

RECOMMENDATIONS

URBAN POPULATION

To increase the civic and political participation of the urban population in the country:

Raise awareness about the importance of participation in socio-political life

- ♦ Focus on outlining the benefits of civic engagement.
- ♦ Connect activism with issues of concern such as ecology, urbanisation, etc.
- ♦ Identify role models and influencers and promote their activities and impact.

Promote channels and procedures to encourage participation in civic life

Promote changes and improvements within the communities as a result of active participation in socio-political life

Provide mechanisms that will support dialogue between citizens and the government to increase civic participation

- ♦ Improve responsiveness of state institutions and political parties to the needs of the citizens.

Increase the belief in their power to make an impact in the community or society.

- ♦ Promote positive examples and their impact in the community. Use examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to influence the society.
- ♦ Promote smaller community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern.
- ♦ Initiate and promote targeted campaigns on ecology, air pollution, transport, etc.
- ♦ Use formats to cater to the variety of attitudes, lifestyles, and interaction of the urban population including women, youngsters, first time voters, unemployed, employed. Use TV, social media testimonials, third-party stories, interviews, project tracking, before and after scenarios, etc.

- ♦ Empower by developing skills and knowledge for confident civic engagement.
- ♦ Use a variety of online (preferred by the urban population) and in-person tools to educate and help develop skills such as webinars, forums, blogs, live video, educational web articles, free training, etc.

Contribute to building a political culture that encourages participation at all levels of society, without fear of consequences, intimidation and violence

Promote diversity and inclusion of candidates by age, gender, ethnicity, etc.

Create alliances

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Raise awareness about the benefits of active civic participation.
- ♦ Report on the outcomes of civic initiatives.
- ♦ Promote channels and ways for civic participation.
- ♦ Include citizens in debates and talk shows to promote their interest in participation.
- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of civic participation.

With the NGOs

Compared to the other demographic groups, the urban population is more privileged in terms of access to a variety of NGOs.

- ♦ Use NGOs as a hub to spark participation. Highlight the effective role of NGOs, their visibility, as well as their field of interest.
- ♦ Create supporting spaces and opportunities for citizens to come together and act on issues they care about (ecology, health, urbanisation, culture, art, etc.)
- ♦ Provide guidance and resources that will encourage citizens to confidently participate in civic life.
- ♦ Use them as a mechanism that will support dialogue between citizens and the institutions.

With influencers/celebrities

- ♦ Partner with micro-influencers relevant for different demographic groups to promote civic participation.
- ♦ Use influencers to gather a critical group around different issues of interest.
- ♦ Use influencers as leaders in smaller community projects.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches.

Use TV to reach the majority of the urban population.

The most recommended options are newscasts, debates, talk shows, open studios, etc.

Use social media to reach the youngsters, including the educated and employed portion of the population.

Social media is the key information channel (28% source socio-political information) with great potential for engagement and participation of the younger part of the population (42% of youngsters under 25 years of age use social media as a source of information).

Techniques to consider:

- ♦ Foster two-way open communication.
- ♦ Promote relevant topics.
- ♦ Give space for citizens to be heard.
- ♦ Partner with influencers/celebrities.
- ♦ Promote direct interaction with candidates.
- ♦ Share opinions on different issues of interest.
- ♦ Inform about the progress of various issues of concern.

Organize direct meetings or other community events.

The format of these meetings should be informal, such as coffee gatherings, debates, joint community projects.

Pilot non-traditional channels

- ♦ Organize entertaining events and activities to spark greater interest and attendance, including sports events, concerts, picnics, etc.
- ♦ Consider effective outreach methods to disseminate information, e.g. in buses, malls, local stores, parks, and other facilities.

RURAL POPULATION

In response to the identified challenges, a set of interventions are recommended that may effectively contribute to improving civic and political participation of the rural population in the country:

Conduct voter registration campaign and/or caravan to monitor, verify and address issues with documents

Strengthen the belief that they can make an impact in the community or society

- ♦ Promote positive local examples that are recognized and respected by the community and highlight their impact. Use examples that show that activism matters and has the power to influence and change the society.
- ♦ Promote and facilitate smaller community projects and initiatives that address various issues of concern.
- ♦ Consider different formats of participation, such as informal meetings with influential local representatives and activists, third-party narratives, community projects facilitated by a political party or other organization.

Alleviate the negative perception of being underrepresented by elected officials

- ♦ Include and keep high in the public agenda issues important for the rural population.
- ♦ Carry out frequent monitoring and follow-up of the rural community's concerns in the period between elections.
- ♦ Encourage politicians and activists to advocate for the needs of the rural population.
- ♦ Use variety of tools to promote two-way communication such as: regular monthly visits to the community, promotion of the concerns of the rural population in the media, as well as regular updates on the progress made; promotion of issues and concerns of the younger rural community on the social media.

Promote local channels and methods to encourage rural population to participate in the civic life

- ✦ Consider various formats: regular meetings, polls or other formats for expression of opinions on a specific subject matter, etc.

Create alliances:

With local civil society organisations to:

- ✦ Identify issues on micro level that are important for the local communities.
- ✦ Support small projects initiated by the local organisations.
- ✦ Establish close contact with the rural communities.
- ✦ Strengthen the capacities, position, and networking of local organisations within the rural community to increase their credibility and influencing power.

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ✦ Promote issues relevant for the rural population, in particular those focused on improving the quality of rural life.
- ✦ Monitor progress of projects relevant for the rural population.
- ✦ Promote positive and success stories of rural activists.
- ✦ Promote diversity of candidates (woman, youth, rural) during election campaigns.
- ✦ Promote new channels and avenues for civic participation of the rural community.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches

Use TV to reach the rural population.

- ✦ Promote representatives and topics relevant to the rural population via debates, talk shows or interactive debates focused on improvement of the quality of life, youth migration, etc.
- ✦ Use formats that enable to contextualize and leverage the information e.g. use TV to reach out to the elderly, women, and people on the lower spectrum of income and education.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events

Harness the potential of familiar formats, such as informal discussions, at the expense of larger events.

- ✦ Use different formats for direct interaction such as small gatherings or informal neighbourhood meetings.
- ✦ Propose community projects or activities conducive to gathering people or specific groups in the community.

Use social media to reach out to the younger rural population

Social media is the key information channel with a great potential to engage the younger portion of the population. It can help promote topics of rural youth life, promote positive examples of the rural youth, and provide opportunities for expression of opinion (polls, debates, incite debates and comments) etc.

Pilot other non-traditional channels

- ♦ Organize entertainment activities and events and introduce new content to activate specific target groups.
- ♦ Explore ways to reach out to the rural population by dissemination of information in the means of public transport, at bus stations, local stores and other local facilities.

YOUTH

Below are a set of recommendations that are:

- ♦ Youth centric.
- ♦ Context specific.
- ♦ Focused on using the right channels.
- ♦ Actionable.

The recommendations are clustered in three groups as follows:

Increase the importance and relevance of the election process

Talk social, not political: I care for a lot of things - education, health, environment

- ♦ Connect elections and voting to issues that affect the lives of the youth.
- ♦ Promote issues that impact youth the most and those that young people are likely to be more knowledgeable of and interested in (e.g. education, health, ecology).
- ♦ Conduct single-issue campaigns relevant to youth that address issues of concern to young people and relevant policy issues or upcoming political decisions that can motivate the youth which is otherwise alienated from institutional politics.
- ♦ Explicitly include youth issues in political party manifestos.
- ♦ Initiate joint activities with organizations and experts dealing with the issues of interest, e.g. environmental civic organizations.

Focus on the impact they can make: I want to know that my vote and involvement in community life have an impact.

- ♦ Promote different young activists, present their activities, and their impact.
- ♦ Promote small community projects that tackle specific issues, e.g. donations to libraries, eco-activism, healthy habits, etc.
- ♦ Promote ways in which young people can make an impact.
- ♦ Use examples that can prove that activism matters and has the power to influence/improve society.
- ♦ Consider different formats such as: testimonials, peer endorsement, third-party narratives, community projects on micro-level facilitated by political parties or other organizations.

Provide channels for expression of opinion: I want space and opportunities to be heard

- ♦ Create opportunities for direct and regular communication with the youth

Make them feel visible: I would like to know that my needs and concerns as a young person are equally important and represented in electoral and political processes.

- ♦ Top government leaders should promote and give attention to young activists and politicians to demonstrate their interest and support the important role of young people in democratic societies. Given their unique position and the intense media attention they attract, top government leaders can do more to place and keep youth issues on the public agenda and also promote young politicians and representatives as well as other successful young professionals.
- ♦ Social media and other online tools should be utilized to allow youth to participate in national and local decision-making. This could include sharing policy information in a youth-friendly fashion, providing direct youth feedback to the government on certain policies (e.g. through feedback forums), holding consultations between youth and politicians through social media or other online platforms, making use of structured citizen surveys, opinion polls, online petitions, policy consultations, and dialogues and involving youth in development planning.

Formats and channels to consider include: social media, open day, coffee gatherings, joint projects as well as debates and conferences.

Create alliances.

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on the positive and successful examples of youth activism (ex. Greta Thunberg).
- ♦ Promote young politicians and activists' presence in the media and increase their media coverage.

- ♦ Promote new channels and ways for civic participation of the youth.
- ♦ Include more young people in debates, talk shows, etc. and give them an opportunity to talk about issues that interest them.

With youth organizations

- ♦ Create supportive spaces and opportunities for youth to come together and act on issues they care about.
- ♦ Provide guidance and resources that will encourage young people to confidently participate in civic life.
- ♦ Provide mechanisms that will support dialogue between young people and the government.
- ♦ Be more proactive in approaching young people to help increase visibility and public awareness.

With influencers and celebrities

- ♦ Partner with micro-influencers relevant in different areas to young people's life to promote civic participation.

Choose the right communication channels.

Social media plays a dominant role in the media habits of young people as it is typically their main source of information and channel for participation

- ♦ Use social media accounts dedicated to communication with youth, managed by young people within the organization/institution/party.
- ♦ Use a mix of all available direct communication channels (direct messaging, comments, reactions, chatbots, etc.)
- ♦ Promote youth-relevant social topics and issues.
- ♦ Provide space for young people to express their opinions.
- ♦ Partner with influencers/celebrities.
- ♦ Use more dynamic formats: motion, video, live streams, stories, etc.

Use traditional media and TV to educate them about the election process or present candidates. News and debates are the most popular formats.

Use direct, informal meetings to build relationships with young voters making them feel appreciated, valued, and heard

Consider formats such as informal coffee gatherings, debates, community projects that cater to youngsters, lectures on topics of interest, etc.

Organize artistic, cultural or sports activities to strike a balance between education and entertainment.

FIRST TIME VOTERS

In addition to the recommendations referring to the youth in general, specific recommendations include:

Provide election information and education about access to the electoral process

- ♦ Create dedicated educational campaign providing necessary information for first time voters on voter registration, voter list scrutiny, voting procedures, etc.
- ♦ Use tailored tools and communication channels for effective outreach and delivery of messages: video tutorials, infographics or other visual presentations could be a good choice in view of the consumption preferences of this group. Communication should be largely online, using digital channels for precise targeting.
- ♦ Include youth representatives and experts in all phases of the voter information and education campaigns, to incorporate youth perspective in the design, evaluation, and validation of the activities.

Start early

Involve future voters into the democratic process early, before they reach voting age by arranging preregistration to facilitate voting or incentivize first time voters via text message, e-mail, or other communication channels specific to this group.

Increase the importance of the election process by focusing on the issues of their interest

Refer to education, health, and ecology, their role in the election process, positive examples of the civic participation impact and provide channels where they can express their opinions or address relevant topics. Details of possible activities are incorporated in the recommendations for the general youth group.

Create alliances

In addition to alliances with the media, creation of alliances with youth organizations and influencers are important to ensure mobilization of the first time voters. Partnering with micro-influencers relevant to different areas of young people's life is likely to increase their interest in the process and impact their willingness to engage.

Use the right communication channels

The current generation of first time voters are the first digital natives to be called to vote, thus their media habits are largely informed by the digital media, in particular the social media platforms. They are their main source of information and can be effective in incentivising personalized participation, based on their sentiments and conversations and establishing two-way communication channels.

Direct informal meetings can also be an effective vehicle for establishment of connections with first time voters, particularly if focused on relevant topics.

Effective communication outreach to young outgoing people can also be achieved by introducing artistic, cultural or sports activities and content.

RURAL YOUTH

The recommendations for the general youth are also relevant and applicable to this group.

One of the most important recommendations to engage rural youth voters is to harness their higher willingness to participate in civic and political activities by creating and promoting conditions and channels that will facilitate such participation.

The specific recommendations for communication and interaction with rural youth are:

Focus on issues that concern rural youth

Local issues that can contribute to a better quality of life such as transportation, entertainment, and employment, being the key concerns expressed by survey participants.

Improve their negative perception of being underrepresented by elected officials

Consistently include, discuss, and address issues of concern to the rural youth in the public agenda of relevant political representatives both during and in-between elections.

- ◆ Encourage politicians and activists affiliated to major political parties to promote rural youth needs.

Strengthen their belief that they can make an impact in the community and society

- ◆ Promote positive examples of recognized and respected rural youth activists in the community and emphasize the impact of their accomplishments. Showcase examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to rectify the society.
- ◆ Promote small community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern for the rural youth.
- ◆ Disseminate positive examples using different formats such as testimonials, third-party stories and community projects on a micro-level facilitated by a political party or other organization.

Establish channels for regular and close communications with rural youth

- ♦ Harness the potential of personal/direct contact to motivate and influence rural youth involvement and participation in civic activities and the election process.
- ♦ Consider formats and channels such as: informal meetings, community projects, regular check-ups, organization of small entertainment events or visits to events in other cities, etc.

Strengthen the capacities of rural youth to participate in civic and political life

Organize free programs on public speaking, debating, and project management to develop confidence to participate in civic and political life.

Create alliances

In addition to creating alliances with the media, establishing alliances with local youth organizations and influencers are also important in order to mobilize the rural youth. Partnering with local micro-influencers active in different areas of young people's life will increase their interest and willingness to engage.

Use relevant communication channels

- ♦ Focus on direct communication with rural youth. Consider direct, informal meetings focused on relevant topics.
- ♦ Use social media as the main information channel as it has the greatest potential for engagement and participation: promote topics of rural youth life, promote rural youth positive examples, provide opportunities to express their opinion (polls, debates, commentaries, etc.)
- ♦ Use TV during the election process, particularly news, debates and candidates' presentation.
- ♦ Organize entertaining activities and events. Such events could spark interest and attendance due to a general lack of organized entertainment in rural areas.

WOMEN

In response to these identified challenges and barriers, a set of interventions are recommended that may effectively contribute to improving civic and political participation of the women in the country:

Increase awareness about the importance of participation of women in civic and political affairs in democratic societies to counter gender stereotypes and to contribute to building a political culture conducive to participation of women at all levels of the society:

- ♦ Focus on the importance and benefits of socio-political participation.
- ♦ Deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice.
- ♦ Promote women's equality in political parties' policies and the society as a whole.
- ♦ Use positive image of women's political representatives in political campaigns.
- ♦ Ensure that the behaviour of the party members is in line with the values of gender equality.
- ♦ Build alliances with men and other women organizations to promote women's participation in public and political life.
- ♦ Strengthen civic and citizenship training in the formal education system at all levels and foster adult education on gender equality and non-discrimination.

Increase relevance and meaning of civic and political participation

- ♦ Educate women about the importance of participation.
- ♦ Relate tangible female concerns and issues with their power to influence policies and the decision making process in general.
- ♦ Conduct single-issue campaigns targeting women that address relevant policy issues or upcoming political decisions and have the power to engage.
- ♦ Initiate joint community based activities at micro level with organizations and experts dealing with issues of interest e.g. children, traffic safety, lighting of public spaces, water supply systems.
- ♦ Mainstream women's issues and concerns in party programmes and address them with special measures.

Strengthen their belief that they can make an impact in the community or society

- ♦ Promote different activists of both genders and use examples that can prove that activism, including for women's rights, matters and has the power to improve and influence the society.
- ♦ Promote success stories of smaller community projects resolving women's issues or concerns.
- ♦ Promote ways women can make an impact and emphasize the role of the woman as an agent for positive societal change.
- ♦ Increase visibility of female initiatives, garner attention and disclose institutional barriers that enforce gender bias practices.
- ♦ Establish mechanisms to consult and communicate with women in local communities when creating party programs or policies.
- ♦ Consider formats such as testimonials, third-party narratives, community projects on micro-level facilitated by political parties or other organizations, and direct contacts.

Initiate participation

- ♦ Due to lower self-initiative, woman should be directly and personally invited to engage in different civic activities).
- ♦ Demonstrate support and appreciation toward female initiatives.
- ♦ Promote channels, methods for participation and engagement that are sensitive to women needs and priorities.
- ♦ Provide support and flexibility taking into consideration their daily chores to ensure their presence and participation
- ♦ Use the power of collective motivation – invite groups of friends, colleagues, neighborhood, etc.

Strengthen capacities

- ♦ Build capacities to develop a skill set important for confident participation: leadership skills, public speaking, public appearance, etc.
- ♦ Provide media training to women activists and/or politicians to help enable effective media campaigns to promote their agenda.

Create alliances

With the media (traditional and nontraditional)

Media can play an important role in supporting women's balanced participation in political and public decision-making, including through equal coverage of female candidates, focus on the positive contributions of women in political and civic life, and avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes. These actions could help challenge negative attitudes towards women's political and civic participation or lack of confidence and support for female candidates among voters.

Media outlets should:

- ♦ Educate and sensitize about the importance of woman participation in socio-political life.
- ♦ Promote women's participation and interests.
- ♦ Emphasize the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination.
- ♦ Ensure that women and men have equal opportunities (air time, invitations to debates, topics for discussion) during election campaigns.
- ♦ Promote positive examples of female activism and political participation.
- ♦ Promote smaller community projects initiated and led by women.
- ♦ Promote ways and avenues for female participation, including promotion of NGOs.
- ♦ Contribute to building a political culture that encourages female participation at all levels of society, without fear of sexist, misogynist or bigoted abuse and hate speech, intimidation, and violence.
- ♦ Use the entertainment part of the program to raise awareness on the importance of active participation of women, e.g. film serial on female activism, content that promotes female leaders and positive examples.

With the NGOs (particularly those dealing with gender equality)

- ♦ Create supporting spaces and opportunities for women to come together and act on issues of concern.
- ♦ Provide guidance and resources that will encourage women to confidently participate in civic life.
- ♦ Provide formats for engagement of women.
- ♦ Serve as a source of support and empowerment for female initiatives.
- ♦ Use NGOs as a link between women in local communities and central authorities
- ♦ Provide mechanisms that will support dialogue between women and central authorities in support of increasing women's participation.
- ♦ Use NGOs to promote women leaders to set an example for other women.

With influencers/celebrities

Partner with influencers and celebrities, in particular with those who deal with issues relevant to women, to promote civic participation of women. Use their influence to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation for a better quality of life and influence by example.

Choose relevant communication channels

The research shows that women generally trust the media less and tend to scrutinize the information. Open and honest communication regardless of the channel is highly recommended.

Use TV to reach women

- ♦ Promote women activists and positive examples of women politicians.
- ♦ Promote topics relevant to women via debates, guest programs etc., especially those focused on their everyday life challenges.
- ♦ Include and promote women participants in the debates on topics not typically considered “women topics” and ensure women perspective is addressed.
- ♦ Promote principles of gender equality and non-discrimination.
- ♦ Use formats other than standard political TV shows. Include topics related to women participation in entertainment shows, morning programs, etc.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events

Harness the potential of the formats they are familiar with by discussing topics in an informal setting instead of organizing events they are unwilling to participate in.

- ♦ Use formats that facilitate direct interaction such as: small gatherings, local informal meetings to build trusting relationships and strengthen their positive self-perception.
- ♦ Use gender sensitive approach in the organization of meetings, and/or arrange or provide extra care and entertainment for their children
- ♦ Propose community projects or activities with the potential of gathering women from the community.

Use social media to reach younger women.

Social media as the key informational channel with great potential for engagement and participation of the younger part of the population:

- ♦ Promote youth topics
- ♦ Promote women candidates
- ♦ Promote positive examples of woman activism and their impact
- ♦ Promote party culture of non-discrimination and equality
- ♦ Enable free expression of opinion (polls, debate, commentaries) etc.
- ♦ Enable and support initiatives

Use other non-traditional channels

- ♦ Organize free training on leadership, public speaking, etc.
- ♦ Organize humanitarian activities and events to spark interest and attendance
- ♦ Organize fitness or hiking events
- ♦ Organize professional lectures, conferences, and workshops
- ♦ Organize film festivals dealing with women’s activism issues
- ♦ Concerts, picnics and other events.

RURAL WOMEN

The set of recommendations drawn for women in general apply to the community of rural women with focus on the following priorities: awareness, confidence, belief in impact and channels/ways to participate.

Increase awareness about the importance of women's participation

- ♦ Focus on the importance and benefits of socio-political participation of women: encouraging trust in the democracy through participation, prioritizing health, education and other key development indicators; decision making process and policies reflecting the priorities of families, women, and ethnic minorities, life quality, etc.).
- ♦ Deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice.
- ♦ Use positive examples of women's political representatives and activists in political campaigns.
- ♦ Ensure that the behaviour of party members is in line with the values of equality.
- ♦ Build alliances with men and other women's organizations to promote women's participation in public and political life.

Strengthen the self-perception of rural women as a powerful agent of change

- ♦ Promote positive examples that are recognized and respected by the community.
- ♦ Establish mechanisms to consult and communicate with women in local communities when creating party programs or policies.
- ♦ Promote and facilitate smaller community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern relevant to rural women.

- ♦ Frequent monitoring and follow-up of the rural community concerns in the period between elections.
- ♦ Encourage politicians and activists of major political parties to advocate for the needs of the rural population.
- ♦ Consider different formats of communication including informal meetings with influential local representatives and activists, third-party narratives, community projects facilitated by political parties, or other organizations, regular monthly visits to the community.

Empower rural women and boost self-confidence

- ♦ Build an atmosphere of trust, respect and non-discrimination.
- ♦ Ensure development of a specific skill set to facilitate confident civic participation, including leadership skills, public speaking, and public appearance. While taking into consideration daily household responsibilities of rural women.
- ♦ Focus on collective instead of individual participation.
- ♦ Contribute to building a political culture that encourages women's participation at all levels of society, without fear of sexist, misogynist or bigoted abuse and hate speech, intimidation and violence.

Promote new channels and avenues to encourage civic participation of rural women

- ♦ Formats to consider: regular meetings, polls or forums for expression of opinions on a specific subject matter
- ♦ Initiatives to tackle local concerns
- ♦ Humanitarian initiatives
- ♦ Skill-based initiatives (cooking, handwork etc.)

Create alliances:

With the local civic organisations to:

- ♦ Identify issues on community level that are important for the local women
- ♦ Support small projects initiated by the local women's organisations.
- ♦ Establish close contact with the rural communities.
- ♦ Strengthen the capacities, position, and networking of local organisations within the rural community to increase their credibility and influencing power.

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote issues relevant to the rural women, including issues focused on improving the quality of life of the rural population and rural women in particular.

- ♦ Monitor progress of projects relevant to the rural population and rural women
- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of rural women activists.
- ♦ Promote diversity of candidates (women, youth, rural) during election campaigns.
- ♦ Promote new channels and avenues for civic participation of the rural community with focus on rural women.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches.

Use TV to reach the rural population. Combine national and local TV stations

- ♦ Use formats that enable to contextualize and leverage the information, in particular given that TV is the main source of information for the elderly, women, and people on the lower spectrum of income and education.
- ♦ Use different types of programs, including political, entertainment, lifestyle shows, morning programs, etc.
- ♦ Promote representatives and topics relevant to the rural population and rural women via debates, guest programs etc., and place focus on improvement of the quality of life, youth migration, etc.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events

Due to the busy schedule of rural women and their affinity for direct contacts and meetings, direct and informal meetings may incentivise participation in civic and political activities.

- ♦ Use different formats that facilitate direct interaction such as small gatherings and local informal meetings, to build trusting relationships and increase their positive self-perception.
- ♦ Take gendered approach when organizing meetings, in terms of women's daily agenda and convenience or arrange extra care and entertainment for their children.
- ♦ Propose community projects or activities with the potential of gathering women from the community.

Use social media to reach younger rural women. Pilot other non-traditional channels

- ♦ Organize entertainment activities and events and introduce tailored made content to activate the specific target group.
- ♦ Engage rural women in humanitarian events
- ♦ Explore ways to reach out to the rural population, including the rural women by dissemination of information in buses, at bus stations, local stores, and other community facilities.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ensure that all requirements are met to effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis

- ♦ Ensure that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use.
- ♦ Use new technology where appropriate to enable them to participate.
- ♦ Ensure they have all the necessary voting information in understandable language and user friendly format.

Actively promote an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the socio-political life, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in socio-political life

- ♦ Promote electoral, political and/or public success of persons from these groups.
- ♦ Include and promote candidates from this group.

Create alliances:

With non-government organizations to empower and facilitate civic and political participation of persons with disabilities.

- ♦ Inform and educate about the voting process.
- ♦ Represent their needs.
- ♦ Inform and alarm about the barriers for participation.
- ♦ Give support and strengthen skills of persons with disabilities for confident participation.
- ♦ Set up links between the community of persons with disabilities and the institutions.
- ♦ Strengthen the capacities, position and networking of NGOs to increase their credibility and influence.

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of activists among persons with disabilities.
- ♦ Raise awareness about the needs of the people with disabilities.
- ♦ Contribute to building a political culture that encourages persons with disabilities to participate at all levels of society, without fear of discrimination.
- ♦ Make information and programs accessible to persons with disabilities, particularly the voter information.

Choose relevant communication channels

and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches. Adjust communication and communication channels to their specific needs.

Use TV to reach the majority of the disabled population

- ♦ Use formats that give opportunities to adjust the accessibility of the information.
- ♦ Always add title and sign language to the information presented.
- ♦ Consider other formats in addition to newscasts e.g. debates, editorials, short stories, and testimonials.
- ♦ Whenever possible, present information in an illustrative manner, especially about the voting process, voting rights, reporting election irregularities.

Use social media to cater to the younger population such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

ROMA

In response to these identified challenges and barriers, a set of interventions are recommended that may effectively contribute to improve civic and political participation of the Roma population in the country:

Continue and expand on civic education efforts

- ♦ Focus on outlining the benefits of civic engagement, forms and channels for participation, improved understanding of voting rights and Election Day activities. Stress the importance of the individual vote - its value and potential impact, the connection with a better quality of life, or protection of voting rights.
- ♦ Conduct information and education campaigns in the Romani language, in addition to the official language(s) of the country. Employ non-conventional approaches including direct meetings, radio programs, visual and illustrative presentation of printed materials, neighbourhood campaigns, community leader's partnerships to reach communities and individuals with literacy issues.

Raise awareness of the importance of the election process

Encourage political parties, public authorities, and the media to promote issues of interest and relevance for Roma population such as: unemployment, informal Roma settlements, illegal buildings, infrastructure problems, water supply and sewerage, social and health problems.

- ♦ Conduct single-issue campaigning targeting Roma communities that address relevant policy issues or upcoming political decisions.

Strengthen their belief that they can make an impact in the community or society

- ♦ Promote positive examples of prominent Roma activists and their impact. Use examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to influence/improve and influence the society.
- ♦ Promote micro community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern specific to the Roma community.
- ♦ Consider different formats such as testimonials, third-party stories, local community projects facilitated by political parties or organizations.

Alleviate the negative perception of being underrepresented by elected officials

- ♦ Include and keep Roma-related issues in the public agenda of relevant political representatives.
- ♦ Follow-up and periodically check on the issues the Roma community is facing in the period between elections.
- ♦ Encourage Roma politicians and activists affiliated to the major political parties to advocate for the Roma community's needs.
- ♦ Use a variety of engagement tools such as regular open days in the community as a channel for two-way communication, promotion of Roma-specific issues on the social media.

Promote tailored communication for the younger Roma population

- ♦ Engage young, educated people as a link between the political parties and the wider Roma community.
- ♦ Harness the potential of personal contact to influence, educate, and help voters to navigate the electoral process.

Create alliances:

With non-government organizations, in cooperation with the authorities or independently, to:

- ♦ Inform and educate about the voting process and improve voter registration.
- ♦ Improve Roma representation in NGOs and other entities that advocate for Roma rights
- ♦ Strengthen the capacities, position and networking of NGOs within Roma community to increase their credibility and power to influence.

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of Roma activists.
- ♦ Promote new channels and avenues for civic participation of the Roma community.
- ♦ Educate and inform about the importance of voting, mechanisms to protect the voting rights and navigate the voting process during elections.
- ♦ Educate and raise awareness about electoral irregularities, violence, and hate speech.

Use relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches

Use TV to reach the Roma population

- ♦ Use formats that give opportunities to contextualize the information and increase its relevance.
- ♦ Consider other communication formats in addition to newscasts e.g. debates, editorials, short stories and testimonials portraying local concerns and providing perspective into the voting process.
- ♦ Focus on TV stations airing programs in the Romani language, as well as local TV stations

- ♦ Whenever possible, present illustrative information in Romani language, particularly with regard to the voting process, voting rights, reporting election irregularities.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events

- ♦ Use a variety of formats for direct interaction such as small gatherings, local informal meetings to build trusting relationships with Roma voters and increase their perception of self-appreciation and importance.
- ♦ Propose community projects or activities with potential of gathering people or specific groups from the community.

Pilot other non-traditional channels

- ♦ Consider ways to reach Roma community members in their daily lives in order to disseminate information, including in buses, at bus stations, local stores, open markets, barber shops, inside food packages, bags, etc.

Use social media to increase participation and influence, particularly of young Roma population through:

- ♦ A more personalized and direct communication based on demographics, location, and interest.
- ♦ Promotion of relevant topics and issues for Roma communities.
- ♦ Engagement of the young Roma community through focused discussions via commentaries, polls, forums, live video debates, etc.
- ♦ Higher communication frequency.
- ♦ Increased information relevance by using the potential of the influencers about the voting process, elections, and civic life.

REMOTE COMMUNITIES

In response to the identified challenges and barriers, a set of interventions are recommended to help utilize their high interest for socio-political topics and improve their civic and political participation:

Improve the negative perception of being underrepresented by the elected officials

- ♦ Set regular communication with the remote communities to identify their needs and concerns.
- ♦ Include and keep issues important for the remote communities in the public agenda of relevant political representatives.
- ♦ Increase the visibility of the issues and needs of remote communities.
- ♦ Monitor and regularly follow-up on the issues of concern to the remote community in the period between elections.
- ♦ Encourage politicians and activists who are part of the major political parties to advocate for the remote population needs.
- ♦ Use a variety of tools such as regular monthly visits in the community, promotion of remote communities' concerns in the media, as well as regular update of the progress; promotion on social media of issues and concerns of the younger rural community.

Increase the belief in their power to make an impact in their community or society

- ♦ Initiate, promote and facilitate smaller community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern.
- ♦ Promote positive local examples that are recognized and respected by the community and their impact. Use examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to influence/improve and influence our society.
- ♦ Consider different formats such as informal meetings with influential local representatives and activists, third-party stories, small community projects facilitated by a political party or other organization.

Empower and boost self-confidence

- ♦ Run education campaigns on methods of civic participation.
- ♦ Help develop skills for confident participation.
- ♦ Strengthen collaborations with the neighbouring communities.

Promote local channels and methods to encourage remote communities to participate in civic life

- ♦ Use the municipalities as they are perceived as most approachable to encourage further participation.
- ♦ Organize them around issues of interest.
- ♦ Focus on the benefits for the community.
- ♦ Consider various formats such as: regular in-person meetings, gatherings in smaller groups, polls or other forums where they can express their opinions on the issue of interest, opportunities to raise awareness about initiatives, etc.

Create alliances:

With local civic organisations to:

- ♦ Identify issues on micro level that are important for the local communities.
- ♦ Support small projects initiated by the local organisations.
- ♦ Establish close contact with the remote communities.
- ♦ Strengthen the capacities, position, and networking of local organisations within the remote community to increase their credibility and power to influence.

With media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote relevant issues, especially those focused on improving the quality of life (health care, transport, migration, etc).
- ♦ Track progress of projects relevant for remote communities.
- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of rural activists.
- ♦ Promote and introduce diversity of candidates (woman, young, rural, etc.) during election campaigns.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches.

Use TV to reach the majority of the remote population.

- ♦ Promote representatives and topics relevant to the remote population via debates, guest programs etc., especially those focused on the improvement of quality of life, migration of young people, etc.
- ♦ Use formats that give opportunities to contextualize the information and increase its relevance, especially because the TV is the dominant channel for the elderly, as well as women and people on the lower side of the education and income spectrum.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events.

Although TV is the most effective way to disseminate information, direct meetings in an informal setting is the most preferred channel for communication for remote communities. Use various formats for direct interaction such as small gatherings, local informal meetings to build trusting relationships and increase their perception of self-appreciation and importance.

Use social media to reach younger people from remote communities.

Pilot other non-traditional channels

- ♦ Consider ways to reach remote communities in their daily lives in order to disseminate information, for example, in buses, at bus stations, local stores and other community facilities.

VERY POOR

Continue and expand on civic education efforts

To empower and increase the importance of civic and political participation, education and information are critical.

- ♦ Educate them about the protection of civic and political rights.
- ♦ Educate them how to exercise their civic and political rights.
- ♦ Educate them about relevant institutional pathways to express their interests, concerns and problems.
- ♦ Focus on the benefits of civic engagement, forms and channels for participation, a better understanding of the individual voter's rights and election-day activities.
- ♦ Employ non-conventional approaches due the limited time and resources such as direct meetings, visual presentation of printed materials, neighborhood campaigns, education in the social institutions, community leader's partnerships to reach communities and individuals with poor literacy.

Increase the belief in their power to make an impact in the community or society

- ♦ Create opportunities for meaningful involvement of the very poor people in local activities or projects on improving segments of their life (converting a local facility into a childcare centre or hygiene facility, small home improvement projects).
- ♦ Promote positive examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to influence and influence the society.
- ♦ Consider different formats such as small community projects facilitated by political parties or other organization, testimonials, third-party stories.

Improve the negative perception of being underrepresented and invisible

- ♦ Demonstrate empathy and understanding of the challenges they are facing.
- ♦ Include and keep poverty-related issues and proposals in the public agenda of relevant political representatives.
- ♦ Follow up and periodically check on the issues this community is facing in the period between elections.
- ♦ Encourage politicians and activists who are part of the major political parties to advocate for the low-income community's needs.
- ♦ Use a variety of tools such as regular meetings in the community, collaboration with social services to understand and work on designing a solution for problems, public advocacy of the poverty-related issues, etc.

Promote tailored communication for different low-income groups

The very poor group is highly heterogeneous. It includes:

- ♦ Single parents.
- ♦ Family with children with disabilities.
- ♦ Older people without pensions.
- ♦ Larger families with a single income source.
- ♦ Families without residential documents, etc.

They all have specific needs and concerns. Tailor the communication to be relevant to their needs.

Create alliances:

With the non-government organizations for improved civic and voter education, in cooperation with the authorities or independently.

Since civic organizations are increasingly involved in providing social services, they inherit both the responsibility and power to act as representatives and advocates for the communities they serve. They can play a key role to:

- ♦ Inform and educate about civic and political rights.
- ♦ Improve representation of very poor persons in NGOs and other entities that advocate for these communities.
- ♦ Facilitate responsiveness of the system: Act as a connection point between this group and the system and support them in protecting their rights and interests.
- ♦ Strengthen the capacities, position and networking of NGOs providing social services and help support them to increase their credibility and power to influence.

With the media (focus on traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of activism of underprivileged communities.
- ♦ Educate them about the ways they can exercise their civic and political rights.
- ♦ Promote topics related to issues and concerns of these underprivileged groups.
- ♦ Educate and inform them about the importance of voting, mechanisms to protect and exercise voting rights.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches

Use TV to reach the very poor communities due to limited access to advanced technology

- ♦ Use formats that contextualize the information.
- ♦ Consider other formats in addition to newscasts e.g., debates, editorials, short stories and testimonials or concerns.
- ♦ In addition to political shows, consider using morning programs, lifestyle and specialized shows (e.g on health).
- ♦ Whenever possible, present information in an illustrative manner, especially concerning the voting process, voting rights, reporting election irregularities.
- ♦ Organize direct meetings or other community events.
- ♦ Use formats for direct interaction such as small gatherings, informal meetings in the neighborhood to build trust and increase their positive self-perception.
- ♦ Propose community projects or activities with the potential of gathering people or specific community groups.

Pilot non-traditional channels

- ♦ Consider effective outreach methods to disseminate information, e.g. in buses, at bus stations, local stores, open markets, barber stores, food packages, bags, etc.
- ♦ Use social centres and other institutions of interest for training on civic and political rights and as participation channels.

CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED

Increase the belief in their power to make an impact in the community or the society

- ♦ Create opportunities for meaningful involvement of chronically unemployed persons in decision-making processes and promote the examples in which representatives of this group have leadership roles in community-based initiatives. If people believe that they can make a difference in their community/neighbourhood or improve the quality of life through their actions, then they will be more willing to participate in civic activities.
- ♦ Promote community projects and initiatives that tackle various issues of concern. Focus on civic projects rather than on political activities that have tangible benefits for the community or the neighbourhood and relate to their interests and skills (e.g. humanitarian initiatives, cooking for a different cause, taking care of the neighbourhood, playground renovation or maintenance, etc.)
- ♦ Promote positive examples that prove that activism matters and has the power to influence/improve and influence the society.
- ♦ Consider different formats such as micro-projects on community level, testimonials, third-party stories.

Improve the negative perception of being underrepresented by political parties, elected officials and other organization

- ♦ Include and promote unemployed civic and political activists.
- ♦ Include and keep unemployment issues and proposals in the public agenda of relevant political representatives.
- ♦ Use a variety of tools such as regular meetings in the community, collaboration with social services to work on resolving issues, public advocacy for the poor, etc.

Expand on civic education effort

- ♦ Raise awareness about the protection of their civic and political rights.
- ♦ Raise awareness about the ways they can exercise their civic and political rights.
- ♦ Raise awareness about appropriate institutional pathways for expressing these interests, concerns and problems.
- ♦ Focus on the benefits from civic engagement, forms and channels for participation, a better understanding of the individual voter's rights and election-day activities.
- ♦ Employ non-conventional approaches such as direct meetings, neighbourhood campaigns, informal gatherings in the neighbourhood, community leader's partnerships to reach communities and individuals and conventional channels where they can articulate their concerns (open days, surveys, etc.).

Strengthen their capacities for confident participation

- ♦ Build capacities for public speaking and debating.
- ♦ Raise awareness about civic and political rights.

Create alliances:

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on positive and successful examples of activism of vulnerable communities in general.
- ♦ Raise awareness about the ways they can exercise their civic and political rights.
- ♦ Promote topics related to issues and concerns of the unemployed.
- ♦ Raise awareness about the importance of voting, mechanisms to protect voting rights and to navigate the voting process.
- ♦ Raise awareness about electoral irregularities, violence, and pressure.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches.

Use TV to reach the majority of unemployed.

- ♦ Use formats that give opportunities to contextualize information and increase its relevance.
- ♦ Consider other formats in addition to newscasts, e.g. debates, editorials, short stories and testimonials portraying concerns and providing insight into the voting process.
- ♦ Consider using morning programs, lifestyle and specialized shows in addition to political shows.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events.

- ♦ Use different formats for direct interaction such as small gatherings, informal meetings (e.g. in front of the traditional store or other meeting points in the neighbourhood, in private houses/backyards etc.), in their neighbourhoods to build trusting relationships and increase their perception of self-appreciation and importance. This is especially convenient in communities with a higher rate of unemployment.
- ♦ Propose projects or activities with the potential of gathering people or specific groups from the community.

Pilot non-traditional channels

- ♦ Consider effective outreach techniques to disseminate information in buses, at bus stations, local stores, open markets, barber shops, food packages, bags, or convenient places or products consumed by this group.

Use social media to increase participation and influence or to start initiatives as it allows more targeted and personalized communication. Social media is an important channel for the young and middle-aged members of this group (more than 20% obtain information about the socio-political situation and elections from social media).

OTHER ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

In response to these identified challenges and barriers, a set of interventions are recommended to effectively contribute to improving civic and political participation of the other ethnicities.

Raise awareness about the importance of participation in the socio-political life

- ♦ Focus on outlining the benefits of civic engagement for democracy and civic society.
- ♦ Identify role models and influencers and promote their activities and impact.

Focus on the promotion of civic and democratic values, instead of the needs of the ethnic groups

- ♦ Promote inclusive instead of an ethnocentric society.
- ♦ Promote education, human rights, health, prosperity, good quality of life, etc.
- ♦ Report on and discuss community issues.

Focus on creating diverse candidate lists

- ♦ Promote ethnic, gender, and age diversity.

Increase the belief in their power to make an impact in their community or society

- ♦ Promote positive examples that are recognized and respected by the community.
- ♦ Improve the responsiveness of state institutions and political parties to the needs of the citizens.

Promote channels and procedures to encourage participation in civic life

This group has a lack of awareness of the participation channels in the socio-political life.

Create alliances

With the media (digital and traditional)

- ♦ Promote narratives focused on the positive and successful examples of civic participation.
- ♦ Raise awareness about the benefits of civic participation.
- ♦ Promote channels and ways for civic participation.
- ♦ Include citizens in debates and talk shows to spark discussion on issues of interest.

With influencers/celebrities

Partner with influencers to promote civic participation and civic and democratic values. The narrative should focus on the society as a whole rather than on ethnicity.

Choose relevant communication channels and apply both traditional and non-conventional approaches

Use TV to reach the majority of this group.

The most recommended options are newscasts, debates, talk shows, open studios, etc.

Consider using other types of programs to reach this segment, due to the reluctance towards political programs. Consider lifestyle programs, health, cooking shows, etc.

This group tends to prefer regional and foreign TV stations when sourcing ethnically-related information. Combine TV with social media and web portals to ensure effective outreach to this community.

Use social media to reach the young, educated, and employed segment of the population.

Social media is the key information channel with great potential for engagement and participation of the younger portion of this demographic group.

Organize face-to-face meetings or other community events.

The format of these meetings should be informal (coffee gatherings, debates, joint community projects).

Pilot non-traditional channels

- ♦ Organize regional entertainment or sports events.
- ♦ Organize entertaining activities and events to trigger interest and attendance.