

25 April, 2013, issue 2.7

Ordinary Voices

Xtra-ordinary Impact

Voter education is of paramount importance. Staff at polling stations should help enhance freedom of participation. Presence of police officers or military at polling stations should be well defined to allay any fears that have been inherited from previous elections—a respondent to a question on what they would advise regarding the next elections.

In this issue

What they said	2
Village Observer	2
Social Media	3
Back Page	4

The Bottom-line

Relax voter registration requirements and give more time for publicity activities. One of the respondents. At least there is someone listening as they have been relaxed.

After March Referendum, What Next?



Focus, after the referendum has been on what the results meant for the political parties. It is understandable given their entrenched positions and interests. However, there is one important point which may be lost. While polling was largely peaceful, there was turmoil in various voting booths as signified by the high levels of spoilt papers. This is a clear sign that we need to take serious steps to make sure that we reduce the number of spoilt papers. Spoilt ballots are usually a result of protests or complete ignorance as to what should be done. Our observations are that the latter is the case in most cases in Zimbabwe. It is, however, encouraging to note that changes have been made to ease voter registration as announced this week. Allowing a smooth registration of voters is one step towards making elections a reflection of the will of the people.



Village observer

Young and old. Men and women. Urbanites and we

from the rural areas. We all converged to sire a new constitution. With the gyrations of those blue pens, we made history. Fathers and mothers to a historic moment, of bringing to life a document that will govern our citizenship. Govern those in power, prescribing to them where they start and end, where they draw their powers from and what they expect us the lesser beings to do as our constitutional obligations. It is interesting that there were so many spoilt papers. It is interesting there was the other side, voting NO. Equally interesting was the high voter turnout. Even Matigari voted. He never disclosed where he put his X. but from his grins and smiles, I could see he felt he had done something significant. Then I was set thinking. Why was there so much interest in the referendum, I mean as

signified by the high voter turnout? Is it a sign that we have gone a step further in terms of political participation. What factors motivated such high participation? This led me to reflect on the theories of political participation and factors influencing the act. Political participation in the simplest of terms is an act that seeks to influence public policy or those who make such policies. There are many acts of political participation but the most obvious is voting. People may not partake in political processes for a number of reasons. They may not be aware, may decide not to or may not have been recruited. So during the referendum, the people were aware, decided to and had been recruited. This is where I solicited Matigari's opinion. The simple question on why he voted, yielded interesting answers. He started with a naughty phrase "Because it's my right" but on a more serious note, he took me through a political science lecture. He explained to me that he had followed the constitution history of the country since UDI. He said the issue of the constitution throughout the history of the country was one of elites trying to decide on behalf of the people. This was the same with the 1979 Lancaster

House constitution, he said. It was the political and military elites who decided to end the war by agreeing on a constitution. Since then, he explained, the constitutions have been about the elites and may continue to be so but what he liked was that in 2000 and 2013, the elites felt confident enough to face the people to test if what they proposed in the supreme law of the land was acceptable. The gesture, Matigari said, was an incentive for him to go and vote. He added that he had realised that political participation meant that if you did not take part, then others, fewer or less reasonable will do that on your behalf. Does it mean he voted YES? To which he responded "My vote is my secret". He added that what was important was to turn in thousands and either approve or disapprove the document. What was important for my fellow villager was not which side had prevailed but the number of people who had made time to stand in a queue and cast their ballots. These were the forces behind the constitution. These were political participants. Additionally, these are the people who will hold the political elites accountable.

To page 4

Lessons learnt, observations made, recommendations made!

In the absence of adequate funding for the next elections, it is prudent for those administering elections to make use of various social media platforms to ascertain what the people who voted in the referendum observed and what they recommend. We are fully aware that observers are requested to give reports after the elections and they have already done so after the referendum. However, we are also of the opinion that there are many people out there who have shared their experiences of the elections through social media and this is rich data that can be used to improve how we administer our elections. We

carried out a survey after the referendum and this has largely given us new insights and could be very helpful if we were in a position to influence the way the elections are run in Zimbabwe. What has come up clearly from the various people who responded to the survey which was posted online, is that there is need for further voter education, need to increase polling stations, need to explain issues to the voters. The people who responded to the survey are mostly those who voted and their insights are very useful for a free and fair elections in Zimbabwe.



Virtual Public Gallery



Using Social Media to Monitor Parly

PMTZ's facebook group Parliamentary Monitor is an interactive virtual public gallery where instead of being spectators, citizens raise issues and seek solutions. As part of the integration of the social media platform and this e-newsletter, we take excerpts of some of the posts on the facebook group and share with others.

After the referendum we asked, through a survey, the question: **What do you think should be done to improve on the administration of elections based on your observations during the 2013 Referendum? These are the responses we got. We extracted 54 of them.**

1. zec, must be not be bias and must be resourced
2. All overseas to vote
3. more polling stations
4. there was nothing really to observe as the issue people were really worried about or wat they had premeditated upon was long meandering ques , and the absence of which seemingly made it as if the system was fine bt judging by the number of personal at the disposal of zec and the time taken to release the results , I would safely conclude that there was incompetency or rather no proper framework to get results ASAP
5. The Constitution should have been distributed to all corners of the country. More ample time should have been given for people to familiarize with the document
6. The use of social media and ICTs to reach the younger generations
7. Iam of the opinion that ZEC should dispatch voting material on time to remote areas on time because roads to the areas are in a bad state and become inaccessible in the event of rains hence people may not vote as time might be

compromised. Most people were not aware of what we were voting for meaning ZEC did not conduct voter education in most areas of the country let alone the outlying areas. I think ZEC should employ the many educated youths to conduct the election during that short period that just continue with the already employed civil servants, of course in critical areas that need experience they return the necessary personnel. At the top i think the secretariate should have a composition of neutral persons from all sectors of society not former serving security personnel as is currently the setup.

8. Intensify vote education, especially in rural areas
9. just have to increase polling agents and positioned conveniently.
10. There should be enough voter education carried out by a politically inclusive group of people. The election officials were partisanly selected and the voters were aware of this. The Accreditation committee was partisan in nature.
11. i believe time for polling stations should be kept whether start and end lets be time conscious. some pooling stations did not have lighting from as 5pm lighting is essential.
12. new voters roll
13. Drivers licenses with national IDs should be allowed as identification.
14. people in diaspora should

be allowed to vote.

15. Voter education
16. There is actually a lot, but this intimidation and fear that has been planted into our voters is the greatest enemy. our people honestly do not have freedom of choice. You know it too.
17. Relax voter registration requirements and give more time for publicity activities.
18. Give all sides equal coverage and space to campaign for their positions, this did not happen during referendum
19. NEED FOR VOTER REGISTRATION
20. Better coverage, Inclusive coverage of all.
21. some people being bussed from rural communities to nearby urban constituency. There was low turn out because there was no voter education. Civil society must given funding to enable them teach people how best it is to participate on elections. These should be apolitical
22. There must be thorough voter education.
23. The ZEC officials were very professional and they should maintain their professionalism. Lets do away with the voters role and we stick to the way people voted in the refferendum..no hussle just walk into a polling station and cast your vote and go!!
24. non
25. Voter education

Feedback? info@pmtz.org



should be done in time, some people were asking what are we voting for.

26. bases should be adequately manned and should be closer to where people stay

27. role of police should be clarified and its relation with ZEC in administration of poll

28. Allow active participation of civic society organisations in voter education and stop all harassment. Enough time to prepare for the elections. Allow the full participation of the so called aliens to vote.

29. means of communication should improve between polling station and command centres. Bubi & Binga results were delayed due to comms. Accreditation was only done in Bulawayo to cover Bulawayo, Mat South and Mat North. It should be at provincial towns for all interested parties.

30. the administration of elections should be computerised in the sense that it will be easy to collate data and be in a position to verify and check issues like voter's role. Resources should be available to have efficiency and effective election implementation program

31. ZEC should include people from different political parties; Bring some security to guard the public;

32. Make voter registration easy

33. The elections should have enough preparation time. Observers

should be trained rather than just sending. Political party observers should not influence processes. It should be clear what a rejected paper is. Voter education should be done thoroughly

34. More time should be given to make people aware of what's happening. This was rushed.

35. Increase polling stations especially in the rural areas.

36. Interested parties be allowed access to information, for the sake of transparency and accountability at polling station.

37. there must be proper education on the importance of voting to the (ordinary citizens) and to the youth

38. Voter education is of paramount importance. Staff at polling stations should help enhance freedom of participation. Presence of police officers or military at polling stations should be well defined to allay any fears that have been inherited from previous elections.

39. Voter education should improve and more polling stations especially at growth points.

40. Make the system computerised to allow efficient tallying of results.

41. More voter education is needed on younger generation

42. Voter Education is lacking hence increasing number of spoilt ballots. Secondly results must be posted at the polling station. Some returning officers in Mutasa North did not comply.

43. There could be use of CCTV

technology at polling stations.

44. voter education, impartiality
45. there should be more voter education

46. Automation. Transparency that the public can clearly see. We don't like the idea of closed door vote counting

47. Early planning: logistics, finance, staff training, voter education, update website, etc

48. most people I spoke to said it was a simple quick process. I think maybe voter education on the requirements eg, ID should be increased to avoid people being turned away

49. Create voter participation.

50. They did exceptionally well find it difficult to fault.

51. Well I think they should have informed every one to vote with due time, kwete kumhanyisa mhanyisa vanhu, some of us we are not even in the country.

52. They must allow diaspora vote, we in diaspora we are also Zimbabweans citizens so we must have a right to vote regardless the geographical location

53. MORE outreach programmes to teach people at grassroots about the process and connect the elections and how it affects their lives directly

54. Polling station info out sooner - Requirements for who can vote and where to vote out sooner

Madisnyongoro of the Week



When President Mugabe gave his speech during the Independence Day Celebrations last week, most people were encouraged by the emphasis on peace. Most thought those speaking afterwards would confirm this but not for the master of ceremonies who is also Information and Publicity Minister, who took it upon himself to denigrate others dignitaries present and chose to highlight the contributions of security forces during the war. For going against the grain of the theme of peace, the honourable minister is the MADISNYONGORO of the week.

PMT Zimbabwe promotes openness, active participation, debate, engagement and respects divergence of views. In view of this, PMT Zimbabwe encourages the posting of stories, commentaries, reports, documents and links (embedded or otherwise) on its site and facebook page. However, these postings do not in any way, shape or form, implied or otherwise, necessarily express or suggest endorsement or support of any of such posted material or parts therein. In some extreme circumstances, our monitoring team may be compelled to pull down or delete offending postings. www.pmtz.org / info@pmtz.org



<http://www.facebook.com/groups/parlymonitor>



+263 738 577 576

