ELECTIONS COVERAGE PLANNING

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

- **Identify parties**, review their manifestos and publish details;
- **Identify party representatives**, get their contact details and also share them with colleagues;
- **Identify and contact** local and national electoral commission offices;
- **Talk to members of the community** and find and research their issues;
- **Create debate and discussion** around local and national elections issues;
- **Do stories and infographics** that assist with voter-education;
- **Divide up** the electoral area/wards amongst reporters;
- **Apply for official accreditation** from the relevant authority;
- **Assess election-readiness status** of polling stations in terms of access to water, electrification, sanitation, contingency plans etc;
- **Radio/TV**: host talk shows with political parties and independent commentators;
- **Radio/TV**: Discuss elections plans with on-air colleagues (disc jockeys/talk show hosts/presenters) to keep them in the loop;
- **Print**: ensure that you have photographs and biographies of candidates prepared;
- **Check** that cell-phones are charged, spare batteries, air-time, transport arrangements etc are in place;
- I**nform** your readers/listeners/viewers where they can keep up to date on elections on your online platforms;
- **Set up** Twitter lists of parties, politicians and other accounts relevant to the election and monitor them using TweetDeck (https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/);
- Subscribe to Facebook pages of political parties/political groupings/analysts etc and monitor them;
- **Use** twXplorer (http://twxplorer.knightlab.com/) to find elections-related hashtags, add them to TweetDeck and monitor them.
- **Set up** a WhatsApp number and tell your audience about it and ask them to share elections-related insights, information, photos and video.

NB: FACT-CHECK EVERYTHING YOU RECEIVE BEFORE PUBLISHING OR BROADCASTING IT

ELECTION DAY

- **Visit polling stations** and check whether they opened on time;
- **Vote**;
- **Conduct interviews** with party representatives and presiding officer to find out whether or not parties are complying with the electoral code of conduct;
- **Note** size of the queues
- **Interview** members of the public about their voting experiences;
- **Note conduct** of voters, party agents and elections authority officials;

- **Note** security provisions;
- **Note** prominent voters and try to interview them;
- **Inform** radio listeners of status of voting stations and voting process;
- **Visit** other polling stations;
- **Tweet and post to Facebook** and include popular hashtags;
- **Use your mobile phone** to shoot video for online.
- **Monitor** your Twitter lists and Facebook carefully for stories
- **Use Twitter and Facebook** to reach out to your audiences; they are extra eyes on the ground;
- **Ask your audience** to share insights, photos and video via Twitter, Facebook
- **Monitor** your WhatsApp number and other social media carefully;

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POST-ELECTION PERIOD

- **Get official comment** from the elections authority with respect to proclamation of fairness;
- **Note queries** from political parties (that are given up to three days to lodge complaints);
- **Request** post-election interviews with political parties;
- **Note** State/Provincial and National results and interview winners;
- **Seek** analytical comment from independent commentators on results;
- **Interview** members of community with respect to election results;
- **Cover** election celebrations;
- **Check** the progress of winning party after 100 days, 200 days, 300 days:
- **Keep** newly elected government accountable and check that it follows up on election promises.