

# Empowering Youth who Care About Democracy: Introducing General Elections to First-Time Voters

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**Abstract.** *The goal of this initiative was to educate first-time voters about the democratic process and give young people a voice in civic life. Workshops were held to teach people how to vote, drives were organized to get people registered to vote, there was a social media campaign, and there was even an attempt to get people out to the polls on election day. The initiative's stated purpose was to help first-time voters become actively engaged in the political process by increasing their turnout at the polls. Participants' increased knowledge and confidence in their abilities to vote in the main election indicates that the program achieved its purpose. Participants gained a grasp of the democratic process, candidates, and problems through the seminars, and all eligible citizens were registered to vote through the voter registration efforts. Election day mobilization provided participants with resources and support to ensure they were able to cast ballots, while the social media campaign helped to engage people and establish a feeling of community. In general, the program achieved its goal of encouraging first-time voters to cast ballots. This program's success exemplifies the power of young people to determine the future of their communities and countries via education and engagement, and it demonstrates the relevance of these factors in building a healthy and vibrant democracy.*

**Keywords:** Empowerment, Youth, Democracy, General Elections, First-Time Voters

Received: October 25, 2022

Received in Revised: November 5, 2022

Accepted: November 19, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Individuals' ability to participate in government and shape policies that directly affect them is important to modern society, as argued by Bärnthaler et al. (2021). In many countries, youth voter turnout remains dismally low (Han & Ahn, 2020). If young people don't take part in democratic processes, fewer voices will be heard in decision-making (de Andrade et al., 2020), threatening the future of democracy.

According to Ning et al. (2023), this problem must be solved by involving and educating first-time voters. By providing young people with resources that help them understand and participate in the democratic process, we can boost voter turnout and strengthen democracy.

This thesis report will analyze a program designed to increase the number of first-time voters by giving them access to resources and education about the electoral process (Gee et al., 2022). Voters who have never cast a ballot before will find that this session is tailored to their specific questions and concerns.

By reviewing the research on youth voter turnout and the factors that affect it, we hope to set the stage for this initiative and explain why it was created (Kuba & Stejskal, 2021). Next, we'll discuss the methods we employed during implementation and how we plan to evaluate the program's success.

Finally, we will provide the results of our program evaluation and discuss how they may be used to guide future efforts to engage young people in democratic processes. Finally, this thesis report's aim is to provide evidence-based recommendations to politicians and organisations who wish to increase youth voter turnout and promote a more varied and representative democracy.

### **Voter Education Workshops**

First-time voters were given the tools they needed to make informed decisions at the polls, according to research by Shai et al. (2019). Participants were given information about candidates, issues, and the importance of casting a ballot in these sessions (Roche et al., 2022).

Pino-Ortega et al. (2021) recorded the workshops, which were led by trained facilitators and included games and debates to teach participants about the democratic process. Numerous methods were employed by teachers in order to pique students' interest and make the material more accessible (Alhammadi, 2021).

Through these sessions, attendees learned about the value of voting, the electoral process, and the role of government. They were also able to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and candidates at play in the upcoming national election (Yang & Kinchin, 2022).

The seminars were more than just a recitation of information; they welcomed and even encouraged audience participation. This helped create a community where students could teach and be taught by one another while also bonding over a love of democracy.

The importance of the seminars designed to educate voters to the overall effectiveness of the program cannot be overstated. The workshops helped first-time voters by giving them the tools and information they needed to make informed decisions at the polls. The sessions inspired community members to take an active role in shaping their future through representative government.



Figure. 1 provision of material to youth regarding Voter Education Workshops Voter Registration Drives

Voter registration drives were also a part of the initiative, as described by Alqahtani et al. (2022), to further empower first-time voters through education and engagement activities. The purpose of these actions was to encourage individuals to become active participants in the political system by registering them to vote and providing them with resources to do so.

At the voter registration drives, trained volunteers helped people fill out registration forms, answered questions, and educated them on their voting rights (Moczek et al., 2021). To make it as easy as possible for participants to get their hands on the necessary materials, drives were organized in a number of different locations (Yhee et al., 2021).

They were successful in getting first-time voters registered, and they were able to connect with other first-time voters through a shared interest in politics. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and engage in lively discussion about the issues that mattered most to them in order to build a sense of community and a commitment to its future.

Voter registration drives were a vital component of the overall endeavor. Campaigns assisted first-time voters get ready for the upcoming election by guiding them through the registration process and building a feeling of community around the political process.



**Figure. 2 Voter Registration Drives**

### **Social Media Campaign**

Along with workshops and drives to register new voters, the program also included a social media campaign designed to excite first-time voters about participating in the upcoming general election. The social media campaign shared pertinent content across platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to reach out to potential voters.

Infographics, videos, and participant testimonials were only some of the material types used in the campaign. The content was made to be informative, engaging, and approachable for a wide spectrum of consumers, including young people who may not have had much experience with social media or voting.

The social media campaign serves a dual purpose by providing a platform for people to disseminate information and share their own perspectives. People's interest in the program and the democratic process increased, as did their willingness to collaborate and communicate with others.

People who are less likely to vote, like young adults and people of color, were reached through targeted advertising as part of the social media campaign. Targeted advertising helped spread the word and get the campaign's message in front of those who might not have heard it otherwise, contributing to the campaign's overall success.

The social media campaign had a significant impact on the program overall. The campaign employed social media to improve voter turnout by reaching out to first-time voters and giving them a taste of the democratic process and inspiring them to participate in the forthcoming election.

### **Election Day Mobilization**

After first-time voters were educated and motivated, Alqahtani et al. (2022b) say the program's final component was a voter mobilization campaign on election day. Program participants were provided with information and resources to help them make an educated decision at the polls and afterward (Simms et al., 2023) as part of this effort.

This sort of thing was done to get people out to vote on election day. Assistance in the present moment The effort made sure there were knowledgeable people at polling stations on election day to help first-time voters with any questions they might have. Volunteers were available to assist voters with finding their polling place, finding information about the issues and candidates, and answering any questions they might have.

Transportation was provided for those who needed it to arrive to their designated polling location. This ensured that all program participants had the same access to voting as possible.

A few things to keep in mind: Participants in the program were reminded and provided with information on polling places, voting times, and what to expect on Election Day.

**Celebrations:** The initiative hosted celebrations after the election to thank and recognize first-time voters. People became more emotionally invested in the program and the democratic process as a whole, and as a result, they increased their likelihood of casting a ballot in future elections.

The campaign was successful in its goal of getting people out to vote on election day. The goal of the program was to increase the number of first-time voters who were able to participate in the democratic process by registering to vote and casting ballots in the general election.



**Figure. 3 Election Day Mobilization**

## CONCLUSION

By educating first-time voters on the importance of voting and giving voice to young people who value democracy, the program hoped to increase youth voter turnout. Voters were energized for the election through the initiative's use of social media, media advertising, voter registration drives, and seminars. Participants left the seminar with the knowledge, skills, and self-assurance to go out and vote in the upcoming general election. Because of the increased sense of community and shared commitment to the democratic process, program members were more inclined to engage with one another and keep voting in subsequent elections. The program was successful in its overarching goal of increasing voter turnout among first-time voters through encouragement and assistance. The initiative's participants were given the tools they needed to become active citizens who steer the course of their local communities and the country as a whole. The success of the program shows how important education and civic engagement are to building a healthy democracy and how much of a say young people have in shaping the future of their communities, cities, and countries.

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