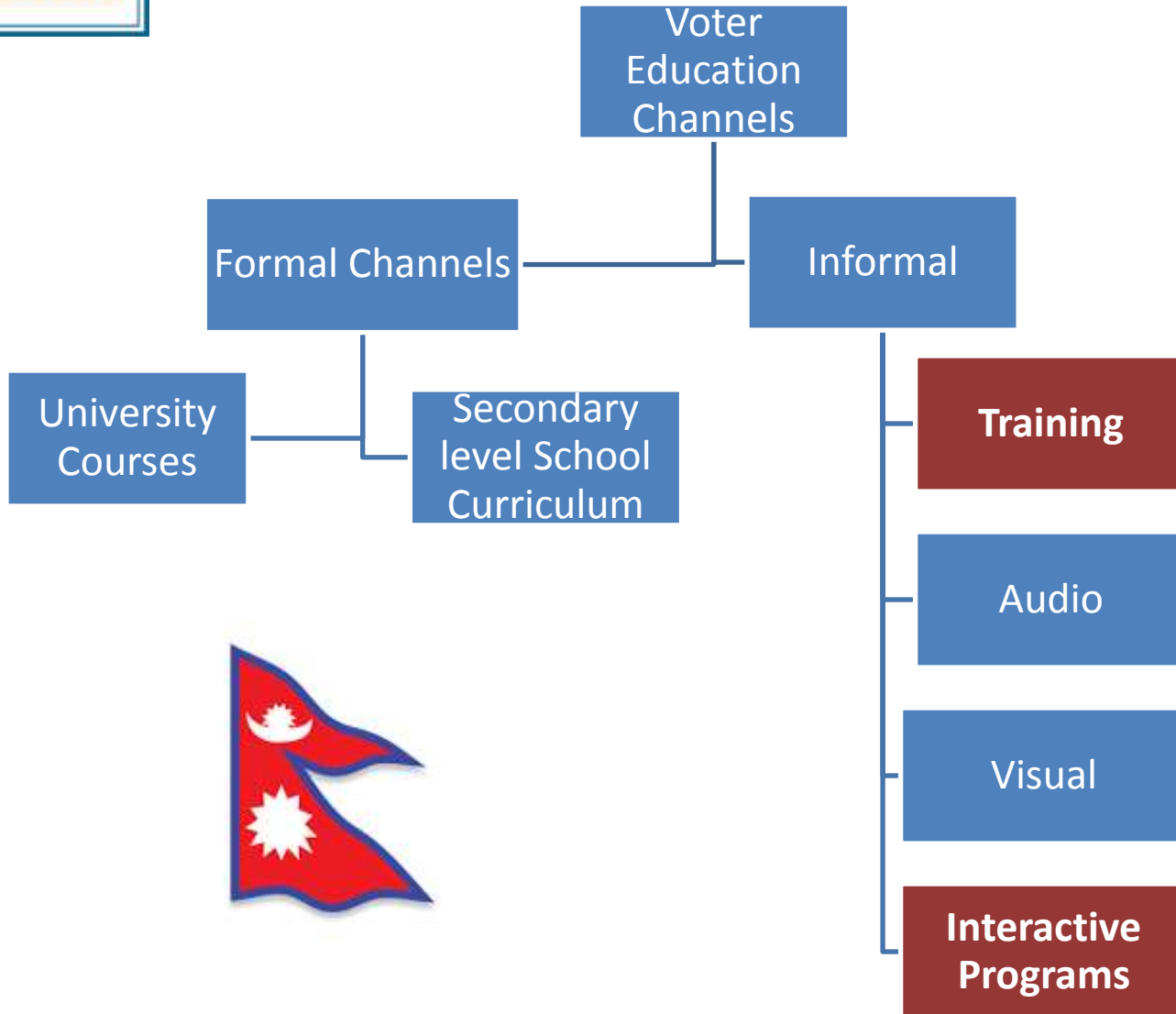
# Why voter education matters



- A failed experiment
  - Lack of understanding = lack of confidence
  - Lack of confidence = lack of smooth democratic transition
- Lesson?
  - It's not enough for the government or a select group of experts (albeit citizen experts!) to understand the transition plan
  - A democracy requires citizens to understand and take ownership to effect change



# Voter Education Channels in Nepal





# Training

- Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) adopted BRIDGE modular trainings in 2008
- Research on global **best practices** for voter education used to identify modules most applicable in context of Nepal
- Eleven (11) BRIDGE modules (out of 24 in V2) selected and customized



# BRIDGE Modules in Nepal

## Modules focused on election implementation

- Introduction to electoral management
- Electoral dispute resolution
- Political finance
- Polling, counting and results
- Voter registration
- Pre-election activities
- Electoral systems

## Modules focused on election participation

- Voter education;
- Gender, inclusion and elections
- Media and elections
- Access to the electoral process
- Electoral systems



# BRIDGE Training Audiences

- ECN and Government staff to enhance capacity of electoral management
- Training for key electoral stakeholders- media, political parties, observer groups, civil society organizations etc. for greater participation and involvement
- Training for security sector agencies - (Nepal Police, Armed Police, National Intelligence Bureau and Nepal Army) for safe and secure elections
- Focused training for disadvantaged groups – women, Dalit, Madhesi, Muslim, Indigenous Peoples etc.
- Special trainings for differently-abled citizens



# Interactive Programs

- International IDEA delivers voter education in Nepal through Civic Initiative Centres (CICs)
- CICs managed in collaboration with Nepal's Legislature Parliament Secretariat and implemented through a national NGO
- 14 Centres established in 2010
  - Located in all 7 of Nepal's new provincial boundaries
  - Located in 3 ecological zones Terai (7); Hill (6); Mountain (1)
  - CICs have delivered interactive programs in all of Nepal's 75 Districts and reached all Village Development Committees across the country



# CIC Objectives

- Increase understanding of constitutional provisions including those related to elections, the electoral system, civil and political rights etc.
- Support civic education at the local level on various topics including voter and election related matters





# CIC Target Audiences

- Political parties
- Civil society
- Representatives from marginalized communities including women, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, Madhesis, Muslims
- Professional associations (lawyers, business, teachers/professors, journalists, doctors, engineers)
- Government offices (District level)
- Community organizations (Village level)
- Academics
- Journalists
- Teachers and students



# CIC Role in Voter Education

- To inform people at the local level on:
  - Their right to vote and the importance of voting
  - The electoral system
  - Proposed constitutional provisions related to the elections and the electoral system
  - The basic features of the provisions of The Constitution of Nepal 2015 related to elections and the electoral system
- To prepare people at the local level to:
  - Participate in the official public opinion collection on the Preliminary Draft Constitution in July 2015
  - Comment on proposed electoral legislation, regulations, policies and practices



# CIC Activities 2010-16

- Interactive workshops
- National TV and Local FM Radio broadcasts
- Distribution of printed resource materials
- Libraries and resource centers in CIC offices



# CIC Impact

- Enhanced awareness and understanding of Nepali people on the electoral system, the election process and their role as voters
- Increased confidence of people in democratic electoral processes
  - Understanding the power of voting particularly among marginalized groups



# Concluding Remarks

- BRIDGE training to support the ECN in the area of voter/electoral education to:
  - Minimize the invalid votes and maximize the voters turnouts
  - Strengthen and upgrade the managerial capacity of the electoral management body
- CICs – civic education to increase
  - Voter confidence
  - Citizen participation in elections
  - Informed democratic decisions



# Thank You!

