

**Country:** Nepal

**Theme:** Inclusive Electoral Literacy Through Informal Education Channel

**Sub Theme:** Any Other-Potential voters, youths, women and minorities

**Title of The Best Practice / Case Study:** Inclusive Electoral Literacy through informal education channel: Establishment of Electoral Education and Information Center and its activities

**Area of Coverage:** Potential voters, youths, women and minorities

**Period of implementation:** During CAE, 2013

**Background:** Election Commission, Nepal (ECN) shall, subject to the Constitution of Nepal and the federal law, conducts, supervises, directs and controls the President, vice president, and members of the Federal Parliament, members of State Assemblies and members of Local Level. For those purposes, the ECN shall prepare electoral rolls. The Election Commission shall hold a referendum on a matter of national importance to the Constitution and the federal law. A number of electoral activities are carried out by the Commission in order to complete elections in free and fair manner. The success of an election is assessed from many parameters. Voters' participation in the electoral process is one of them.

**Brief Description of Best Practice:** Inclusive Electoral Literacy through informal education channel: Establishment of Electoral Education and Information Center and its activities  
Background: Election Commission, Nepal (ECN) shall, subject to the Constitution of Nepal and the federal law, conducts, supervises, directs and controls the President, vice president, and members of the Federal Parliament, members of State Assemblies and members of Local Level. For those purposes, the ECN shall prepare electoral rolls. The Election Commission shall hold a referendum on a matter of national importance to the Constitution and the federal law. A number of electoral activities are carried out by the Commission in order to complete elections in free and fair manner. The success of an election is assessed from many parameters. Voters' participation in the electoral process is one of them. Across the world, the imperative of enhanced voters' participation in elections is no more a matter of debate, but a serious assignment for the election management bodies. The Constituent Assembly elections successfully held in 2013 in Nepal was a milestone in terms of voters' participation. The percentage of voters' participation was 78.4 percent which is an outstanding achievement as compared to the 2008 CA elections (62.5%). It can be said that one of the causes of such high voter turnout was due to the effective voter education programmed. ECN has carried out varieties of voter education modalities to impart voter education throughout the country. 1. Establishment of Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC) The EEIC was established in 2012 with the objectives of enhancing awareness and participation of voters towards electoral systems, processes and procedures by making electoral education more accountable, transparent and voters oriented. Through this

center, the ECN has aimed to provide civic and electoral education to the groups and individuals visiting it. In order to ensure free, fair and credible election, it is vitally necessary that all voters and stakeholders are well informed about the importance of elections in strengthening democracy. The activities to be accomplished by the center to impart voter education are as follows: Mini museum, In this area visitors are displayed election related materials of historical and archaeological importance. This makes visitors be familiar with election materials and they know the gradual development in the use of election materials. Mini theater - In this area a 25 minutes long documentary named Democracy and Elections is displayed, it gives a wide knowledge to the visitors about Nepalese democratic movement and electoral practices history. Interactive room, the visitors are now taken to another important room where interactions on various issues such as democracy, constitution and electoral history, citizens' rights and duties, electoral systems and voting processes, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in elections etc. are held. Visitors are made to learn many things visiting turn by turn to the areas of different thematic subjects using different technology and learning styles. Mock polling area- After visiting the interactive room, visitors are taken to mock polling area where mock polling exercises are held that give glimpses of electoral systems, processes and procedures. Hence the visitors will receive electoral education on the evolution of democratic governance in Nepal through multimedia in an interesting manner. They will get information in a simple and entertaining way in the interactive zone. They will have an opportunity to participate in electoral activities through mock polling exercise. All the visitors will participate in the electoral processes and will thus receive firsthand information on the matter. Around 24 thousands visitors have visited this center till now. Most of them are secondary and higher secondary students who are the potential voters. The lesson learnt from the EEIC made ECN to expand its access to regional level by establishing as Regional EEIC in Pokhara and Dhangadhi. A new regional EEIC is going to be established soon in Biratnagar. Youths and first time voters, students, teachers, leaders, cadres, journalists, Nepali citizens and voters and so on are the target groups of the center all interested groups are required to book their time earlier in advance by informing the center about the description and number of visitors. A maximum of forty persons may visit the center at a time. An estimated time of two and half hour will be required for a group to have an entire observation of the center. It is considered that the establishment of EEIC and dissemination of systematic voter education through it is a new practice in the field of VE in this region.

### 1.1 Capacity Enhancement Program Election Commission, Nepal is implementing its second strategic plan (2015-2019 A.D.).

In fact it has been proved as a basic document to bring the entire electoral reform and to execute new program in Commission . Capacity building program is one of the major pillars of the Strategic Plan. ECN has adopted BRIDGE modular trainings since 2007. Besides BRIDGE trainings many other Non-BRIDGE trainings are followed the interactive training method. All the interaction programs, trainings and other activities of ECN are focused to make voters realize their rights and responsibilities. Regular capacity building programme has been conducted to election staff and stakeholders. The capacity building programs mainly include the following areas:

- a. Specific BRIDGE modular training like; Introductory to electoral management, Gender and election, Access to electoral process, Electoral dispute resolution, Political finance etcetera have been conducted to ensure more ethical and more credible election. These trainings are generally focused to youths, political party cadres, women groups, civil societies etc.
- b. ECN has also conducted trainings to the excluded and the minorities by developing resource manuals compatible to them. The training for deaf citizen is one of

them. c. Series of trainings are conducted to enhance the capacity of the electoral staff and major stakeholders. d. Research of the best practices of voter education from different part of the world and identify the applicable modules in Nepalese context. 1.2 Social study teachers' training Realizing the scope and influence of the teachers in Nepalese society, the ECN intended to take a continual support from teachers in the field of electoral education. Higher secondary school curriculum in Nepal contains a formal learning about election, democracy, citizen's roles and responsibilities, governance system and Constitutional Bodies and so on. The social studies teachers need to educate students (potential voters) on the above mentioned topics which the ECN also deals with. The ECN piloted this program in 2013 and then decided to train secondary teachers all over the

**Challenges :** Sustainability, retention of the experienced staff

**Outcome:** Historic Voters turnout