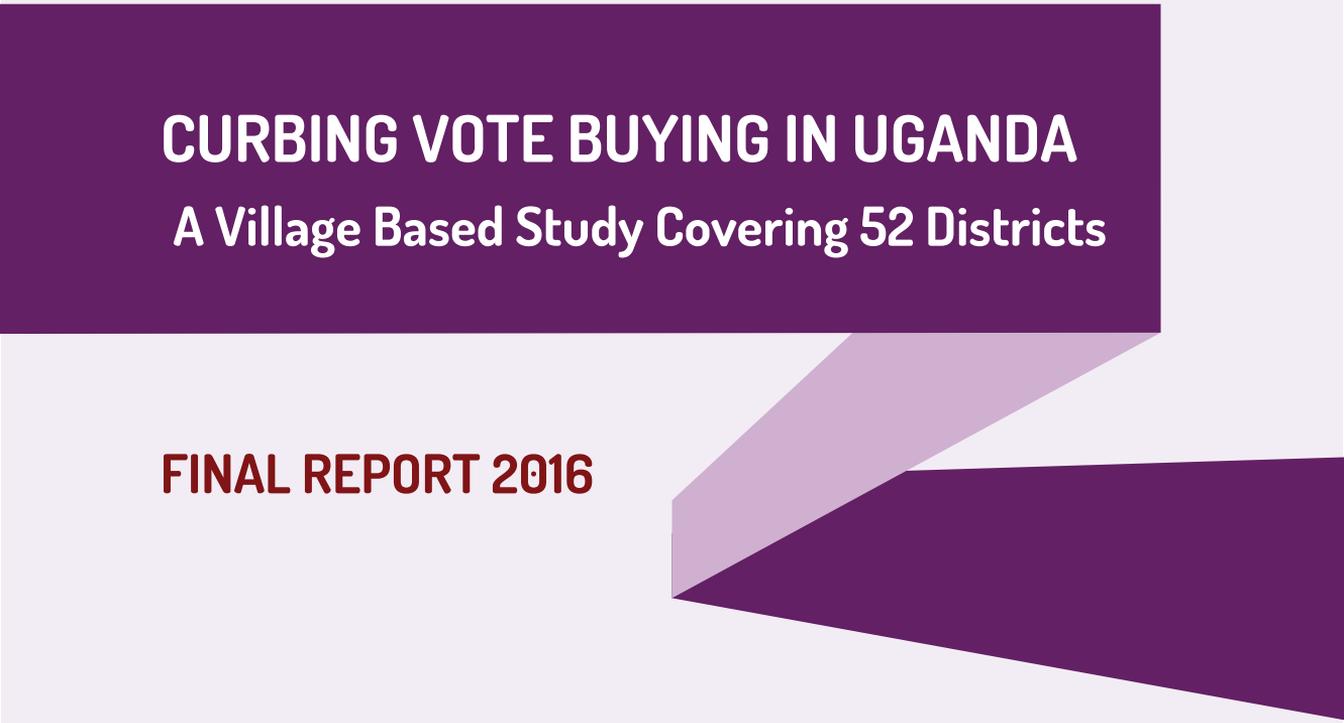




CURBING VOTE BUYING IN UGANDA

A Village Based Study Covering 52 Districts



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FINAL REPORT 2016

THE ORGANISATIONS THAT MAKE UP ACFIM



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was conducted to trace the depth of vote-buying in Ugandan society, taking a sample from 1,426 villages of Uganda.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) and the secretariat, we would like to first and foremost thank the 1,610 men and women who made this project a reality through delivery of leaflets to households at village level, moderating village meetings, recording data from every meeting and overseeing the hanging of No Vote-Buying posters in villages that adopted a No Vote-buying resolution.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACFIM	Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
EC	Electoral Commission
FDG	Focus Group Discussions
Freq.	Frequency
GISO	Gombolola Internal Security Officer
LC	Local Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PEA	Presidential Elections Act
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
TIU	Transparency International Uganda
TOT	Training of Trainers
UGX	Uganda Shillings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vote buying was prevalent during election campaigns 2016 including campaigns for party primaries. The practice manifested itself in form of money, gifts (sugar, soap, hoes, seedlings, cloths, saucepans, airtime cards, food, plastic chairs, tents etc.) and donations offered by candidates directly or indirectly through campaign agents to voters.

Contextualisation

The distribution of cash and to voters during elections which is popularly known as vote-buying is extremely widespread in many African democracies¹. In Uganda vote buying is so widespread that the cost of contesting for elective political position has steadily risen to astronomical levels that credible people have been discouraged and at worst even blocked from offering themselves for elective politics².

The Project/Campaign

The project took the form of a randomised trial where we had villages that we treated and villages that we controlled. It was implemented in 1,426 randomly selected villages spread out in 52 districts across Uganda targeting 104,992 households during in the months of January to February 2016³. ACFIM/TTU were accredited by the Electoral Commission in April 2015 to conduct voter education for the 2015/2016 General Elections. We approach was to mitigate vote-buying through sensitisation of citizens at village level with a view of working towards villages taking collective resolutions against vote buying and standing by them through Election Day – February 18th, 2016.

Scope of the Project

The scope of the project was limited to the following strands, namely:

1. Leaflet delivered to every household in the target villages.
2. Three deliberative meetings on the theme conducted in progression on vote buying.

¹ Eric Jonathan Cramon (PhD), *Vote Buying and Accountability in Democratic Africa*, 2013, University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

² Statement by Hon. Stephen Mukitale, Member of Parliament Buliisa County, Uganda.

³ Ssembabule, Masaka, Rakai, Lwengo, Lyantonde, Kalangara. Lira, Nwoya, Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro, Rukungiri, Amuria, Bukedea, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kumi, Ngora, Serere, Soroti, Hoima, Adjumani, Arua, Moyo, Nebbi, Yumbe, Bushenyi, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kiruhura, Mbarara, Mitoma, Ntungamo, Rubirizi, Moroto, Napak, Luwero, Nakasongora, Jinja, Apac, Kole, Oyam, Bundibugyo, Kabarole, Kamwengye, Kasese, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Ntoroko, Iganga, Namutumba, Luuka.

3. Village asked to endorse a village resolution to reject vote buying “This is a NO VOTE BUYING village”.
4. Robocall⁴ broadcast made a day or two before elections to all citizens who attended the deliberative meetings and had passed a “No Vote Buying” resolution.

Project Objectives

- a) Influence perceptions and attitudes of grass root citizens against vote-buying.
- b) Influence candidates and campaign agents’ behaviour to adapt, change and reduce individual vote buying as a tactic of popularising their candidature.

Intended Outcome

- a) Villages make public declarations against Vote-buying for 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections.
- b) Minimised influence of money on voting behaviour and outcome of elections.
- c) Decrease in voter monetary demands to political candidates.

Methodology

A total of 1,610 community activists were trained to deliver the leaflets to each village, facilitate deliberative village meetings, collect data from participants, and paste up the posters in their designated villages. Deliberative village meetings took the form of Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) and these were the principal tool for data collection. The meetings were conducted in the customary places where village members always convene to discuss issues of community interest.

Leaflet Delivery

Whereas the campaign targeted 104,992 households in the 1,426 randomized villages across 52 districts, the leaflets were delivered to 68,492 representing 65 percent. It was not just dropping the leaflet but there was always a discussion to ensure that the content of the leaflet was well understood by the receiver.

⁴Robocall is an automated telephone call that delivers a recorded message, typically on behalf of a political party, civil society organisation or telemarketing company. In the case of this project, the message was on reminding village members to stick to their vote-buying resolution.

Deliberative Village Meetings

There were 3,278 village meetings conducted during the study period of which 33.5percent were first meetings, 33.9percent were second meetings and 32.6percent were third meetings.

Number of Participants attending Village Meetings

A total of 92,987 participants participated in the 3,278 village meetings, which is an average of about 28 participants per meeting.

Participation in Meetings

Village Local Council-One (LC1) leaders participated in majority of the village meetings (61.5percent). Crime Preventers were present in 28.7 percent of the meetings while campaign agents of different Presidential and Member of Parliament (MP) candidates were present in 24.1 percent of the meetings, while religious leaders were present in 11.0percent of the meetings.

Popular Views Shared in Meetings

- a) Village members would be willing to refuse vote buying only if candidates deliver services to their community. This view was witnessed in 48.3 percent of the meetings.
- b) Vote buying is not an important issue in our village, there are far more pressing problems. This view was common in 39.3 percent of the meetings.
- c) Vote buying is an important issue but it will be difficult to eliminate it. This view was shared in 29.3 percent of the meetings.

Resolution on Vote Buying

In slightly more than half of the village meetings (50.8 percent), participants either by consensus of popular vote agreed to a collective resolution on vote buying in their village.

What Resolution was Adopted?	Percent
Communities come together and denounce vote buying in their village (Posters)	60.0
Take money but vote the person of their choice	31.9
Take legal action on the candidates/citizens that engage in vote buying	8.2
Total	100.0

Analysis of Village Resolutions by Region

Overall, the region with the biggest number of villages that took the collective resolution to denounce vote buying compared to the other resolutions, was Eastern⁵. Northern⁶ region recorded the second highest number of village meetings that took the resolution to denounce vote-buying. However it was a different story in Western⁷ region. Majority of the meetings that adopted the resolution of taking the money but voting the candidate of choice were in this region (Western), followed by Central region. Eastern region had the lowest percentage of meetings that resolved to “eat widely but vote wisely.”

Recommendations

1) Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and Parliament

- a) *Amend the laws to include a five year ban from standing for elective political positions for politicians convicted of vote buying by courts of law.*
- a) *Insert in the Presidential Elections Act, a provision that prohibits the incumbent President from giving out donations during campaign period.*
- b) *Enact a new law to regulate campaign financing*

2) Police and Inspectorate of Government

Enforce legal provisions against voter bribery as laid out in the Presidential Elections Act and Parliamentary Elections Act. IG should pursue the enactment of a new law on campaign financing to ensure that there it includes a provision for disclosure of campaign income and expenditure for every candidate.

3) Political Party Leaders

Denounce vote-buying and institute punitive measures against flag bearers that engage in the vice. Engage party representatives in parliament to champion enactment of tougher laws of campaign financing.

4) Civil Society Organisations

Conduct innovative awareness interventions at the grass root level targeting voter attitudes towards vote buying and levying unlimited financial demands on Members Parliament. Civic education campaigns against vote buying must not wait but start now.

5) Religious Leaders

Religious leaders should stop the practice of targeting political candidates as fundraising sources particularly during election campaigns.

⁵Eastern region comprised of: Busoga, Teso and Karamoja with majority of districts coming from Teso

⁶Northern region comprised of: Lango, Acholi and West Nile

⁷Western region comprised of: Ankole, Rukiga, Tooro and Bunyoro

INTRODUCTION

Vote buying has contributed to escalation of commercialisation of politics and elections, and this raises concerns about the quality of elected leaders, democratic institutions and the potential for elections to deliver a credible and more accountable government in Uganda.

Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) describes vote buying as an economic transaction in which political parties and/or candidates distribute cash and material benefits to individual citizens in anticipation of votes on polling day. The practice of buying votes is both illegal and corrupt. But even more concerning is the fact that vote-buying is already showing signs of perverting Uganda's democratic system. Politicians and voters are aware of the illegality of vote buying but they engage in it with impunity because they know too well that laws in Uganda are not enforced.

Vote buying was prevalent during election campaigns 2016 including campaigns for party primaries. The practice manifested itself in form of money, gifts and donations offered by candidates directly or indirectly through campaign agents. Citizens across the country looked forward to the campaign period and welcomed it as a window of opportunity to extract as much as they could from political candidates. Almost all candidates that contested for Member of Parliament in districts where ACFIM monitored the campaign process, participated in acts of vote buying, the difference was in degree.

Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring

Alliance for Election Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) is a consortium of sixteen civil society organisations that came together to foster transparency and accountability in political financing in Uganda. As already indicated, ACFIM was accredited by the Electoral Commission (EC) to conduct voter education ahead of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections 2016. The task was rolled out through rigorous village based citizens' no vote buying campaign. The campaign was carried out in 1,426 villages spread out in 52 districts of Uganda.

Contextualization

The distribution of cash and gifts to voters during elections which is popularly known as vote buying, is extremely widespread in many African democracies⁸. In

⁸Eric Jonathan Cramon (PhD), *Vote Buying and Accountability in Democratic Africa*, 2013, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Uganda vote buying is now so widespread that the cost of contesting for elective political position is so high that credible people have been blocked from joining politics⁹. Though no visible actions have been taken by government, key government actors have publicly expressed concern describing it as undesirable “vice.” In his speech to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Delegates Conference in December 15, 2014 the President of Uganda described use of money to bribe voters in elections as “political mistake” that distorts the purpose of elections. Similar sentiments have been echoed by the Speaker of Parliament and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Despite all the above pronouncements, no tangible efforts have been witnessed to reverse the trend.

Vote buying in Uganda takes various forms including the distribution of cash and/or groceries and other patronage resources to voters. As alluded to in the previous sections, the practice was prevalent during the pre-campaign and campaign period ahead of presidential and Member of Parliament elections 2016. Vote buying is a felony under the country’s electoral laws. Specifically under the Presidential Elections Act (as amended 2010) and Parliamentary Elections Act (as amended) 2010, it is illegal for a person to solicit for or offer to pay or accept payment for a vote¹⁰. However, despite existence of provisions that outlaw this practice, politicians still devise ways of buying votes from willing voters. Part of the reason for this is the general perception that laws are not enforced.

Vote buying has arguably contributed to the escalating cost of contesting for elective positions in Uganda and particularly so for Presidential, Parliamentary, District Chairpersons and Mayoral races. Uganda is experiencing highly commercialised political and electoral processes, thereby discouraging credible and well intentioned citizens from contesting in elective positions.

This raises concerns about the country’s democratisation process and the potential for elections to deliver better and more accountable government to Ugandans. In a survey on titled “*Who Pays the Piper*” focusing on money and politics conducted by ACFIM in November – December 2014 targeting 275 Members of the 9th Parliament, majority of MPs decried the ever increasing volume of constituency demands. They revealed that visiting their constituencies can be very expensive as they are often asked by voters to assist them financially. This financial assistance includes contributing to costs of building churches and mosques as well as communal services like boreholes, schools and health facilities. In this survey majority of MPs (90 percent) agreed that “the cost of competing for parliamentary seat has increased almost 10 times since 2001. Additionally 72 percent of MPs agreed that “if the costs of competing for Parliamentary seats continues to rise

⁹Statement by Hon. Stephen Mukitale, Member of Parliament Buliisa County, Uganda.

¹⁰Presidential Elections Act, section 64; Parliamentary Elections (amendment) Act 2005, sections 68 and 25;

at the same rate it has over the last ten years, only the super-rich will be able to compete¹¹". An earlier citizens' survey by the Afro Barometer revealed that 85 percent of respondents in Uganda believed that vote buying happened regularly during the 2011 elections¹².

In summary elections in Uganda have largely been commercialized with candidates investing large amounts money with over half of it being directed towards bribing voters. As a result courting voters with cash and/or gifts to popularise one's candidature is becoming a major part of Uganda's political culture. The general perception of voters at village/grass root level is that election campaigns provide them a rare opportunity to harvest from parties and candidates. This commercialization of the electoral process has been steadily increasing since 2001 general elections so much that to date money influences candidate selection process within parties by determining who wins party primaries and subsequently, races for President, Parliament, Mayor or District Chairperson.

Background

ACFIM with support of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted another survey targeting citizens and was code named "*Shaking the Mango Tree*". This study followed an earlier one that targeted Members of Parliament. The motivation for "*Shaking the Mango Tree*", was to understand the attitudes of ordinary citizens/voters on vote buying and/or selling, how deeply rooted it is rooted, what drives it and how it can be minimized. The research methodology adopted for the citizens' survey was focus group discussions (FDG).

Forty eight focus group discussions were conducted comprising on average 15 persons but with varying group dynamics. For example in twelve of the FDGs the participants were female only while in another twelve FDGs participants were male only and in twenty four FDGs the gender was mixed. The aim of single gender FGDs was to enable open and sincere sharing of the thoughts without any socially constructed restraints. The FGDs showed that many Ugandans have direct experience of voter bribery and anticipate its recurrence during 2016 election campaigns. There were some who believed that accepting the bribe damages their opportunity to advocate for improved public services in the future. Specifically, the key points coming out of the focus group discussions were as follows:

- a) Ugandan voters do not trust politicians' promises because they know that they are rarely fulfilled.

¹¹ACFIM Uganda; Who Pays the Piper; A Survey on Commercialisation of Politics targeting Members of the 10th Parliament, 2014.

¹² "How often, if ever, during the 2011 elections did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you food or a gift or money, in return for your vote?" – 31percent said always, 19percent often, 25percent sometimes and 18percent said never, AfroBarometer round 6 survey, July 2015.

- b) Many citizens will be more than happy to take the money because they perceive the campaign period as a rare opportunity to get something from politicians.
- c) Ugandans know that vote buying is illegal but that “laws are not enforced”. So they can take the money without facing any legal consequences.
- d) A number of citizens are envious about how much campaign agents receive from politicians in comparison to the ordinary villager. This was based on their experience of 2011 when campaign agents were seen improving their financial status by either putting a facelift on their houses or constructing new ones, or even acquiring a new motorcycle among other village indicators of enrichment.
- e) Some citizens would like it put a stop to vote buying, but would not want to participate in the process. They want others to do this namely: government spies, the police, the President or any other government institution.
- f) There are some who believe that taking the money from politicians during campaign period means forfeiting the future because it literally means that they cannot demand from elected leaders, improvement to public services like education, health or roads.

It was against this backdrop that Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) designed a no vote-buying campaign at village level targeting 1,427 villages in 52 districts ahead of 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections to educate and influence citizens’ attitudes against vote buying or selling.

THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign was implemented in 1,426 randomly selected villages spread out in 52 districts across Uganda targeting 104,992 households during in the months of November 2015 to February 2016¹³.

A total of 220,000 leaflets with an illustrated message on vote-buying and urging the household members not to sell their votes were produced and delivered to households in 1,426 villages. The message on the leaflet was moralistic because it was premised on the fact that vote-buying is an ethically inappropriate behaviour of people who want to win elections at all costs. The message on the leaflet was presented in dual languages on either sides namely: a local language on one side and English on the flip side. Overall 18 local languages were considered. During the leaflet delivery, household members aged 18 years and above were invited to attend deliberative meetings. The first of three deliberative meetings discussed the content of the leaflet relating it to vote buying. In the second meeting, participants deliberated on collective communal actions that could be taken against vote buying. The third meeting concluded deliberations towards a collective village resolution against vote buying.

After the meetings debate on vote buying continued to resonate within different sections of the community including drinking places, youth groups, bodaboda¹⁴ stages¹⁵ and in trading centres. Overall, 121,029 men and women participated in the deliberative meetings out of a target population of 250,000 people. Majority of the villages passed a “No Vote-Buying” resolution and put up no vote buying posters. Robo-call¹⁶ messages were broadcast on the eve of Election Day to citizens that participated in the deliberative meetings. The campaign was implemented through grass root activists under close monitoring of district supervisors.

¹³Ssembabule, Masaka, Rakai, Lwengo, Lyantonde, Kalangala. Lira, Nwoya, Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro, Rukungiri, Amuria, Bukedea, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kumi, Ngora, Serere, Soroti, Hoima, Adjumani, Arua, Moyo, Nebbi, Yumbe, Bushenyi, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kiruhura, Mbarara, Mitooma, Ntungamo, Rubirizi, Moroto, Napak, Luweero, Nakasongora, Jinja, Apac, Kole, Oyam, Bundibugyo, Kabarole, Kamwenge, Kasese, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Ntoroko, Iganga, Namutumba, Luuka.

¹⁴Bodaboda is a popular mode of public transport in Uganda that uses motorcycles. Uganda is awash with motorcycles carrying passengers.

¹⁵Stage is a spot along the road where commuter cyclists (bodabodas) converge to wait for passengers.

¹⁶Robo-call is a pre-recorded voice message that is broadcast to targeted phone numbers and received by a person holding a cell phone.

Copy of the Leaflet

You wouldn't sell your soul. You wouldn't sell your village's future

WHY SELL YOUR VOTE?

BEFORE  **AFTER** 

Stand together with your community and
don't sell your vote.
It is your chance to demand a better future!

ACFIM
ALLIANCE FOR ELECTION
CAMPAIGN FINANCE MONITORING

The Flip Side of the Leaflet

Torikubaasa kuguza amagara gaawe,
Torikubaasa kuguza ebiro byanyensya byekyaaro kyaawe
AHABWENKYI NOGUZA AKARUURU KAAWE?

ENYIMAHO  **BWANYIMA** 

Yegeite hamwe nekyaaro kyaawe,
kandi otaguza akaruuru kaawe

ACFIM
ALLIANCE FOR ELECTION

The scope of the project was limited to the following strands, namely:

1. Leaflet delivered to every household in the target villages.
2. Three deliberative meetings on the theme conducted in progression on vote buying.
3. Village asked to endorse a village resolution to reject vote buying “This is a NO VOTE BUYING village”.
4. Robocall broadcast made a day or two before elections to all citizens who attended the deliberative meetings and had passed a “No Vote Buying” resolution.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The overarching goal of the study/campaign was to reduce vote-selling and buying during 2016 presidential and parliamentary election campaigns. Specifically the study had two major objectives.

- a) Influence perceptions and attitudes of grass root citizens against vote-selling and buying.
- b) Influence candidates’ and agents’ behaviour to adapt, change and desist from vote buying.

INTENDED OUTCOME

The overall intended outcome was for villages to make public declarations against vote-buying for 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. The specific outcomes included:

- a) Minimised influence of money on voting behaviour and outcome of elections.
- b) Decrease in voter monetary demands to political candidates during election campaigns.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The study was based on the theory that:

“if citizens deliberate on the costs and consequences of vote buying and selling and resolve to collectively reject it and promote their resolution, then the incidence of voter bribery will reduce and candidates and agents will be induced to seek the support of voters on the basis of issues, the delivery of public services or party ideology”.

TIMING

The project/campaign was implemented from November 2015 to February 2016 when electioneering was at its peak.

METHODOLOGY

The campaign was a randomised controlled trial covering 1,426 experimental villages. These villages are concentrated in 535 parishes in 249 sub-counties across 52 districts. It was implemented by 1,610 community activists who were trained to deliver the leaflets to each village, facilitate deliberative village meetings, collect data from participants, and provide guidance to the communities as they pasted up the posters in their respective villages.

Deliberative meetings took the form of Focus Group Discussions and these were the principal tool for data collection. During deliberative meetings the activists worked in pairs where one served as moderator to the discussion while the other served as the Note-taker whose primary responsibility was to collect qualitative data. All deliberative meetings were conducted in local languages.

The meetings were conducted in the customary places where village members always convene to discuss issues of community interest. Some of the meeting venues included places under trees, a home of a popular person or a primary school among others. There was no drink, no snack or transport refund provided to participants. And this was communicated to them before and during delivery of leaflets. On average every village meeting had 28 participants which provided enough diversity to spark energy and creativity in the discussions. The meetings lasted between 60 – 90 minutes.

The community activists that implemented the campaign were recruited from a list of 2,796 activists and monitors that were already working with ACFIM partner regional organisations that have a track record of implementing governance and accountability programs on the ground. These partner organisations identified from their data base, the names, locations and telephone numbers of the 2,796 village based activists from which the best 1,610 were selected. Selection depended on ability to moderate or take note of proceedings. Lots of roleplays were done during the training which allowed us to selected the best activists for the mission.

In addition a team of 80 trainers was identified and taken through two-day Training of Trainers (TOT) course. These Trainers were nominated by the respective partner organisations and their number per district varied from organisation to organisation based on the number of randomised villages in a particular district. A training Guide for Trainers was developed and used to train the Trainers who in turn trained the activists using the same guide. During the trainings emphasis was put on the need for homogeneity in implementing the campaign/study interventions across the country.

A team of program staff from ACFIM secretariat supervised the training of activists across the country. The project design ensured that no team of activists¹⁷ worked in more than three of the randomly selected 1,427. After training, the activists were ready to get the campaign started with leaflet delivery.

The leaflet was delivered to households in the randomised villages. During delivery the activists carried out conversation with heads of households on the content of the leaflet and communicated the date and venue for the first deliberative meeting. Two-to-three deliberative meetings were conducted in each village in advance of the Election Day. In the final meeting, villages endorsed a collective resolution on vote buying. These villages put up posters to communicate their no vote buying resolution to political candidates and campaign agents. On the eve of Election Day, a robo-call message was sent to village members who had shared telephone contact, reminding them to stay true to their resolution of no vote buying.

LEAFLET DELIVERY

Whereas the campaign targeted 104,992 households in the 1,426 randomized villages across 52 districts, the leaflets were delivered to 68,492 representing 65percent. The delivery was made by activists who on many occasions were born and raised on those villages which gave them situational awareness about the character and locations of the households. Reports from the activists indicate that the people

¹⁷Team of Activists refers to the Moderator and Note-taker.

were welcoming, friendly and interested in the content of the leaflet to the extent that they were offered seats, greeted and requested to further explain the message they had brought to them.



Some of the village members appreciating the message on the leaflet.

Activists further report that out of the 68,492 households to which the leaflet was delivered, majority 75percent were visibly impressed with the information and the pictures on the leaflets and expressed willingness to attend the village meetings. Specifically they wanted to know more about the leaflet and also asked questions including whether the activists had been sent by one of the political parties or candidates contesting for elections. Upon understanding and appreciating the theme of the leaflet some household heads commented that the no vote buying / selling campaign should have come earlier before party primary elections were conducted.

There are a few other households that rejected the leaflet and chased away the activists with their leaflets. These represent 25 percent of the households and the three main reasons given for rejecting them were:

- a) They did not like the message the activists were delivering through leaflets.
- b) There was no money attached to the leaflet.
- c) They were unhappy with the message of not asking and/or taking money from political candidates during campaigns.

VILLAGE MEETINGS

Deliberative village meetings were at the core of the project design and they were conducted in succession. Three meetings were conducted in the villages with the overarching purpose of creating a safe and open platform for people living in the same village and united with common challenges in social service delivery, to discuss the merits and demerits of vote buying based on experiences from past election campaigns; educate citizens on the consequences of accepting money, gifts or both from political candidates in exchange for their vote; and to try to get them to agree to a community resolution on the issue of vote buying.



An activist in the district of Apac, northern Uganda explaining the content of the leaflet.

Some of the Village Meetings in Progress



Number of Village Meetings Conducted

There were 3,278 village meetings conducted during the study period of which 33.5percent were first meetings, 33.9 percent were second meetings and 32.6 percent were third meetings. In the context of this report each of the three meetings had a different but related standpoint.

In the first meetings the activists (facilitator and note-taker) introduced themselves, the local organisation they are affiliated to, the gist of the campaign and the contents on the leaflet. Participants then discussed the content of the leaflet relating it to the present situation. At the end of the first meeting participants agreed on the date for the second meeting.

Second meetings were conducted at least four or five days after the first meeting. Discussion during second meetings was centred on the benefits and cost of vote buying and selling on the community in the long-term.

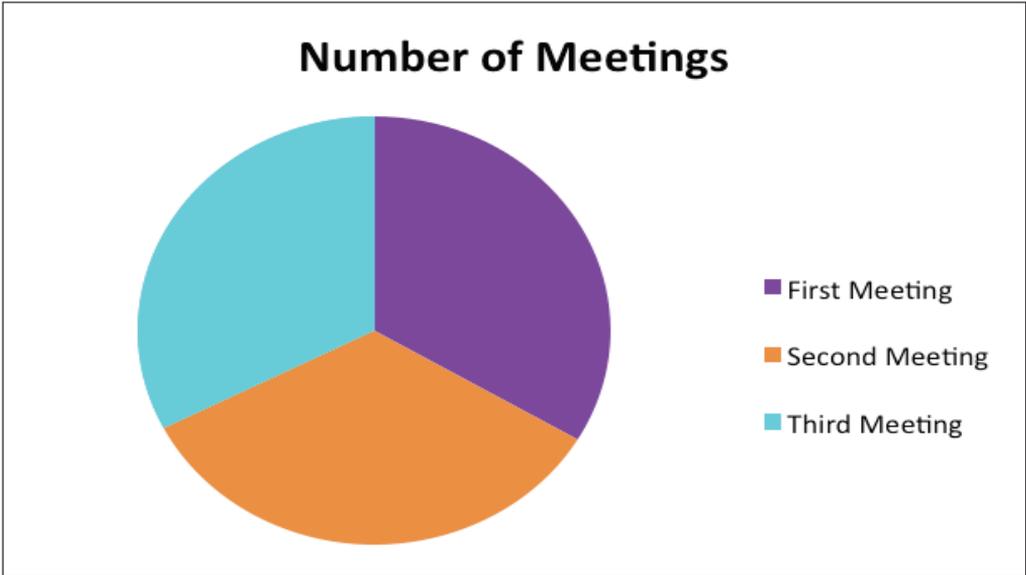
Third meetings focused on possible collective action that can be taken by the village members in response to vote buying and selling.

Table 1: Number of First, Second & Third Meetings

MEETINGS	Number	Percent
First Meeting	1,099	33.5
Second Meeting	1,112	33.9
Third Meeting	1,067	32.6
Total	3,278	100

The pie chart at the end of this paragraph illustrates the balance in numbers of participants in the three meetings namely: first meeting, second meeting and third meeting. This in a way presents a finding that there was a section of village members that are concerned about vote buying and were interested in deliberations that would help them to arrive at a solution. This partly explains why these people returned for the second and third successive meetings during which they discussed the different perspective of vote buying and vote selling.

Figure 1: Number of First, Second and Third Meetings



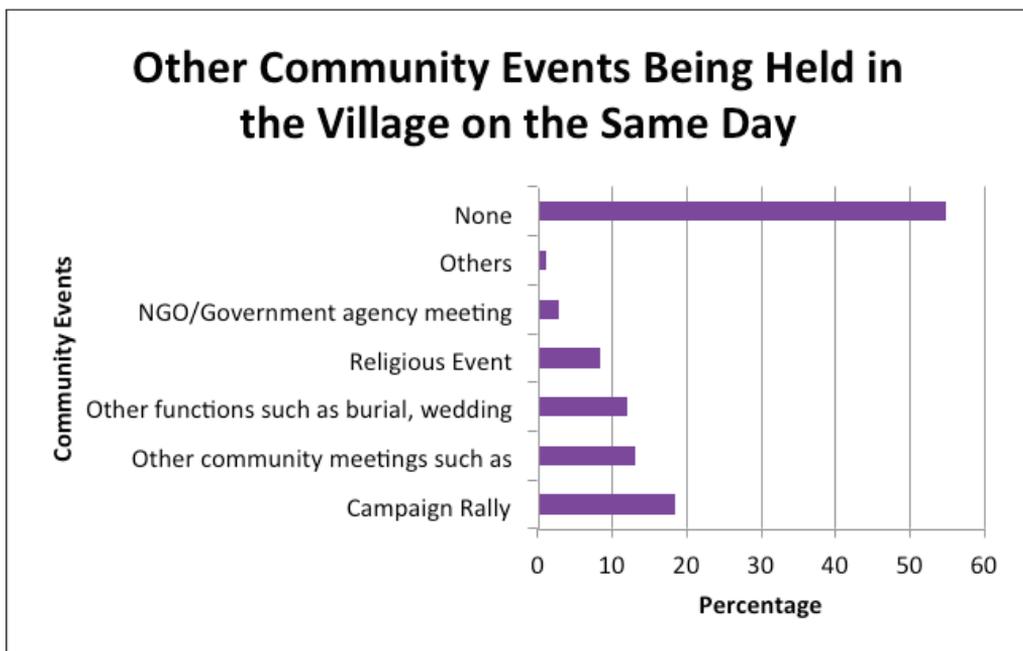
Community Events Coinciding With Village Meetings

Slightly more than half of the village meetings (54.8 percent) were conducted on a day that had no other community or political events to distract participants. Whereas one of the guidelines for the village meetings was to select a day that is less busy in terms of competing activities, it was always difficult to predetermine this as activities like campaign rallies and funerals among others are unpredictable. As such a significant percentage of these meetings (45.2 percent) faced interference from a number of competing events. Majority of these competing events were campaign rallies (18.4 percent), community meetings such as SACCO (13 percent), social functions such as burials & weddings (12.0 percent), religious events (8.4 percent) and NGO/Government agency meetings (2.7 percent). The next table and graph illustrate the extent of interruption that village meetings had in relation to other community events.

Table 2: Other Community Events Being Held in the Village on the Same Day

Other Community Events	Frequency	Percent
Campaign Rally	577	18.4
Other community meetings such as SACCO	406	13.0
Other functions such as burial, wedding etc	375	12.0
Religious Event	262	8.4
NGO/Government agency meeting	86	2.7
Others	36	1.1
None	1716	54.8
TOTAL	3131	

Figure 2: Other Community Events Being Held in the Village on the Same Day



Number of Participants Attending Village Meetings

A total of 92,987 participants participated in the 3,278 village meetings, which is an average of about 28 participants per meeting. These participants volunteered their names and telephone contacts which were recorded and entered into a data base for purposes of staying in touch with continued interaction and feedback on how the campaign unfolds.

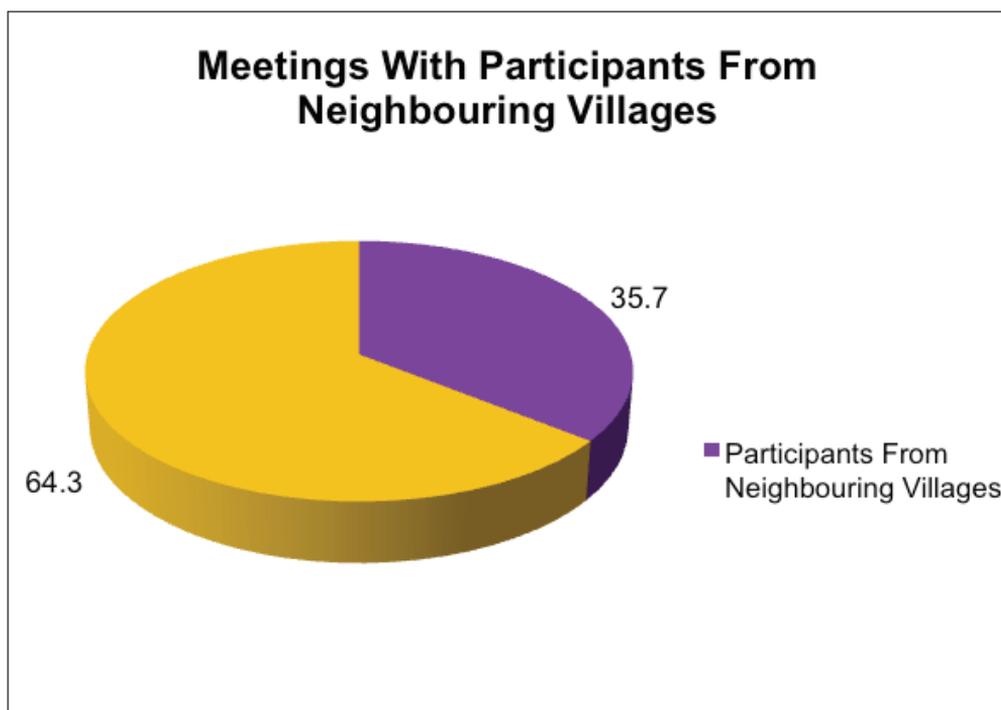
It is the conviction of ACFIM that equal participation of men and women in collective civic awareness activities has a higher potential to increase civic competence of voters and subsequently change voter attitudes on vote buying and/or selling.

There was fair gender balance in the village meetings as 51 percent of the participants were male while 49 percent were female. This partly indicates growing interest within women at grass root level to play a role in political dialogue aimed at shaping political perceptions.

Table 3: Gender of Participants Who Attended the Meetings

GENDER	Number	Percent
Male	47,429	51.0
Female	45,558	49.0
Total	92,987	100.0

Figure 3: Gender Disaggregation of Participants Attending the Meetings



With an almost equal gender balance, the facilitators were able to ensure that as deliberations progressed, the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men were taken into consideration, while at the same time recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. There was also notable participation of the youth in these meetings.



Grass root activist (standing) introducing the topic of discussion during one of the village meetings in Kabalore District. Participants seated on the ground are female and indication of the active participation of women alluded to earlier. These meetings were conducted within normal village conditions.

Interest from Neighboring Villages

Whereas majority of the people that participated in the meetings were residents of the targeted villages (64.3 percent), there spill overs neighbouring villages. Specifically there was notable participation 35.7 percent of people coming from neighbouring villages. This was particularly so for second and third meetings. There are many reasons to explain this.

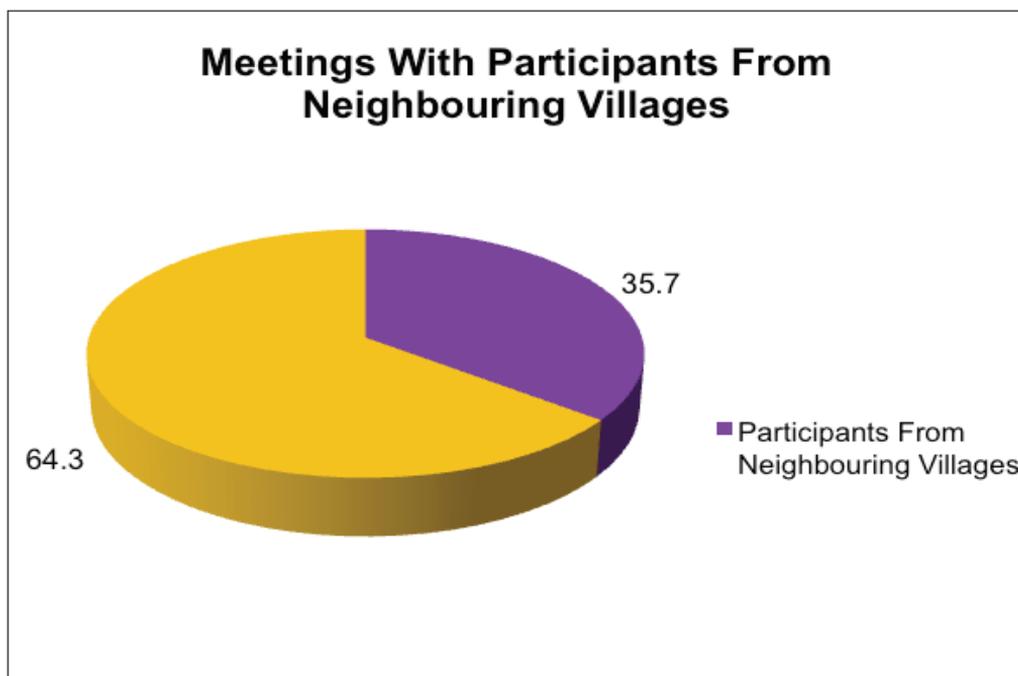
One of them could be that the discussion that ensued after delivery of the leaflet and/or first meeting, spilled over to other villages ore resonated at trading centres and market places thereby attracting interest to participate in the second and third meetings.

The other reason could be that some village members could have invited their friends or relatives from the neighbouring villages to attend the meetings. Whatever the reason, the interest exhibited by citizens at grass root to deliberate on the issue of vote buying and/or selling is remarkable.

Table 4: Participants Who Reported That They Were From the Neighboring Village

MEETINGS WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES	Frequency	Percent
Participants From Neighbouring Villages	1170	35.7
No Participants in Village Meetings	2108	64.3
TOTAL	3278	100.0

Figure 4: Percentage of Participants Reported to have come from Neighbouring Villages



Reduction in Number of Participants Attending Meetings

Whereas the first meetings were fairly well attended, activists observed a decline in numbers that turned up for the second and third meetings compared to the first meetings. A number of reasons have been given by activists to explain this, namely:

- a) Absence of transport allowances led to reduction in the number attending. It is understood that some participants came with high expectations to receive handouts.
- b) Some participants found the topic contradicting to their pre-conceived motives of harvesting from political candidates to the best of their ability.
- c) Political rallies and spontaneous campaign processions took a number of the village members who would have actually been participating in the meetings.
- d) Community events like burials, village security meetings and others also made an impact on the low turn up.
- e) Discouragement from the politicians and their campaign agents especially those who were using money and handouts as their main campaign tool.
- f) Some people mostly the youth thought the meetings were a waste of time.
- g) The project was started after party primaries during which many village members had accepted and eaten money from candidates. Such people found the discussion on vote buying somehow unpleasant.

Privacy of Deliberative Village Meetings

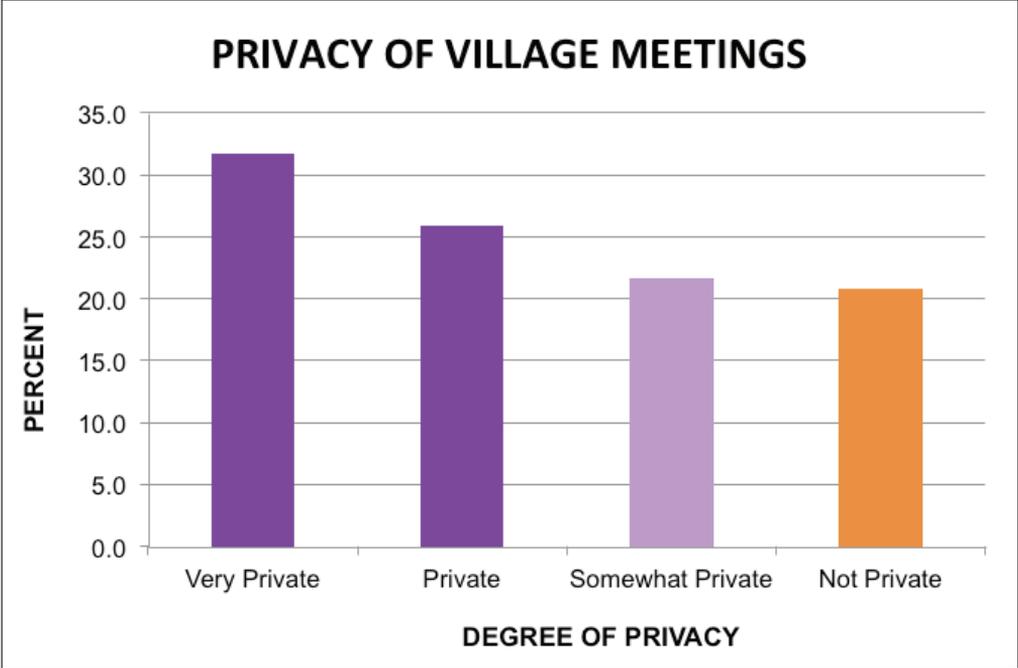
Maintaining confidentiality was essential to ensuring the success of focus group discussions which in the context of this report are referred to as deliberative village meetings. This was because vote buying and selling is a sensitive topic whose discussion involved sometimes divulging sensitive personal information by participants who had benefitted or participated in vote-buying. As such the study design emphasized the need to hold village meetings in communal but private places where participants would feel comfortable and free to provide the sort of open and honest feedback on vote buying/selling. Unless in situations where it was absolutely impossible, but local council (LC) leaders, and security officers were kept out the village meetings. This ultimately resulted in collection of strong and accurate qualitative data.

Majority of village meetings were conducted in venues and conditions that observed the principles of privacy in research as shown in the next table, that is to say: very private (31.7 percent), private (25.9 percent) and somewhat private (21.7 percent) making a total of 79.3 percent privacy rating for the deliberative village meetings. Cases where privacy could not be provided constitute only 20.8 percent of the total village meetings conducted.

Table 5: Privacy of the Venue Where the Meeting Was Held

PRIVACY OF MEETING	Percent
Very Private	31.7
Private	25.9
Somewhat Private	21.7
Not Private	20.8
Total	100.0

Figure 5: Privacy of Deliberative Village Meetings



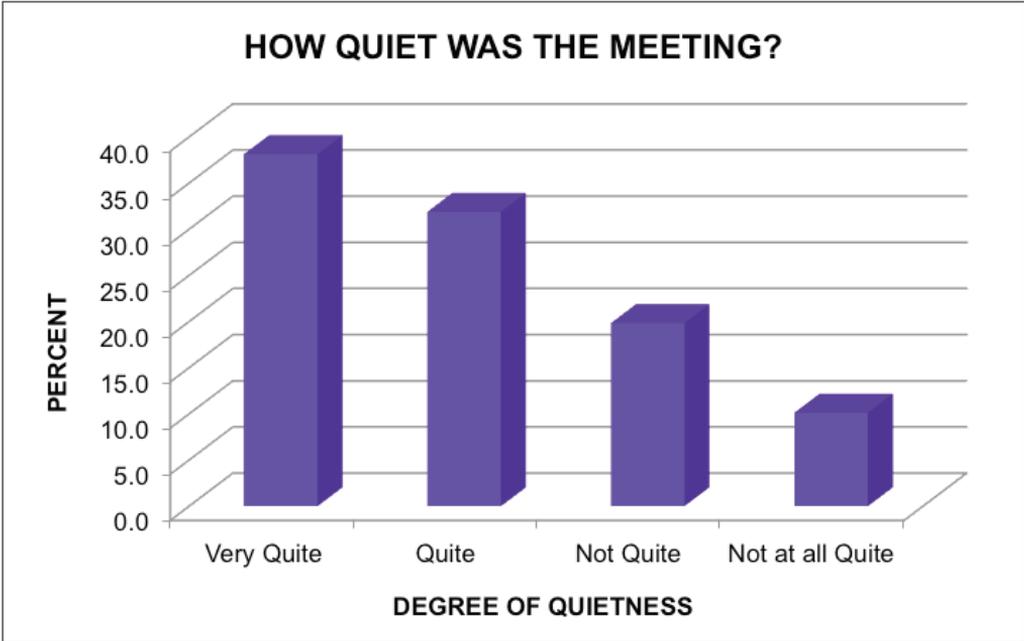
Appropriateness of Venues for Village Meetings

The preferred venues for the village meetings were those that could keep discussions away from unnecessary noise and/or interruptions from businesses and other social activities. Majority of the meetings (70 percent) were rated as free from noise interruption (very quiet – 38.1percent and quite – 31.9 percent). The rest of the meetings (30 percent) there were noise interruptions but they were not substantive enough to stop the discussions from proceeding. The next table and attendant bar graph illustrate the appropriateness of venues selected for meetings in terms of noise interruptions.

Table 6: How Quiet was the Venue Where the Meeting was Held?

HOW QUIET WAS THE MEETING	Percent
Very Quiet	38.1
Quite	31.9
Not Quite	19.8
Not at all Quiet	10.1
Total	100.0

Figure 6: How Quiet was the Venue Where the Meeting Was Held?



Accessibility of the Venue for Meetings

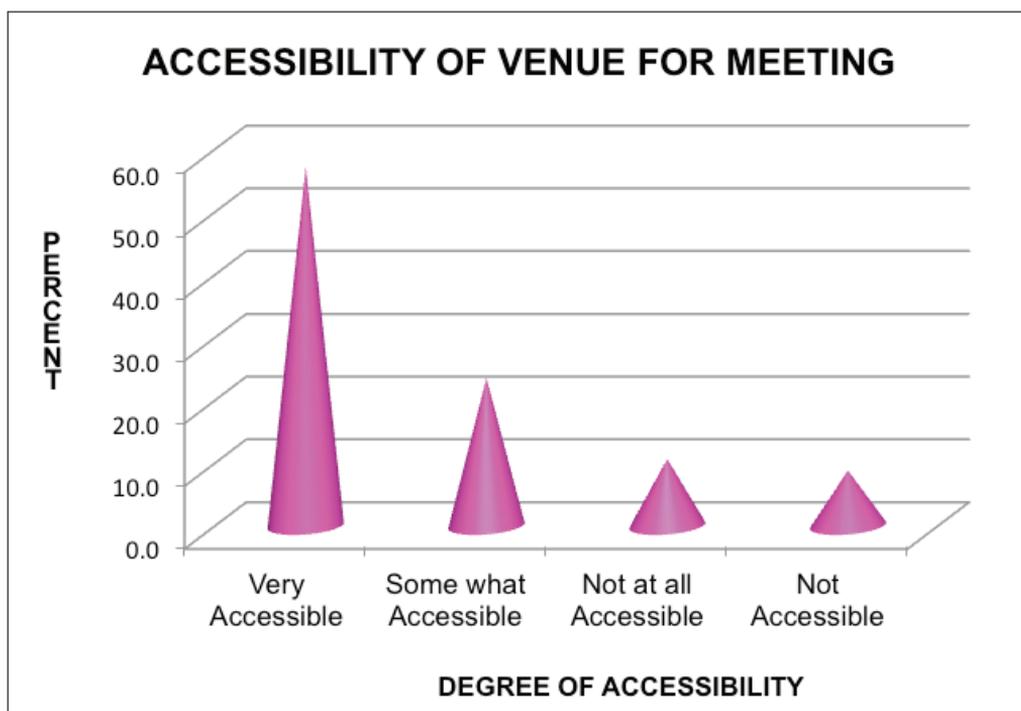
Accessibility of the venue to the targeted participants for the deliberative village meetings was one of the key factors considered in choosing the venue for the meetings.

In terms of this variable 57.1 percent of the meeting the venues were rated as “Very Accessible”, 23.5 percent as somewhat accessible while only 19.4 percent were rated as not accessible as illustrated in the next table.

Table 7: Accessibility of the Venue Where Meetings were Held

ACCESSIBILITY OF MEETING	Percent
Very Accessible	57.1
Somewhat Accessible	23.5
Not at all Accessible	10.6
Not Accessible	8.8
Total	100.0

Figure 7: Accessibility of the Venue Where the Meetings were Held



Participation of Local Leaders and Government Officials in Village Meetings

Whereas it was of critical importance for the meetings to be conducted in an environment that guaranteed privacy of views and opinions expressed during the deliberative meetings on the sensitive topic of vote buying for which case presence of village local council (LC1) leaders was not required, it was difficult to avoid them entirely. In the end activists made the decision to use them for mobilisation for village meetings on the agreement that they will behave as any participant in the meeting. Setting the record straight on this was crucial otherwise there was a risk of village LC1 chairpersons hijacking the meetings.

Village LC1 leaders participated in majority of the village meetings (61.5 percent). Crime Preventers were present in 28.7 percent of the meetings, campaign agents of different Presidential and Member of Parliament (MP) candidates were present in 24.1 percent of the meetings, while religious leaders were present in 11 percent of the meetings. There were some meetings which attracted participation of political candidates especially those contesting in the MP race and these accounted for 6.0percent of the meetings. Security Officers were observed participating in at least 1.9 percent of the meetings while district Electoral Commission Officials

were seen in 1.9 percent of the meetings and Sub-County Chiefs in 0.9percent of the meetings. It was only in 19.9 percent of the meetings that none of the above specified people was present. The next table and attendant bar graph illustrate this further.

Table 8: Did any of the following people attend the meeting?

DID ANY OF THESE PEOPLE ATTEND THE MEETING?	Percent
LC Leader	61.5
Crime Preventer	28.7
Campaign Agents	24.1
Priest (Reverend, Father etc)	11.0
Political Candidate or MP	6.0
Security Officer (GISO, Police, Army)	1.9
Electoral Commission Official	1.9
Sub-County Chief	0.9
None	19.9

Figure 8: Did any of the following people attend the meeting?



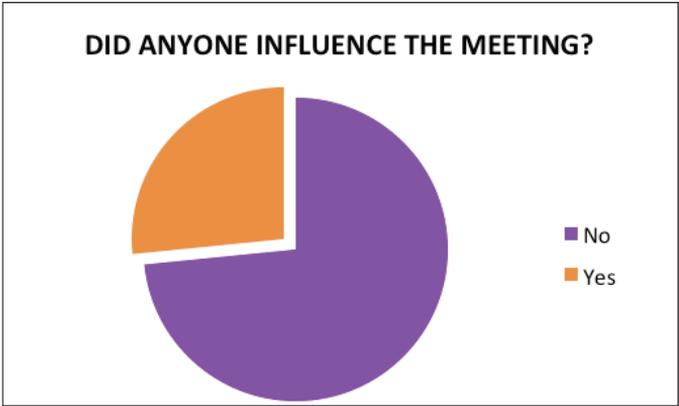
Influence of Village Local Council Leaders and Government Officials

Whereas village local council leaders, government officials, crime preventers and security officers mentioned in the previous sections were unavoidably present in 80 percent of the village meetings, majority of them were passive participants. It is understood that the main motivation for their participation was to understand what was being discussed in relation to state and/or party interests. It should be noted at this point that majority of village local council chairpersons are by default members of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party. It is only in 26.6 percent of the note-takers data collection forms that the above persons/ individuals reportedly influenced deliberations in the meetings. This means that in majority of the village meetings (73.4 percent) the personalities under question did not influence the meetings. However it is also possible that as much as they kept quiet throughout the deliberations, there is a possibility that their presence alone could have participants feel uncomfortable and nursing a feeling of anxiety, which may in a way restrain them from openly sharing their views and experiences on vote buying and selling. And because it was a key principal in research for the moderator of a focus group discussion (deliberative village meetings) to take extra measures in relation to protecting each participants privacy, in the case where a government official was in attendance and the topic of discussion is vote buying, protecting each participant’s privacy was not easy to achieve.

Table 9: Did Any of the People Influence the Meeting?

DID ANYONE INFLUENCE THE MEETING	Percent
No	73.4
Yes	26.6
Total	100.0

Figure 9: Did any of the People Influence the Meeting?



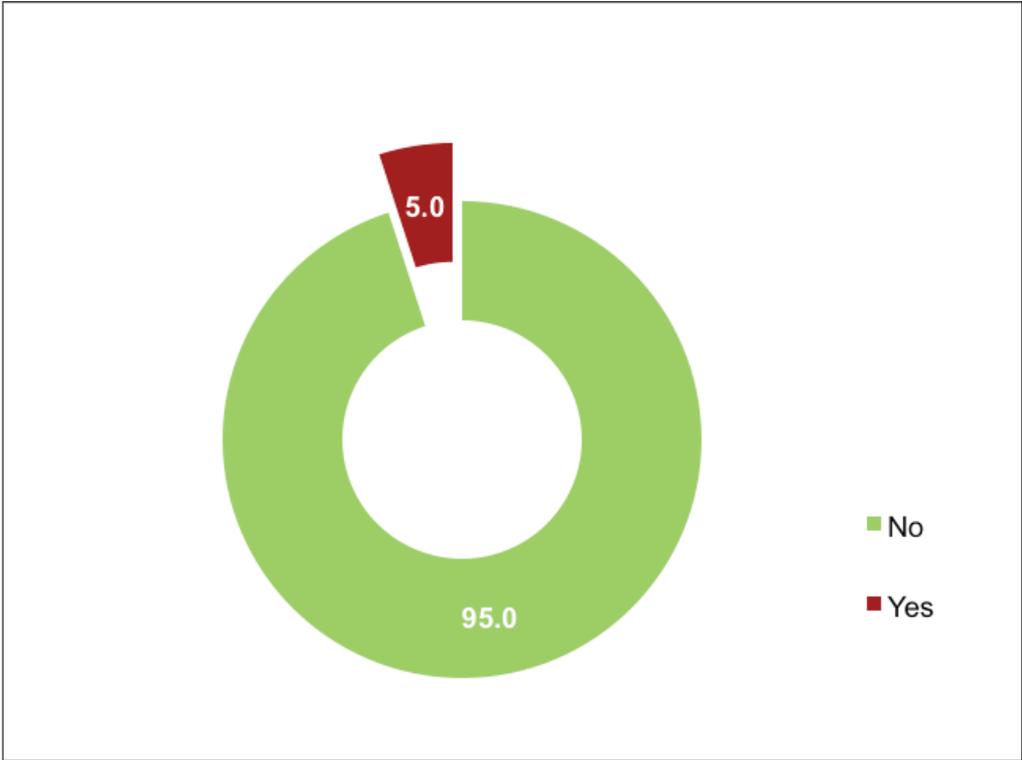
Disruption of Village Meetings by State Agents

Majority of the village meetings (95 percent) went on successfully without disruption from state agents notwithstanding the sensitivity of the topic of discussion and its timing. State agents that had been feared to disrupt the meetings included the District/Sub-County Internal Security Officers, the Police and Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) among others. Disruption was reported in only 5 percent of the village meetings and this was as a result of participants turning violent as a result of disagreement on the views shared. Cases in point include Wakibombo village in Nakasongola district and Kabembe village in Luweero district.

Table 10: Did State Agents or any other incident disrupt the Village Meetings?

DID STATE AGENTS DISRUPT THE MEETINGS?	Percent
No	95.0
Yes	5.0
Total	100.0

Figure 10: Did State Agents or any other incident disrupt the Village Meetings?



Analysis of Participants' Interest in the Village Meetings

In majority of village meetings across the country (82.2 percent) participants stayed put and deliberated until the end of the meeting. This points to the level of interest that people found in the topic, vote buying. It was only in 11.9 percent of meetings where facilitators reported that people moved away before the end of the village meeting. Ironically one of the reasons given for participants leaving the village meetings prematurely was information about a certain candidate or his/her agents arriving on the village and convening a campaign meeting where they expected to receive money. This serves to tell how deeply ingrained vote buying is in the minds of voters.

Table 11: Analysis of Participants' Interest in the Village Meetings

Analysis of Participants' Interest in the Village Meetings	Frequency	Percent
Participants attending Meetings until the end	2695	82.2
Participants leaving before end of Meetings	389	11.9
Total	3277	100

Figure 11: Did participants leave before the end of the meeting?



Why Did Participants Leave Before the End of the Meeting?

Activists cited a number of reasons to explain why on a few occasions participants left the meetings prematurely. The most common reasons were:

- a) Participants leaving to attend another community event/gathering such as a burial ceremony or funeral.
- b) Competition from a political rally on the same village especially if the candidate is renowned for his/her generosity with voters.
- c) If the meeting took longer than the time communicated or agreed to.
- d) Rainfall would force participants to abandon the meetings particularly so because some meetings were convened in open ground and others under trees.
- e) Quality of the facilitator. If the facilitator failed to answer in a convincing way the questions asked, some dissatisfied participants would leave.
- f) Security agencies came and stopped the meeting.

Figure 12: Why did participants leave the Meetings Prematurely?

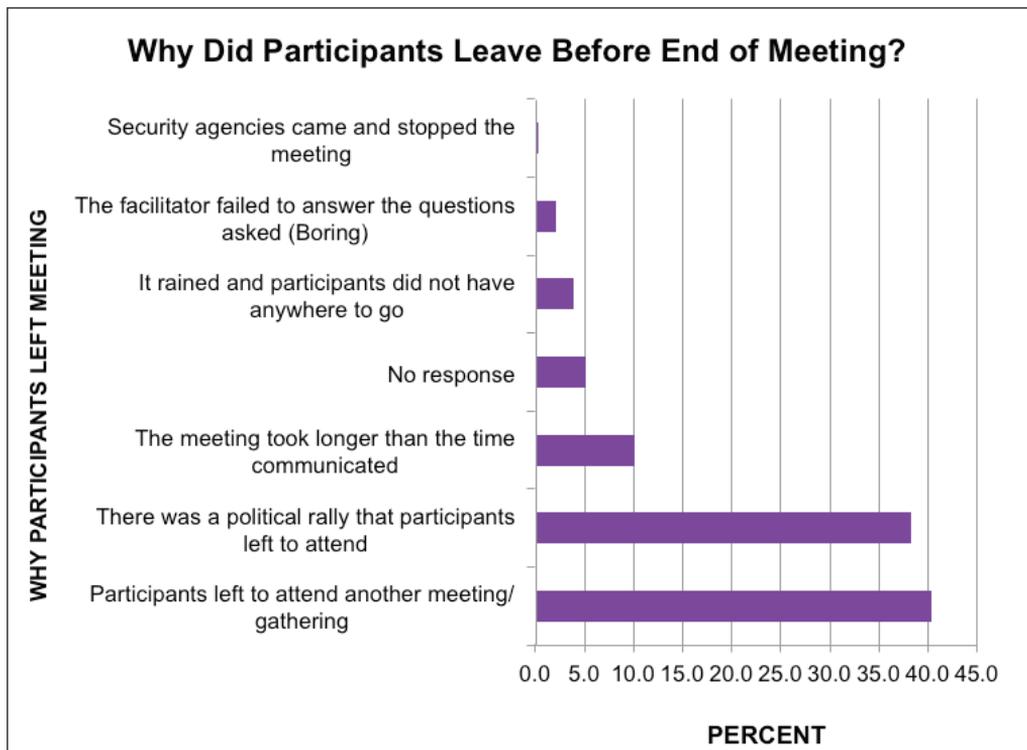


Table 12: Why did participants leave before the end of the meeting?

WHY DID PARTICIPANTS LEAVE BEFORE END OF MEETING?	Frequency	Percent
Participants left to attend another meeting/gathering	157	40.4
There was a political rally that participants left to attend	149	38.3
The meeting took longer than the time communicated	39	10.0
No response	20	5.1
It rained and participants did not have anywhere to go	15	3.9
The facilitator failed to answer the questions asked (Boring)	8	2.1
Security agencies came and stopped the meeting	1	0.3
Total	389	100.0

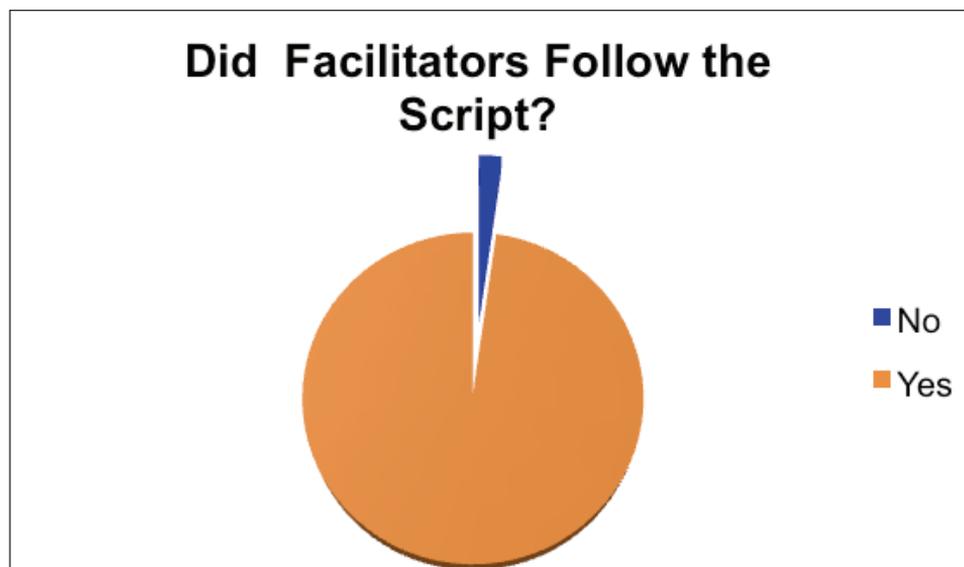
MODERATING DELIBERATIONS

In order to ensure homogeneity in soliciting and collecting qualitative data from the deliberative village meetings, there was a script the facilitators had to follow during the meetings. And majority of the activists (97.8 percent) followed the script while moderating the meetings. This helped us to understand deeper the views of grass root citizens with regard to vote buying.

Table 13: Did the facilitator follow the script during the meeting?

DID FACILITATOR FOLLOW THE SCRIPT?	Percent
No	2.2
Yes	97.8
Total	100.00

Figure 13: Did the facilitator follow the script during the meeting?



Articulation of Purpose of the Meetings

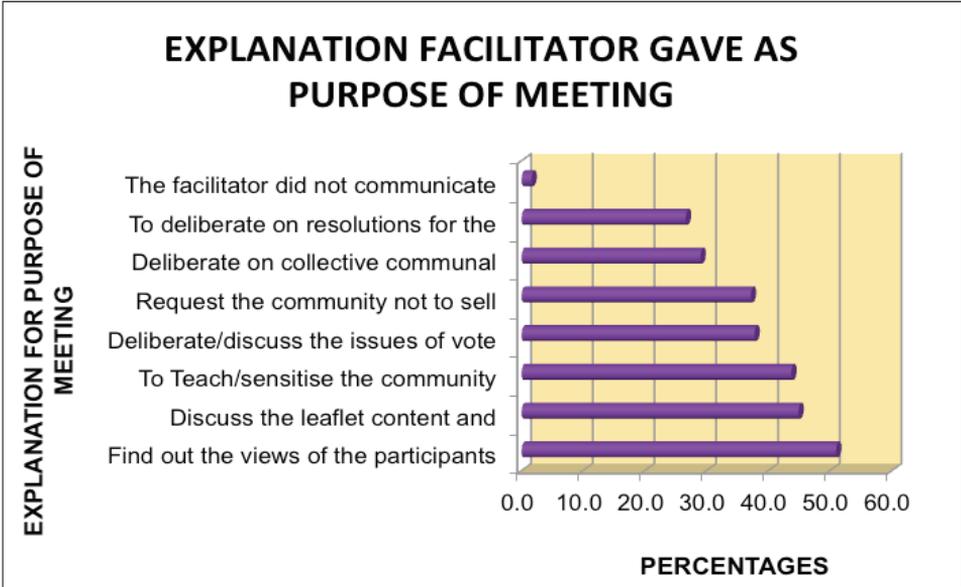
Explaining the purpose of the village meeting was crucial for focusing the direction of the discussion. There was no one size fits all method for introducing the purpose of the meeting and as a result several explanations were given by the facilitators as the purpose of the meetings. The most prominent given was “Find out the views

of the participants on vote buying and vote selling” in 51.0 percent of the meetings, followed by “Discuss the leaflet content and introduction” in 44.8 percent of the meetings and “To Teach/sensitise the community about vote buying and selling their votes” in 43.7 percent of the meetings. The least prominent reason given was “The facilitator did not communicate the purpose of the meeting” in only 1.6 percent of the meetings.

Table 14: Explanation the Facilitator Gave as Purpose of Meeting

MEETING PURPOSE	Percent
Find out the views of the participants on vote buying and vote selling	51.0
Discuss the leaflet content and introduction	44.8
To Teach/sensitise the community about vote buying and selling their votes	43.7
Deliberate/discuss the issues of vote buying	37.7
Request the community not to sell their votes	37.1
Deliberate on collective communal options against vote buying	29.0
To deliberate on resolutions for the anti-vote buying campaign	26.6
The facilitator did not communicate the purpose of the meeting	1.6

Figure 14: Explanation the Facilitator Gave as Purpose of Meeting



Most Popular Views

The length and breadth of interaction between participants on a given view signified the quality of the deliberative village meetings. In this regard we identify the views that received the most number of participant interaction. The participants agreed on several views during the meetings. The most prominent views were:

- a) Village members would be willing to refuse vote buying only if candidates deliver services to their community. This view was witnessed in 48.3 percent of the meetings,
- b) Vote buying is not an important issue in our village, there are far more pressing problems. This view was common in 39.3 percent of the meetings.
- c) Vote buying is an important issue but it will be difficult to eliminate it. This view was shared in 29.3 percent of the meetings.

Least Prominent Views

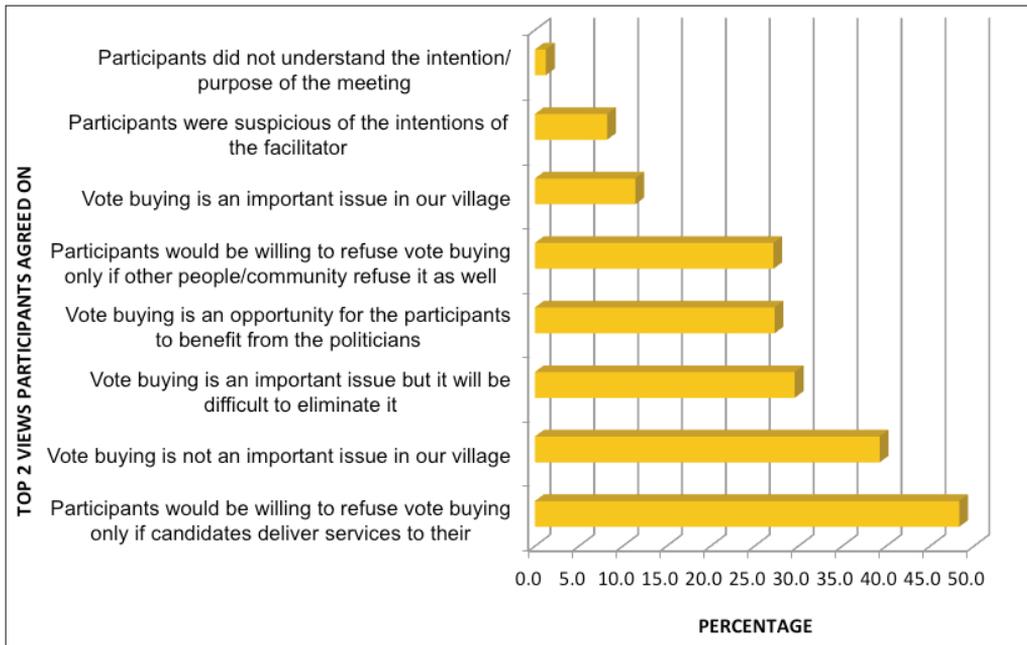
The least prominent view was that of village members not being able to understand the intention/purpose of the meeting as witnessed in 1.3 percent of the meetings.

In 8.2 percent of the meetings, activists reportedly observed that participants seemed suspicious of the intentions of the facilitator and these played a passive role throughout the duration of the village meetings.

Table 15: Top Views that Participants agreed with

TOP VIEWS THAT PARTICIPANTS AGREED WITH	Percent
Participants would be willing to refuse vote buying only if candidates deliver services to their community	48.3
Vote buying is not an important issue in our village	39.3
Vote buying is an important issue but it will be difficult to eliminate it	29.6
Vote buying is an opportunity for the participants to benefit from the politicians	27.3
Participants would be willing to refuse vote buying only if other people/ community refuse it as well	27.2
Vote buying is an important issue in our village	11.4
Participants were suspicious of the intentions of the facilitator	8.2
Participants did not understand the intention/purpose of the meeting	1.3

Figure 15: Popular Views that Participants agreed with



COST OF VOTE BUYING

Overall analysis of the views shared in deliberative meetings shows that grass root citizens are well aware that vote buying is a tactic used by candidates who are not sure of their electorate's support, "so they use money to influence voters to change their minds". They went on to argue that less competent candidates are ones that use the gifts to confuse the voters so as to vote the wrong people. The question is that if they know about this fact, why do they then go on to vote for candidates that offer them money and gifts? Other participants shared a view that vote buying is a way of making people happy such that they can vote for you. That voting in Uganda is a business to win votes through change of voters' mind set. Some citizens actually know that vote buying and/or selling is against the laws of Uganda and is hence punishable but they engage in it because they know that the law is not enforced.

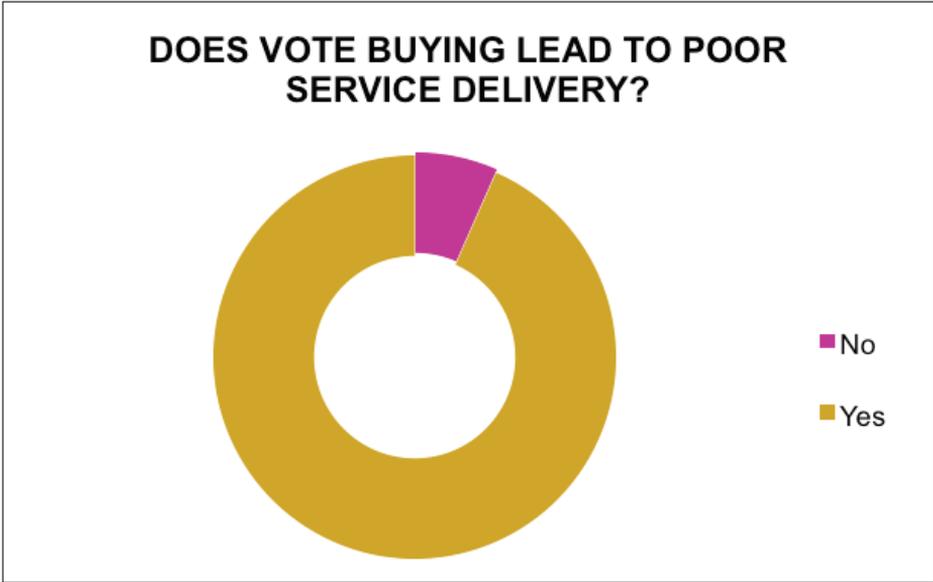
Vote Buying Leads to Poor Service Delivery

Most citizens at the grass root have over time been able to link vote buying with service delivery. In 93.4 percent of the village meetings conducted, there was at least one participant who made the statement that vote buying leads to poor service delivery. It was only in 6.6 percent of the meetings where no participant linked vote buying to service delivery. The activists who moderated and took note of the proceeding in these meetings report that participants reflected on the experiences of 2006 and 2011 campaigns from which they learned that when a candidate for Member of Parliament uses money to induce voters, that candidate will not be seen until such a time when elections are near. They further know that an MP must be able to recoup the money they spent as opposed to representing the interest of the voters.

Table 16: Does Vote Buying Lead To Poor Service Delivery?

DID ANY PARTICIPANT MENTION THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO POOR SERVICE DELIVERY?	Percent
No	6.6
Yes	93.4
Total	100.0

Figure 16: Does Vote Buying Lead To Poor Service Delivery?



Who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to poor service delivery in the community?

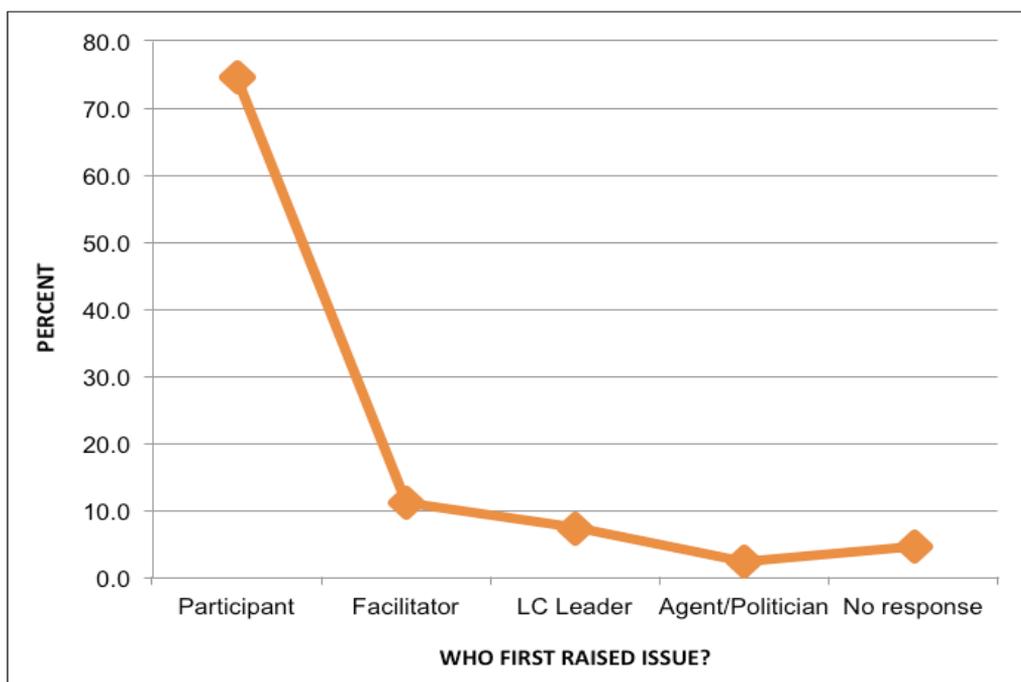
In the village meetings, different types of participants raised the issue that vote buying leads to poor service delivery in the community. However in circumstances where the facilitators saw that the time for the meeting was running out without anyone raising the issues, then they raised it. This happened in only 11.1 percent of the cases. In other cases the issue was first raised by the village local council leader, a campaign agent and politician.

It is reported by the note-takers that regardless of who raised the issue first, once it came up for discussion, the participants shared their varied views on it with observable passion. Cases where meetings ended without anyone raising the issue represent 4.6 percent of the meetings.

Table 17: Who First Raised the Vote Buying Issue?

WHO FIRST RAISED THE VOTE BUYING ISSUE?	Percent
Participant	74.6
Facilitator	11.1
LC Leader	7.3
Agent/Politician	2.3
No response	4.6
Total	100.0

Figure 17: Who Raised the Vote Buying Issue?



Demographics of Participants raising the issue that vote buying leads to poor service delivery in the community

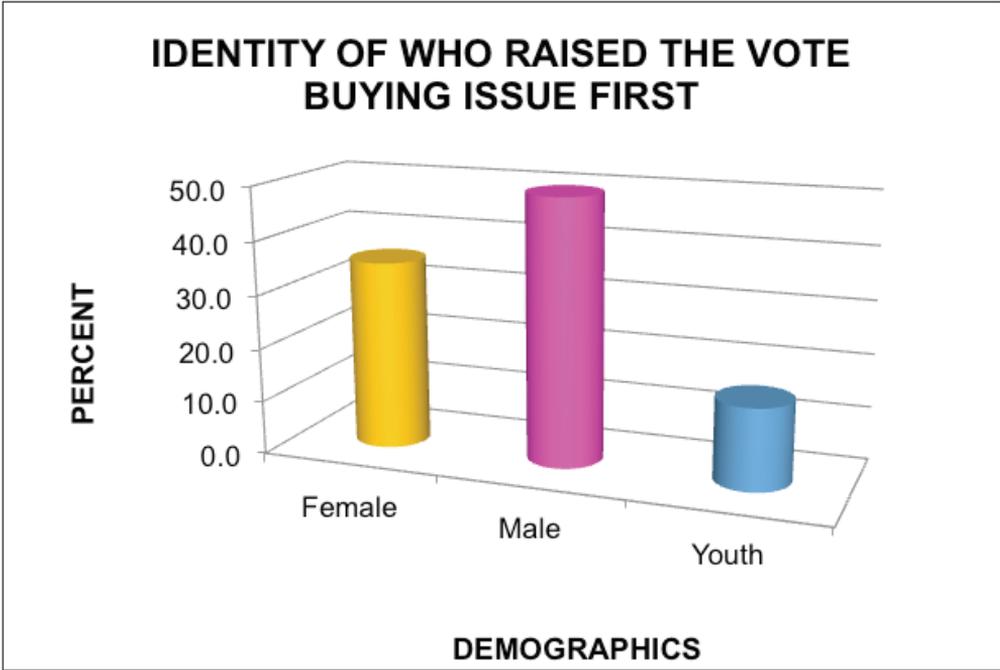
Majority of the participants that raised the issue that vote buying leads to poor service delivery were male at 49.5 percent, followed by female at 35.3 percent and the youth¹⁸ at 15.2 percent. For the non-youth, the male were the first to raise the issue in 49.5 percent of the meetings as compared to the female who were the first to raise the issue in 35.3 percent of the meetings as illustrated in the next table and graph:

Table 18: Identity of Who First Raised the Vote Buying Issue

IDENTITY OF WHO FIRST RAISED THE VOTE BUYING ISSUE	Percent
Female	35.3
Male	49.5
Youth	15.2
Total	100.0

¹⁸outh in the context of this report refers to citizens aged between 15 – 30 years of age.

Figure 18: Identity of Who First Raised the Vote Buying Issue



Participants’ agreeing with the argument that vote-buying leads to poor service delivery in the community

Participants in the meetings where the issue of vote buying was raised and recognised as a problem which contributes to poor service delivery as opposed to seeing it as an opportunity to get something back from politicians, were classified.

It was only in 29.6 percent of the meetings that “All” participants agreed. In other meetings participants were divided. For example in 55.2 percent of the meetings, “Most” participants agreed and in 12.0 percent of the meetings it was only “A Few” participants who agreed with the argument that, by accepting money from candidates contesting for MP and District Local Government positions, they are forfeiting their right and power to hold elected leaders accountable. They further took cognizance of the fact that a leader who spends money to be elected is much more likely to participate in syndicates where money is diverted from service delivery to personal gain. In 3.3 percent of the meetings majority of participants could not link vote-buying with poor service delivery. The next table and graph illustrate this variable.

Table 19: Participants who agreed with the Vote Buying idea

PARTICIPANTS AGREEING THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO POOR SERVICE DELIVERY	Percent
Most	55.2
All	29.6
A few	12.0
Very Few	3.3
Total	100.0

Vote Buying Leads to Corruption

ACFIM experience with monitoring campaign spending for the Presidential and Parliamentary elections 2016, reveals that the roots of vote-buying lie deeper in the Ugandan society. The practice has overtime been ingrained in Uganda’s political culture and is largely responsible for the astronomical escalation in the cost of contesting for elective positions especially at presidential and parliamentary levels. Elective politics has raised to a level where it is virtually impossible to mount, far less win, a campaign without investing huge sums of money to buy voters¹⁹. According to ACFIM Report, vote buying in 2016 election campaigns manifested in various forms including: cash handouts, gifts, voter tourism, voter hospitality and donations among others. The views shared by voters during the deliberative meetings show that vote buying is increasingly corrupting Uganda’s democracy by suppressing citizens’ ability to exercise their right to vote for the right candidates that would have “put service above self”.

In majority of the village meetings (88.5 percent) there was at least one participant who mentioned that vote buying leads to corruption. The discussion that ensued around this issue revealed that many citizens at the grass root level believe that politicians are by and large corrupt. Citizens further believe that a Member of Parliament is able to recoup the money spent on vote buying by either passing laws in favour of the government in power or becoming ministers – a platforms that gives them direct access to state resources. It was only in 11.5percent of the meetings where no participant mentioned the idea that vote buying leads to corruption.

¹⁹ Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring; Extended Study on Campaign Financing for Presidential and Member of Parliament Races; Final Report 2016

Table 20: Did any participant mention vote buying leads to corruption?

DID ANY PARTICIPANT MENTION THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO CORRUPTION?	Percent
No	11.5
Yes	88.5
Total	100.0

Figure 20: Did any participant mention vote buying leads to corruption?

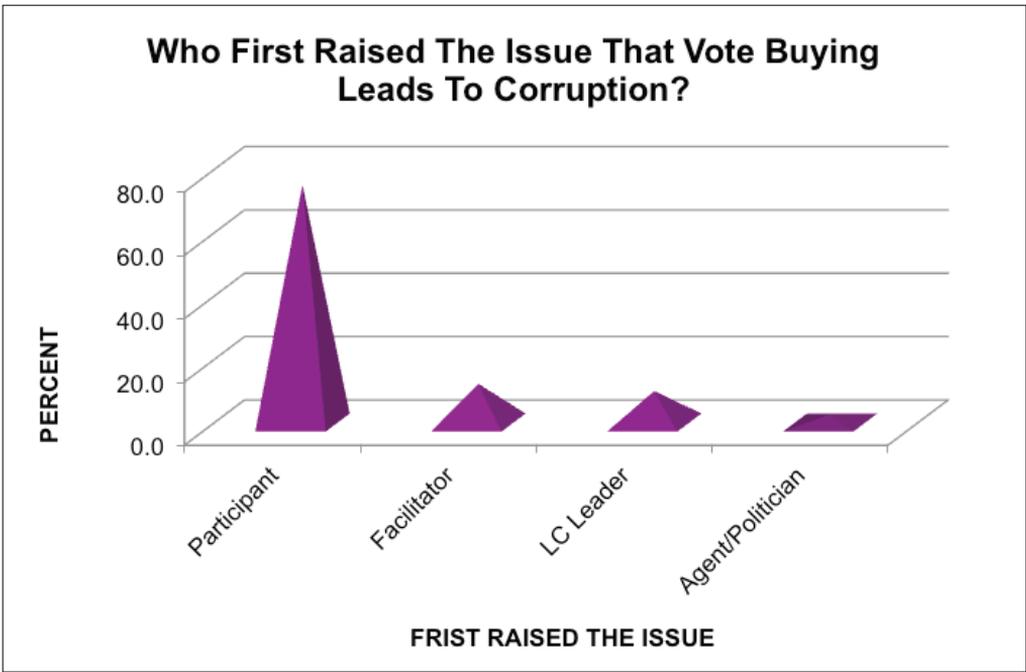


In majority of the meetings (75.1 percent) of the meetings the issue that vote buying leads to corruption was raised without any prompting questions from the moderator. It was only in 12.3 percent of the meetings that facilitators asked a prompting question that result in the issue coming up. There were other circumstances when village local council chairpersons or leaders were the first ones to link vote buying with corruption, and this happened in 10.0 percent of the village meetings. In 2.7 percent of the meetings the issue was first raised by campaign agents and/or politicians. The next table and related graph illustrate this further.

Table 21: Who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption?

WHO RAISED CORRUPTION ISSUE THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO CORRUPTION?	Percent
Participant on their own	75.1
Facilitator’s probing question	12.3
Village Local Council Leader	10.0
Agent/Politician	2.7
Total	100.0

Figure 21: Who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption?



Demographics of People that Linked Vote Buying To Corruption

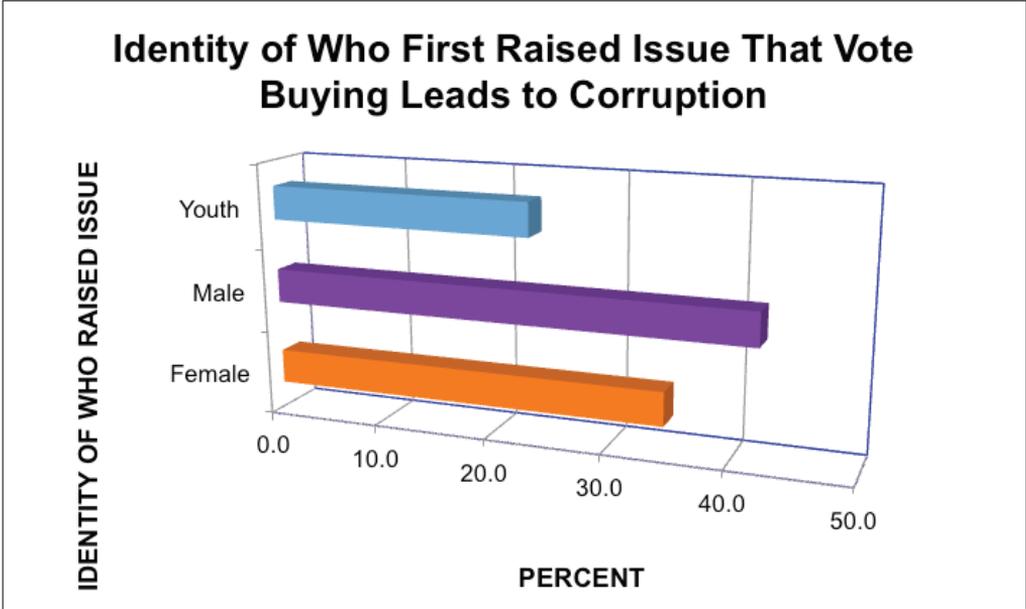
In 42.1 percent of the meetings the person who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption was male while in 34.6 percent of the meetings the person who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption was female. In 23.3 percent of the meetings the person who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption was a youth. This underscores the need to build civic competence of the youth to link corruption with vote buying during campaigns. It is argued that the attitude of the youth towards corruption can be quite lenient

when they are not appropriately sensitized or taught about its risks and impact. In the campaigns for Presidential and Member of Parliament elections 2016, the youth were targeted by political candidates as agents and/or beneficiaries of vote buying.

Table 22: Identity of who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption?

IDENTITY OF WHO RAISED ISSUE THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO CORRUPTION	Percent
Female	34.6
Male	42.1
Youth	23.3
Total	100.0

Figure 22: Identity of who first raised the issue that vote buying leads to corruption?



Perception on whether Vote Buying leads to Corruption

In almost all the village meetings participants agreed with the view that vote buying leads to corruption. The difference was in numbers of those that agreed and those that did not. Their argument was that a candidate who spends more on cash handouts, gifts, and donations is most likely to engage in corruption activities once

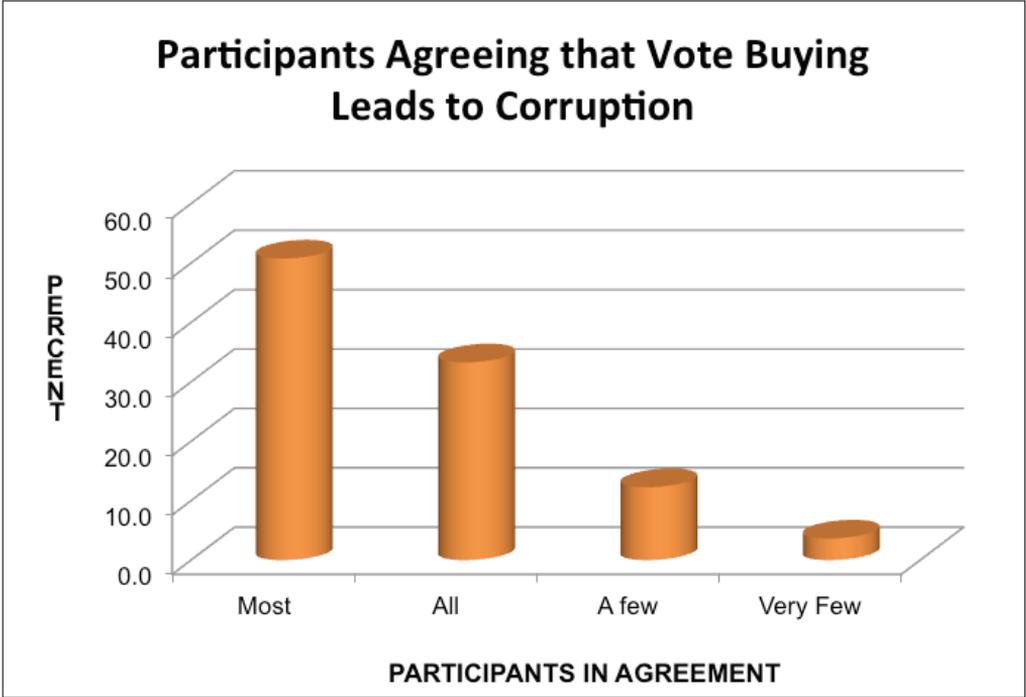
voted in order to recover their money. Some reflected on the source of money that candidates were using for which they argued that incumbent ministers and former civil servants contesting in the election are able to spend more on voters perhaps because they have also taken more from government.

The meetings where all participants agreed with this view represent 33.3 percent while those where most (but not all) of the participants agreed with the view represent 50.8 percent. In other meetings it was a few participants (12.3 percent) or very few participants 3.7 per cent as illustrated in the next table and graph.

Table 23: Participants who agreed with the idea that that vote buying leads to corruption

PARTICIPANTS WHO AGREED WITH IDEA THAT VOTE BUYING LEADS TO CORRUPTION	Percent
Most	50.8
All	33.3
A few	12.3
Very Few	3.7
Total	100.0

Figure 23: Participants who agreed with the idea that that vote buying leads to corruption



Morality of Vote Buying and Selling

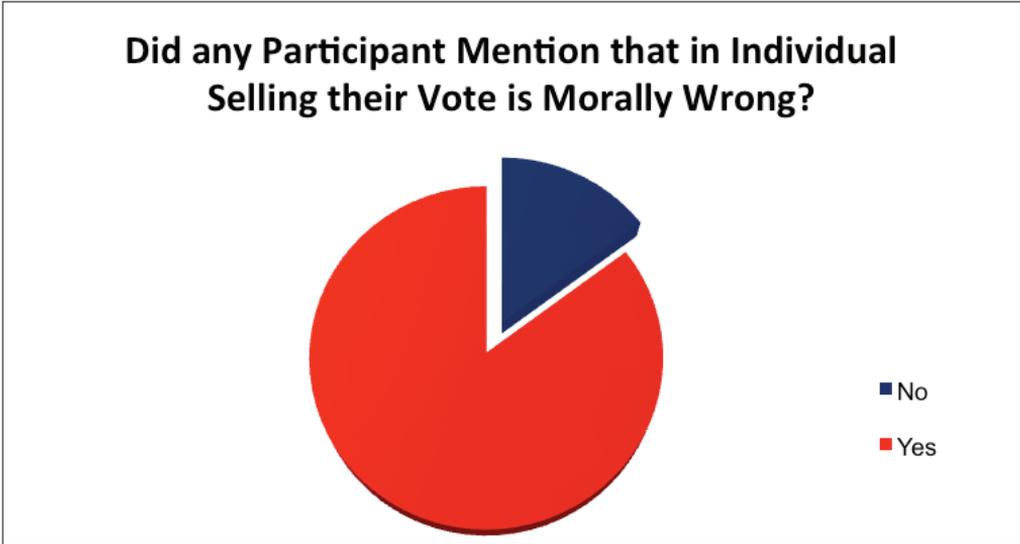
There is a moral hazard that should be associated with vote buying in Uganda. This is because on one part, voters will collect money from all candidates that are contesting on the same elective position, and they do so with knowledge that despite accepting the money they will not vote for that particular candidate. The popular slogan for 2015-2016 election campaigns was “eat widely vote wisely”. The practice of accepting money and gifts from a candidate you already know you will not vote for raised a moral question on the Ugandan voter. And it is not that citizens are not aware that this is morally wrong! On the side of the vote buyer when elected, the prime thing on his/her mind will be to recoup his/her investment and by doing so he/she will be accountable only to his money that bought him the votes, not the voters.

In majority of the village meetings (85.2 percent) there was at least a participant who mentioned the idea that it is morally wrong for an individual to sell their votes. And when it was mentioned the participants discussed it albeit to no definite conclusion. However there were also meetings where no participant alluded to vote buying or selling as a morality issue and this was reported in 14.8 percent of the village meetings.

Table 24: Did any participant mention that selling their votes is morally wrong?

DID ANY PARTICIPANT MENTION THAT AN INDIVIDUAL SELLING THEIR VOTES IS MORALLY WRONG?	Percent
No	14.8
Yes	85.2
Total	100

Figure 24: Did any participant mention that selling their votes is morally wrong?



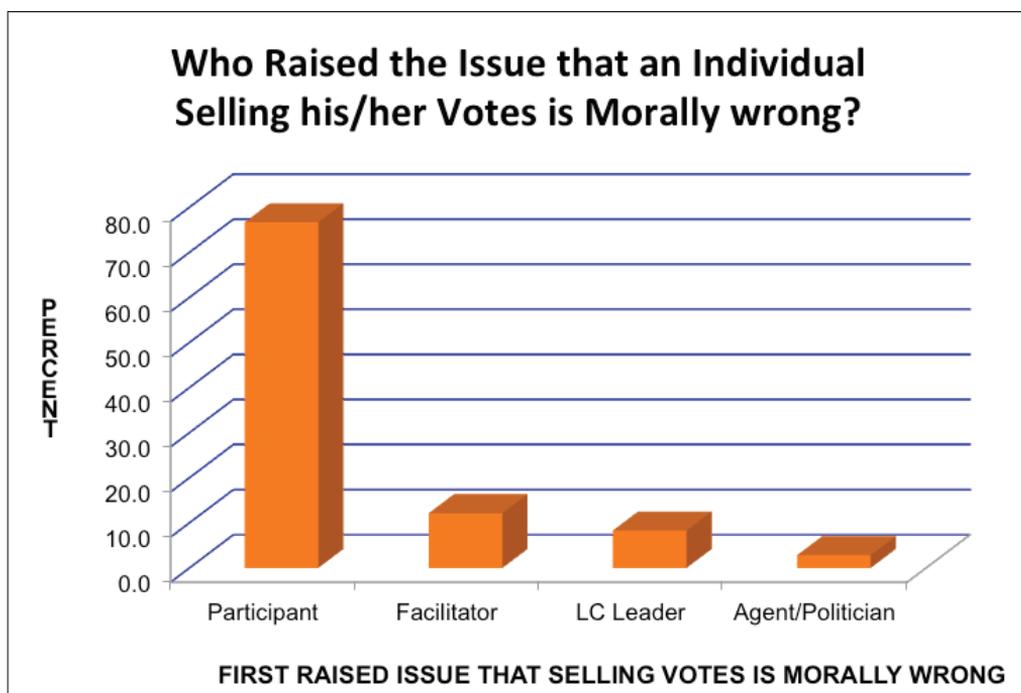
Who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong?

There were instances when it was the village Local Council leader or campaign agents and on some occasions it was politicians that started the argument that vote buying and selling is morally wrong. This happened in 11.1 per cent of the meetings. In other meetings it was ordinary village members that first questioned the morality of vote buying /selling and this happened in 76.7 percent of the meetings. In 12.2 Percent of the meetings those who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong were activists who were moderating the meetings.

Table 25: Who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong?

WHO FIRST RAISED THE ISSUE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL SELLING THEIR VOTES IS MORALLY WRONG?	Percent
Participant	76.7
Facilitator	12.2
LC Leader	8.3
Agent/Politician	2.8
Total	100.0

Figure 25: Who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong?



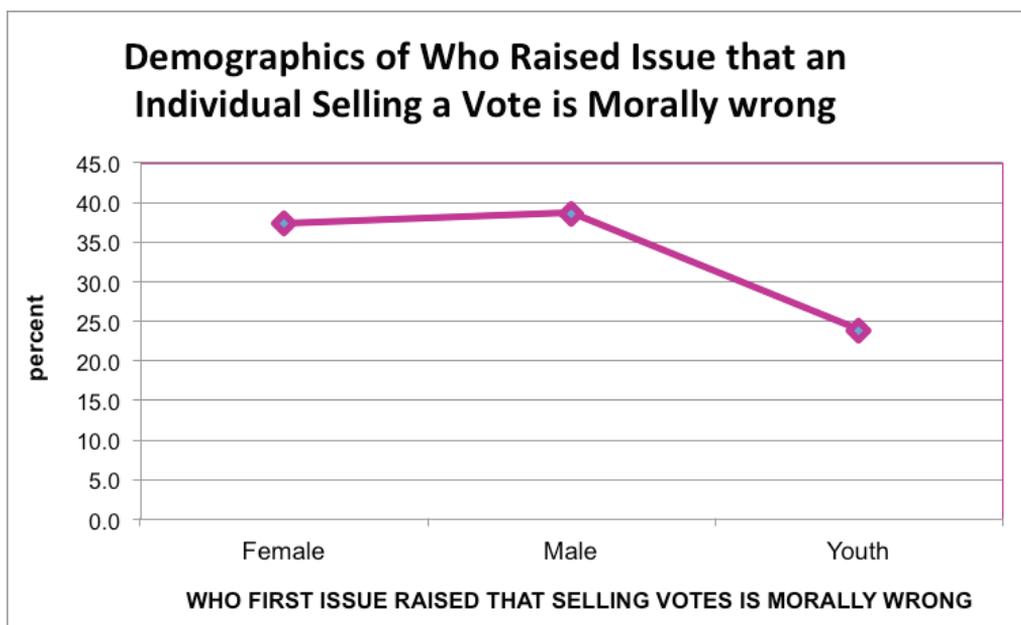
Demographics on Morality of Vote Buying and Selling

Male and female participants almost equally shared the view that vote buying and/or selling is evokes morality questions. In 38.6 percent of the meetings it was Male participants who first questioned the morality of vote buying while in 37.4 percent of the meetings it was female participants who first questioned the morality of vote buying. There was also a sizeable number of youth who argued that vote buying is morally wrong and this happened in 23.9 percent of the village meetings.

Table 26: Identity of who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS THAT QUESTIONED THE MORALITY OF VOTE SELLING	Percent
Female	37.4
Male	38.6
Youth	23.9
Total	100.0

Figure 26: Who first raised the issue that selling their votes is morally wrong?



How many participants agreed with the idea that selling their votes is morally wrong?

Majority of the citizens that participated in the village meetings agreed with the idea that selling their votes is morally wrong. In more than a third of the meetings (30.6 percent) there was general consensus on the view that it is morally wrong for a person to exchange money for his/her vote. They further argued that the slogan “eat widely but vote wisely” that was being propagated by some candidates and campaign managers where a vote can take money from a candidate with full knowledge that he/she will not vote for that candidate, is wrong. They reflected on previous election campaigns 2006 and 2011 where they accepted money but remained as poor as they had been.

In 48.8 percent of the meetings whereas there were voices that contested the moralistic view, it was clear that majority supported the argument that it is morally wrong. It was only in 4.5 percent of the meetings where participants who did not consider the moral aspect outnumbered those who perceived vote buying as an immoral act.

Figure 27: Participants who agreed with the idea that selling their votes is morally wrong?



Table 27: Participants who agreed with the idea that selling votes is morally wrong?

HOW MANY AGREED WITH THE IDEA THAT AN INDIVIDUAL SELLING THEIR VOTES IS MORALLY WRONG?	Percent
All	30.6
Most	48.8
A few	16.1
Very Few	4.5
Total	100.0

Vote Selling Makes Community Suffer in Future

Participants reflected on the mounts given out by political candidates or their campaign agents which ranged between UGX 500 and UGX 2,000 (US\$0.15 - \$0.60). Some argued that whereas in the past their excuse for accepting the petty monies provided by political candidates was because they are poor, time has taught them a lesson that the benefit is so minuscule and short-lived compared to the pain of going through another five years of misrepresentation. They further expressed envy at campaign agents who are perceived to get more money from

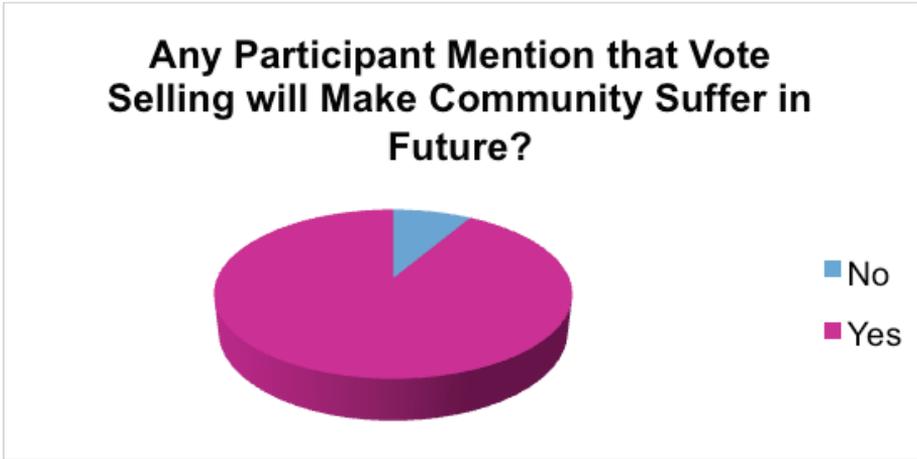
political candidates and pass on so little to the ordinary villager as evidenced in the observable economic improvements in the ways of living of the agents during and after campaigns. These improvements according to participants manifest in form of an improved homes, acquiring improved means of transport often in form of a new motorcycle or bicycle among other signs.

Some participants expressed knowledge of the fact that taking the money means forfeiting the future because it becomes difficult to lobby elected leaders for improvement to public services after you took their money. They further argued that buying votes appeals particularly to political candidates who intend to behave opportunistically after being voted and for this very reason may also be willing to pay more for votes than candidates who intend to behave well and serve the common good of citizens. In majority meetings (91.5 percent) across the 52 districts of the project scope there was at least one participant who argued that if an individual sells his/her vote, that act will make the whole Community suffer in future. It was only in a few meetings (8.5 percent) where no participant alluded to the argument that the entire village communities suffer long term when an individual or group of individuals sells their votes.

Table 28: Participants that Believe Vote Selling Makes Community Suffer

PARTICIPANTS MENTION THAT SELLING VOTES WILL MAKE THE COMMUNITY SUFFER IN FUTURE?	Percent
No	8.5
Yes	91.5
Total	100.0

Figure 28: Participants that Believe Vote Selling Makes Community Suffer



Who first raised the idea that Individual selling will make the whole Community suffer in future?

Whereas village local council leaders (LC 1) and campaign agents had been used by some candidate as agents for vote-buying, this did not stop some of them from stepping forward to denounce vote buying as an act that will make the whole community suffer in future. However in majority of the meetings (72.14 percent) it was ordinary village members that started the argument that when a village member accepts to give up his/her vote in exchange for money or a gift, the consequences of that act will be faced by the entire community in future. In 15.8 percent of the meetings it was Facilitators who initiated the discussion on the long term effect of vote buying on the community.

Figure 29: Who Raised Issue that Selling Votes Makes Community Suffer?

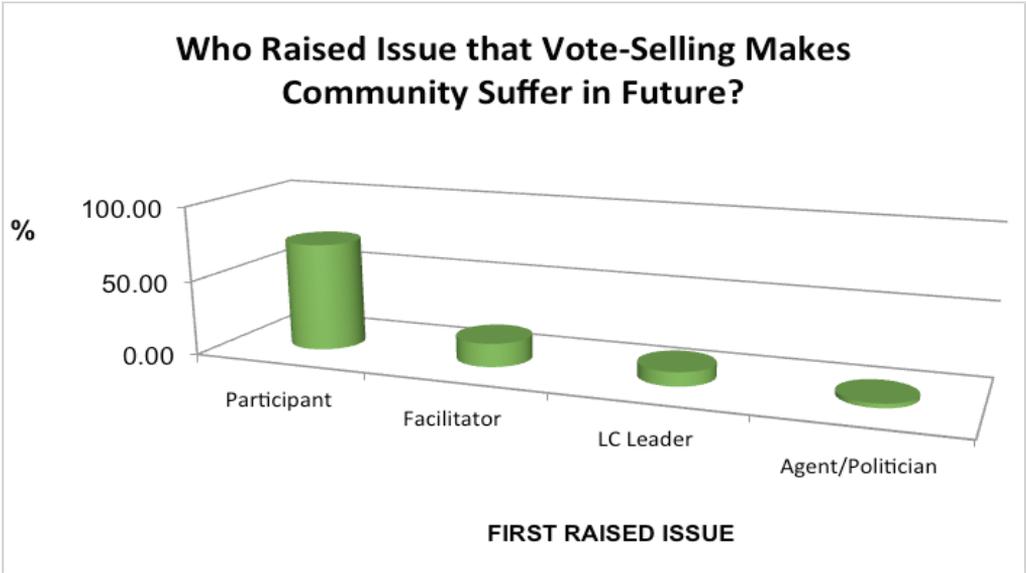


Table 29: Who Raised Issue that Selling Votes Makes Community Suffer?

WHO RAISED ISSUE THAT VOTE-SELLING WILL MAKE COMMUNITY SUFFER IN FUTURE?	Percent
Participant	72.14
Facilitator	15.68
LC Leader	9.36
Agent/Politician	2.82
Total	100.00

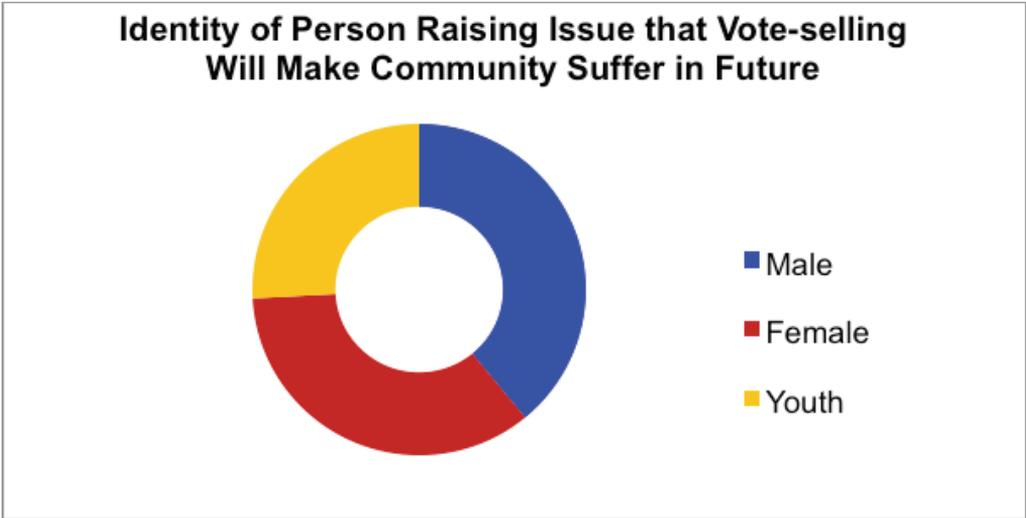
Demographics in relation to responses on Vote-buying by one Person affecting the community in turn

Male and female participants were unequivocal on the view that when one village member sells his/her vote, the consequences of that act will be endured by the entire village in future. The argument underpinning this statement was that a politician who pays for a vote is more likely to behave opportunistically if elected than the one who campaigns and earns a vote. Opportunistic politicians will most likely spend the entire tenure serving their personal interest as opposed to voter interests. The next table illustrates this in percentage terms.

Table 30: Identity of Who Raised Issue that Selling Votes Makes Community Suffer?

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PERSON WHO FIRST RAISED ISSUE THAT SELLING VOTES WILL MAKE THE COMMUNITY SUFFER IN FUTURE	Percent
Male	39.0
Female	35.2
Youth	25.8
Total	100.0

Figure 30: Identity of Who Raised Issue that Selling Votes Makes Community Suffer?



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO VOTE BUYING

An analytical reflection on the deliberations in most of the village meeting shows that there is a growing percentage of Uganda citizens in rural and urban areas that view vote buying with disapproval. This view is informed by experiences from previous elections 2006 and 2011 when some the elected politicians particularly Members of Parliament virtually abandoned their constituencies. There were also media reports about the indebtedness of MPs in the 9th Parliament.

In the survey of MPs in the 9th Parliament conducted in December 2014 one of the respondents stated that *“people think that they should keep on milking you... and if you do not do this in the eyes of the voters, you have not performed”*²⁰. Other MP respondents revealed that they spend on average UGX 4.5 million every time they visit the constituency. The spending goes for things like payment of school fees for children, medical bills, funeral bills, fundraising for weddings, in churches and mosques among others.

It was apparent from the discussions that Ugandan voters are cognizant of the fact that politicians who buy votes do so mainly to obtain control of the public apparatus in ways that allow a person to recover, at the very least, the money that was paid out to the individuals who sold their votes, with something left to compensate the vote-buyer for the labour and entrepreneurial risk they undertook. In a nutshell there was consensus in majority of meetings that vote buying has in the past not returned any long term benefits and that there was no evidence that it will return any benefit in the post 2016 election period.

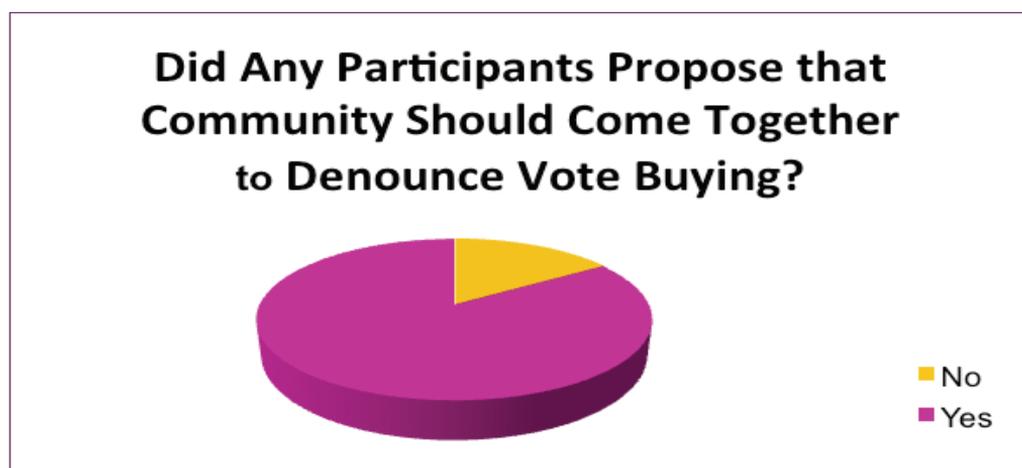
Based on these views, participants in majority of the meetings (84.1 percent) proposed that community members should come together and denounce vote buying in their village, as illustrated in the next table.

[±]The Survey code named: Who Pays the Piper, was conducted in November – December 2014 by Alliance for Election Campaign Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to conduct a survey of Members of Parliament on the commercialization of Uganda’s political culture. It targeted a population of 275 directly elected MPs (excluding Government ministers). A total of 146 MPs were randomly surveyed constituting 53.1% of the target population.

Table 31: Participants Proposing that Community Should Denounce Vote Buying

PROPOSAL THAT COMMUNITY SHOULD COLLECTIVELY DENOUNCE VOTE BUYING?	Percent
No we cannot denounce Vote-buying	15.9
We should Collectively Denounce Vote-buying	84.1
Total	100.0

Figure 31: Participants Proposing that Community Should Denounce Vote Buying



Demographics of participants that supported the view that community members should denounce vote buying in their village

Whereas there was general consensus especially during the third and final round of village meetings that the village members should join hands against vote buying, it was mostly men who supported this position (40.3 percent) followed by women at 37.3 per cent and the youth at 22.5 percent.

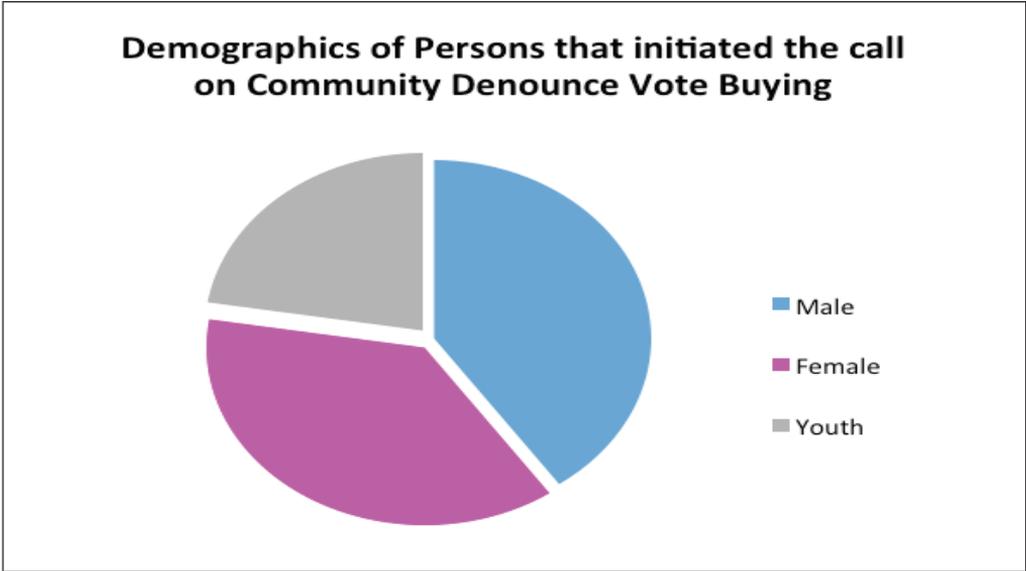
Table 32: Demographics of Who Raised Proposal to Denounce Vote Buying

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PERSONS THAT PROPOSED THAT COMMUNITY SHOULD DENOUNCE VOTE BUYING	Percent
Male	40.3
Female	37.3
Youth	22.5
Total	100.0

The argument against vote buying was premised on the ground that votes do not have a price, they have consequences. One of the consequences mentioned was the situation where after buying enough votes to see them through as elected Members of Parliament, many of them will spend the next five years trying to recoup what they invested instead of serving the interests of voters. In the end it is the voter who loses, and the loss comes in form of poor service delivery.

The next pie chart illustrates the demographics of people that raised the view of denouncing vote bribery collectively as a village/community.

Figure 32: Demographics of Persons that Raised Proposal to Denounce Vote Buying



How many participants agreed with the idea that community members should denounce vote buying in their village?

Whereas the argument that seemed palatable to some village members was the one that favoured “*eating widely but voting wisely*” which literally translates into: accept the money, but vote your conscience, there was a number of participants who disagreed with it. The problem with this “*eating widely but voting wisely*” is that it encourages voters to seek and/or ask for money from political candidates thereby escalating the problem of commercialisation of electoral politics.

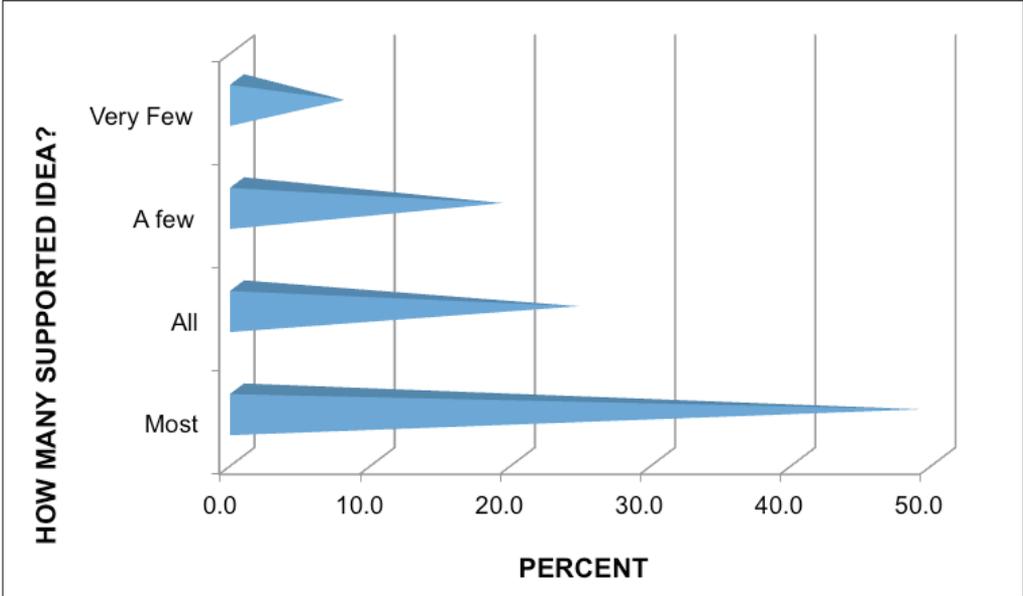
Some village members challenged the notion of “eat widely but vote wisely” on moral grounds. Village members who supported the argument that a person’s vote is free therefore is cannot be sold further agreed to the importance of coming together to say no to vote buying. In all village meetings there were voters who agreed to the position of no vote buying.

In almost a quarter on the village meetings (24.4 percent) all participants agreed to denounce vote buying completely. In almost half the meetings (48.9 percent) it was most participants but not all, who agreed with the view that community members should come together and denounce vote buying in their village. The next table provides better illustration of this.

Table 33: How Many Supported That Community Should Denounce Vote Buying?

HOW MANY SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL THAT COMMUNITY SHOULD COME TOGETHER TO DENOUNCE VOTE BUYING?	Percent
Most	48.9
All	24.5
A few	19.0
Very Few	7.7
Total	100.0

Figure 33: How many supported the view that Community Should Denounce Vote Buying?



Participants challenging the proposal that community members should denounce vote buying in their village

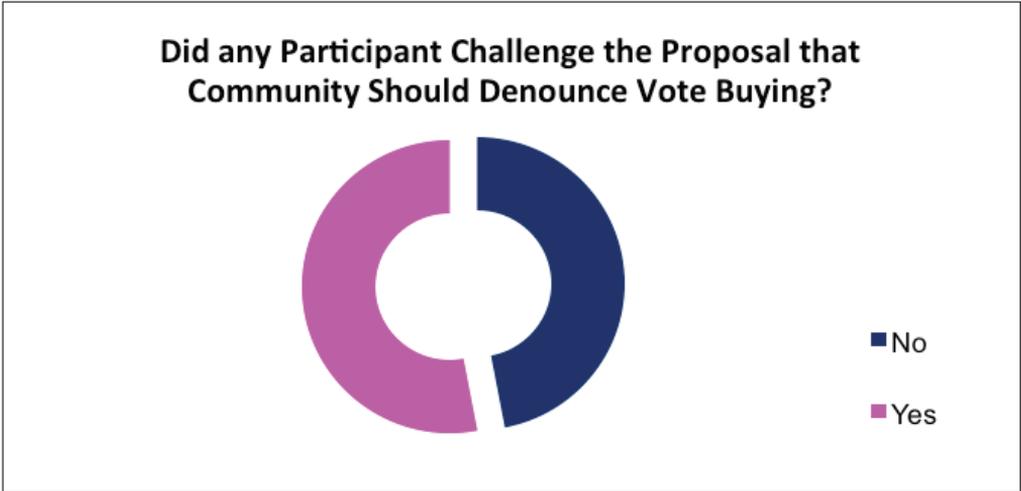
In more than half of the village meetings (53 percent) there were participants that challenged the proposal of village/community members coming together

and denouncing vote buying in their village. However in almost half the meetings (47 percent) the village members were clear-cut about the need to denounce vote buying in their village.

Table 34: Did Participants Challenge Proposal To Denounce Vote Buying?

DID ANY PARTICIPANT CHALLENGE PROPOSAL THAT COMMUNITY SHOULD COME TOGETHER TO DENOUNCE VOTE BUYING?	Percent
No	47.0
Yes	53.0
Total	100.0

Figure 34: Did Participants Challenge Proposal To Denounce Vote Buying?



Reasons given for challenging the Proposal that community members should denounce vote buying in their village

Several reasons were given for challenging the suggestion that community members should come together and denounce vote buying in their villages. The most prominent reason was that: *“People are poor, they have to take the money”*, and this happened in 50.9 percent of the village meetings. In the ensuing discussion in response to this argument showed that some people actually know that vote buyers are targeting poor citizens which is why the money given out to voters ranges between UGX 2,000 (US\$ 0.60) maximum to UGX 500 (US\$0.15).

Most vote buying takes place in villages because it is there that politicians and/or campaign agents are able to find people that will be more than happy to take the little pocket change which may not in any way get the receiver out of poverty.

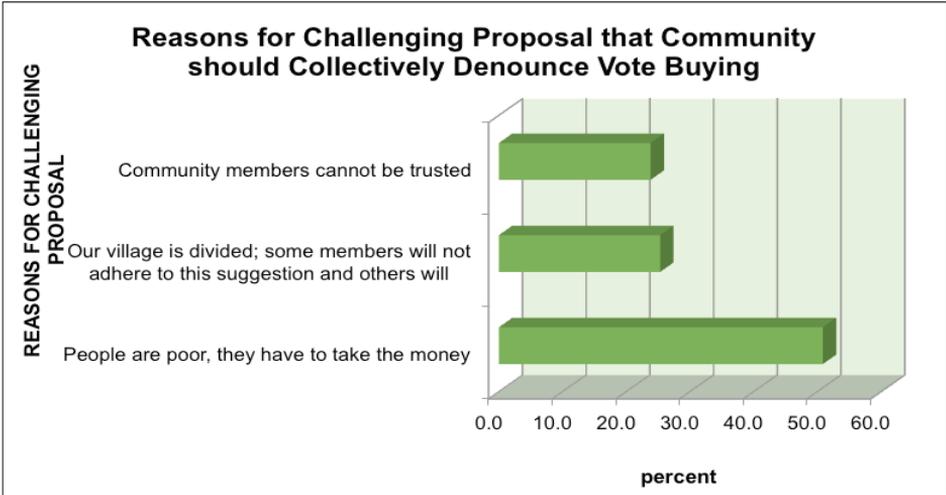
The second most common reason given for challenging the proposal to come together as a village and collectively denounce vote buying was that: *“Our village is divided, some members will not adhere to this suggestion and others will”*. This reason was given in 25.3 percent of the meetings. By explanation, some village members felt that it would be of no consequence if some village members participating in the meeting resolved to collectively denounce vote buying while other village members are out there collecting as much as they can from political candidates.

The third most common reason given for challenging the proposal that the community should denounce vote buying was that: *“Community members cannot be trusted”* and this happened in 23.8 percent of the village meetings.

Table 35: Reasons for Challenging Proposal that Community Should Denounce Vote Buying

REASONS FOR CHALLENGING PROPOSAL THAT COMMUNITY SHOULD COME TOGETHER TO DENOUNCE VOTE BUYING	Percent
People are poor, they have to take the money	50.9
Our village is divided; some members will not adhere to this suggestion and others will	25.3
Community members cannot be trusted	23.8
Total	100.0

Figure 35: Reasons for Challenging Proposal that Community Should Denounce Vote Buying



VILLAGE RESOLUTIONS AGAINST VOTE BUYING

During the final round of village meetings, participants deliberated towards a collective village resolution on vote buying. This was very important for the campaign, that after two or three successive meetings the village members were able to make collective resolutions. A position like this one would be arrived at either by consensus as it is done in traditional village meetings when there is an issue of contention, or through a vote.

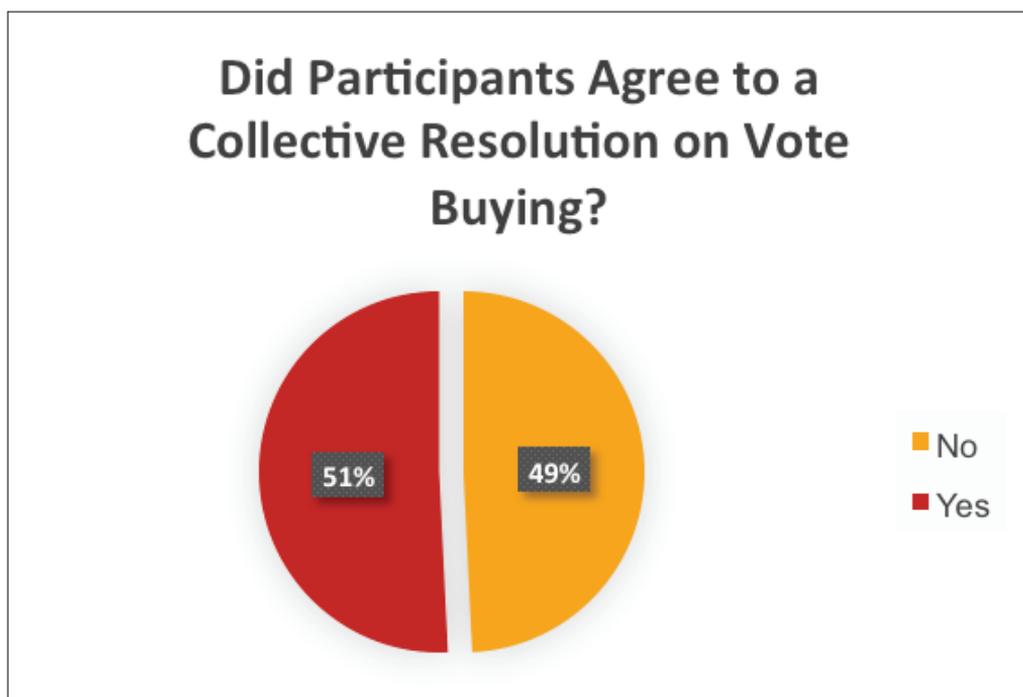
Did the participants vote for a resolution?

In slightly more than half of the village meetings (50.8 percent), participants either by consensus or popular vote agreed to a collective resolution on vote buying in their village. In the rest of the meetings (49.2 percent) the village members failed to come to a collective resolution on vote buying and they were left at liberty to do so. The moderator/facilitators' role was kept strictly at facilitation but not forcing any resolution on participants. The principle was to let the village deliberate on its own views and experiences and based on what they deem fit, agree or disagree.

Table 36: Did Participants Agree to a Collective Resolution on Vote Buying?

DID PARTICIPANTS VOTE FOR A RESOLUTION?	Percent
No	49.2
Yes	50.8
Total	100.0

Figure 36: Did the Participants Vote for a Resolution?



What Resolution Was Adopted?

The collective resolutions taken by the 50.8 percent of the villages on vote buying were not homogenous. There were three different resolutions adopted in the final round of village resolutions as follows:

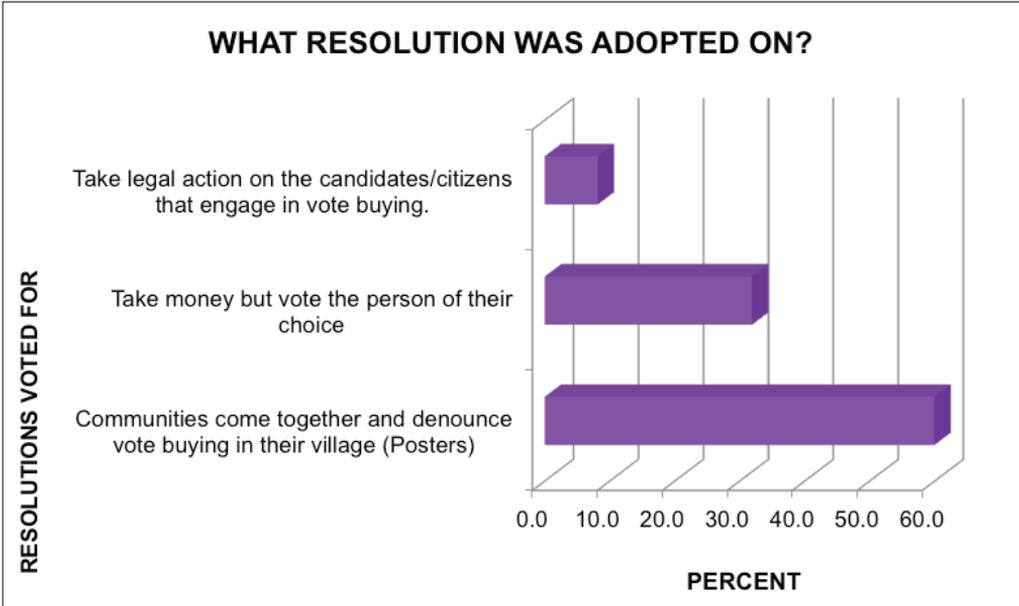
- 1) **Resolution One:** “Total denouncement of vote buying including turning down monies provided by candidates”. This resolution was adopted by majority of the villages representing 60 percent of the collective resolutions. Here communities resolved to come together and denounce vote buying in their village by putting up posters to send a clear message to political candidates and campaign agents.
- 2) **Resolution Two:** “Take money but vote the candidate of their choice”. This resolution was adopted in 31.9 percent of the meetings. Villages that went with this resolution did not display any posters to communicate their message to the political candidates and/or campaign agents. The village members that made this resolution belong to that category of Ugandans whose intuition sees vote buying as a practice too palatable to be shunned. The risk with this resolution is that it may actually encourage more voters to ask for money. It also can have a moral aspect – why would you take someone’s money when you know already that you will not vote for him/her?

3) **Resolution Three:** “Take legal action on the candidates/citizens that engage in vote buying”. This was a rather radical one and was made in 8.2 percent of the meetings. This group of citizens based their resolution on existing provisions against vote buying that are embedded in the Presidential Elections Act 2010 and Parliamentary Elections Act 2010, which are reluctantly enforced. Politicians know that acts of vote buying can result in cancellation of their election in the courts of law but the sweet smell of possible victory by any means blinds their rational thinking.

Table 37: What resolution was adopted?

WHAT RESOLUTION?	Percent
Communities come together and denounce vote buying in their village (Posters)	60.0
Take money but vote the person of their choice	31.9
Take legal action on the candidates/citizens that engage in vote buying	8.2
Total	100.0

Figure 37: What resolution was adopted?



ANALYSIS OF VOTE BUYING RESOLUTIONS

a) Total Denouncement of Vote Buying and Selling

Total denouncement of vote buying was the most popular resolution made during village meetings representing 60 percent of the meetings where participants agreed to a resolution. In these meetings participants agreed by consensus to completely reject the money and all forms of gifts donated by political candidates. They argued that it is not only immoral but also an act of cheating to take money and/or gifts from a political candidates and not vote for them. It was further urged that those who offer money are probably the corrupt ones that end up serving their personal interests when elected as opposed to voter interests.

Village members that went with this resolution hanged posters on their village with the message: *Together We Stand as a No Vote-Buying Village*. In Okanyumo village, Atatur Sub-County, Kumi district the village members contributed money and erected a metallic signpost in the trading centre with the following message: *“We Do Not Want Your Money, We Want Your Manifestos”*.



Residents of Byabasambu village, Kyakanyemera Parish, Kammunge District display posters as part of the actions to present their resolution against Vote Buying.



One of the village members reading the message on the pink No Vote-Buying poster hanged in Kalububbu Trading Centre, Matete Sub County, Sembabule district.

b) Take the Money but Vote Candidate of Choice

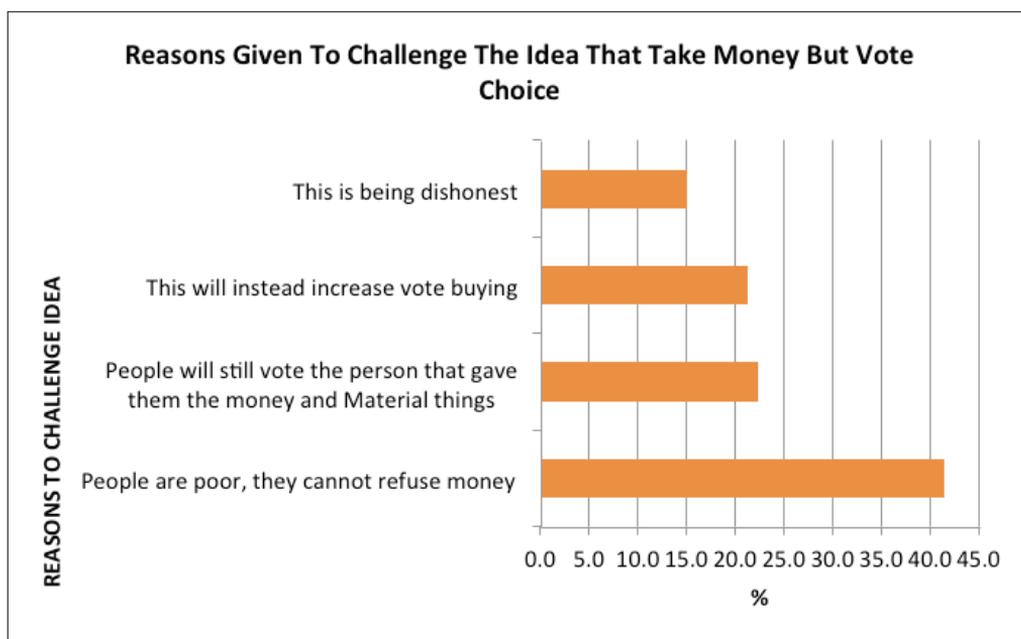
The second popular resolution was: *“take money from political candidates but voting the one candidate of your choice”*. Whereas this view came up for discussion in majority of the village meetings (89.1 percent), in the end it was only in 31.9 per cent of the meetings that this resolution was taken. Further probing of the proponents of this view showed that Ugandans at the grass root level treat elections as mere fundraising events or opportunities that come once in a blue moon without moral and political reflection on the obligations of citizens to use the vote in determining their destiny. This underscores the importance of providing voters with civil and moral education in a systematic and sustained manner.

The resolution to “take the money but vote candidate of choice” lends credence to the school of thought that citizens do not always vote as they are bribed. The numbers of incumbents and independent candidates who lost the election despite excessive campaign spending is clear manifestation of the fact that money alone may not be enough to win an election. That there are other variables voters may be looking for in addition to the generosity of a political candidate as observed manifesting in form of cash giveaways, donations to churches and mosques. But this is not to rule out the fact that there were other candidates whose overspending translated into maximum number of votes. The next table and pie chart give a visual illustration of the proportion of the village members that believe in taking the money but voting their choice candidate.

Table 38: Reasons Given to Challenge of Taking Money but Vote Choice

REASONS GIVEN TO CHALLENGE IDEA THAT TAKE MONEY BUT VOTE PERSON OF CHOICE	Percent
People are poor, they cannot refuse money	41.5
People will still vote the person that gave them the money and material things	22.3
This will instead increase vote buying	21.2
This is being dishonest	15.0
Total	100.0

Figure 38: Reasons Given To Challenge Idea That Take Money But Vote Choice



We further learned that the people who supported the view “*eat widely but vote wisely*”, accepted money from political candidates because they do not see all forms of money given out by candidates as attempts to purchase their votes. The village Local Council (LC 1) leaders and campaign agents who actually distribute the money often say it is simply a “handout or token” that does not obligate the voter to the candidate. Indeed from the views shared it was clear that many citizens at the grass root level are able to distinguish between money given with strings attached which they perceive as “vote-buying” and money given without such strings which they call “goodwill” money. To them “goodwill” money is a gesture of generosity

on the part of the candidate and is thus less problematic than vote-buying. This however raises a cultural challenge where traditionally when a person extends an act of generosity to someone, the receiver feels duty bound to return the favour. In other words there is likely to be moral calculus embedded in minds of the rural voter in deciding whether or not to vote the candidate who bothered to give the voter something. And politicians are much aware of this which explains why they insist on giving out money and gifts during campaigns and on Election Day.

It should be emphasised that citizens know that voter bribery is against the law and that the giver and taker of the bribe commit an offence, but they continue engage in it because they know that laws are not enforced. In the words of one campaign agent: “It is definitely wrong to buy votes! That is against the electoral laws even if they are not enforced. But to generously spend money or donate gifts to people in need for the purpose of spreading the candidate’s name and popularity, I guess that is ok”.

Arguments Presented in Favour of Taking the Money but voting one’s Choice

The resolution to take the money but vote one’s choice was supported by various arguments including among others the following:

- a) People are poor, they cannot refuse money. This argument was presented in 41.5 percent of the meetings across the country. A people that lack access to the bare necessities of life have higher marginal utility of the small amounts of money offered by political candidates. It was reported that political candidates always give small amounts of money that range between UGX 500 (US\$ 0.140 and UGX 2,000 (\$0.60), or half a kilogram of sugar or a piece of bar soap. ACFIM understands that for a people living in poverty with eternal material deprivation, and surviving on less than a dollar a day, selling one’s vote for material rewards is a rational course of action. The politicians and/or campaign agents are cognizant of this situation, and it is the reason why the deliberately keep the amounts low so that they can buy as many votes as possible.
- b) People will still vote the person that gave them money and material things. This was the second most raised argument in support of the resolution to take the money but vote the candidate of choice. It was evidenced in 22.3 percent of the village meetings. Participants argued that some people will feel so personally indebted to the candidate that donated generously to them that they will return the favour through the vote.

Demographics of Persons who supported the Resolution that voters should take the money but vote the person of their choice?

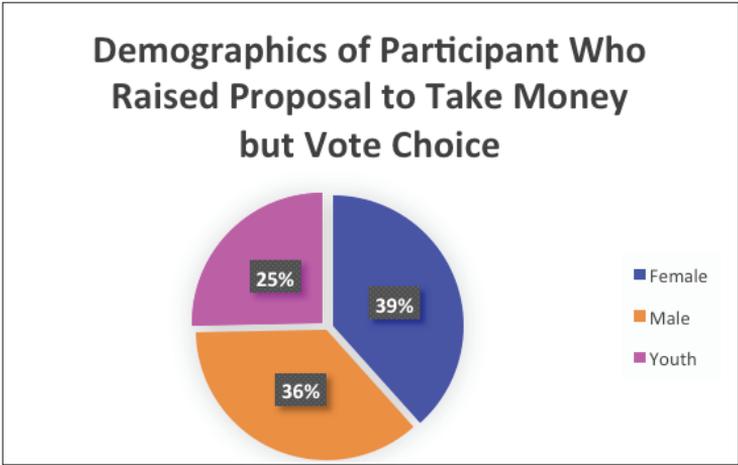
The view that village community members should take the money from all candidates but vote the person of their choice, was almost evenly supported between male, female and youth village members. However there were more female participants that supported it representing 38.4 per cent. These were closely followed by men at 36.3 percent and youth at 25.3 percent.

It was understood from the views shared by campaign agents that female voters are more targeted than male because they are far more likely to turn out and vote in larger numbers compared to their male counterparts. In such a situation there are more opportunities for vote-buying money towards female voters which may partly explain why female participants supported the proposal of “eating widely but voting wisely”. In Kabale district for example activists report that many women abandoned farm work and formed groups which would compose campaign songs for political candidates. They would gather in groups in road junctions and wait for a candidate for whom they would sing in exchange for money.

Table 39: Participant Demographics Proposing to Take Money but Vote Choice

IDENTITY OF PARTICIPANT WHO RAISED THE PROPOSAL TO TAKE MONEY BUT VOTE PERSON OF CHOICE	Frequency	Percent
Female	761	38.4
Male	720	36.3
Youth	502	25.3
Total	1983	100.0

Figure 39: Participant Demographics Proposing to Take Money but Vote Choice



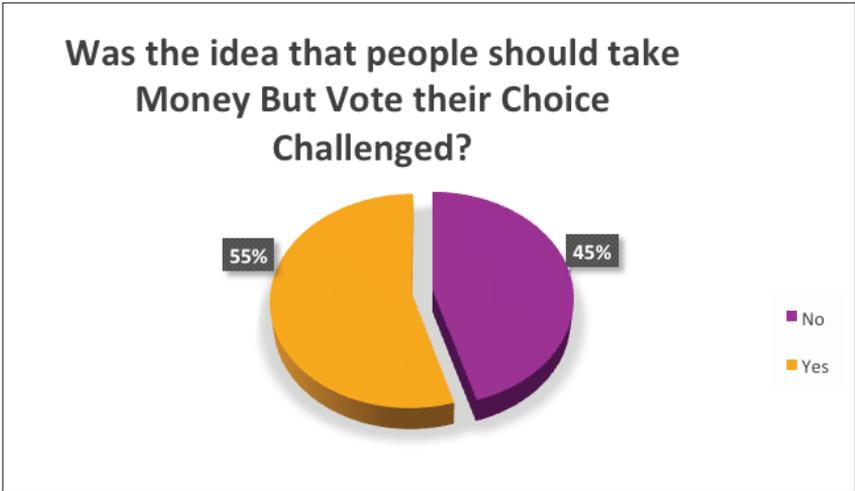
Did other Village Members challenge the Resolution that People should take the money and but vote the person of their Choice?

The resolution to take money and material things from political candidates that were contesting but vote the person of their choice was challenged in 54.7 percent of the meetings. However in 45.3 percent of the meetings there was no participant that challenged the idea of voters taking the money and gifts but vote the person of their choice. This percentage is significant and representative of the mind-set of the wider Ugandan population that harbours strong views in favour enjoying monetary benefits from politicians. It is wrong to accept money from political candidates as it constitutes voter bribery which is a felony in the Parliamentary Elections Act 2010²¹ and Presidential Elections Act 2010²². The law provides that both the giver and receiver commit an offense. This underscores the need for creative, rigorous and well targeted civic education to change the mind set and perception of Ugandans.

Table 40: Did other Participants Challenge Resolution to take Money but Vote Choice?

DID PARTICIPANTS CHALLENGE THE RESOLUTION OF TAKING THE MONEY BUT VOTING CANDIDATE OF CHOICE?	Percent
No	45.3
Yes	54.7
Total	100.0

Figure 40: Did other Participants Challenge Resolution to take Money but Vote Choice?



²¹ Parliamentary Elections Act 2010 (as amended) section 68 (1-2)

²² Presidential Elections Act 2010 9as amended) section 64 (1-2)

c) Take Legal Action against Candidates, Agents and Citizens who engage in Vote Buying

Taking legal action against people that engage in vote-buying and selling was the third resolution in order of popularity, made during the final round of village meetings. This resolution was evidenced in 08 percent of the meetings²³. It was reached after participants cited provisions in the Presidential Elections Act (as amended) 2010 and Parliamentary Elections Act (as amended) 2010 both of which make voter bribery illegal, but the laws are not enforced. Voter bribery was literally interpreted as the buying and selling of votes by use of money or gifts during the campaign period or on Election Day. Participants reflected on the situation of Members of Parliament who lost their seats in the previous Parliament after courts of law nullified their elections on grounds of voter bribery, came back, re-contested and some even went through. This is a weakness in the electoral laws that lack a provision that bars from contesting, candidates convicted of voter bribery in courts of law. Participants discussed two strategies namely: collecting evidence and reporting to police, or more radically, arresting the offenders. They were guided by the facilitator that the constitution of Uganda allows a citizen to arrest another citizen who is involved in or participating in committing a felony, but that such arrests must be done lawfully without use of violence. They were further guided that if they chose to go down the path of arresting the offenders, they must make sure that in making the arrest, they must first inform the vote-buyer or vote-seller that he/she is being arrested for violating the electoral laws of the Republic of Uganda through vote buying or vote selling. The offender must then be brought to the nearest police station without unnecessary delay.

Disaggregation of Vote Buying Resolutions within a Region

The region with the biggest number of villages that took the collective resolution to denounce vote buying compared to the other resolutions, was Eastern with 84 percent of the meetings denouncing vote buying while only 4.8 percent agreed to the infamous resolution of taking the money but voting candidate of choice. Eastern Uganda accounts for 14 out of the 52 project districts. Of these four districts are in Teso sub region, four in Busoga and two in Karamoja²⁴. Northern region recorded the second highest number of village meetings that took the resolution to denounce vote-buying, with 67.3 percent of the village meetings doing this. It was in only 22 percent of the meetings where village members agreed to the less desirable resolution of eating widely but voting the candidate of choice.

²³ It was in 51 per cent of the village meetings that participants agreed to make a resolution on vote buying. Three different resolutions were made.

²⁴ Busoga (Iganga, Luuka, Namutumba, Jinja); Teso (Amuria, Bukedea, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kumi, Ngora, Serere, Soroti); Karamoja (Moroto, Napak).

Northern Uganda²⁵ accounts for 10 out of the 52 project districts. The next table illustrates this further.

Table 41: How Regions Voted on Resolutions

REGION	Communities come together and denounce vote buying in their village (Posters)	Take legal action on the candidates/citizens that engage in vote buying	Take money but vote the person of their choice	TOTAL
CENTRAL	56.5	10.4	33.0	100.0
EASTERN	84.0	11.2	4.8	100.0
NORTH-ERN	67.3	10.3	22.4	100.0
WESTERN	51.0	5.8	43.1	100.0

The message from ACFIM throughout the campaign period was that it is wrong to accept money from political candidates as it constitutes voter bribery which is an offence according to the Parliamentary Elections Act 2010²⁶ and Presidential Elections Act 2010²⁷.

Further analysis from the previous table reveals that Western region had the highest number of meetings where participants agreed to the infamous resolution of taking the money (eating widely) but voting the candidate of one's choice. This happened in 43.1 percent of the meetings. Western region²⁸ comprised of 20 out of the 52 sample districts accounting for 38.4 percent of the geographical scope. No single region had more sample districts than western region.

Central/Buganda region had the second highest number of village meetings that ended with the resolution of “*eating widely but voting wisely*” with a statistic of 33 percent of the meetings.

Eastern region has the least number of meetings that ended with the resolution of “*eating widely but voting wisely*” with only 4.8 percent of the village meetings supporting that resolution. Not only did majority of village meetings in eastern region denounce vote-buying (84 per cent), but the region also recorded the highest number of meetings (11.2 percent) where participants went a notch higher and made the collective resolution to take legal action against vote-buyers and sellers.

²⁵ Lango (Apac, Kole, Oyam, Lira); Acholi (Nwoya); West Nile (Adjumani, Arua, Moyo, Nebbi, Yumbe)

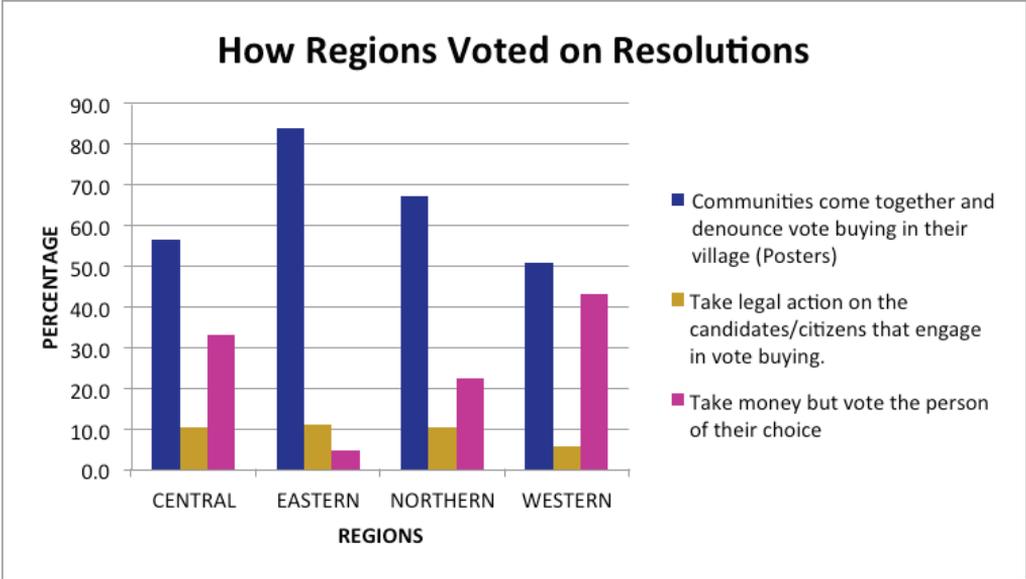
²⁶ Parliamentary Elections Act 2010 (as amended) section 68 (1-2)

²⁷ Presidential Elections Act 2010 9as amended) section 64 (1-2)

²⁸ Kigezi (Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro, Rukungiri); Ankole (Bushenyi, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kiruhura, Mbarara, Mitooma, Ntungamo, Rubirizi); Rwenzori (Bundibugyo, Kabalore, Kamwenge, Kasese, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Ntoroko); Bunyoro (Hoima).

The next bar graph puts this explanation into perspective.

Figure 41: How Regions Voted on Resolutions



Cross Region Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis by regional distribution of the villages shows that Eastern region had the highest number of meetings where communities came together to denounce vote-buying in their village, representing 32.5 per cent of the total no vote-buying resolutions. Northern Uganda region had the second biggest number of meetings that denounced vote buying (26.0 percent). Majority of the resolutions in northern Uganda region (27.3 percent) supported taking legal action against political candidates and citizens that engage in vote-buying. However overall there were more resolutions of this kind in eastern region compared to other regions. Central region was third (21.8 percent) while Western region came last with the lowest number of village meetings where communities denounced vote buying (19.7 percent). Conversely the region had the highest number of meetings which opted for the resolution to take money but vote the person of their choice. It was mostly in the western region that facilitators and note-takers found more communities that could not be convinced to refrain from vote buying and/or selling. In comparison to the four regions, 41.7 percent of the villages that resolved to “eat widely but vote wisely” were in Western region followed by Central region at 32 percent.

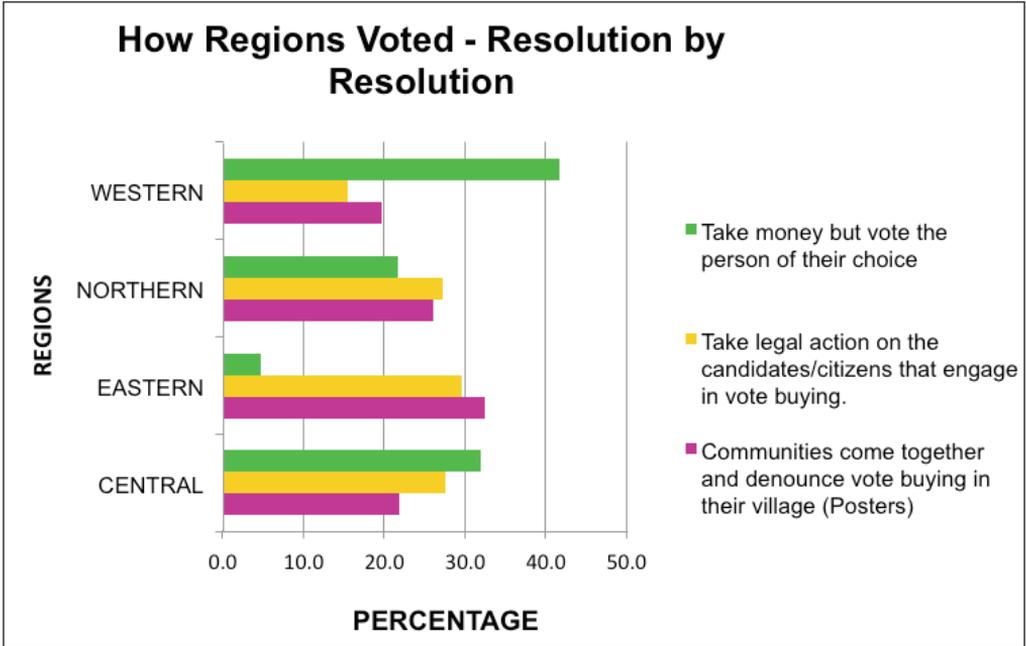
As a consequence it is more expensive to contest for elective position in Western and Central regions than it is in Eastern or Northern regions of Uganda. This

has partly contributed to a situation where elective politics is comparatively more expensive in western Uganda than other regions thereby driving political candidates into massive campaign debts on one hand while discouraging credible people from joining politics on the other hand. The next table and attending bar graph illustrate the regional disparity in citizen perceptions on vote buying.

Table 42: How Regions Voted on Resolutions – Resolution by Resolution

REGION	Communities come together and denounce vote buying in their village (Posters)	Take legal action against the candidates/citizens that engage in vote buying	Take money but vote the person of their choice
CENTRAL	21.8	27.6	32.0
EASTERN	32.5	29.7	4.6
NORTHERN	26.0	27.3	21.7
WESTERN	19.7	15.4	41.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Figure 42: Cross Regional Analysis – Resolution by Resolution



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Bribing voters or simply put, buying votes is an explicit act of corruption and hence illegal in Uganda. In the courts of law, vote-buying constitutes grounds for cancellation of an election. Beyond being illegal, the practice is already perverting the country's democratic system by undermining the integrity of the vote. It was prevalent during election campaigns 2015-2016 at Presidential and Parliamentary level with almost all candidates "courting" voters with money, gifts and donations with a clear intention of inducing them to vote in a certain way on polling day. The concern of ACFIM member organisations²⁹ and the rest of the civil society fraternity is that vote-buying has reached a level where it is not only affecting voter turnout and choice, but political accountability and equality as well. Vote-buyers target the poor and most vulnerable members of the society that find more utility for the small amounts given out (UGX 500, 1,000 and in rare cases 2,000). Political candidates and campaign agents know that poor people have an overwhelming impact on the election result because it is them that are most likely to turn out and vote on Election Day. Once voters accept money and gifts, elected officials have no one to be accountable to except, perhaps, to themselves.

The prevalence of vote-buying further reveals that citizens have no confidence in the ability of politicians to serve them. The views shared during village meetings show that citizens do not trust that an election can result in improvement of service delivery. They argue that there is no guarantee they will get anything after the election, "so why not get something from them now"? As such they feel more comfortable getting the small incentives before elections. These might be indicators of an inefficient democratic system or even worse, a failing democracy.

Recommendations

Commercialisation of politics in Uganda poses a profound threat to democratic progression. It is a conundrum that must be brought under control before it gets out of hand. Vote-buying is so multifarious that it requires concerted effort from citizens, political party leaders, government institutions, religious leaders, cultural leaders, the media and academia among others. Findings from the deliberative

²⁹Transparency International Uganda, Anti-corruption Coalition Uganda, Citizens Platform for Democracy and Accountability, Native Travel Festival, Kick Corruption out of Uganda, Western Ankole Civil Society Forum, Rwenzori Anti-corruption Coalition Uganda, Mid-western Region Anti-corruption Coalition, MAYANK Anti-corruption Coalition, Northern Uganda Anti-corruption Coalition, The Apac Anti-corruption Coalition, Moroto Nakapiripirit Religious Leaders Initiative for Peace, Teso Anti-corruption Coalition, Anti-Corruption Coalition of Busoga, First African Bicycle Organisation, Community Development and Child-welfare Initiative

village meetings show that citizens have deep-seated obsession for money and gifts from political candidates particularly during elections campaigns. Many of them perceive political leaders as patrons that should support them financially to pay their personal expenses such as school fees, medical fees, weddings and funeral ceremonies, and contributing to fundraising for churches, mosques, schools as well as other communal services. This poses a major barrier to the democratization process, and must be dealt with.

ACFIM strongly recommends the following:

Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and Parliament

- a) *Amend the laws to include a five year ban from standing for elective political positions.*

Amend the provisions on voter bribery as contained in Presidential Elections Act and Parliamentary Elections Act to include a ban from public office and standing for elections for at least five years from the date of conviction. This would serve to deter candidates and their campaign agents from engaging in vote-buying prior to elections. The country needs robust legislation and commensurate sanctions against the vice.

- b) *Insert in the Presidential Elections Act, a provision that prohibits the incumbent President from giving out donations during campaign period.*

The provision in the Presidential Elections Act (PEA) that permit the incumbent president to continue giving donations even during the campaign period as he does in the ordinary course of his/her duties, serves to undermine the democratic principal of fairness as it accords the incumbent undue advantage. Implement Supreme Court recommendation of amending the PEA to insert a provision that prohibits the giving of donations by all candidates including a President who is also a candidate, in order to create a level playing field for all³⁰.

- c) *Enact a new law to regulate campaign financing*

The law on campaign finance should among other things limit campaign spending thereby reducing the volume of money that is channelled towards vote buying.

Police and Inspectorate of Government

Enforce legal provisions against voter bribery as laid out in the Presidential Elections Act and Parliamentary Elections Act.

³⁰ This reinforces one of the recommendations of the Supreme Court of Uganda in response to the Presidential Election Petition challenging the outcome of Presidential Elections 2016.

One of the core functions of the inspectorate is to eliminate and foster the elimination of corruption, abuse of authority and of public office³¹. However from experiences throughout the campaign period for 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, vote buying and selling which were prevalent during party primaries and general campaigns but police and the Inspectorate of Government (IG) did not take keen interest in these felonies. The views shared during village meetings reveal that many Ugandan voters know that vote buying and selling is illegal but they also know more than anything else that laws are not enforced.

IG should pursue the enactment of a new law on campaign financing to ensure that there it includes a provision for disclosure of campaign income and expenditure for every candidate.

Political Party Leaders

Denounce vote-buying and institute punitive measures against flag bearers that engage in the vice.

Leaders of political parties should institute internal measures against voter bribery including speaking out consistently against voter bribery and taking rigorous action against flag bearers doing so starting with the by-elections coming up in 2017. Although the strong statements made by some party leaders particularly the National Resistance Movement during elections campaigns 2015-2016 are laudable, candidates easily ignored them. The recent cancellation of election results by courts of law on various grounds including voter bribery during 2016 campaigns, lends credence to this recommendation. Statements however strong they may be are meaningless if they are not followed through by action and the by-elections provide a good starting point. Party leaders should adopt a No voter-bribery policy for all flag bearers during campaigns, and be seen to be taking disciplinary action against offenders.

Civil Society Organisations

Conduct innovative awareness interventions at the grass root level targeting voter attitudes towards vote buying and levying unlimited financial demands on Members Parliament.

CSOs should conduct innovative awareness interventions at the grass root level targeting voter attitudes towards vote buying and levying unlimited financial demands on Members Parliament. It is important to reflect on the effectiveness of civic education interventions conducted over the past five years and use the leaning to design more creative mechanisms of combating vote-buying. Ugandan voters at the grass root level need civic education that allows them to deliberate on the phenomena in their own context. Citizens must know about how their vote can and impacts upon the quality of social service extended to them. These messages

³¹ Inspectorate of Government Act 2002, Part III, Section 8 (1b)

must be broken down to very simple things and taken to them at household level as one of the ways of instilling a longer term view of elective politics and make vote-selling less appealing. This is based on a strong premise that the roots of vote-buying lie deeper in the Ugandan society. Civic education campaigns against vote buying must not wait but start now.

Religious Leaders

Religious leaders should stop the practice of targeting political candidates as fundraising sources particularly during election campaigns.

Religious leaders went on record in July 2015 warning Ugandan citizens against vote buying in 2016 elections. It is important the sensitising followers against vote-buying is mainstreamed within the religious teachings in worship centres.



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