



RENEWING FAITH IN DEMOCRACY: Why Elections in Africa need the know-how of Religious Actors



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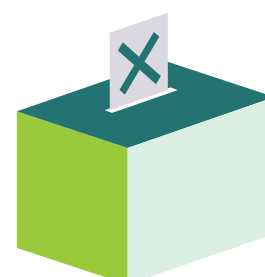
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Cover photo: Archbishop Paulino casts his ballot in Juba, Sudan, on Sunday, January 9, 2011. The archbishop went to vote accompanied by the Cardinal Napier of South Africa. People began lining up to vote around 3 a.m. At St. Kizito Parish there were at least 1,000 people waiting by the time the polls opened at 8 a.m. The six-day long election process allowed southern Sudanese to vote to either continue as one unified Sudan or to secede and become their own nation. (Photo: Sara A. Fajardo / CRS)



Contents

List of abbreviations	4
Executive summary	5
1. Introduction	8
2. CAFOD's work on governance	11
3. Case studies	15
3.1 The 2018 integrity survey in Zimbabwe	15
4. Voter and civic education – Kenya	17
4.1 The Lenten (Easter) Campaign	17
5. Oversight of electoral processes: Advocacy at regional and international levels for free and fair elections in DRC	19
6. Oversight of electoral processes: an inter-faith approach to monitoring and observing the 2018 elections in Sierra Leone	22
7. Mediation of electoral disputes – Zambia and Kenya	24
7.1 “One Zambia One Nation”	24
7.2 The ‘Golden’ Handshake – Kenya	25
8. Promotion of competent, accountable and responsive legislatures: The Parliamentary Liaison Office: Zimbabwe	27
8.1 Other related examples in Uganda and Zambia.	28
9. Methodology	29
10. Why the Church ? Key strengths and attributes of the Church in the electoral process	30
11. Conclusion	32
12. Recommendations	32
Further Reading	34





List of abbreviations

AU	African Union
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Zimbabwe
CENCO	Conference Épiscopale Nationale du Congo
CENI	Commission Electorale Nationale Independante
CPLO	Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EPOIZ	Ecumenical Peace Observation Initiative of Zimbabwe
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
HOCDZ	Heads of Christian Denominations (Zimbabwe)
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IMBISA	Inter Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa
IRCSL	Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
IRCK	Inter-Religious Council of Kenya
KCCB	The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PVT	Parallel Voter Tabulation
RECOWA	Bishops of the Catholic Church in West Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADC SEOM	Southern Africa Development Community Electoral Observation Mission
SECAM	The Symposium of Episcopal Communities of Africa and Madagascar
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZCID	Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue
ZEC	Zimbabwe Election Commission
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference



Executive summary

Faith groups have a long-term sustainable presence in communities and play critical roles in augmenting development, including working before, during and after elections. The Catholic Church regards competitive elections as critical for promoting socio-economic policies which are responsive to people's needs, aspirations and rights, and which aim to eradicate poverty and expand the choices that all people have in their lives.

There is growing recognition from other development actors of the importance of faith groups and networks throughout the election cycle, but there is still not enough evidence or learning on the ground about the effective involvement of local and national faith-based organisations in this vital work. This research aims to improve the understanding and best practice of the Catholic Church's involvement at all stages of the election cycle, particularly in African countries. The report explores examples of the Church's work in elections, both independently and as part of interfaith coalitions, to demonstrate the contribution of religious bodies and faith groups to the strengthening of democratic systems in Africa.

The Catholic Church has a strong history of engagement throughout the election cycle through her teaching and actions. Elections and the strengthening of democratic systems present opportunities for the Church and other civic groups to encourage meaningful political participation, debate and oversight.

In the last 10 years, CAFOD has supported the Church to push for free, fair and credible elections in many countries and locations, particularly in Africa. A case study approach in this research used a qualitative methodology to collate information on five interventions by the Church in electoral processes. Each of the five countries provide an inspiring and varied response of the Church across the range of moments in the electoral cycle:

- Pre-election analysis in Zimbabwe
- Voter and civic education in Kenya
- Using technology in election observation by linking online and offline activities in Sierra Leone
- Engaging local, regional and international actors for free and fair elections in the DRC
- Mediation of electoral disputes in Zambia and Kenya
- Post-election work to promote accountable legislatures through establishing Parliamentary Liaison Offices in Zimbabwe

It is hoped that these examples will assist national and international organisations, governments and donors to recognise the wide potential of the Church and local faith-based organisations.

The Church uses various methods, tools and events in electoral responses, throughout the election cycle, depending on the context. Some activities of the Church before, during and after elections include the following:

- Voter education and civic education
- Support for youth groups, women's groups and men's groups on electoral participation
- Pastoral Letters on issues of concern¹
- Peace pledges
- Lent campaigns, leading a community-wide reflection on the meaning of being Christian and putting the needs of others first, especially those on the margins of society
- Ecumenical delegations to national and international levels
- Mediation between oppositional parties
- Election observation and reporting of irregularities
- Press conferences
- Election pledge monitoring, after the event, to ensure successful pro-poor policies

1. A pastoral letter is an official open letter written by a Bishop or group of Bishops, addressing the clergy and lay people in the parishes, containing general instruction, consolation or directions for behaviour in response to an issue of concern.

From the five case studies there emerge a few main themes:

a) Religion's rootedness in communities:

Religion for much of Africa is a way of life, engrained into the culture of communities. This rootedness in communities and long-term presence allows the Church to build trust and inspire volunteers. Hence, when the Church takes on an issue, she has ready access and support from communities. Because the Church is rooted in communities, she provides an alternative voice to the prevailing political situation and able to encourage other voices in shaping public opinion in the broader community. The case studies from Kenya show how this made voter education successful. In Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, the Church was able to get messages to people to renounce violence.

b) The reach from local to global:

The particular profile of the Church and Catholic networks across the world ensures that messages can be brought to those in decision-making positions at local level and escalated to national and international levels as needed. The case studies from Zimbabwe demonstrate how concerns of the people from the local level were taken to the national stage. In DRC the Church reached every district, no matter how remote, in election monitoring, and brought the pressure of international actors on the President to ensure free and fair elections.

c) The Church's ability to convene and mediate:

This proves useful at many points in the electoral process. The Church operates on the basis of principles and values that is recognised even by parties opposed to each other. The Church is committed to the common good, willing to serve the whole population and generally viewed as neutral. In the Kenya and Zambia case studies, the Church was preferred as the trusted actor at times of electoral disputes; this position was used to bring leaders together for mediation across political divides.

As our research shows, religious leaders in many places hold the trust and confidence of people struggling to understand and exercise their civil and political rights. With the Catholic Church networks, the trust and outreach are already in place, which can significantly enhance the democratic process from a neutral non-partisan network.

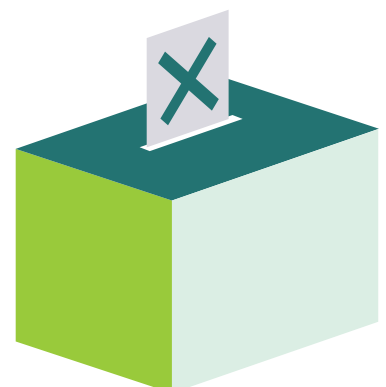
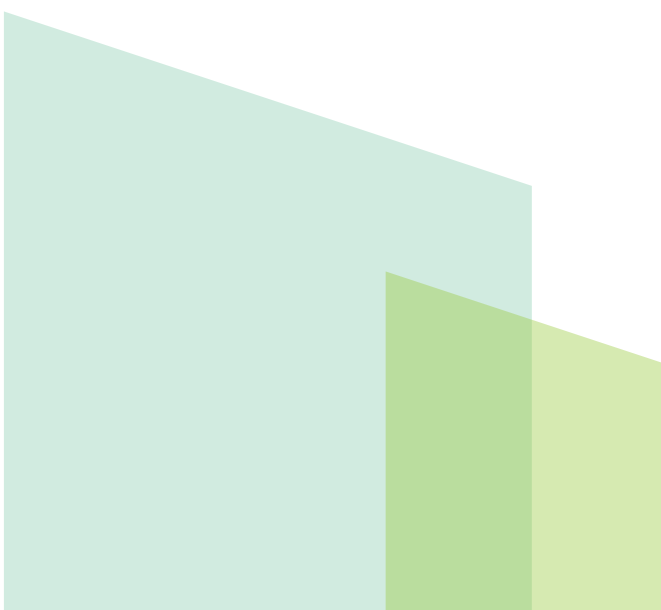
For those national, international organisations, donors and the wider public who would like to engage with the Church for transformational partnerships to enhance democracy during the election cycle, a clear understanding of the range of possible interventions and the Church's approach is important.

Better collaboration and partnership with the Church and her networks has the potential to improve the quality of local, national and international response to development challenges; it also allows for quicker reaction times in moments of crisis. In many different scenarios and situations, the Catholic Church and her many networks and committees dedicated to social justice are very well positioned for effective and lasting collaborations with significant impact.

In order to improve this understanding and the potential for fruitful collaboration around elections, and transformational development, CAFOD makes the following recommendations to donors, national and international organisations:

- **Strengthen partnerships with religious leaders at local, national and international levels, with a goal of understanding and building transformational partnerships for engagement across the electoral cycle.** This should happen at all the different levels and groupings of the Catholic Church, such as the lay people and clergy at all levels, as well as other religious leaders. This would utilise the Church's convening power and experience in mediation, as well as long-term networks and structures in communities. Such partnerships are particularly important in countries with areas that are largely out of government reach.

- **Build in time and resources to foster long term effective engagement with religious organisations for democracy enhancement and election support.** It is important to ensure that programmes go beyond one-off occasions into planning, design, management, and monitoring of the electoral cycle. Effective partnerships are the result of long-term and deliberate efforts that need to be integrated into ways of working and funding cycles.
- **Incorporate religious bodies in the early stages of scoping, planning and monitoring for country-specific electoral responses.** This would make the most of the Church's embeddedness in communities and rich knowledge of local needs, as well as her tested strategies that work for long-term locally driven initiatives.
- **Apply a multi-level approach to engagement with the Church for tailored and fit-for-purpose interventions.** Where required, build and invest in the long-term capacity of local structures and leaders to become more effective partners and partnerships.
- **Strengthen faith literacy among international staff** of national and international organisations to cultivate a broader and more nuanced understanding of the history of the region and the role of faith in augmenting development in that context. Where possible, identify and seek to understand contentious areas of policy or practice that potentially make partnerships difficult, with a view to find common ground.





Introduction

The World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* study found that "religious leaders and institutions are often the most trusted institutions in developing countries."² Faith can inspire confidence and trust, and is often seen as deeply embedded in, and committed to, local communities. Faith groups have a long-term sustainable presence in communities, and play critical roles in augmenting development, including working before, during and after elections. In recent years there have been local, national and global concerns about the quality of elections and the potential for violence; it is now more important than ever to look at and support local faith groups and networks involved in promoting peaceful, informed and fair elections in Africa and beyond.

In the summary of findings for a 2016 report by Governance and Social Development Resource (GSDRC) on religious leaders and the prevention of political violence, the researchers found that:

There are various characteristics associated with religious leaders that make them well placed to mobilise stakeholders and to engage in efforts to counter violence and promote peace. These include, trustworthiness and credibility, shared and respected set of values, understanding of local context, presence in local communities, legitimacy, strong networks and access to various levels of power.³

There has been a growing recognition by donor governments and international organisations of the role of faith in development, as exemplified by the

development of working frameworks to engage with faith communities. UNHCR in its *Partnership Note on Faith-based Organisations, Local Faith Communities and Faith Leaders* (2014) recognises religious actors and their organisations as active members of civil society.⁴ UNICEF's *Partnering with Religious Communities for Children* (2012)⁵, and DFID's *Faith Partnership Principles* (2012)⁶, all testify to the impact of working with faith-based organisations in development and humanitarian situations.

Since the 2018 Humanitarian Summit, there has been a new and evolving policy agenda that promotes local leadership of humanitarian aid and development, and has identified partnerships with local faith communities, faith leaders and faith-based organisations as key.⁷ There is growing recognition of the importance of faith groups and networks throughout the election cycle, but there is still not enough evidence or learning from on the ground about the involvement and activities of local and national faith based organisations in this vital work. As a result, faith groups are occasionally seen as passive actors that focus more on small scale social issues or pastoral care, with the wider accomplishments and potential unrecognised.

This research is an attempt to share evidence and experience from the ground, to demonstrate the range of responses of the Church throughout the election cycle in African countries.

Religious institutions such as churches, mosques or temples are at the heart of communities, especially in Africa. Religious leaders in Africa have huge untapped potential to respond to and make impact in development, including before, during and after elections. In many places, religion is not waning in

2. Narayan, D. (2000). *Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?* Washington: World Bank, March 2000: 41 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/131441468779067441/pdf/multi0page.pdf>
What the Poor Say summary <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/poor.pdf>

3. Haider, H. (2016). *Religious leaders and the prevention of electoral violence* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1366). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham

4. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/hcdialogue%20/539ef28b9/partnership-note-faith-based-organizations-local-faith-communities-faith.html>

5. <https://jiflc.com/resources/partnering-with-religious-communities-for-children/>

6. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67352/faith-partnership-principles.pdf

7. <https://charter4change.org/we-need-localisation-2/>

influence; rather it continues to be a growing force that shapes people's worldviews. Indeed, religion can be hugely influential on people's choices and cultures, especially in Africa. In Western contexts, religion is often considered a private matter and a personal choice with a more limited public role. In contrast, in developing countries, religion often dominates the everyday life of people in some places and is largely interwoven into governance and development processes on many levels.

Religion offers people, both individuals and groups, an identity, meaning and values that shape and influence their worldview, social and political beliefs, attitudes and norms. It must be acknowledged, however, that at times this influence can lead to detrimental consequences for society. CAFOD research in Northern Nigeria in 2019 showed that religious affiliation from both Christian and Muslim groups had been manipulated by political actors to create division.⁸ In Jordan, videos of Christian groups engaging in proselytism – that is, attempting to convert a person from one religion to another – heightened tensions in the community and threatened other activities by Christian agencies.⁹ Governments in Kenya, South Africa and Ghana have started cracking down on some charismatic churches – churches that perceive to have prophecy and healing at the core of their ministries – to curb exploitation of poor people drawn in by promises of prosperity messages and pressured into the purchase of healing prayers.¹⁰

However, there are more examples of churches, mosques, temples and other faith institutions full of dedicated people, driven by their faith to serve others. Equipped with their long-term presence in communities, and their commitment to helping the poor and most vulnerable, they provide valuable contributions which can be a powerful enhancement of the democratic processes.

This report explores examples of the Catholic Church's work in elections, both independently and as part of interfaith coalitions, to demonstrate the contribution of religious bodies and faith groups to

the strengthening of democratic systems.

The Catholic Church has a strong history of engagement in elections through its teaching and actions. Elections present an opportunity for the Church and other civic groups to encourage meaningful political participation, debate and oversight. The Church therefore regards competitive elections as critical for promoting socio-economic policies which are responsive to people's needs, aspirations and rights, and which aim to eradicate poverty, strengthen justice, and expand the choices that all people have in their lives.

Pope John XXIII, in his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, deals with the issue of Governmental authority deriving from God. In this context, he points out the importance of democratic elections which give people the opportunity to influence the laws of the land. He writes:

The fact that authority comes from God does not mean that men [sic] have no power to choose those who are to rule the State, or to decide upon the type of government they want, and determine the procedure and limitations of rulers in the exercise of their authority.

The crucial importance of being involved in politics at all the levels is implicit throughout Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (2015). Within each social stratum, he writes, and between them, institutions develop to regulate human relationships. Anything which weakens those institutions has negative consequences, such as injustice, violence and loss of freedom.¹¹

However, the absence of systematic evidence to demonstrate the contribution and impact of faith groups continues to be a challenge. The role of the Church in elections is no exception. Despite

8. CAFOD (2019). Research on interreligious and intercultural pluralism in Plateau State (Nigeria) (Unpublished) : 1; University of Jos (2018). Report on Interreligious and Intercultural tolerance in Nigeria on Action for Cultural and Religious Pluralism in Kaduna State (Unpublished), Kaduna State University: Nigeria.

9. Ager, A. and J. Ager (2015). Faith, Secularism and Humanitarian Engagement. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

10. Mamanglu-Regala, S. (2016). "African governments crack down on charismatic churches promising miracle cure and exploiting poor people." Christian Today, Sunday 21 February 2016.

11. Pope Francis (2015). *Laudato Si*, #142

election responses on the ground by the Church, documented studies and programme reports are hard to find, because either the Church works outside of the limelight, or, as research from the World Council of Churches shows, faith-based organisations “are busy ‘doing’ but are notoriously bad ... about documenting their efforts.”¹²

This research attempts to provide some up-to-date research and positive examples of the Catholic Church’s role and impact in electoral processes in five countries across Africa where CAFOD works: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Kenya; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. The aim of the case studies together is to demonstrate the potential and breadth of the Church’s engagement in the electoral process, which has so far been under-reported.

The study draws specific examples of the role of the Church in electoral processes covering a 10-year period (2000-2017) from the five targeted countries. Each of the five countries provide an inspiring and varied response of the Church across the range of moments in the electoral cycle:



- Pre-election analysis in Zimbabwe;
- Voter and civic education in Kenya;
- Using technology in election observation by linking online and offline activities in Sierra Leone through working with Inter-Religious groups;
- Engaging local, regional and international actors for free and fair elections in the DRC;
- Mediation of electoral disputes in Zambia and Kenya;
- Post-election work to promote accountable legislatures through establishing Parliamentary Liaison Offices in Zimbabwe with also some examples from Uganda and Zambia.

A note on the terminology

The word “Church” is used broadly in this report to refer to the work done by the Catholic Church alone or within a multi-faith setting. By Church we also refer to its various expressions (i.e. lay people, clergy, religious bodies and the Church hierarchy). Examples have been drawn from the Catholic Church or where the Catholic Church has worked in ecumenical and interfaith settings.

‘Love is civic and political and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world’ – Laudato Si: 231

Pope Francis kisses the feet of two opposing South Sudanese leaders at the end of a retreat to solidify a peace agreement, April, 11, 2019

Photo ©Vatican Media

12. Sue Parry (2007). Responses of the Faith-Based Organisations to HIV/AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa World Council of Churches: 3. <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/fba-hiv-aids.pdf>

2

CAFOD's work on governance

CAFOD believes that the full participation of all citizens in society is central for human flourishing, dignity and solidarity; good governance is a crucial element to achieving sustainable development, peace and security.¹³ Support for elections is an important part of CAFOD's governance work, as they are a means to expand and increase active participation of communities in choosing their leaders, and in shaping and influencing decision making processes that affect their lives. Elections come in different forms (see below for an explanation of types of elections). CAFOD has a long history of supporting the Catholic Church in development and is well placed to conduct this research on the role of the Church in elections, due to CAFOD's proximity and strong partnerships with the Catholic Church in Africa.

In the last 10 years, CAFOD has supported the Church to push for free, fair and credible elections in many countries and locations, particularly in Africa. It is hoped that these examples from the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia** and **Sierra Leone** will assist national and international organisations, governments and donors to recognise the potential of the Church in work throughout the election cycle. Sharing the details of the work of the Catholic networks and our partners, we hope to increase the understanding of how the Church works, improving effective engagement for increased long-term partnerships.

Types of elections

It is important to understand the types of election, in order to better to better comprehend the context and the levels of legitimacy, competitiveness, management and significance of an election.

1 Procedural (including run offs)

These are regular elections held in accordance with times and procedures set out in the constitution or other country electoral laws and guidelines.

2 Post conflict

Usually held as part of a negotiated peace settlement at the conclusion of war or conflict.

3 Breakthrough

The first round of elections after a lengthy period of authoritarian, one-party, or military rule.

4 Consolidation

These are usually the 2nd or 3rd round after a return to democracy. They seek to consolidate and strengthen the electoral process.

Source: CAFOD Programme Management Manual (2018), Section 8 – Governance Themes

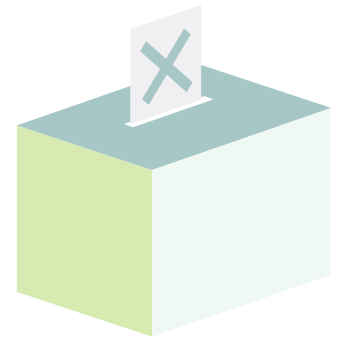


13. <http://www.cafod.org/vision>

The Church uses various methods, tools and events in their work and use them in an electoral context. They are grouped as follows: **Influencing and Advocacy; Education and Awareness raising; Protecting the integrity of processes (elections); Community training and discussions.** See below for the methods that will feature in most of the case studies in this report.

Methods, tools and events the Church uses in election work

Influencing and advocacy	
Ecumenical Delegations / Solidarity	Group visits by leaders from one denomination or could be inter-denominational, set up to influence an issue locally, regionally or internationally. They are usually led by the clergy, but lay people are also included.
Leaders Assembly / Convocation	A gathering of clergy and lay people to discuss key pertinent issues of concern.
Education and awareness raising	
Galas / Rallies / Roadshows	Open gatherings to promote or raise awareness on an issue at community or national level, usually accompanied by drama, music, speeches or prayer, depending on what socially connects that community.
Lenten Campaigns	Activities done during the season of Lent as a reflection on the meaning of being Christian and putting the needs of others first, especially those on the margins of society.
Local and National Days of Prayer	Set days at local or national level open to all, dedicated to praying for an issue.
Mass	A celebration service for the Sacrament, teaching and a homily. The Church uses the homily to reflect and tailor preaching to issues of concern. After mass, parishioners (especially in Africa) normally get together and these are the opportunities to have other additional activities, for example voter education or specific trainings for members.



Protecting the integrity of processes (elections)

Election Observation	The monitoring of an election cycle (before, during and after) by trained local and foreign independent parties, to assess the conduct of the electoral process, based on national and international election standards.
Pastoral Letters	An official open letter written by a Bishop, addressing the clergy and lay people in the parishes, containing general instruction, consolation or directions for behaviour in response to some circumstance.
Justice and Peace Commissions or Committees	Individuals who volunteer their time to support the laity priests and bishops of the diocese in developing awareness of and ensuring engagement with and commitment to Justice and Peace as an integral part of community life and action.
Peace Pledge	A tool usually used for getting commitment and assurance from political parties for non-violence and observance of peace.
Peace Promoters / Animators	Trained individuals, often but not always members of the Church, who are respected in the community for promoting peace. They respond to conflicts in the area and advocate for peace in communities.
Press conferences	Meetings convened to make announcements and/or press statements.
Press statements and press releases	Official announcements in writing or on video of concerns, updates and recommendations on an issue to the press.
Breakfast meetings	An early morning meeting of clergy and lay people to discuss issues.

Community training and discussions

Small Christian
Community
Discussions / Focus
Groups

Community groups led by lay people open to Christians and people of other faiths to discuss issues of community concern.

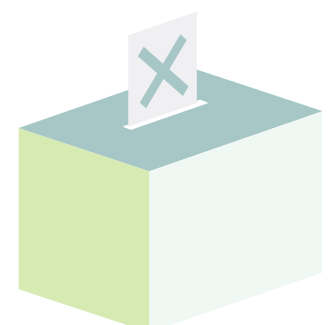
Youth¹⁴ / Women's /
Men's Movements

Groups of women, youth or men championing social issues in the Church. These groups are useful structures that the Church uses to reach out to communities and advocate for group issues.

Training for
Transformation

An approach used by the Church to understand issues affecting a community and take appropriate action. It uses four steps:

<p>SEE</p> <p>See, hear and experience the lived realities of individuals and communities. This would be followed by naming what would be happening.</p>	<p>JUDGE</p> <p>The word "Judge" is used in a positive sense. It means analysing the situation and making an informed judgement about it.</p>	<p>ACT</p> <p>Informed by "See" and "Judge", "Act" involves planning and carrying out actions aimed at transforming the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice.</p>
<p>CELEBRATE</p> <p>God's love and goodness, crucial to bringing about hope and joy, and pivotal to seeing more clearly, judging more wisely, and acting more efficiently.</p>		



14. In Africa, the term "youth" often refers to people of a younger generation who have not yet gained full adult status, for example if they are unmarried. Although this varies by region and culture, usually youth refers to people below the age of 30.

3

Case studies

This section serves as a response to the earlier finding that there is a general lack of documentation of the work by the Church's role in elections. It provides more detailed evidence of work across the election cycle from case studies in the five countries. The case studies are not exhaustive, but each provides useful insights and learning that could be applied more widely to improve the understanding of the crucial role of the Church in elections.

Each case study has been selected to represent an aspect of the electoral cycle. Cumulatively, the case studies cover the whole electoral cycle from before elections, during elections, to after elections.

3.1 The 2018 integrity survey in Zimbabwe

Key attributes of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church used her rootedness in communities and her commitment to serve all populations to successfully conduct a survey that identified needs and concerns of citizens on the 2018 elections in all 8 Dioceses in Zimbabwe.
- The church used her structures and evidence from the survey to influence key electoral management stakeholders towards free and fair elections.

A pre-election analysis is a range of activities or interventions that are done prior to an election to assess the quality and integrity of the process, and the prospects for a legitimate outcome.

These assessments examine the institutional framework (e.g., the legal framework, election management structures, voting rights, and complaint mechanisms). They may also serve as baselines against which developments during the election and over time can be measured. Results gathered from such research serves to shape recommendations and influence key stakeholders.

In 2018, the Church sought to engage well ahead of polling day and to better understand the concerns of communities across Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference produced and distributed a pastoral letter titled *Elections, Peace and Development* to all parishes in the country to encourage active participation in the electoral process by all citizens.

As the Church is rooted in communities and known for a commitment to serve the whole population, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace commissioned an election integrity survey to benchmark citizens' perspective and aspirations around the 2018 elections.

The purpose of the election integrity survey was two-fold:

- 1 To identify the needs and concerns of the citizens in order to inform and tailor the Church's election response;
- 2 To develop an evidence base on the needs and concerns of citizens, in order to influence key election management stakeholders such as the Zimbabwe Election Commission and ensure free and fair elections.



Vimbai and Clementine, Catholic youth observers, staffing the Catholic situation room in Harare, Zimbabwe, July 2018

The survey was carried out in all eight Dioceses, covering the whole of Zimbabwe. Sample groups had representation from women, men, youth and people with disabilities. The survey was administered in both rural and urban settings. It was conducted through existing Church structures such as the Justice and Peace committees, youth, women's and men's movements, and lay leaders.

The survey revealed the importance to voters of retaining integrity in an election, and low levels of confidence in the electoral process. There were fears of violence and potential vote rigging, among other issues. Several respondents called on the Church to protect the integrity of the vote. This was based on their experiences of the previous elections, where elections were marred by violence and results contested.

In previous elections, Zimbabwe used manual voter registration rolls, which could be manipulated through double entries or including deceased voters. The survey revealed that the introduction of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) technology was welcome and increased the confidence in the system by mitigating double registration. However, it had been introduced late in the process and there were growing concerns around its use, such as reports of political party officials recording voter slips registration numbers and rumours that voting choices would be traceable back to their registrations. Other findings of the survey were high levels of voter apathy among the youth, and the inaccessibility to voting information for people with disabilities. There were no tactile braille ballots, and most polling stations were at shops or schools lacking ramps for wheelchair access.

These findings helped the Church to come up with strategic interventions to address people's key concerns around the upcoming elections. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) reviewed their voter education materials to address concerns around the BVR. To encourage young people to vote, the Church engaged in a campaign called I pray, I vote and stepped up their use of social media and peer networks. The Church also collaborated with civil

society groups on the *Get Out the Vote* campaign, which targeted the youth vote. The Church, working in collaboration with a range of civil society actors, influenced the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), and the voter education and registration process were extended. According to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, the 30-34 years age group accounted for the largest total number of registrants, at 781,227 voters; this was followed by the 20-24 years age group at 780,903 registrants.¹⁵

To mitigate the fears of violence, the Church engaged political parties, the ZEC and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) to ensure the elections were violence-free. This culminated in the signing of a Peace Pledge by political parties convened by the Church, working collaboratively with the NPRC. This was an important step by the Church in speaking truth to power, and boldly challenging candidates to desist from violence or coercion.

The Church convened a Presidential candidate debate which was covered by a Catholic Radio Station, Chiedza Radio. The debate was a space for citizens to meet and interrogate the candidates' manifestos. It also provided an opportunity for citizens to get assurance from the candidates that they would be no violence or vote-rigging. Nineteen out of the 23 Presidential candidates attended the event at the Jesuit Centre, showing that the candidates viewed the Church as a trusted convenor with access to the electorate.

The Church actively put measures in place to protect the people's vote during the election. It deployed 700 observers around the country, and set up structures to report incidents of violence, including media statements used within Zimbabwe and internationally.¹⁶ The 2018 voting day was generally peaceful. Unfortunately, despite these efforts for non-violence, the process was marred when the military fired upon citizens who were demanding the early release of the results in the following days. The Church strongly renounced the violence¹⁷ and offered to mediate between the government and the opposition.¹⁸ Efforts are still ongoing.

15. <http://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Final-ZESN-2018-Harmonised-Election-Report.pdf>

16. Dairai Chikwengo, CAFOD's Governance Adviser, spoke to Ed Stourton on BBC Radio 4's Sunday Programme about the role on the Church in the Zimbabwe elections BBC on 30 July, 2018.

17. <http://imbisaweb.com/?p=2105>

18. <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2018/08/07/catholic-church-offers-to-mediate-zimbabwe-election-dispute/>

4

Voter and civic education – Kenya

Key attribute of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church used her capillary system of diocese and parishes, volunteers and scheduled Church events, to reach 18 out of 20 dioceses in Kenya with voter education.

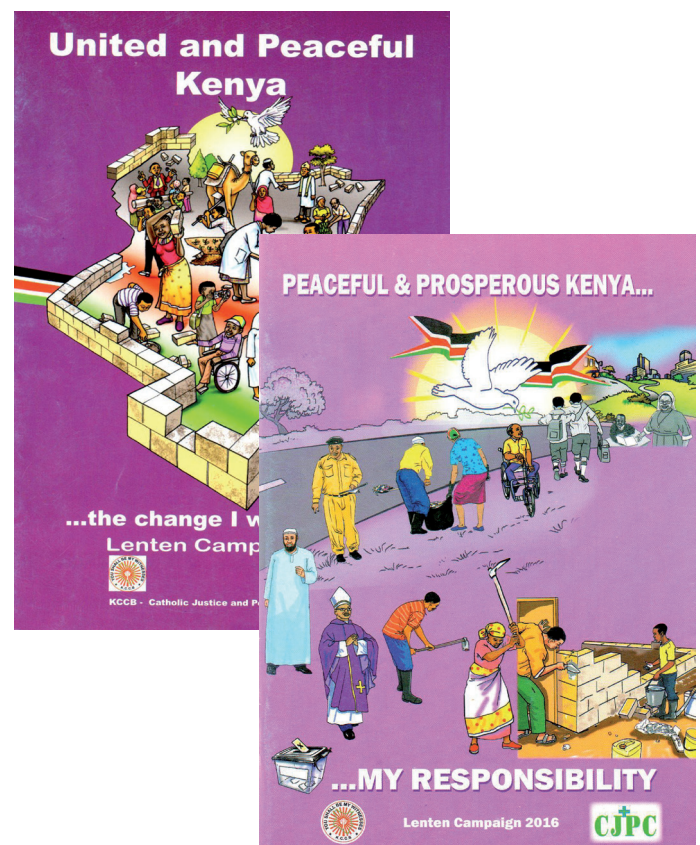
In Kenya and other countries, the Church has extensive experience in voter education. This is the dissemination of information, materials and programmes designed to inform voters about the specifics and procedures of the voting process for an election. The Church also engages in civic education, which is a broader concept going beyond any one election in a moment in time; it is about providing knowledge of a country's political system and the wider historical and political context. Together, voter and civic education are necessary and mutually reinforcing. They ensure citizens understand their rights and the political systems, so they can make informed decisions at election time.

4.1 The Lenten (Easter) Campaign

Elections in Kenya are held within the framework of multi-party democracy with a major focus on the presidential system. The President, the Senate, Governors and Members of Parliament are directly elected by the people under the supervision of Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) which is the commission in charge of conducting elections.

In Kenya, the Church has been a long-term trusted partner of the IEBC in voter and civic education. Using her structures, power of numbers and influence, the Church has carried out several initiatives to disseminate information on the election to voters. Notable interventions for the 2017 elections were the Lenten Campaign which included: the training of voter education facilitators; the development of resources; community workshops; prayers; and engaging with the media.

The Lenten Campaign focused on the theme: *Peace and Credible Elections... Leaders of Integrity* and was launched in all dioceses. The campaign had five issues identified for weekly deliberation in Churches and communities. These issues included: Security; Youth and Society; Environmental Conservation and Protection; Elections; and Negative Ethnicity and Clannism. Discussion employed the See, Judge and Act methodology (see page 14) in each of the dioceses, linking experiences from the communities. The deliberations demonstrated how public life is intertwined with faith, and how the Church is embedded in communities. The 2018 national launch of the Lenten Campaign was attended by 7,000 people; subsequently, 18 out of 20 dioceses had their own launches with approximately 4,000 people at each launch. Approximately 2.4 million people were reached through small Christian communities in each of the dioceses.



Some of The Lenten Campaign materials

Because the Church is rooted in communities, she utilised her structures from lay people to clergy to enhance voter education and peace in communities. Lay people were trained to accompany communities and spread the word of peace, while priests engrained messages of peace in their sermons. The Kenya Catholic Bishops Conference, through the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Religious and Clergy Commission, organised meetings and trainings to equip the clergy on peace building and conflict prevention. At the end of each Mass, the trained facilitators were given time to carry out civic, peace and voter education in Church premises with the different Church groups, such as the Catholic Women's Association (CWA), the Catholic Men's Association (CMA), and the Catholic Youth Association. This was possible because the parishioners see the Church as a way of life and then avail time after Mass.

Using existing Church structures, voter education resources were utilised as engagement tools in communities by long-term community peace and justice animators. Different communities were able to tailor and disseminate information as they deemed appropriate. This led to the development of community-led peace plans, which were owned by communities, making adherence and promotion of them much easier.

In Samburu county, the Catholic Church used an existing programme to do voter education. The Catholic women's movement supplies water to communities, as mainly women attend the water distribution. In consultation with the women, the facilitators were able to run a voter education session for women at the same time as water collection. The action reached women who would otherwise have been left out because of time demands to fulfil household chores.

The Kenya Catholic Bishops Conference held high level consultative meetings with editors from media houses to influence them to share messages of peace in newspapers. This reached a wider level of readership and influence, due to the popularity of the media.

To pre-empt any violence during the elections, the Church used her convening potential to convene a National Day of Prayer. The prayer was held ahead of the elections, bringing together other faiths, candidates across the political divide, media and members of the electoral body to deliver messages of peace.



5

Oversight of electoral processes: Advocacy at regional and international levels for free and fair elections in DRC

Key attributes of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church used her reach at local and international levels and rootedness in communities to train 41,026 observers, some from very remote parts of DRC, to administer a parallel voter tabulation exercise. The wide reach of the observers enabled the Church to provide an alternative result, using local, regional and international observers to tally results displayed at polling stations.
- The Church had a long-term approach and used regional and international structures to advocate for free and fair elections and to challenge the President's unconstitutional bid for a third term.

Election observation is the monitoring of an election by both local and foreign independent parties, to assess the conduct of the electoral process based on national and international election standards. It contributes to strengthening of democratic institutions and builds public confidence in electoral processes by deterring fraud, intimidation and violence. The DRC has experienced three electoral cycles since the end of the 1998-2003 civil and regional war. That war claimed more than 6 million lives¹⁹ and was ended by a peace agreement. However, pockets of conflict continue in parts of the country, and all the subsequent election events have been marked by violence and questionable credibility of the results.

The DRC case study looks at a specific aspect of the observation, focusing on engaging regional and international players in challenging President Kabila's unconstitutional third term bid. Regional and International support through the Church's Catholic networks helped in advocating for free and fair elections by highlighting irregularities in the process. The wide reach of the election observation and rootedness in communities enabled the Church

to provide an alternative result to that being offered by politicised groups, using local, regional and international observers to monitor and tally results displayed at polling stations.

The Church has presence in all 26 provinces of the country, through provision of essential services to the population. In DRC, around half of the 75 million people are Roman Catholic, and the Church – with its network of schools, parishes and medical centres – is one of the few institutions that commands wide respect across a big and divided country.²⁰

In 2016, the Church successfully challenged President Kabila's bid to run for a third term, in direct violation of the constitution that only allows a President to run for two terms.

Through press statements and Pastoral Letters, the Church challenged the tactical delay in proclamation of the elections, aimed at keeping the President in office. The Church used established regional Church networks, like the Inter regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) to organise series of meetings with SADC ambassadors in Kinshasa to influence SADC to change their stance of unquestioning support of President Kabila

On May 28, 2016 the Church launched a petition campaign to collect at least one million signatures to demand the organization of much-delayed local and municipal elections. CENCO launched an awareness raising campaign with several messages, including Pastoral Letters, asking for the organisation of credible and fair elections in accordance with the Constitution. This campaign was in both rural and urban areas, including places where the state is almost totally absent.

At the end of 2016, Catholic partner Conference Épiscopale Nationale du Congo (CENCO) was key in the mediation process that led to the inclusive global political agreement, the Saint Sylvester Agreement. The agreement, signed in December

19. <https://www.caritas.org/2010/02/six-million-dead-in-congos-war/>

20. <https://www.dw.com/en/dr-congo-the-church-has-to-walk-a-very-fine-line/a-42002319>



CENCO advocacy to H.E. Mr Edgar LUNGU, President of Zambia and Chairman of the SADC Troika on Politics, Security and Defence. Lusaka, 07 September 2018

2016, offered a roadmap out of the country's political and constitutional crisis. It paved the way for the holding of presidential, legislative and provincial elections, which had been postponed several times by government to buy more time in power.

In 2017, the Church networks concentrated their efforts on civic education of the population to prepare them for the elections; the Church also focused on training observers for the long-awaited elections. The Church's civic and electoral education program had a team of more than 10,000 long-term facilitators. These facilitators conducted civic training sessions across the country, covering issues such as: governance; corruption; tribalism; non-violence and citizen engagement. In total, over 18 million men and women were reached with the trainings. The Church also broadcast discussions about these subjects on more than 80 radio stations.

Although the 2018 elections in DRC were heralded as the country's first democratic transfer of power, the outcome of the election faced a formal challenge and significant contestation due to election irregularities. Controversial electronic voting machines had been prematurely introduced for the first time with no consultations or accompanying

voter preparation. In addition, there were allegations of the existence of over six million registered voters in the voter roll without fingerprint identification. There also was a refusal to have international observers and little space for opposition and civil society groups, including threats and actual violence.

Considering these challenges, CENCO used external structures of the Catholic Church and organised ecumenical delegations to the region and the international community to plea for legitimate and credible elections. In November 2018, the Bishops, organised by CENCO, issued a statement deploring the uneven playing field and called for international solidarity:

These conditions do not make it possible to obtain a democratic changeover that ensures the legitimacy of those who will govern us. The Bishops of CENCO are convinced that within the framework of international cooperation, brothers [sic], friends and neighbours of the DRC can contribute something in order to satisfy the aspirations of the Congolese people.²¹

21. CENCO (2018). Des élections crédibles pour une véritable alternance politique (Credible elections for a real political alternative)

22. <https://actualite.cd/2018/09/17/rdc-elections-les-15-recommandations-des-experts-britanniques-sur-la-machine-voter>

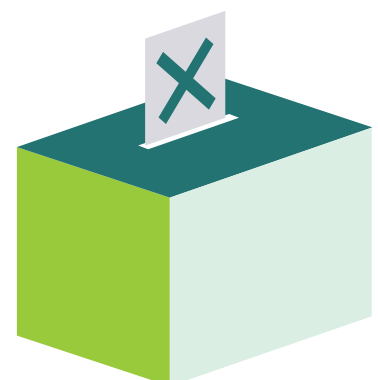
Learning from independent studies and voting experts from abroad, CENCO was able to uncover vulnerabilities and widespread concerns on the use of electronic voting machines.²² CENCO raised these concerns with Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) to ensure the machines were credible and reliable.

As a measure towards safeguarding the peoples vote and ensuring accurate results, CENCO put in place a Parallel Voter Tabulation (PVT) process using their network of national, regional and international observers. The Church deployed thousands of observers across the country in pairs per polling station. These pairs were set up for the Parallel Voter Tabulation (PVT) and this allowed the Church to collect and monitor the results of the elections in real time. 41,026 short-term and long-term observers, the largest such effort in the country, were trained and deployed. DRC is well-known for having little or destroyed infrastructure, with dilapidated roads and rail networks, vast geography, extensive forests and large rivers. So, for the Church to build structures and methods of training that

sustained the biggest observer mission in the country amidst these conditions was no mean feat.

In January 2019, the observers tallied results displayed at polling stations. This was possible because CENCO had structures in communities and was trusted by the citizens as being impartial observers on the ground. The credibility of their observers helped CENCO to challenge the electoral body CENI to publish accurate results, as the results CENI had initially published did not correspond to the figures collected by the CENCO observation mission.

Although the Church was making the challenge within the confines of the law, these actions irked government officials. Undeterred, the Church continued to push for peace and stability in DRC and continues to this day. The Church and Catholic networks have been advocating for the former regime to allow the new President to do his work without hindrance. The Church is also advocating to the new government to improve the lives of the general population.



6

Oversight of electoral processes: an inter-faith approach to monitoring and observing the 2018 elections in Sierra Leone

Key attributes of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church used technology to enable existing structures of trained peace promoters to enhance their work on monitoring.
- The Church was inclusive and worked well with leaders and networks from other religions.

Globally, the internet and technology have become increasingly important for free and fair elections, particularly for voter registration, verification, and election delivery. Technology also enables the sharing of information amongst the citizenry, providing evidence for holding to account institutions and individuals involved in electoral inconsistencies. However, the importance of combining on-line and offline activities may hold the key for promoting and ensuring fair elections.

In Sierra Leone internet access and connectivity is growing – about 83 per cent of the population have access to the internet.²³ This growth is mainly through the abundance of cheap smart phones, and the rise of mobile network connectivity across the country.²⁴ However, technology by itself is not a panacea for free and fair elections. Interfaith work in Sierra Leone has shown how the networks and connections of faith actors on the ground has helped make technology more effective to improve the quality of elections.

The Catholic Church in Sierra Leone, working through the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), engaged religious leaders and community animators to use technology to support monitoring and observation of the 2018 elections. This approach to electoral observation and incident reporting was unusual in combining offline and online elements.

Existing structures enabled the effective application of new technologies, and those technologies enhanced existing work. Building on the successes of working together during the war, and more recently in the response to the Ebola crisis, the Catholic Church working with IRCSL came together with many others to set up a digital platform to observe elections; the main vehicle for this work was the website *Sierra Leone Decides*.²⁵

The 2018 elections were the fourth elections held since the end of the civil conflict in 2002. They were highly contested as a transition of presidential power was required; the incumbent Ernest Koroma had served the maximum of two terms as President. Previous elections had been marred by outbreaks of political violence, leading to a lot of anxiety before, during and after elections.

The technology platform was used for widely distributing information prior, during and after the 2018 elections. This information included educational messages around electoral violence, and reliable information about the progress of the elections. It aimed to reach marginalised groups, such as the youth who had fallen into apathy due to high levels of unemployment; it was clear that a new approach was needed, based on the work of peace promoters who served as long-term monitors in communities.

The IRCSL provided training on conflict resolution and incident reporting for 60 Peace Promoters from their existing network of peace animators. They covered six districts and Freetown that were identified as potential hotspots for electoral violence. The presence of this existing network allowed the successful uptake of the new technology in a short amount of time and supported its use to reduce incidents of violence.

Peace Promoters were provided with mobile phones and network top-up. They were trained on how to report incidents of violence or electoral irregularity

23. BBC Media Action, (2015). Communication in Sierra Leone: an analysis of media and mobile audiences (internet). Available at <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research/mobile-media-landscape-sierra-leone-report.pdf>

24. Ibid

25. <https://sierraleonedecides.com/>



The use of the mobile phone was very simple...it was easy to report...that helped us to do the reporting... you will report but then if it is something very serious you will also call the coordinator to liaise with the police.

Christian Feyta, District Coordinator IRCSL, Kono District

into the *Sierra Leone Decides* platform via SMS message and mobile application. They were also trained to offer community peace resolution to minor cases, and to organise Church leaders to meet with political party representatives in the communities.

Major cases were escalated to the relevant security services or electoral commission via the National Election Watch (NEW) situation room. Incidents were then displayed on an interactive map on the *Sierra Leone Decides* website. The security services responded and drew on the support, knowledge and relationships already available from the Church community Peace Promoters. Because of the technology, Peace Promoters were able to report the speed at which the security services responded

to violent incidents and observe how this helped to deter or mitigate violence in reported communities.

The inter-faith approach through the IRCSL also supported conflict resolution on the ground; this was through mobilising and tapping into a pre-existing network of Peace Promoters to support behaviour change to reduce violence in communities.

There was an incident where some officials came into one polling station...they came and said that they were from the Office of National Security, but they had nothing to prove themselves...So, I reported it using a text message and a fast response was taken. The security services came in and intervened quickly.

George Sesay, District Coordinator IRCSL, Western Urban District



Mediation of electoral disputes – Zambia and Kenya

Key attribute of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church used her convening and mediation powers that stem from her commitment towards the common good, service to others, and her perceived neutrality. This enabled her to bring people together across political divides as a trusted mediator.

7.1 “One Zambia One Nation”

Since the advent of multi-party democracy in 1991, Zambia has been lauded as a beacon of peace within the region, demonstrating a strong commitment to the democratic process. The political and human rights situation in Zambia is generally described as stable, as Zambia has managed political transitions largely by peaceful democratic means.

In 2016, the situation changed dramatically. The 2016 election results in Zambia were contested, following allegations of vote rigging by the opposition. The case was thrown out on technicalities with no declaration of winner from the Constitutional Court. Hakainde Hichilema, the opposition leader, was arrested on charges of failing to give way to a Presidential motorcade. Following his arrest, the country was gripped in a tense situation that was made worse by unexplained fires that burned government buildings and markets. The opposition walked out on the Presidential address in Parliament. This resulted in the President declaring a threatened state of public emergency (Article 31, Zambia Constitution).

In response, a Pastoral Letter was released by the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) entitled *If you want peace work for justice, speaking truth to power*. The Letter strongly criticised the current government's dictatorial approach that was causing more political tension and worsening the political crisis. The President agreed to meet with

the Catholic Bishops in tentative first steps towards dialogue. Earlier dialogues had been attempted, hosted by the Commonwealth and the Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue, the governments preferred mediator. However, the opposition preferred a new, Church-led dialogue, saying the country was safe in the hands of Church; they felt that the Church had proved her competence and neutrality as she had brought the nation together before and could be trusted with the process. The Church had been actively engaged in monitoring the elections, including monitoring results through a Parallel Voter Tabulation through the Ecumenical Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) with the aim of ensuring a free, fair and peaceful election.



Cartoon by Kiss Brian Abraham/Flipproject Zambia

Based on their knowledge of communities in Zambia, the Church recognised that the electoral dispute was accentuating tribal and ethnic divides, thus threatening the social fabric of the nation. So, the Church broadened the dialogue to promote national healing. A dialogue framework was developed with three cycles:

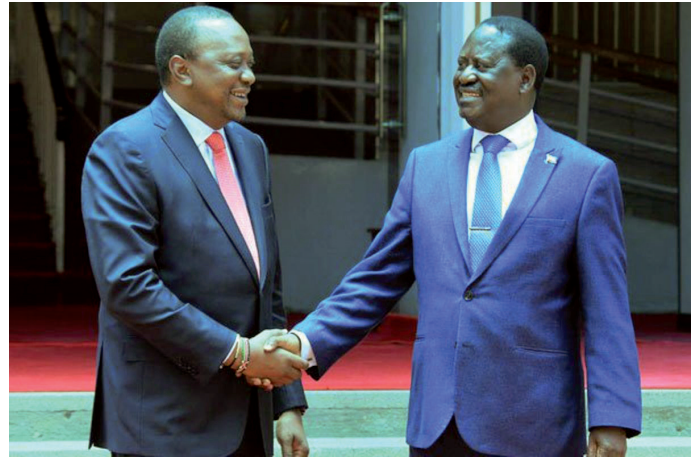
- Cycle 1:** Pre-dialogue action activities, to seek buy-in for all stakeholders;
- Cycle 2:** Getting closure on the 2016 elections;
- Cycle 3:** First national dialogue followed by provincial dialogue forums with a roadmap and reconciliation framework to map the way for the 2021 elections.

At the time of writing (2019), the Bishops' Conference is on Cycle 1: coordinating Indabas (meetings) as pre-dialogue activities across the country to hear people's concerns, seek buy-in from all stakeholders, and promote healing.

7.2 The 'Golden' Handshake – Kenya

The 2013 elections in Kenya were contested, and the opposition alleged rigging. In 2015, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) and National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) called for reforms in the IEBC (Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission) and the wider electoral framework. Their aim was to safeguard the 2017 general elections to avoid a repeat of the 2013 contested outcome. KCCB and NCCK partnered with other faith leaders and used their access to power to initiate a mediation process aimed at ensuring that the 2017 general elections would be credible. Working with NCCK and later with inter-religious Council of Kenya (IRCK), the conference established the Multi-Sectoral Forum which brought together various sectors to advance dialogue and other mediation through a forum lead by religious leaders, the Dialogue Reference Group (DRG). The group was chaired by the late Bishop Rev. Cornelius Korir, who was also the Chairperson of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC).

As in the 2013 election, the opposition disputed the 2017 results and refused to acknowledge President Uhuru Kenyatta as the legitimate President. High political tension and anxiety turned into turmoil, conflict and violence, occurring in several parts of the country. This was particularly the case in regions where the opposition had a massive support base. The 2017 presidential election period saw abusive police operations in opposition strongholds, with police beating and shooting to death at least



The Daily Nation Kenya, March 16, 2018

100 opposition protestors and bystanders. Many women and girls were raped and sexually harassed by police during these operations.²⁶ The situation was exacerbated by the opposition carrying out a swearing-in of the former Prime Minister and leader of the opposition Hon. Raila Odinga as the "Peoples' President of Kenya" at Uhuru Park on 30th January 2018.

In response, the DRG organised and convened several scenario building sessions on the state of the nation, seeking to understand the crisis and develop appropriate interventions. The group organised a fact-finding mission and visited the victims of violence that had rocked the opposition stronghold city of Kisumu. Having seen the impact of the recent violence, the group immediately called for non-violence throughout the country.

The visit was a gesture of solidarity and a show of willingness to unite divided communities; it was widely televised and publicised. Leveraging on its access to power, the DRG convened a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary and Inspector General to raise concerns about the deteriorating security in the country. The meeting demonstrated the government's trust in the Church by agreeing to act on cases of police brutality that the Church brought to light. Through a press statement, the Catholic Bishops urged the opposition to stop mass demonstrations and rather seek redress at the Supreme Court; on the other hand, they called for the President to stop the police brutality and protect all Kenyan citizens. This action showed the Church was independent and trusted to challenge both the government and the opposition.

26. Human Rights Watch World Report, 2019: 322

These efforts to respond to high level political tensions in the country culminated into a National Religious Leaders' Conference in February 2018, at which a Framework for National Dialogue was adopted by the DRG. The result of these mediation efforts, and other behind-the-scenes actions, was that on 9th March 2018, President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga emerged outside Harambee House, and publicly shook hands; this was a moment now famously dubbed "the Handshake." The two leaders announced an agreement and the rollout of a programme to work for unity of the nation through a document titled *Building Bridges to a New Kenyan Nation*. This plan identified nine issues to be addressed, including: ethnic antagonism and competition; lack of national ethos; inclusivity; devolution; and divisive elections. Other issues of importance were safety and security, corruption, shared prosperity, and responsibilities and rights.

The Church successfully convened a prayer breakfast meeting where people from different groups were invited and a taskforce was formed. A taskforce was formed to evaluate the national challenges outlined in the Building Bridges Communiqué. The evaluation led to practical recommendations, and proposals for reform, in order to build lasting unity. According to *The Nation*, Kenya's largest newspaper, the appointment of former members of the inter religious DRG, among them Bishop Zacchaeus Okoth, gave the taskforce credibility and demonstrated the influence of the Church.²⁷

The Handshake brought massive relief to the country, bringing closure to the 2017 presidential election controversy and the rift between the two leaders and their supporters which was threatening to paralyse all institutions of governance in a country already sharply divided.

27. Daily Nation (2018) <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/National-healing-to-top-agenda-of-Uhuru-Raila-team/1056-4536696-sr3ek0z/index.html>

8

Promotion of competent, accountable and responsive legislatures: The Parliamentary Liaison Office – Zimbabwe

Key attribute of the Church demonstrated in this case example:

- The Church leveraged her influence and respect from the governments and legislature to enforce accountability in government beyond the election by establishing the Parliamentary Liaison Office that acts as a bridge between Parliament and the people through influencing Members of Parliament to legislate pro-poor policies.

... a moral voice...particularly at a time in which this world is experiencing many conflicts [such as] refugees; migration; human rights abuses; and climate change, we really need such a strong moral voice as the Pope's; on this, the occasion, during which more than 150 Heads-of-State and governments of the world are gathering, therefore, you cannot expect any greater, more significant and important gathering of the world's leaders, including the Pope.²⁸

Post-election is one of the easily forgotten areas in the electoral cycle, as attention fades after the announcement of results. The Church has shown the importance of carrying on working and monitoring governance beyond the election day, by establishing structures that work with parliaments and other key governance bodies. The purpose of these structures is to provide a bridge between citizens and institutions, aiming to bring elected leaders to account on their promises and commitments, and to advocate for pro-poor policies.

Leveraging her influence and respect from governments and legislatures, the Catholic Church has established Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices (CPLO) in several countries including Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa. At sub regional and continental level, the Symposium of Episcopal Communities of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) has a liaison office at the African Union. At the international level, the Catholic Church has permanent representation at the UN in New York and Geneva, to support national Bishops' conferences in escalating advocacy issues to higher levels of influence. The former UN Secretary General, speaking on the Pope's address to the UN General Assembly that adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, hailed the address as:

The CPLO in Zimbabwe acts as a bridge between Parliament and the people, influencing Members of Parliament on key issues that benefit the citizens. The CPLO has facilitated the creation of a cross-party Catholic Parliamentary Group that picks up issues raised by communities for discussion in Parliament. In 2013, the CPLO, working with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and other Church bodies, facilitated community discussions on the constitution in advance of the Parliamentary committee outreach. This meant that by the time the Parliamentary Committee went to the communities, the people were informed and prepared for the process, and better able to meaningfully participate.

The CPLO runs two main programmes; first is the *know your Parliament* programme, whereby representatives of an MP's constituents visit their MPs in Parliament for a progress report on an issue of concern; this is to follow up on commitments that the politicians have made during the campaigns. Second, through the *Meet your MP/Leaders Forum*, the CPLO organises constituents through the local CCJP structures, and invites MPs to a question time with communities in their constituency. In 2016, the CPLO organised a meeting with the MP for Harare West where constituents discussed how the constituency development funds had been

28. <https://zenit.org/articles/ban-ki-moon-says-pope-francis-is-man-of-moral-voice-purpose/>

used, among other issues.²⁹ By doing this, the CPLO provides an effective space to strengthen participation and accountability. In addition, the CPLO uses these activities to draw and bring relevant issues to the attention of the Bishops Conference for action.

8.1 Other related examples in Uganda and Zambia

Similarly, in Uganda in 2010 through a Parliamentary Liaison Office, a Bishops Advocacy Committee was established to raise issues in Parliament. During the Catholic Bishops' biannual meeting in November 2011, the Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama, addressed the Ugandan people

in a press conference. He also issued a press statement on behalf of the Bishops' Advocacy Committee regarding the lack of transparency and accountability in the country's oil sector. Two Ministers involved in an oil scandal resigned shortly after the Bishops issued the statement. This demonstrates how the Church can be influential to enforce accountability and transparency in government.

In Zambia, Caritas developed a *Promise Monitor* of directives and promises, organised by sector, made by the President and other senior officials as reported in the three major daily newspapers. Through community dialogues using Church structures, promises are tracked, and used as evidence to provide feedback to government.

COMMITMENT/PROMISE	OFFICIAL	SOURCE	AUTHOR	COMMENT / HAS THE GOVERNMENT DELIVERED?
CONSTITUTION AND CORRUPTION				
'Sata wants village ward councils': PF government want governance to go to the village level.	President Michael Chilufya Sata	Zambia Daily Mail January 13, 2013, Page 1	Steven Mvula	
Government prioritises elimination of corruption in land administration: Government's priority in 2013 is to eliminate corruption in land administration.	Minister of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Wylbur Simuusa	The Post January 3, 2013, Page 10	Misheck Wangwe	
Government to take care of GBV, human trafficking victims: The government has put in place a policy that will compel the state to look after victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and human trafficking.	Minister of Community Development, Mother and Child Health Dr Joseph Katema	The Post January 13, 2013 Page 5	Chris Ndhlovu	
Government introduces compulsory vehicle insurance scheme: Government has established a compulsory third motor vehicle insurance scheme in the Road Traffic Act.	Minister of Transport, Works, Supply and Communication Permanent Secretary Muyenga Atanga	Times of Zambia January 12, 2013 Page 1	Nakubiana Shabongo	
Government will review ZAWA law: Government is committed to protecting the country's wildlife.	Vice President Dr Guy Scott	Times of Zambia February 16, 2013 Page 2	Chila Namaiko	
Chipata Forest Reserve squatters must relocate: Hon Sichone says he is going to engage the investigative wings to find out how the funds for the rehabilitation of houses at Lutembwe Farm Centre for the handicapped were used.	Eastern Province Minister, Hon. Malozo Sichone	The Post April 12, 2013 Page 16	Christopher Miti	
State to undertake judicial reforms: Government will undertake judicial institutional reforms in accordance with the demands of the Zambian people as well as due to the pitfalls which have led to slow delivery of justice.	Justice Minister, Wynter Kabimba	Zambia Daily Mail May 3, 2013 Page 1	Chomba Musika	
State assures on graft fight, governance: Government has assured cooperating partners that it will continue to hold good democratic tenets and will not relent in the fight against corruption.	Foreign Affairs Minister, Efron Lungu	Times of Zambia May 21, 2013 Page 1	Chila Namaiko	

Example of a promise tracker in Zambia

29. Jessie Majome is a former Movement for Democratic Change MP of Harare West

9

Methodology

To best understand the specific role of the Church in elections, mixed methodologies were employed in this study. The research had limitations in that it focused only on positive case studies.

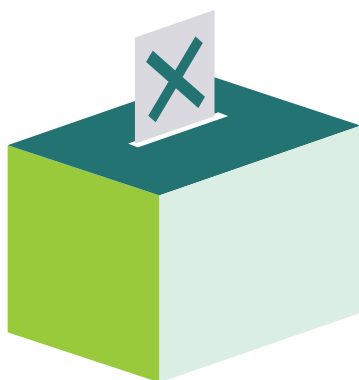
Through a purposive sampling focusing on positive examples to show the potential of the Church, five countries were identified for the research. Purposive sampling, also known as a judgment, selective or subjective sampling³⁰ is a technique in which a researcher relies on their own judgment to identify and select representative elements for a research considered to possess the required characteristics. A representative sample can be obtained by “sound” judgement, which will result in saving time and money.

A case study approach was used as a qualitative method through which the information on six interventions by the Church in electoral processes were examined. Each country was matched to a cycle intervention where they had excelled, ensuring that the entire election process was covered, before, during, and after elections. This was purposively done to ensure that learning was extracted that would allow countries to have better informed responses in the future. In the process, local in-country researchers, mostly CAFOD staff or partners, and those with sound knowledge of the Church and the context were engaged.

Recognising that perspectives of stakeholders have a bearing on the role of the Church, members of electoral bodies, government, members of parliaments and key Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were also interviewed. Research methods primarily centred on gathering information directly from government officials, politicians, civil society groups, community, and the Church leadership, building on existing relationships.

Key research questions were developed and adapted for each target country to develop the case studies. The research was structured as follows:

- Literature review – to build up the context analysis on the nature and history of the elections in each country, and the history of the Church as an actor at the national, regional and international levels;
- Desk review of the interventions of the Church in elections;
- Interviews with key Church representatives and key electoral stakeholders;
- Writing up of case studies,



30. For more on purposive sampling, see Black, K. (2010). Business Statistics: Contemporary Decision Making 6th edition. John Wiley & Sons: 57.

10

Why the Church? Key strengths and attributes of the Church in the electoral process

The case studies in this research shown the varied and crucial experiences of the Church. Across these case studies several common factors and attributes can be identified that demonstrate the key role that the Church can play in electoral processes. These are: rootedness in communities; ubiquitous nature and reach of the Church from local to global; and her ability to convene because of her perceived neutrality; and commitment to the common good and service to others.

Rooted in Communities

The case studies revealed that religion, especially in Africa, is a way of life for millions of people, engrained into the culture of communities and bringing social benefits to communities. From “cradle to grave,” the Church plays a huge role in people’s lives. The Church’s presence does not necessarily depend upon external or international funding. In fact, the Church remains long after international attention has faded, and external funding has declined. The Church is a key provider of essential services such as health and education in most countries in Africa. The Church inspires and motivates volunteers who see their roles as part of a calling to making a difference and a reflection of their faith. Because of this embeddedness in the communities, the Church is trusted by many. Hence, when the Church takes on a particular issue or issues a Pastoral Letter, she has access and gets support from all the platforms available to her. In Kenya the Lenten (Easter) campaign reached about 2.3 million people with voter education, in 18 out of 20 dioceses. This was possible because the Church used small Christian community discussions made up of Christian groups, priests, and groups of youth, women, and men’s movements to reach out to the community.

Because the Church is rooted in communities, she is often able to influence faith communities and shape public opinion in the broader community. In both Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, the Church used her structures to get messages to people to renounce violence in the communities. In Zambia, the Church

is currently using local community structures to conduct *Indabas* (meetings shaped by the Zambian culture) across the country to heal any tribal and ethnic divisions as part of the reconciliation efforts after the disputed 2016 elections.

Reach of the Church, from local to global

In Africa, faith institutions including the Church are available and present even in the most remote villages, where the government is absent. In DRC, 41,026 short-term and long-term observers, representing a wide range of communities, were trained and deployed to observe elections. This made it possible for the Church to offer an alternative voter tallying process because the coverage of the trained observers gave the process credibility.

In Zimbabwe the election integrity survey was possible because the Church used its structures in all the eight dioceses in the country to conduct the survey. The Church was able to take the concerns of the people to the national level by engaging with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The Church’s global presence allows her to escalate issues to the Regional Economic Communities, continental and international levels using functional and existing Church structures at those levels.

In the DRC, the Church used her networks in the Southern Africa region to reach out to SADC as well as the Caritas Networks in Europe to put pressure on the DRC government to hold free and fair elections. President Kabila succumbed to the pressure from the Church and other actors and called for elections that had been postponed for two years. Likewise, in Zimbabwe, the Church, through the Ecumenical Peace Observation Initiative, collaborated with the Church regional network, IMBISA, and organised lobby visits to Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia and Zambia; these countries were important because they were either chairing the SADC Troika on Peace or convening other SADC groups to advocate for peaceful elections in Zimbabwe.

In the DRC, CENCO is perceived as one of the most legitimate organs of Congolese civil society through its moral and intellectual leadership, the predominance of its structures throughout the country, the credibility of its commitments and the defence of values, its neutrality and impartiality as well as its firm commitment to the promotion of the dignity of the human person and the consolidation of democracy in the DR Congo. Its voice is nationally and internationally important and makes it an important interlocutor in the democratic process including elections. .

Source: interview conducted by Gilbert Diongo, CAFOD consultant with Fr Clement Chair of CENCO, March,2019

were convinced that the country was safe in the hands of the Church and that the Church could be trusted with the process. In a great show of trust, the Dialogue Reference Group in Kenya was given access to meet the Cabinet Secretary and Inspector to influence them on ending violence in a stronghold of the opposition. In the Kenya case study, the Archbishop of Kisumu was appointed to the “Handshake” taskforce, because the Church is perceived as working with strong experience and sobriety, with other faiths and actors.³¹ In these mediation efforts in both Zambia and Kenya, there were many meetings that happened behind closed doors and were not documented. This was because the Church shows humility by shying away from publicity, prioritising the building of trust; this sustains the momentum of any mediation by avoiding unnecessary premature announcements, thus protecting against any efforts to scupper success.

The establishment of Parliamentary Liaison Offices in Zimbabwe and other countries, representation at the African Union and permanent representation at the UN enable the Church to act as a bridge between governments, international organisations, and citizens. It also shows that governments and organisations value the Church’s views and inputs.

Church’s ability to convene and mediate

The Church is able to bring together people across political divides. This is because the Church is perceived by many as a neutral, trusted convenor in the communities; because of a tradition of the commitment to the common good and serving the whole population, as well as her deep knowledge of the community, her reputation helps to initiate mediation with strong moral authority.

After the election dispute in Zambia, the opposition preferred a Church-led dialogue because they

31. <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/National-healing-to-top-agenda-of-Uhuru-Raila-team/1056-4536696-sr3ek0z/index.html>



Conclusion

Free and fair elections are indispensable to democracy. A country cannot be considered fully democratic until, among other things, citizens can choose their representatives in competitive elections. The aim of this research was to demonstrate the role of the Church in elections at every step of the cycle: pre-election, during the elections, working to stem post-election violence, and the tracking of post-election promises. Overall, the research demonstrates that the Church is a key player across all the stages of elections in Africa. In many cases, the Church has the potential to effectively enhance the electoral processes in all the targeted countries.



Recommendations

The research has demonstrated that the Church plays a particular role in elections. Religious leaders in many places hold the trust and confidence of people struggling to understand and exercise their political rights. The trust and outreach are already in place, which can significantly enhance the democratic process from a neutral non-political network. Equally crucial is the ability to understand and recognise the different ways that members of the Church express and live their faith, including clergy, Justice and Peace Committee members, youth, women's and men's groups, and lay people. This can allow for multiple levels of effective engagement and interventions, giving flexibility to respond to different challenges.

For those donors, members of governments, and the wider public who would like to engage with the Church for transformational partnerships to enhance democracy during the election cycle, a clear understanding of the range of possible interventions and the Church's approach is important. This has the potential to improve relationships and, most importantly, improve the quality of international, local and national response;

It is worth mentioning that this report is not exhaustive, and that there are other examples of the Church's work in elections that were not cited here. Future research should further explore and document the role of the Church in other countries, and beyond Africa. The Church, through CAFOD and other Caritas agencies, has supported election and governance work in Europe, Asia and Latin America. The experiences of the Church's responses in those continents could be interesting and varied, particularly where the Church's congregations are in a minority.

this would also allow for quicker reaction times in moments of crisis.

Religious actors have a particular role in strengthening development, and therefore should be engaged in a way that is distinct from other actors, particularly in electoral processes. For example, the Church is not an NGO, but a special actor who has the potential to catalyse change by inculcating values and behaviour changes at individual and community levels. If donors and other international actors fail to recognise the Church's wide potential for mediation and transformation, they run the risk of missing the possibilities of what the Church can offer. In many different scenarios and situations, the Catholic Church and her many networks and committees dedicated to social justice are very well positioned for effective and lasting collaborations with the potential for dramatic impact.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, governments, donors, national and international organisations are exploring ways of working collaboratively to deliver on these ambitious goals by 2030. Faith institutions and the Church are

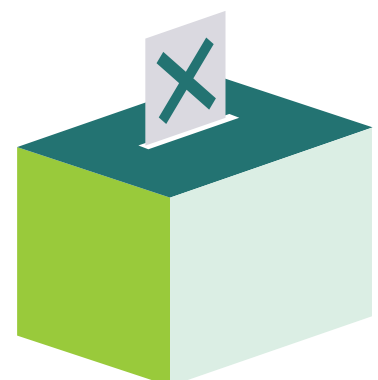
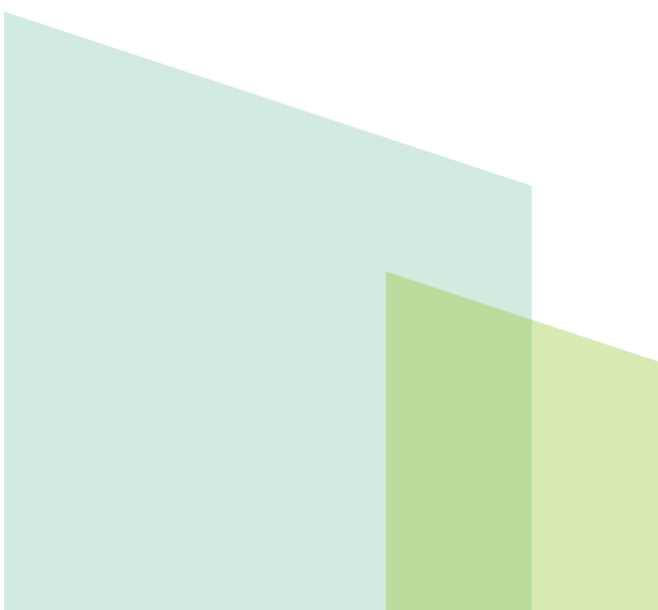
critical actors, not only in elections but in all areas of development.

In order to improve this understanding and the potential for fruitful collaboration, CAFOD makes the following recommendations for engagement in a distinctive way with religious actors for development, and specifically for elections:

- **Strengthen partnerships with religious leaders at local, national and international levels, with a goal of understanding and building transformational partnerships for engagement across the electoral cycle.** This should happen at all the different levels and groupings of the Catholic Church, such as the lay people and clergy at all levels, as well as other religious leaders. This would utilise the Church's convening power and experience in mediation, as well as long-term networks and structures in communities. This is particularly important in countries with areas that are largely out of government reach.
- **Build in time and resources to foster long term effective engagement with religious organisations for democracy enhancement and election support.** It is important to ensure that programmes go beyond one-off occasions into planning, design, management, and monitoring of the electoral cycle. Effective

partnerships are the result of long-term and deliberate efforts that need to be integrated into ways of working and funding cycles.

- **Incorporate religious bodies in the early stages of scoping, planning and monitoring for country-specific electoral responses.** This would make the most of the Church's embeddedness in communities and rich knowledge of local needs, as well as her tested strategies that work for long-term locally driven initiatives.
- **Apply a multi-level approach to engagement with the Church for tailored and fit-for-purpose interventions.** Where required, build and invest in the long-term capacity of local structures and leaders to become more effective partners and partnerships.
- **Strengthen faith literacy among international staff** of national and international organisations to cultivate a broader and more nuanced understanding of the history of the region and the particular role of faith in augmenting development in that context. Where possible, identify and seek to understand contentious areas of policy or practice that potentially make partnerships difficult, with a view to find common ground.





Further Reading

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