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## **2019 National and Provincial Election Africa Unite Report to Independent Electoral Commission**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Africa Unite is a youth empowerment and human rights organisation that works with youth from different backgrounds to prevent conflict, enhance social cohesion and promote socio-economic development.

To combat the legacy of the divide between races and the growing ignorance and intolerance between cultures and classes, Africa Unite prepares young adults to face the challenges of living in South Africa while also being agents of change within their communities through a combination of educational and practical programmes.

For the past years Africa Unite has trained more than 800 young people from different backgrounds to act as human rights peer educators. They have been capacitated with human rights knowledge. In return, these young people are encouraged to disseminate the knowledge gained among their peers, schools and communities. The peer educators use their various local languages such as isiXhosa, isiZulu, Afrikaans and English etc... to allow for wider engagement from their audience. This method of training individuals or groups to train other individuals or groups is sometimes referred to as "training the trainers". It is also known as Peer Education.

Part of their work is to raise awareness about human rights in general and the right of vulnerable groups (women, children, people with disabilities, senior people, migrant and refugees). Political rights are one of the rights given only to citizens, unfortunately, we have noticed that young people tend to ignore this right.

In order to raise awareness on voter education among young people, Africa Unite has worked with Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) since 2010. In 2016, we were accredited to be observers during Municipal Elections which permitted our youth to observe the electoral process for the first time.

During May 2019 National and provincial elections, Africa Unite deployed 17 young people selected among our peer educators from Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal as observers. In total, 13 voting stations located in different Townships were observed in both provinces. This report will highlight the feedback received during their observation.

## SELECTED PICTURES OF THE OBSERVERS



**Fig 1.** Lindelani township in KZN



**Fig 2.** Mfuleni township voting Station with DKA our partner



**Fig 3.** Group photo inside of the voting station in Philippi Township with one of DKA our Partner

Below is the feedback obtained during their observation in different voting stations in townships in Cape Town and KwaZulu Natal.

## SUMMARY OF THE VOTING STATIONS

Region	Station Name	VD Number	No. of Voters	No. of Votes
Western Cape				
	Sophumelela High School	97092322	1592	3,184
	Mfuleni Secondary School	97142283		
	Masonwabe Primary School	97142306	1356	2,712
KWA-ZULU NATAL				
	Lamontville Community Office	43371031	2888	2000
	Protea Secondary School	43371626	1000	2200
	Oceanview Primary School	43371592	1100	5,776
	Summerfield Primary School	43371637	1920	3840
	Depot road Memorial Primary School	43371648	1000	2000
	Sarva Dharma Ashram	43371446	2000	4000
	Bhekokuhle Primary School	43390481	1900	3800
	Inanda White City Creche	43362176	4000	8000
	Ntuzuma A	43360860	1296	2456
	Umtapho High School	43361063	1349	2424
	Lindelani and Richmond Farm			

### FEEDBACK ON OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING VOTING STATIONS:

#### **I. WESTERN CAPE - CAPE TOWN**

##### **1. Sophumelela High School (VD No. 97092322)**

###### **Pre-opening:**

The voting station opened at 07h00 and set up the voting station accordingly. There were 3 tables allocated for scanning identity documents, checking registries and marking of thumbs. There were two additional tables for the distribution of ballot papers and a booth controller. At the end there was a ballot box controller as well to direct where voters' ballots had to go. There was also a constant visible police presence.

**Voting Process:**

There was a drunk voter who collapsed two different voting booths.

Due to this incident, some voters were unable to place their ballots inside the booth and they were obliged to leave it on the floor. These ballots were considered as spoiled- this was agreed by all party agents apart from an ANC party agent who filled in a Rec 5 form as a result.

2 voters were turned away because one was unregistered and the other was a foreign national.

**Post-opening & Counting:**

There was some concern from party agents regarding the validity of spoiled ballots and a recounting of those ballots had to take place. There was a large voter turnout across age and sex demographics filling up 4 sets of ballot boxes.

**Recommendations:**

- An IEC staff member must be assigned to direct voters where to go, especially to assist elderly voters or to demarcate the area behind the booths with tape to avoid voters from placing ballots on the stage or on the floor.

**2. Mfuleni Secondary School (VD No. 97142283)****Pre-opening:**

The start of the election process at 7:00am until the end of the ballot counting at about 02:00am

Although the weather was not as motivating to get out of the house on Election Day, as Mfuleni experienced heavy showers of rain from the morning, the community members were not affected. As from 9am, the voting station at Mfuleni High; had long lines which extended outside the school gate.

**Voting Process:**

Nonetheless, although the IEC members were working efficiently most of the day, at around 16:00, the service declined, and the line did not move as fast as before. Following this, around 17:30 the scanner used to identify voters ran out of paper and the voting came to a pause until 18:00 while IEC members organized a new roll. Unfortunately, right before the voting came to a pause, at 17:25 the party agents got into a verbal uproar among themselves as they accused one of the party agents for breaking protocol. At 19:00 the four ballot boxes (2 national and 2 provisional) were sealed and replaced as they had reached maximum capacity. When the new boxes were stationed, party agents were called to inspect the boxes to ensure they were empty. This showed transparency within the IEC as they followed protocol and ensured that the elections were free and fair. At this point, Mfuleni High School voting station had already processed 5000+ voters.

**Post-opening & Counting:**

At 20:30 the voting station decreased in numbers, as the final few voters came through, mostly the elderly coming from work. At 21:00, the voting station was closed with an additional 3227 and 2953 provincial votes being added to the previous toll. At 21:27, the station was completely shut down with only the IEC members, party agents, 4 police officers and Africa Unite observers being present in the voting hall. The counting process went on until about 02:00.

## Recommendations:

- There is a need to have more IEC members helping to speed up the voting process especially after 18h00
- IEC must have more than one scanner at the voting station
- Additional booths are needed to speed up the process
- There must be at-least one Police officer based inside the voting station to intervene in-case conflict may arise
- There must be a designated first aider on the premises in case there is an incident
- The Presiding Officer must take control of the counting process as the party agents become unruly

### 3. Masonwabe Primary School (VD No. 97142306)

#### **Pre-opening:**

There were 2 tables allocated for registration, one table for marking of voter's thumb and one table for the serving of ballot papers. There was lack of police visibility throughout the morning and afternoon as only 2 police officers were visible. However, in the evening the number of police officers increased to a total of 4 police officers.

#### **Voting Process:**

There was a drunk voter who shouted that he was "voting for Zuma". Some people tried to vote together in a single voting booth. There was a total of 4 ballot boxes that were used on the day in the station with an additional two of the boxes that were used for special voting day (previous two days), these two boxes had very little votes in them. There was no voting booth controller.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Counting proceeded smoothly, though slowly. It was decided that ticks were counted as well as X marks. There were many spoilt votes.

## Recommendations:

- An IEC Official must guide voters to the empty booths and regulate stalls, if he/she is not available, then a piece of tape can be used to mark where voters must wait
- There is a need for voter education and more awareness regarding registration and special voting processes

## II. KWA-ZULU NATAL – DURBAN

### 4. Lamontville Community Office (VD No. 43371031)

#### **Pre-opening:**

Counting proceeded smoothly, though slowly. It was decided that ticks were counted as well as X marks. There were many spoilt votes.

#### **Voting Process:**

Party agents were wearing party regalia during the mobile special voting process. There was disruption by EFF party in form of organized collective singing, dancing and chanting within the location of the voting station after the end of the special voting process.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Lamontville township was expecting 3000 voters but only 2888 casted their ballots. Votes were shared amongst political parties as follows; ANC 238, EFF 375, IFP 68 and the remaining were shared amongst other parties which include DA and ATM.

### Recommendations:

- Party agents must be briefed in advance by the Presiding Officer before the mobile site visits begins about the voting procedures including the prohibition of wearing party regalia.
- Political parties must not be allowed within the parameters of the voting stations and must be outside the yard of any voting station.

### 5. Protea Secondary School (VD No. 43371626)

#### **Pre-opening:**

Voting Station was opened late at 07:20. Chatsworth community expected 1000 voters.

#### **Voting Process:**

Zip-zap machine was not working and scanning IDs. The other voting processes went well without any issues.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

More than 1200 votes were casted, and the results were as follows: DA 820, ANC 255, MF 42 and IFP got few votes and the other political parties had no political support and the area is mainly by one racial group.

## Recommendations:

- IEC staff must be at the voting station on time so that the station is opened on time for voters to cast their votes.

### 6. [Oceanview Primary School \(VD No. 43371592\)](#)

#### **Pre-opening:**

Havenside in Chatsworth community expected 1000 voters

#### **Voting Process:**

Forthright and headstrong party agent dictated to the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer and IEC staff in an unruly manner. Hence being out-of-order and disturbing the smooth and peaceful operation of the voting station.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Received more than 1100 voters and the results were: DA 938, ANC 11, IFP I and MF 14.

## Recommendations:

- The Presiding Officer must have a briefing with Party Agent, informing them of their role and responsibility prior to Pre-opening the voting station
- The Presiding Officer must address any individual party agent at any point during the day when found that they are over-exerting their role and responsibility, being unruly, disruptive and disturbing the peace of the voting station.
- If Presiding Officer is scared of being assertive or if the behaviour continues then Security Officers to be called in and have party agent to be removed from voting station.

### 7. [Summerfield Primary School \(VD No. 43371637\)](#)

#### **Pre-opening:**

This was the only station from all we attended in Chatsworth where the Presiding Officer ensured that all other party agents and election observers list their names on both the Presiding Officer diaries. All voting staff were dressed in IEC officially-issued uniforms unlike in other voting stations. This was highly admirable and made all staff look excellent.

#### **Voting Process:**

There was a complaint by a party agent that the blank or available balance of ballot papers were counted in the back room and not in the full view of party agents, IEC staff and Election observers. Party agent from EFF touched

three ballot papers by passing them from one voting station staff to the other in full view of fellow IEC staff and other party agents. However an IEC staff interjected and advised that it was a major transgression. The Party agent stopped immediately, was apologetic via body language and not speech and did not do it again.

### **Post-opening & Counting:**

The ballots took too long to count and the verification counting processes was lengthy. The Presiding Officer had the counters verify the stamp on the back for each ballot and then once completed verify each ballot again for a questionable ballot. This made the process long, tiring and drawn out even though she had the best intentions of the integrity of the process in mind and at heart. One box for both national and provincial ballots made the sorting process of national and provincial unnecessary, long and drawn-out. Bayview in Chatsworth expected 2000 voters to cast their votes on the day and about 1920 voters came as a results.

### **Recommendations:**

- The IEC must provide better voting education particularly on how to vote and what kinds of marks count.
- The Party agents are not to touch or interfere with the natural or otherwise environment of the area in and around where they are pitching their political party tent outside the Voting District.
- Presiding Officer at both voting stations need to ensure that the party agents and election observers fill their information in the Presiding Officer's diary.
- There must be two boxes, one for provincial, one for national, this will render the sorting and counting process easier.

## **8. Depot Road Memorial Primary School (VD No. 43371648)**

### **Pre-opening:**

Voting booths placed in front of windows where one window's blinds was opened. 1000 voters were expected to vote in this voting station, just over 1000 voters voted.

### **Voting Process:**

A voter demanding his ballot to be stamped on the face of the ballot paper. Presiding Officer gave in to his demands. Ballot boxes were not marked with all the information required on the side of the ballot boxes. Nail polish remover and cotton wool was used for removing nail polish from voter's thumb for mark of indelible ink.

### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Just over 1000 voters voted in this station with the following results after counting; NATIONAL DA – 882, ANC – 106, ACDP – 40 and other parties such as EFF and IFP had to share the remaining votes.



## Recommendations:

- IEC needs to develop a special policy regarding the protocol if the voter has nail polish on.
- IEC must raise awareness regarding the removal of the ink, hence informing voters that removing the ink is a criminal offense.

### 9. Sarva Dharma Ashram (VD No. 43371446)

#### **Pre-opening:**

Voting station personnel staff were badly positioned, sitting haphazardly on desks and tables and working very unprofessionally. Section 24 (A) forms not filled in by Presiding Officer for voters. Rather Section 24 (A) voters turned away. Voting booths so poorly erected, leaning and falling. Voting station dimly lit. Voter Station untidy and haphazard. Highly sensitive IEC stationery not stored away, kept open and in front and accessible to all.

#### **Voting:**

No proper voting flow. Such items as beverages, food, bags, shoes, toilet roll, etc. Thrown around haphazardly on and under chairs, benches and tables. The Presiding Officer refused to complete Section 24 (A) Forms for voters. Safety Officers were bringing this to her attention due to overboiling frustration in the form of anger by the political parties outside the fenced perimeter of the voting station along the roadside. She did not respond to their needs. Presiding Officer was stubborn and had an unapproachable attitude. Staff member who was controlling zip-zap machine was throwing out all the printouts from the zip-zap on the floor and table. This looked very untidy and improperly scattered. Party agents outside in their tents along the roadside were surprisingly well-behaved, cool, calm and collected even while enjoying their music and liveliness of their party tent-station save their frustration and anger at the Presiding Officer who refused to fill in and complete Section 24 (A) Forms.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

2 000 voters were expected and less than the expected number came to vote, and the results were as follows; NATIONAL: ANC 1 038, DA – 444, EFF – 159, and COPE, IFP, ACDP getting few votes.

## Recommendations:

- The IEC must evaluate the attitude of the Presiding Officer, as this can cause commotion during the election process.
- The IEC needs to improve the voting flow of the voting station.
- IEC should ensure that the voting stations are kept tidy at all times.
- The IEC staff members needs to ensure that voting booths are properly assembled.
- During Venue checks, the IEC must ensure that the voting stations have enough light and around voting booths.

### 10. Bhekokuhle Primary School (VD No. 43390481)

#### **Pre-opening:**

The station was prepared from 06:00 in the morning the election staff were early and were able to make up the ballot boxes and voting polls. The election process started late at 07:20 because there was no identity scanning machine. Community of Deisenhofer expected 1900 voters to vote.

#### **Voting Process:**

Because there was no identity scanning machine, it was difficult for those who did not appear on the voters roll. There were voters coming to the voting station under the influence of alcohol who ended up disturbing other voters in the line and disrupted the voting process. There was a couple that came in and the man took the identity book of his spouse and gave it to loan shark as leverage for money they ended up fighting in the voting venue as the woman was irritated by this act of her spouse because she was not able to vote. She then took the identity of her spouse and said to him he will not vote if she was not voting. A party agent helped an old woman when she was casting her vote in the absence of Presiding Officer and other party agents, this was a wrongdoing and the Presiding Officer did not take any action on this.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

During the counting of votes the presiding officer and her deputies were not completely open to the party agents, when there were spoilt ballot papers they only see by themselves and not show to the party agents before cancelling the votes. There was an incident where the second deputy presiding officer had to recount the votes after the EFF party agents requested so, the Deputy Presiding Officer miscalculated ANC votes which were 45 and said there were 50. During the counting some IEC staff fell asleep and party agents of the ATM party and a party agent of the EFF. There was a time where the Presiding Officer counted a spoilt ballot paper to the favor of the ANC. The police officers opened the doors and let counting IEC staff, party agents and themselves out of the counting venue which was against the rules and laws of the IEC.

## Recommendations:

- There needs to be better education for the public about the voting process and their rights to vote.
- The IEC must supply the voting station with functioning scanning machines and t-shirts before Pre-opening
- The criteria in which the IEC uses to identify and employ their Presiding Officers should be revised due to the level of unprofessionalism and lack of knowledge the Presiding Officer had
- There should be more election observers since there was a robbery by other
- Political parties should educate their agents on what roles and responsibilities are during the election process. The IEC should penalize the party agents who create chaos during this time.

### 11. Inanda White City Creche (VD No. 43362176)

#### **Pre-opening:**

The voters came at the station around 06:00. The station was opened at 07:00 but the voting process did not start until 08:30 as there was an unexpected delay. The community of Inanda expected 7000 voters as they had two sub stations.

#### **Voting Process:**

Out of the two substations there was one identity scanning machine working in both substations. There were senior citizens who applied for special voting but did not vote due to their responses being sent via SMS and they were unable to access them. Nevertheless, they could vote when they came to the voting station. There was a male who came with an old identity book and his face could not be recognized, though there were some delays eventually his identity was scanned and could vote. There were three parties whose agents were present (EFF, ANC and ATM) and at around 18:00 the electricity went off and returned at around 21:00 and there was no voter at the station at the time

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Station closed at 21:00. The counting process started at 22:00 after an hour break from 21:00, when it started there was a ballot box with eight votes from the special voting on the 7th May, the box was still sealed when it was opened. There were no complaints during the counting process although party agents and IEC staff fell asleep during the process. There were 29 ballot papers spoilt. The voting station was closed at 08:00 the following day (09th May 2019).

### 12. Ntuzuma A Voting Station (VD No. 43360860)

#### **Pre-opening:**

Voting station opened at exactly 07:00. Lindelani community expected 1517 voters to vote. Ballot boxes were assembled in front of all-party agents and observers.

#### **Voting Process:**

For one voter to cast his or her vote, it took them about 3-10 minutes on the booth. All party agents and observers were present all day. The Venue was accessible, clean and in good working conditions. The voters were very excited about the process.

### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Voting station closed at 21:00 for counting. But counting started at 21:30 after 30 minutes break.

### **13. Umtapho High School (VD No. 43361063)**

#### **Pre-opening:**

Umtapho voting station opened at exactly 07:40. Lindelani community expected 1000 voters. Ballot boxes were assembled in front of all-party agents and observers were placed in front of everyone to see them.

#### **Voting Process:**

All party agents and observers were present all day. The station had water shortage but community members were generous enough to provide water. For one voter to cast his or her vote it took them about 3-10 minutes on the booth. One voter almost did not vote because his name was already cancelled on a voter's roll and only to discover that the voters roll control scratched the wrong person.

#### **Post-opening & Counting:**

Umtapho voting station closed at 21:10 for counting. Counting started at 21:40 after 30 minutes break

## **III. GENERAL CHALLENGES**

### Observer GEAR

In Cape Town, the gear (observer's bibs, handbooks and accreditation) which were supposed to be used by our youth peer educators as observers on the day of the Elections came two days later after the Elections.

### Observer's Training

IEC conducted a quick training for only 2hrs for the Presiding Officer. This was also only 2 days away from the Election Day. This was not enough for someone to understand all the procedures of the IEC needs to run free and fair elections.

## **IV. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Training of Presiding Officers must be more than one day for them to be more effective in achieving their task as their duties are more demanding and agile.
- IEC needs to develop a special policy regarding the protocol if the voter has nail polish on. This will avoid any conflict between the IEC staff and the voter.
- The voter must be well equipped with voter education to ensure that each voter understands all information pertaining to elections. This will also avoid spoiled ballots.
- Young people must be encouraged and motivated to play an active role in all electoral processes
- The turnout of young voters was alarming, this indicates that young people lack interest in taking an active role in making decisions on public interest. We strongly recommend IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) to form partnership with NGO's who are working with the youth to intensify the campaign on Voter education targeting young people.
- Voters who been identified drunk at the voting stations, the Residing Officer must inform the Security officials in advance so that they can be assisted through the process quickly to avoid chaos
- In 13 of our voting stations in Townships where we observed, there were no other observers besides us. We therefore recommend IEC to encourage civic society to play the role of observers

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The 2019 National and Provincial elections were handled in a manner that allowed everyone who is a registered voter to exercise their right to vote as they freely chose. The Electoral Commission displayed a character of honesty and openness for the purpose of providing confidence to the public about the outcomes of the elections. There were challenges that the Electoral Commission of South Africa must quickly attend to such as voter education, consistent lengthy campaign to attract young voters, timeous dispatch of the necessary gear to observers and others that are mentioned in the recommendations. The Africa Unite observers conclude that the elections were conducted in an environment conducive for elections to take place and that the electoral process was transparent, free and fair.