



## **Real-Time Election Results for Kenya**

### ***Press Release***

### ***For Immediate Release***

Kenyan voters will be able to monitor election results and reports of election irregularities in their constituencies on Monday, thanks to added functionality on the popular [GotToVote.co.ke](http://GotToVote.co.ke) election portal.

GotToVote will now allow ordinary citizens to cut through all the 'noise' and hype generated during elections to get easy access to the official election results for their counties, or local constituencies, when they become available from Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IBEC).

"The media and political parties are all focused on the national results and on results affecting two or three of the higher profile presidential contenders. The ordinary citizen and their need to know about their local results is getting lost in all the hype. GotToVote seeks to change that, by giving citizens their local results, as soon as they're available, and mashing up these results with other locally relevant data," explains Open Institute executive director, Jay Bhalla.

The Open Institute (OI) is a Kenya-based think tank and civic innovation lab that helps create new ways for citizens to hold those with power to account.

During the elections, GotToVote users can send SMS and social media messages to friends and family, at no cost, reminding them to vote and urging them to support peaceful polling. After balloting closes, GotToVote users will be able to track the election results for their constituencies, as well as track official reports of irregularities, election fraud, or other incidents in their neighbourhoods.

"We've deliberately made the system as easy to use and as useful as possible," says Bhalla.

GotToVote is a Code4Kenya pilot project, managed by OI, on behalf of the African Media Initiative (AMI) and the World Bank. It was originally built in just 24hrs to help voters register for the elections, after citizens complained that the official data released by the IBEC was too large to download and too cumbersome to use.

“The file was so big, it would have taken days for ordinary Kenyans to download. And, once they opened the document all they would have found was complex lists and tables of constituency registration centers. These elections are a tight race, and every vote counts. So, we knew that the information was simply too important to be ignored,” says Bhalla.

Two Code4Kenya fellows, David Lemayian and Simeon Oriko, therefore scraped the data out of the IBEC document and built a simple website for citizens to find their registration center at the click of a button. The website also helped citizens understand the often complex procedures for registering.

“The approach is something that data journalists in programmes like Code4Kenya do all the time. Within hours, thousands of Kenyans were using GotToVote to register for the elections. It proved that the real power of civic technologies is their ability to quickly and cheaply translate complex data into ‘actionable’ information, and to then calibrate the information to a citizens’ exact location or other circumstances,” says AMI digital strategist, Justin Arenstein.

These early successes prompted Dutch human rights organisation, HiVOS, to make a micro-grant of 10,000 Euro to the project to build additional functionality, as well as to package GotToVote and other useful civic technology tools into a ‘plug-&-play’ resource kits for media and citizen groups in other countries.

“Building tools that can be easily reused elsewhere is incredibly important. Tens of millions of US Dollars are spent unnecessarily every year to reinvent the wheel. Code4Kenya and our other programmes seek to change this, by building stuff that can be reused everywhere from Cape to Cairo,” says Arenstein.

GotToVote and other tools built by Code4Kenya and its partners will therefore be made freely available for use by anyone else via a new African-Commons portal. AMI is also replicating the Code4Kenya model elsewhere in Africa, beginning with Ghana and South Africa, as part of a drive to kick-start civic technology movements there.

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**BACKGROUND ON THE PARTNERS:**

**CODE4KENYA**

*Code4Kenya is pioneering programme to transform the way that African media and civil society use data, by embedding tech strategists as ‘fellows’ into thought-leader organisations, where they build civic engagement tools and open data resources.*

*For more information, visit: **[www.Code4Kenya.org](http://www.Code4Kenya.org)***



***AMI** is the continent's largest umbrella association of media owners. AMI's mandate is to serve as a catalyst for strengthening African media, by building the tools, knowledge resources and technical capacity for African media to play an effective public interest role in their societies.*

*For more information, visit: **[www.AfricanMediaInitiative.org](http://www.AfricanMediaInitiative.org)***



***The Open Institute (OI)** is an agile think/do tank and civic technology lab that provides helps turn great ideas into powerful tools. It does this by providing technical support and strategic leadership for Africa's open data movement. It also advises civil society, the media, governments, and the wider corporate world.*

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