

# ACFIM

ALLIANCE FOR CAMPAIGN

FINANCE MONITORING

## CAMPAIGN SPENDING FOR VILLAGE ELECTIONS IN UGANDA, JULY 2018

### Monitoring Report





# Campaign Spending for Village Elections in Uganda



July 10, 2018 Report

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms



ACFIM	Alliance for Finance Monitoring
EC	Electoral Commission
LC	Local Council
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
PAS	Public Address System
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UPDF	Uganda Peoples Defense Forces
USD	United States Dollars

# Acknowledgement



Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) has been monitoring actual election campaign financing since 2015 and using findings as a basis to engage policy makers on campaign finance reforms with a view of curbing the rate of commercialisation of electoral politics.

In July 2018 ACFIM endeavoured on monitoring campaign financing for Village Council Chairperson Elections. It was a pioneering activity to monitor campaign financing at the level of Administrative Units (Village and Parish). This was important for ACFIM to establish the scale and depth of commercialisation of politics in Uganda's electoral politics.

It was indeed an enormous task made possible by ACFIM staff, member organisations and volunteers that committed in the efforts of promoting transparency in campaign financing at all levels of electoral politics in Uganda.

ACFIM is indebted to all the staff and volunteers who heeded the call to advance the cause of curbing commercialisation of election campaigns with a view of promoting electoral hygiene. We are especially grateful to the individuals who went an extra mile in ensuring that ACFIM monitored at least 149 villages. These are: F. Valeria Khatondi, Fiona Nantamu, Annet Naluyima Kirabo, Rose Achom, Ronald Nabugoomu, Sarah Babirye, Felix V. Kafuuma,

We are grateful to Eddie Kayinda for having dedicated his time to coding, entering and analysing quantitative and qualitative data from all filled research tools that were returned. Without your input this report would probably never have seen the light of day.

We are also grateful to Henry Muguzi for having taken lead on authoring this report.

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# 1.0

## Introduction and Background

In July, 2018, Uganda successfully held elections for Lower Administrative Units (village and parish level) as well as Women Councils and Committees (village to national level) after 17 years of postponements. Specifically the elections for Village Local Councils (LC 1) were conducted on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in most of the 60,800 villages. A Press Statement released by the national electoral management body - Electoral Commission (EC) on closure of polling day, indicated that voting was successful in 60,799 villages, which reflected a 99% performance. The EC reported that elections had to be called off in 635 villages mainly because unregistered residents disrupted the exercise when they were turned away. However these elections were later conducted

These elections were conducted not by secret ballot but by open voting where voters queued up behind the nominated candidates or contenders who stood at the front. Once the polling officer was certain that all eligible voters present at the time of voting were on the queue, he/she would wage his/her finger as part of the counting and tallying process. This was in accordance with Section 111(2) of the Local Government Act CAP 243 (as amended). This method of voting had been anticipated to face a number of shortcomings including the following:

- a) Intimidation of voters which would cause fear and disenfranchisement;
- b) Disunity and hatred in the community
- c) Domestic violence arising from wives not voting in the direction given to them by their spouses.

### 1.2 Why Ugandans waited for 17 years for Village Council Elections

Uganda had last conducted Village / Local Council 1 (LC1) elections in 2001, and it was also conducted using the queuing system. By 2018, the Village Council (LC 1) leaders in place were those were had either been elected 17 years back or replaced when the previous left or died. Government postponed village elections were in subsequent



electoral cycles (2006, 2011 and 2016) on the premise that the legal framework in place made the cost of conducting them through the method of secret ballot was too high and impracticable.

Article 68 (1) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda sets a standard for voting at elections and referenda. It provided that: “At a public election or referendum, voting shall, subject to the provisions of the Constitution, be by secret ballot using one ballot box at each polling station for all candidates in an election and for all sides in a referendum”.

In the immediate aftermath of general elections 2016, the Electoral Commission presented a budget of **UGX 500 billion (about USD 185million)** to carry out village council elections, but was rebuffed by the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) which maintained that the money was not available that financial year, notwithstanding the centrality of village councils a units of local administration.

Subsequently government presented to Parliament a Bill to amend the Local Government Act in order to allow provide an open voting method – which he argued was realistic and more affordable for the country. This open voting method which was not strange to Ugandans would require voters to line up behind their preferred candidates in all 60,800 villages at a cost of **UGX 15.9 billion only (USD 4million)**. Parliament passed the Bill and elections were conducted in July 2018 by voters lining up behind their preferred candidates.

### **1.3 Centrality of the Village Council in Administration of Justice**

Section 26 of the Local Government Act, 1997 (as amended) stresses that the local councils assist in maintaining law, order and security as well as receive and solve problems or disputes in villages. They also carryout community sensitization and identify beneficiaries of government programs; assess and recommend candidates for some government jobs and issue the primary endorsement documents to the citizens. Specifically the village council committees performs the following roles:

- a) Overseeing the implementation of policies and decisions made by the council.
- b) Assist in the maintenance of law, order and security
- c) Exercise judicial powers to handle cases relating to: debts (below UGX 2million / USD 580), contracts assaults and battery, conversion, property damage, trespass, customary land disputes, civil disputes under customary law including customary land, divorce and inheritance. These judicial powers



further include causes and matters arising out of infringement of by-laws and cases of civil nature involving children.

- d) Initiate, encourage, support and participate in self-help projects and mobilize people, material and technical assistance in relation to self-help projects.
- e) Vet and recommend persons in their areas for recruitment into the Uganda Peoples Defense Force (UPDF), the Uganda police Force and the Uganda Prisons Service.
- f) Serve as communication channel between the government, the district or higher local council and the people in the area.
- g) Monitoring projects and other activities undertaken by the government, local governments and non-government organizations in their area.

# 2.0

## ACFIM Monitoring Project

Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM) leverages the presence of over 1,000 activists at village level in at least 50 districts across the geographical regions of Uganda. When it became apparent that village elections were set to be conducted on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, ACFIM designed a project to undertake monitoring of campaign financing for the village elections. The project was supported technically and financially by ACFIM membership and secretariat using an army of volunteers. This was our major shortcoming because it limited the scope of the project to only those villages where ACFIM membership could leverage resources.

### 2.1 Monitoring Objective

ACFIM's overarching objective was to monitor to monitor ground-level campaign expenditures of nominated candidates for Village Council Chairperson Elections in villages where we leveraged presence of campaign finance monitoring activists on the ground. Monitoring was done to deepen ACFIM's understanding of the scale and extent of commercialisation of elections in village politics. Specifically, ACFIM wanted to:

- a) Gather empirical data that will give a sense of extent of commercialisation of election campaigns at the village level.
- b) Establish the level of spending by candidates for village chairpersons whether that spending is in sufficient quantities to impact the outcome of elections.
- c) Make comparative analysis of the prevalence of vote buying during open voting.
- d) Deepen understanding about the extent to which money influences electoral outcomes in local level politics.

## 2.2 Methodology

ACFIM developed a campaign finance monitoring tool tailored for village council campaigns. The tool was tailor-made to guide in tracking candidates on campaign trail, gather data about the candidates and villages monitored, nature and types of spending, mode of spending, the amounts involved, role of the political party and other political leaders, perspectives of the electorate on candidates spending, and Election Day activities. Village activists were joined by staff from ACFIM secretariat and secretariats of ACFIM member organisations that participated in the campaign finance monitoring exercise. Key informant interviews were conducted to interrogate specific aspects including the perception and attitudes of voters about the campaign process and their opinion on method of voting by queueing up behind nominated candidates.

## 2.3 Scope of Monitoring Effort

Monitoring focused on campaign activities conducted by the candidates in the process of canvassing for votes. These activities included road drives, rallies, door-to-door canvassing, production and distribution of election campaign paraphernalia (mostly posters and flyers) and other campaign activities carried out directly by the candidate or indirectly through campaign agents. The scope further included looking into sources of campaign financing to understand the nature and character of campaign financiers and what that motivation is.

Geographically, ACFIM monitored village campaigns and elections in nine districts namely Kampala, Wakiso, Kyenjojo, Bundibugyo, Bunyangabu, Hoima, Kabale, Jinja and Moroto. In these districts we purposively sampled villages where activists were present on the ground. These activists worked in the same villages and parishes where they live. The activists trailed campaign processes in 149 villages in the districts mentioned. The regional spread of the districts reached are indicated in the table below;

**Table 1: Geographical Scope of Villages Monitored**

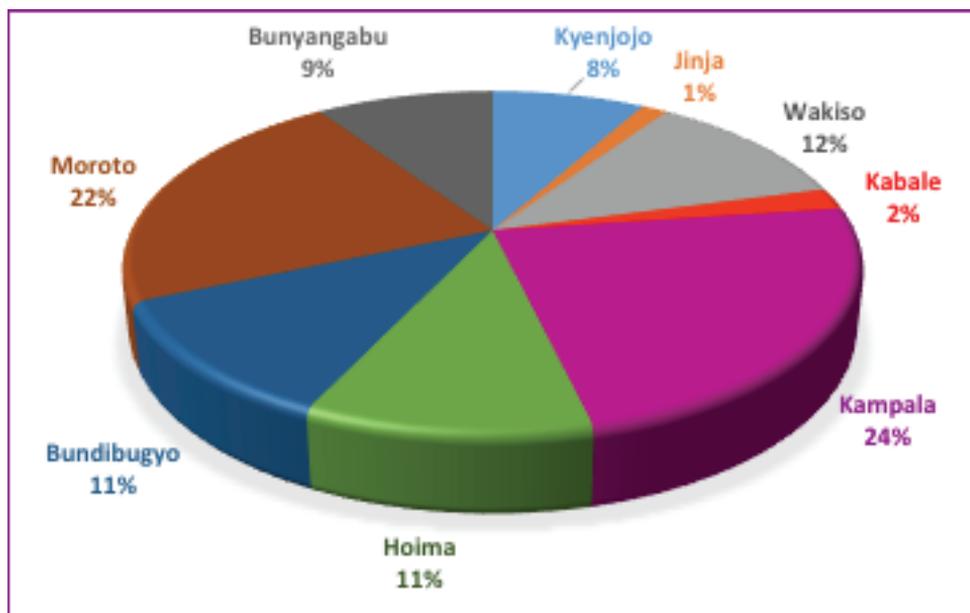
Region	District	Number of Districts
Central	Kampala, Wakiso	2
Western	Kyenjojo, Bundibugyo, Bunyangabu, Hoima, Kabale	5
East	Jinja	1
North Eastern (Karamoja)	Moroto	1
Total		9

**Table 2: Villages Monitored per District**

District	No. of Villages Monitored	Percentage
Kyenjojo	12	8.05
Jinja	2	1.34
Wakiso	17	11.4
Kabale	3	2
Kampala	35	23.5
Hoima	16	10.73
Bundibugyo	17	11.4
Moroto	33	22.15
Bunyangabu	14	9.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>

Kampala Capital City Authority had the highest number of villages monitored for campaign spending, contributing 23.5 per cent (35 villages) of all the villages monitored followed by Mororo at 22.15 per cent (33 villages).

**Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Villages Monitored**



## 2.4 Gender of Candidates

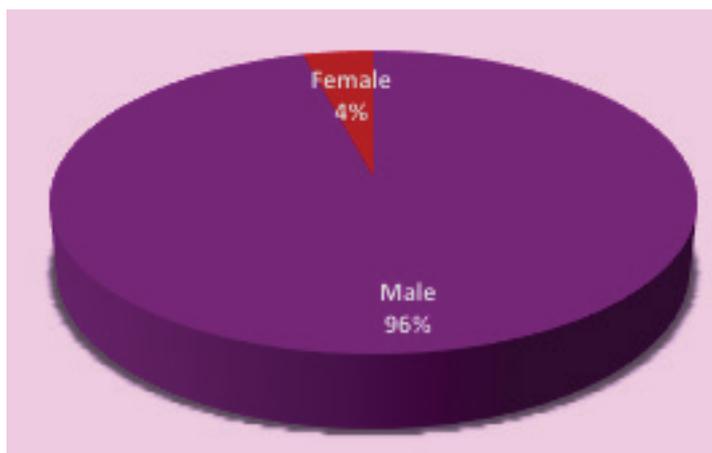
Nominations of candidates for village council chairpersons were dominated by men. Out of a total of 144 candidates whose campaigns were monitored, only six (6) were female. This reinforces the continued community perception that open electoral seats are principally for male candidates as illustrated in the table below;

**Table 3: Gender of Nominated Candidates**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	138	95.2
Female	6	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>99.3</b>

Space for village council leadership was a male dominated electoral campaign process with 96% (138) of candidates being males and only 4% being female as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 2: Percent Gender of Nominated Candidates**



In addition to the common perception that open seats are men's seats (*bifo bya basajja*), the dismal participation of women in village elections is attributable to a couple of other factors namely;

- a) Village women council elections which were carried out a week before. Across the country, women had participated as candidates for Women Council Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, General Secretaries, Publicity Secretaries and Secretaries for finance Exit interviews conducted by ACFIM at polling centres revealed a general perception that having conducted

women council elections already, the elective seat of village chairperson was only for men. This may have discouraged some women from competing with men as village chairpersons.

- b) Lack of access to campaign finance sources. Contesting for village chairpersons was characterised by “spending wars” between candidates. ACFIM understood that from the time Electoral Commission announced the roadmap for village elections, aspiring candidates started spending on gifts and donation to endear themselves to the electorate. This raised the spending bar and creating a barrier for women and probably also youth that wanted to offer themselves for nomination. ACFIM activists reported that there were women who were interested in contesting for Village Chairperson but were put off by lack of access to campaign finance sources in amounts that can enable them outmuscle their male counterparts. Interviews with candidates revealed that while undertaking door-to-door canvassing of votes, they were confronted with direct demand for money or gifts in order for a particular voter to queue up behind them on Election Day. It was apparent that voter bribery is now integral to Uganda’s politics.

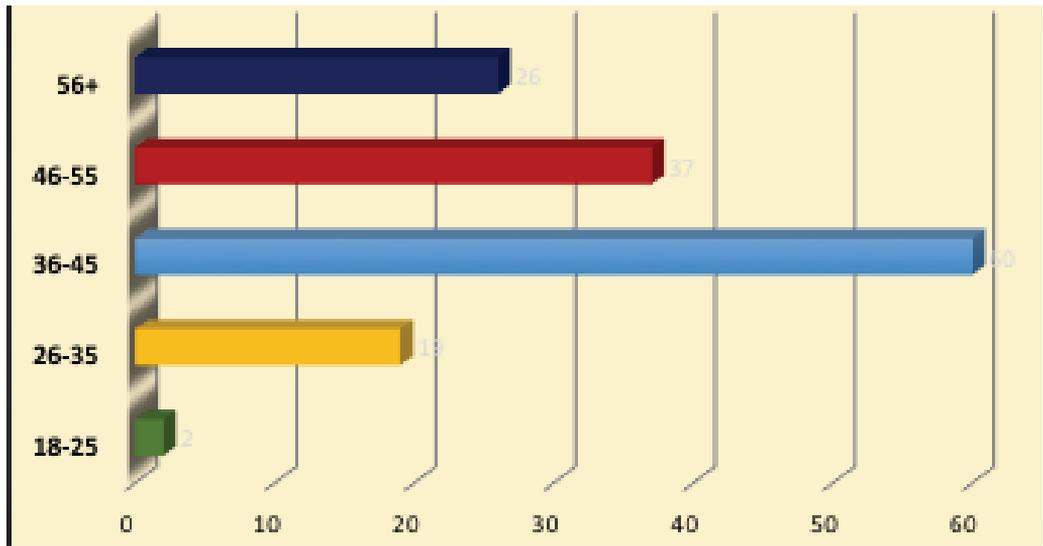


*Candidate Christine Mbajja was one of the very few women that overcame barriers to compete with men on Village Council Chairperson seat. This was in Heritage village, Kansanga Parish, Makindye East, Kampala.*

## 2.5 Age of Candidates

Majority of the candidates for village chairperson elections representing 84.8 per cent were aged 36 years and above. Of these, 43.4 per cent were aged 46 years and above while 41.4 per cent were aged 36-45 years. Participation of youth aged 18-35 years was principally in form of campaign agents, voters, and cheer leaders. This is further illustrated in the table below;

Figure 3: Age Categories of Candidates



ACFIM activists reported that youth were observed parading themselves before candidates that were willing and ready to motivate them with either money or alcohol mainly in form of performing as campaign agents for particular candidates, participating in vote canvassing road drives, and also queuing up behind candidates on Election Day.

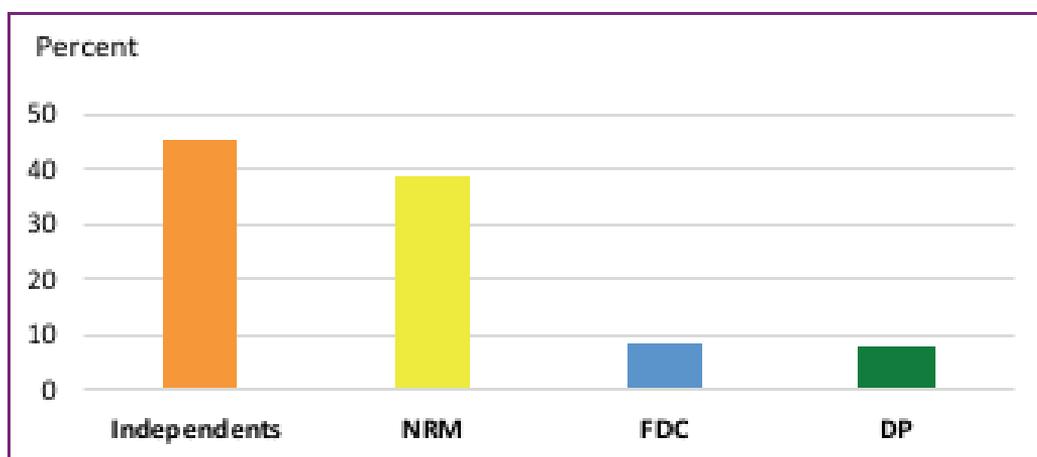


Youth participation in the village chairperson election campaign was predominantly in form of cheering, chanting, and dancing on road drives and campaign rallies.

## 2.6 Political affiliation of Candidates

Analysis shows that the political affiliation of most candidates in villages monitored was independent representing 44.8 per cent of the total number of candidates monitored. These were followed by National Resistance Movement (NRM) candidates at 38.6 per cent. Further interrogation revealed that many of the so called independent candidates were also politically leaning towards the NRM Party (some had lost in NRM primary elections). Candidates affiliated to opposition political parties represented in Parliament namely Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC), Democratic Party (DP) and Justice Form (JEEMA) constituted less than 16 per cent of candidates in the villages monitored and these villages were largely urban. In the rural villages, candidates were either independent (NRM-leaning) or NRM flag bearers with little or no presence of political opposition. The bar chart below illustrates this:

***Figure 4: Political Affiliation of Candidates Nominated for Village Elections***



# 3.0

## Campaign Spending

### 3.1 Strategies of Campaign Spending

The official campaign period of village council chairperson election was 4 days (July 6<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> 2018) following the successful nomination of candidates for all the 60,800 villages. The political candidates employed five major campaign spending strategies during the 4-day campaign period leading up to Election Day July 10<sup>th</sup> 2018, namely;

- 1) Vote Buying
- 2) Campaign Processions / Road drives
- 3) Door-to-door canvassing
- 4) Production of posters and other campaign paraphernalia
- 5) Voter Hospitality / Entertainment

#### 3.1.1 Vote Buying

When the Electoral Commission revealed that voting for Village Council Chairpersons will be by queuing up behind candidates, a number of aspiring political candidates welcomed it. The argument was that queuing would help deal with dishonest electorate who accept/take cash and gifts from political candidates and not vote for them. The common narrative in Uganda is “*eat widely but vote wisely*”. This literally means that a voter can take cash or gifts from as many political candidates as comes his/her way because secret ballot voting system guarantees that there is no way a political candidate will tell who voted or did not vote for them. This information asymmetry between the voter and political candidate has always been a challenge. On the contrary, when voting is by queuing up it would be almost inconceivable for a voter to accept and/or take money/gifts from a political candidate and risk being seen to vote in a different direction. This argument underscored vote buying as an effective campaign strategy with aggravated poverty levels providing a fertile ground for it.



Activists reported the growing perception at village level that voters cannot be convinced by promises of good performance and ideology alone without money or gifts. As such it was common practice for candidates to offer cash in amounts of UGX 2000, 5000 and 10,000. This was mainly done during door-to-door visits. In Kyengera Town Council, Wakiso District, one of the candidates was reported to have unleashed a plastic basin filled with assorted coin currency of UGX 1,000, 500, 200 and 100. Voters were allowed to dip one of their hands and grab as many coins as the hand could grab. Candidates further provided booze in sachets of local gin. The targets for vote buying were reported as mostly women and youth. The

### 3.1.2 Campaign Processions / Road Drives

Processions were a common campaign strategy across all villages monitored. Candidates hired open trucks on which they mounted sound systems with disco jockeys and traditional “kadodi” dancers. Some candidates added Bodaboda cyclists to the processions where they were understood to have provided at least one litre of fuel and additional UGX 10,000 per Bodaboda. ACFIM observers reported that campaign procession was a common electioneering strategy in all the villages monitored.

ACFIM activists reported that on nomination day candidates used displayed their campaign finance muscles. Candidates were reported to have been accompanied by processions comprising of a couple or more of the following:

- a) Motor vehicles
- b) Boda boda cyclists
- c) Mobile disco
- d) Brass band
- e) Cultural dancers.

Campaign processions continued through campaign period and this escalated the cost of campaigning for village elections. Processions involved hire of a strong outdoor public address system mounted on a hired long track. ACFIM activists reported that some trucks also had traditional “kadodi” dancers, and bodaboda cyclists moving ahead of the track in front of the truck to attract attention of the electorate.



Bodaboda cyclists observed at a petrol station in Nampungwe village along Hoima Road in Kakiri Sub Country. ACFIM observers established that every bodaboda cyclist received two litres of gasoline and paid cash UGX 10,000 to join the campaign procession of one of the candidates. Scenes like these were always synonymous with campaigns for presidential parliamentary or district chairperson, but now it was happening on campaigns for the lowest administrative unit – the Village.







### 3.1.3 Door-to-door canvassing

Candidates spent significant time moving from household to household, door-to-door canvassing for electoral support and votes. This strategy was endeared because of the shared opinion that it allows a heart-to-heart discussion with the voters, and makes a candidate be perceived as a man or woman of the people. Key informant interviews conducted by ACFIM revealed that voters perceive of village elections as different from other elections (Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government). Whereas the latter elections are perceived as a “game” which they enjoy because the candidates participating in those election campaigns are do not relate directly with the electorate on the ground, but village chairpersons not only live within the community but their actions or inactions directly affect the livelihoods of village members / voters. It is this fact that reinforces the centrality of village elections to an ordinary voter in Uganda. Key informant interviews with selected village members revealed some tensions among the electorate towards Election Day as they contemplated the queueing up method of voting and its attendant possible disharmony arising from choosing one neighbour against the other.

### 3.1.4 Production of Posters and other Campaign Paraphernalia

Candidates in all villages monitored used campaign posters which were hanged in public places, trading centres, on tree along village roads, in peoples’ homes and sometime on mobile trucks carrying sand. These posters were of varying sizes but the common denominator was that they were all printed in colour. Some candidates were observed to have used plastic posters that would be placed in strategic positions to look like billboards. Below are some of the examples of posters;



These are examples of expensive colour posters which were pasted in all villages monitored. The average size for these posters was A3 and printed on glossy paper.

### 3.1.5 Voter Hospitality / Entertainment

Candidates provided a various positive inducements to the electorate during the 4-day campaign period. These inducements included among other things slaughtering a bull on the eve of Election Day, and inviting village members to the home of the candidate to a village banquet where they eat and drink, provision of alcohol particularly the so called “sachet waragi” targeting mostly the youth. ACFIM activists monitoring village election campaigns reported that youths consumed a lot

of sachet waragi through Election Day which is the reason there was commotion at some polling centres. It is recalled that soon after village election Parliament called for an immediate ban on the sale of sachet waragi (local gin) because the youth are consuming a lot of it and that it is taking a toll on their health.

### 3.2 Types of Campaign Spending for Village Elections

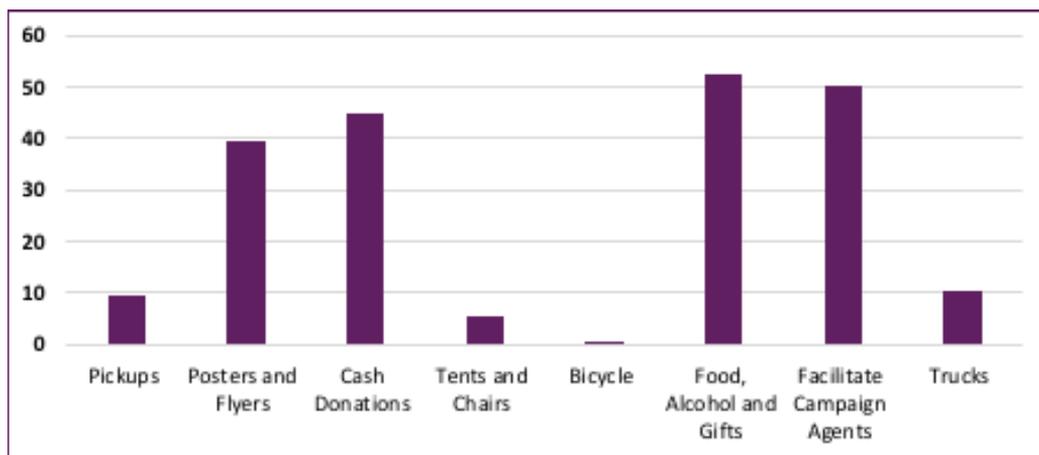
Candidates spent money on various campaign expenses including among others facilitation of campaign agents, transport, publicity, donations and gifts. Analysis indicated that candidates spent money on: transport (trucks and pick-ups), production of posters and flyers, cash donations, tents and chairs, hospitality (food, alcohol, gifts), and facilitation of campaign agents. The top four spending items were;

- a) Facilitation for campaign agents
- b) Cash donations to donors
- c) Voter hospitality
- d) Propaganda materials (posters, flyers)
- e) Publicity (hire of mobile sound systems and trucks)



In the urban districts and centres campaign spending was manifested in form posters, flyers (popularity), usage of vehicles like pick-ups and cash donations to voters. The pick-ups were majorly used to carry public address systems (PAS). For any candidate the used pick-up, it was more likely that the candidate also hired a PAS (many a computation for this). The figure below illustrates the types of campaign spending as observed in village election campaigns.

**Figure 5: Nature of Campaign Spending for Village Council Chairperson Elections**



### 3.3 Estimated Total Campaign Spending for Village Elections

Most of the spending by the candidates was done covertly at night and through third party agents. Interviews with some visibly spending candidates estimated that the election campaigns cost at least UGX 10million. The interviews further informed ACFIM that candidates who were not popular during campaigns felt that is they had a little more money for spend on voter hospitality and cash donations. The cost of campaigns would probably have gone higher if the campaign period had been longer than the 4-days provided for by the Electoral Commission.

This illuminates the challenge of highly commercialised politics where some voters think it is their right to be bribed by political candidates irrespective of how good or well-intended the campaign message is. And political candidates acting out of desperation to be elected and aware that open voting method (queueing up behind candidates) would bind voters to return the favour by voting for them.



### 3.4 Who financed the campaigns?

Establishing the source of campaign financing could not be monitored but required sophisticated research methods including key informant interviews with political candidates and/or their campaign managers. Findings reveal that political candidates raised campaign finance from the following sources;

- a) Personal sources including sale of land, domestic animals and savings.
- b) Contribution from political parties. ACFIM activists reported that the National Resistance Party made campaign finance contribution of UGX 3million (USD 800) towards their flagbearers. There were no reports of opposition political parties doing the same to their own flagbearers.
- c) Contribution from business interests. In Kampala and Wakiso districts, ACFIM learned that land brokers and some estate agencies bankrolled favoured candidates. ACFIM strongly believed that campaign contributions from land brokers and estates agencies are quid-pro-quo.
- d) Borrowing. There were reports of some candidates borrowing from money lenders to increase hype in their election campaigns.

# 4.0

## Election Day Activities

ACFIM activists reported that in all villages monitored and observed, village members arrived at the polling centers on time to cast their vote. Elections were conducted between 11.00 am – 1.00pm by queueing up behind nominated candidates and the polling officer counting the number of voters by waving their hand against every voter in the queue. Voting was reported successful in most of the rural villages except some in Kampala and Wakiso districts elections were postponed. Below pictures of open ballot voting method in progress.

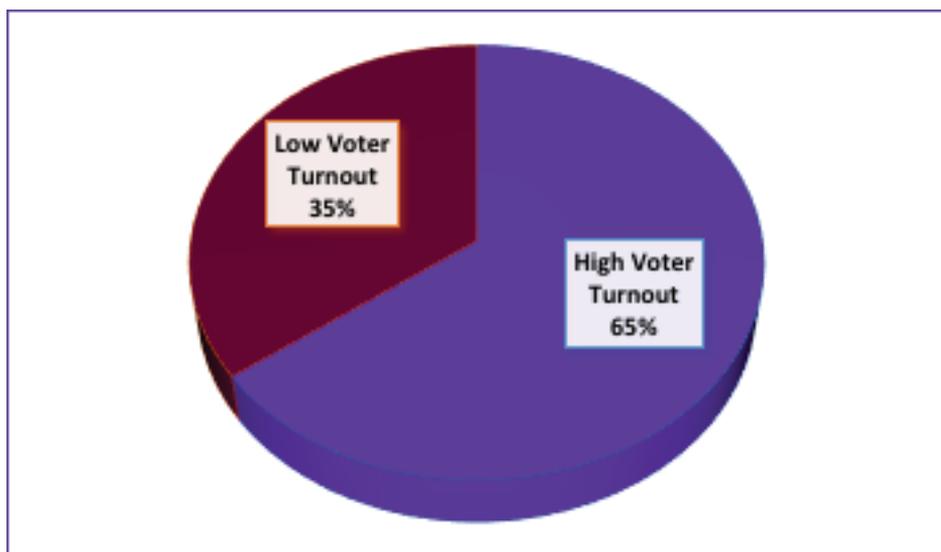




#### 4.1 Voter Turnout

Whereas some village members did not turn out to vote understandably voting due to fear of conflict and disharmony arising with being seen to side with one member of the village against the other, overall voter turnout was reported by activists as “high” in 64.9% of the villages monitored. To establish whether the turnout is high or low, the activists considered the entire village population as a voting population. High turnout is in the context of the entire voting village including those members who turned out but did not vote. It was clear that after 17 years of continuous postponement of village elections, there was strong enthusiasm within the electorate to vote their village leaders against all odds.

**Figure 6: Illustration of Activists' Observation of Voter Turnout in Villages Monitored**



It was reported that some of the voters were however tuned away after their names were found to be missing out on the voters' register. This was reported to have contributed to the commotion that interfered with the voting process but later calmed down and voting went on. In some villages the non-voting village members stood by the side and watched voting going on as seen in the photograph below.

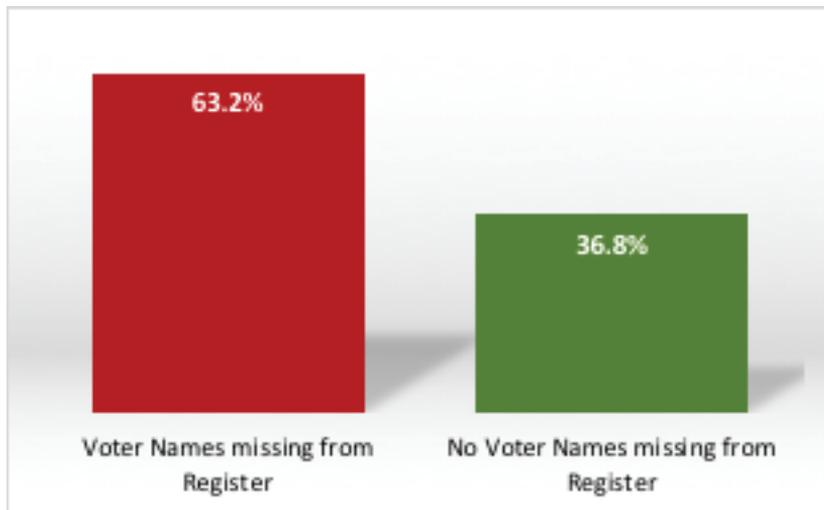


*Voters who were turned away looking to the right as the rest of the village members voted.*

## Voter Names Missing from the Voter Register

Incidents of voters' names missing from the Voters' Register were reported in 63.2 per cent of the villages monitored. These were also reports that some voters thought they all they needed to vote was to have a National Identity Card. It became evident that voter education was not sufficient. Cases of voters missing out from the voter registers were common in urban areas than rural.

***Figure 7: Per Cent of Villages where Voters' Names were reportedly missing from Register***



ACFIM activists observed that voters were averse to being caught on the losing side. They would first watch others queue up and then join the queue that was longest. There were incidents where voters on a shorter and losing line would abandon the candidate they were queueing up being to join the one with a longer line. Understandably voters were wary being seen to be on the losing side for fear of retribution. In the view of ACFIM, this development compromised the quality of elections. The photographs below bear testament to the situation where voters abandoned candidates with shorter queues to join those with longer ones whom they would not have otherwise voted for if the voting method had been by secret ballot.



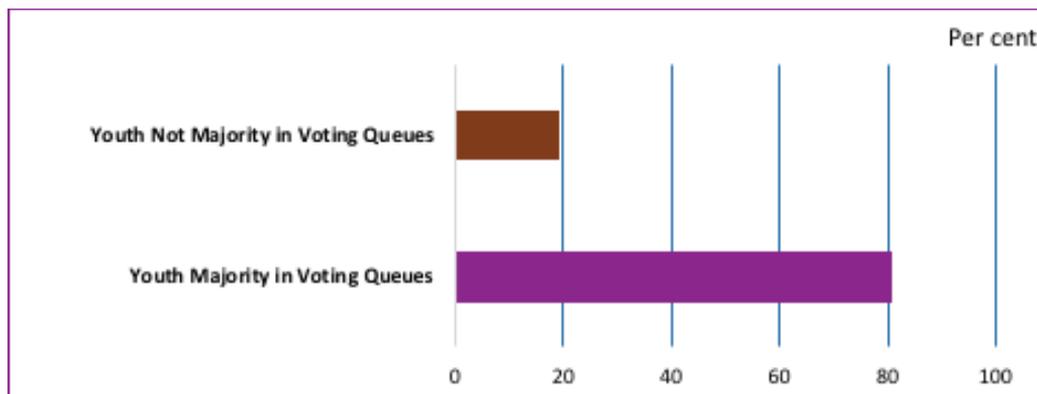
**Above and Below:** Candidates whose queues were abandoned by voters to join the queue that was longest as voters were increasingly keen on queuing behind winning candidates. ACFIM activists reported that these losing candidates in the beginning had longer lines only to be abandoned by voters who went to join the queue of the competing candidate that was visibly longer.



## 4.2 Youth Dominated Village Electorate

Youth aged 18-35 were observed to have made the biggest number of voters standing in the queues. Analysis indicated that in 80.6% of the villages monitored by ACFIM, young people estimated to be aged 18-35 dominated the voting queues in terms of numbers. The figure below illustrates this;

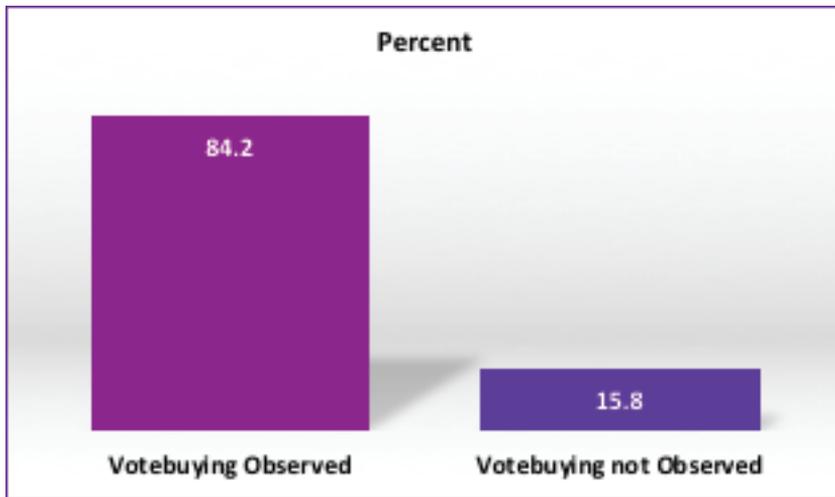
**Figure 7: Youth Dominating Voter Turnout Numbers**



## 4.2 Incidences of Vote Buying

Vote buying was prevalent during the campaign period, through Election Day. Interviews with candidates revealed that they came face-to-face with the reality that their promises alone without money would not get them votes. Candidates reported that household members openly demanded for money on the argument that once elected as village Chairpersons, they will also “eat”. On Election Day some candidates and/or their agents were observed giving out money, others provided mineral water, booze in sachets of waragi and other inducements. ACFIM Activists reported cases of vote buying in 84.2% of the villages monitored. Vote buying was interpreted as to mean enticing voters with cash, gifts, sundries, alcohol and other things aimed at inducing the voter to vote in the direction given to him/her by the one providing the inducements.

Figure 8: Percent of Villages where Vote Buying was reported



Participation of women as voters in village elections was significant especially in village where voting was peaceful. ACFIM activists reported that in villages where there was commotion, the numbers of female voters were lower.

## Some Victory Celebrations Caught on Camera



*Above and Below: Young people took centre stage in celebrating victory of their candidates. The centrality of youth in determining the outcome of elections is likely to gain increasing significance as the country heads towards 2021 general elections.*



# 5.0

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

- a) Commercialisation of election campaigns pervades all levels of electoral politics not least the lowest administration unit – village council chairperson elections. The mentality of candidates in terms of campaign spending is the same with higher level elections such presidential and parliamentary. The difference is only in scale of spending. Voters on their part will expect money from anyone signposted as political candidate regardless of position.
- b) Voters place a higher premium on village elections than they do with the Presidential, Parliamentary and upper Local Government elections.
- c) The open ballot election method of queueing up behind a preferred candidate largely compromised the quality of village chairperson elections. ACFIM activists reported that some people voted with intimidation during the exercise and/or fear of retribution at the end of the election. As such people did not vote for the leaders they desired but voted for those they had to be seen to be voting for. There were reports of some voters choosing to stay at home rather than coming out and face the risk of disharmony in the aftermath of elections just because they chose one candidate and not the other. ACFIM strongly believes that if the secret ballot system of voting had been used, the outcome of village elections would have been very different.
- d) The open ballot method of voting encouraged electoral malpractices such as voter bribery. Political candidates who always wish to use money to influence people to vote for them during the election welcomed this method of voting. ACFIM activists reported that village members who took money or gifts from particular candidates voted sheepishly for their payer. And high spending candidates were reported to have largely won the elections. In other words some voters sold their conscience to the highest bidder resulting in queueing up behind the wrong person to lead the village.

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- e) Women and youth continue to be excluded from participating in the electoral processes and political candidates. There is a mentality that direct political positions are a preserve of men.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- a) Enact legislation to regulate campaign financing across the electoral spectrum including lower administration level elections. This would level the electoral playing field for those who wish to run for office, but also contribute to preventing political candidates from using elections as a business investment, with the gaining of the political office as their profit.
- b) Use secret ballot method of voting during the next electoral cycle for village council elections. This will be in conformity with international and national legal obligations, commitments, practices and principles of confidentiality of one's electoral choice, anonymity and individuality of a voter. Democracy, which is the path Uganda has chosen, does not come cheap.
- c) Deepen civic education to deconstruct the widely held notion that direct political positions such village council Chairperson are for men only. This is intended to eliminate barriers to women participation as political candidates to compete with men on same positions.





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