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Human Resource Management Of The General Election Commission In Increasing Female Voter Participation Through Socialization Programs: A Qualitative Study At The Cianjur Regency KPU

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Abstract

Electoral outreach is often treated as a matter of communication technique alone, even though it rests on the capacity of the organization that designs and delivers it. This article examines human resource management (HRM) practices at the General Election Commission (KPU) of Cianjur Regency in supporting voter-education programs aimed at women, a group commonly classified as vulnerable voters because of their limited access to electoral information. The study adopts a qualitative case study design. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, with purposively selected informants consisting of commissioners, a section head, KPU staff, and ten women voters in Ciranjang Village. Analysis followed data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was tested through source and technique triangulation and member checking. The findings show that with a core staff of roughly twenty-eight people covering a regency of considerable size, the commission pursued optimization through task allocation set out in official terms of reference, the deployment of ad hoc electoral bodies, tiered and online training, and collaboration with women's organizations such as Persistri, Fatayat NU, and Aisyiyah. The outreach strategy was built as a hybrid of community-based face-to-face activities, door-to-door approaches, and digital media. Program evaluation, however, still rests on output indicators such as the number of activities and participants, while changes in understanding and voting behavior remain unmeasured. The study concludes that outreach effectiveness depends on the organization's ability to integrate human resource management, internal coordination, leadership, and external networks.

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Keywords: human resource management; women's voter participation; outreach programs; Cianjur Regency KPU; qualitative studies

INTRODUCTION

The year 2024 saw Indonesia face two simultaneous electoral challenges, each producing differing results in terms of citizen engagement. The February 2024 presidential and legislative elections still saw 81.78 percent voter turnout, nearly matching the 2019 figure. Nine months later, in the simultaneous regional elections in November 2024, the national average participation rate dropped to around 71 percent. This ten-point difference in less than a year indicates that high turnout in the national election does not necessarily translate to local elections.

Among the various voter segments, women occupy a position that consistently receives special attention. Their numbers nearly equal those of male voters, significantly influencing the legitimacy of election results. However, in Indonesian election practice, female voters are categorized as vulnerable voters, along with elderly voters, people with disabilities, and residents of remote areas. Vulnerability here refers not to ability, but to limited access to information and election activities. Norris (2011) places citizen participation in the political process as one of the main indicators for assessing the quality of democracy; from this perspective, the marginalization of some voters from the flow of information is a democratic issue, not simply a technical issue of election administration.

Cianjur Regency is interesting to study because it combines a large voter population with challenging regional conditions. The Final Voter List for the 2024 Election in this regency recorded 1,832,583 voters, consisting of 931,167 men and 901,416 women, spread across 360 villages and sub-districts and 7,278 polling stations. For the 2024 Regional Elections, the Final Voter List (DPT) was set at 1,816,668 voters, with 922,850 men and 893,818 women, across 32 sub-districts and 4,054 polling stations. There was a reduction of 15,915 voters, or approximately 0.87 percent, which, according to local commissioners, was due to changes in domicile, voters who died, changes in status to members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) or the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and corrections to data matching and research results.

One interesting aspect of the data is that, although the number of female voters is lower by 29,751, their turnout percentage is actually higher. In the 2024 regional elections, when overall participation was recorded at 61.64 percent, female voter turnout reached 68.08 percent of the female registered voters. A similar pattern was seen in the general election, with female turnout at 69 percent compared to 61 percent for males. Overall, turnout in Cianjur also increased, from 68.12 percent in 2019 to 70.12 percent in 2024, although still below the West Java average of 71.25 percent.

This achievement was not achieved easily. Cianjur Regency is among the largest

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in West Java, with the northern region relatively easily accessible and the southern region requiring a four- to five-hour journey from the city center over hilly and winding roads. The regency's Human Development Index (HDI) ranges from 66 to 67, among the lowest in West Java, where the average is 73. This situation impacts literacy rates and the public's access to information, including election information.

The combination of vast territories, difficult terrain, and limited personnel places human resource management at the heart of the issue. Dessler (2013) defines human resource management as the process of planning, organizing, directing,and human resource oversight to achieve organizational goals. For election organizers, these four processes determine whether outreach programs can be designed to be well-targeted and implemented evenly. The success of outreach programs is not solely determined by the number of activities or the size of the area covered, but rather by the ability of election organizers to plan, organize, implement, and evaluate communication strategies adaptively to the characteristics of the community.

Unfortunately, election studies in Indonesia have largely focused on the voter perspective, particularly voting behavior and the factors influencing it, or on communication strategies as an output. The internal aspect of election organizers, namely how the institution organizes its people to carry out its mandate for socialization, has been relatively rarely explored. This study addresses this gap with two main questions. First, how does the Cianjur Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) manage its human resource management strategy to increase female voter participation through socialization? Second, how effective is the socialization program and the structural barriers that accompany it?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analytical framework for this research is based on the human resource management theory proposed by Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2008). These four authors divide human resource management practices into several core functions, four of which are used here because they are most relevant to the nature of the work of election management institutions: human resource planning and recruitment, training and development, performance management, and labor relations. The core of the planning function is the organization's ability to place the right people according to program needs. Training and development involve systematic efforts to improve personnel's competencies so they can perform tasks to uniform standards. Performance management deals with measurement, feedback, and improvement. Labor relations, meanwhile, encompass internal communication, leadership, and managing relationships with external parties.

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Armstrong and Taylor (2020) added that human resource management in public sector organizations is unique due to its strict personnel regulations, resulting in much less room for adding or removing personnel compared to the private sector. This situation encourages public organizations to seek alternative forms of optimization, such as through restructuring the division of labor, strengthening competencies, and partnering with external parties. In Indonesian literature, Hasibuan (2016) and Sutrisno (2016) emphasize a similar point, namely that organizational effectiveness is determined more by the quality of management than by the number of employees alone.

In terms of socialization, several previous studies have highlighted the communication strategies of election organizers. Eko Ari Wibowo, Muradi, and Sudirman (2019) examined political socialization to increase female voter participation in the simultaneous regional elections in Magelang City and found that existing social group-based approaches were more effective than mass campaigns. Bagus Hidayat (2023) examined the socialization strategy of the Solok City General Elections Commission (KPU), while Bouk (2022) examined a similar strategy for first-time voters in Malaka Regency. Sibadu et al. (2025) examined the KPU's communication strategy to increase female voter participation in the 2024 presidential election. The general trend of these studies is to position socialization as a communication variable,

While the capacity of the organizations that produce them is rarely a focus. It is at this point that this research seeks to contribute, namely by examining election socialization from its source, namely the management of human resources among the organizers.

Two additional concepts are used as complements. Bevir's (2012) governance perspective, which views the implementation of public affairs as the result of interactions between various actors and not the sole work of state officials, is used to interpret the KPU's partnership patterns with community organizations. Lee and Kotler's (2019) social marketing concept helps explain the importance of tailoring messages to the target audience's daily needs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, following the framework proposed by Sugiyono (2019). Three elements of the case study were established from the outset. The case studied is the human resource management of the Cianjur Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) in implementing a socialization program to increase female voter participation. The unit of analysis is human resource management practices, from planning to program evaluation. The case study is limited to the Cianjur Regency KPU in the context of the 2024 General Election and Regional Head Elections.

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Data were collected through three techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face using established guidelines, covering human resource management practices, outreach strategies, implementer experiences, female voter perceptions, and obstacles in the field. Non-participant observation was conducted to observe behavior and activities at the research sites. Documentation included the Terms of Reference, activity accountability reports, final voter list data, gender-based participation recapitulations, and referenced election regulations.

Informants were determined purposively, taking into account their mastery of the data and phenomena being studied. Their composition is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition of research informants

No	Informant	Information dug up	Amount
1	Commissioner of the Cianjur Regency KPU	HR management policies, direction of socialization strategies, and views on female voter participation	1 person
2	Head of Human Resources and Community Participation Sub-Section	Mechanism for planning, task distribution, training, and activity evaluation	1 person
3	KPU staff, women are prioritized	Experience of implementing socialization in the field and the benefits of the training received	3 people
4	Female voters in Ciranjang Village (working women, women in remote areas, female heads of households)	Access to election information, level of understanding, motivation to vote, and perceived barriers	10 people

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman as outlined by Sugiyono (2017), which continued until data saturation was reached. The reduction stage involved summarizing, selecting key points, and identifying themes and patterns from the collection of transcripts and field notes. The presentation stage presented the categorized data in the form of narrative descriptions and diagrams of intercategory relationships. The final stage involved drawing conclusions, which were continuously verified against field evidence.

Data validity was tested using four criteria: credibility through source triangulation, technical triangulation, member checking, and observational diligence. Transferability

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was achieved through detailed descriptions of the Cianjur General Elections Commission (KPU), geographic conditions, characteristics of female voters, and the context of socialization. Dependability was maintained by documenting the research process, interview guidelines, transcripts, coding, and field notes. Confirmability was ensured through data traceability, informant quotes, documentation, researcher reflections, and audit trails. Field data collection took place in June 2026.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human Resource Planning and Recruitment

Human resource planning at the Cianjur Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) wasn't developed on the spur of the moment, but rather through a coordination meeting between the secretariat and commissioners. The meeting discussed who would be responsible for conducting outreach, who would facilitate the activity, and who would coordinate with target groups. For women, the initial coordination assignment was carried out separately. This approach demonstrates that human resources are positioned as an element that must be tailored to the characteristics of the target group, not the other way around.

The meeting results are then outlined in the Terms of Reference (Terms of Reference) prepared by the subsection head. This document outlines the activity's objectives, number of participants, implementation timeline, targets to be achieved, and technical division of labor. All technical decisions regarding task allocation, work area determination, and outreach targets are further discussed in a plenary commissioner meeting. Thus, planning is collective and documented, not an individual decision.

The most prominent issue with this function is the limited number of personnel. This limitation is even more pronounced in the Socialization, Voter Education, Community Participation, and Human Resources Division, which at certain periods is staffed by only four people: a division head, sub-section heads, and staff. This situation has only improved somewhat with the arrival of seven new civil servant candidates within the Cianjur Regency KPU, one of whom was placed in that division.

There simply isn't enough room to add permanent personnel. As one commissioner explained, the human resource structure of the district/city KPU is determined based on the allocation from the Provincial KPU, under the direction of the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI), and additional personnel cannot be added due to civil service regulations. Additional personnel are only provided in stages, in the form of ad hoc personnel at the sub-district and village levels, namely the Elections Committee (PPK), Elections Committee (PPS), and Elections Working Group (KPPS). This finding aligns with Armstrong and Taylor's (2020) findings regarding the rigidity of

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staffing structures in public organizations and explains why ad hoc bodies occupy such a central position in regional election work.

From a gender representation perspective, the ad hoc agency recruitment data shows developments that are moving in a positive direction but are not yet adequate, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Composition of ad hoc organizers of the Cianjur Regency KPU by gender

Ad hoc body	Man	Woman	Amount	Proportion of women
2024 Election PPK	143	17	160	10.6%
2024 Election PPS	915	165	1,080	15.3%
2024 Regional Election PPK	133	27	160	16.9%
2024 Regional Election Polling Station	903	177	1,080	16.4%

Women's representation at the PPK level increased from 17 to 27, or from 10.6 percent to 16.9 percent, while at the PPS level it moved from 165 to 177, or from 15.3 percent to 16.4 percent. This increase indicates efforts to promote women's representation from one period to the next. However, the proportion remains far below that of men. Referring to the view of Noe et al. (2008) that the success of human resource planning is determined by the ability to place the right people according to program needs, the low representation of women at the field level presents a challenge in itself. This is because, as will be seen in the next section, psychological closeness between officers and targets is one of the determinants of the success of outreach to female voters.

Training and Capacity Development

Personnel capacity building is achieved through four complementary channels. The first channel is tiered technical guidance, flowing from the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI) to the Provincial KPU, then to the Regency/City KPU, and continuing to the Sub-district Elections Committee (PPK). Meetings are held at a fairly frequent frequency, ranging from once a month to once every two months, depending on the stage being undertaken. This tiered approach ensures a uniform understanding of regulations and work procedures at all levels.

The second pathway involves online training provided by the State Administration Institute and other institutions. Secretariat staff are required to attend this training, with

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recorded training hours and can choose topics according to their needs, ranging from self-development to anti-corruption. This model offers flexibility, allowing employees to participate in it around their main work. The scope of the material, which extends beyond the technical aspects of elections, also demonstrates that human resource development is geared toward building integrity and professionalism, not just procedural skills.

The third pathway is a knowledge-sharing program initiated by the Cianjur Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) and implemented after the general election and regional elections (Pilkada) stages are completed. Through this forum, information and experiences are exchanged between divisions, ensuring knowledge regarding socialization is not concentrated in a single department. Given that socialization requires cross-divisional involvement, this shared understanding forms the basis for better coordination.

The fourth track is Parmas Insight, a weekly program initiated by the West Java Provincial Election Commission (KPU) for all district/city KPUs in West Java. This forum is attended by division heads, sub-division heads, and relevant staff as a means of aligning understanding and updating information on outreach and public participation.

The benefits of this tiered training were directly recognized by female KPU staff. One informant stated that training was usually provided from a higher level to a lower level, for example, from the Provincial KPU to the Regency KPU, and was found to be very helpful in carrying out their duties. These four channels demonstrate that the training and development function, as outlined by Noe et al. (2008), is functioning quite well, with a combination of top-down institutional development and bottom-up internal initiatives.

Performance Management and Evaluation

Employee performance evaluation and outreach programs are conducted through four mechanisms. First, the preparation of accountability reports for each activity serves as a measure of administrative order and reflects employee responsibility for the stages they have completed. Second, a plenary meeting is held after the activity, where leaders and staff discuss achievements, obstacles, and areas for improvement. In this forum, the Terms of Reference are used as an initial benchmark to assess the alignment between planned targets and actual implementation.

Third, the use of the Siparmas application as a digital reporting tool. Through this application, each outreach activity is reported, along with participant data and questionnaire results, allowing the Provincial and Indonesian General Elections Commissions (KPU RI) to monitor implementation in a more structured manner. Fourth, unannounced inspections by commissioners at outreach points conducted by the Elections Committee (PPK) and Elections Post (PPS) allow for direct assessment of officer readiness and public response.

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The combination of these four mechanisms forms a fairly comprehensive evaluation system from an administrative perspective. However, this is where the most significant limitations of performance management practices at the Cianjur Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) lie. All instruments used rely on output indicators, such as the number of activities implemented, the number of participants present, and the completeness of accountability documents. Instruments that measure whether the socialization program has actually changed the understanding, attitudes, and voting behavior of the targeted women are lacking. However, within the performance management framework of Noe et al. (2008), performance measurement ideally links activities to the results the organization aims to achieve. Without this bridge, evaluations risk stopping at the question of whether activities have been implemented, rather than whether they have been successful.

Working Relations, Leadership, and External Partnerships

Employee motivation is built from the outset by instilling the value that working at the KPU is a form of service with significant responsibility, as it is directly related to the election administration. The leadership style implemented emphasizes leadership involvement in field activities, rather than simply issuing instructions from the office. Cross-unit coordination is key, as limited personnel require staff from other divisions to assist with outreach.

The same limitations prompted the Cianjur Regency Election Commission (KPU) to build partnerships with women's community organizations. Persistri, Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah became key partners, alongside women's figures and other local women's communities. These organizations have a long-established mass base and social legitimacy, allowing election messages to flow through channels trusted by the community. Read within Bevir's (2012) governance framework, this pattern demonstrates a shift from a system solely reliant on state officials to collaborative collaboration between actors. For the Cianjur KPU, these partnerships were not merely a strategic choice but a necessity, given the impossibility of reaching all 360 villages and sub-districts with just twenty-eight core personnel.

All of these practices are based on a multi-layered regulatory framework, including Law No. 7 of 2017, Law No. 10 of 2016, KPU Regulation No. 8 of 2022 concerning Public Participation, KPU Regulation No. 14 of 2020 concerning Secretariat Work Procedures, and KPU Regulation No. 8 of 2019 concerning commissioner duties. Internal directives issued by the Cianjur Regency KPU generally take the form of technical letters referencing these regulations.

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Socialization Strategies for Female Voters

Face-to-face outreach is the backbone of the Cianjur Regency Election Commission's (KPU) strategy for reaching female voters. Instead of inviting residents to a single location, the approach involves visiting groups already established within their social lives: religious study groups (Koran), the Family Welfare Movement (PKK), integrated health posts (Posyandu), and other women's associations. This method conserves organizational energy while also placing election messages in a space familiar to the target audience.

Several technical adjustments were made to ensure this approach was effective. Female staff were assigned to deliver materials to women's groups, ensuring more fluid and less distant communication. The timing of the sessions was adjusted to fit the women's daily routines to avoid conflicts with work hours, rest periods, or prayer times. Visual aids such as candidate photos, pamphlets, and similar media were used to facilitate understanding, especially for participants unfamiliar with formal election terminology.

Beyond community forums, the KPU also employed door-to-door approaches and more relaxed activities such as watching movies together at the village and sub-district levels. Other variations were developed based on an evaluation of low-participation areas, where lectures were replaced with more engaging forms: walks, dangdut entertainment, touring, wayang puppet shows, and even stand-up comedy. Simple door prizes such as tumblers, candy, and chocolate were used to encourage attendance. While the value was small, the element of appreciation was proven to liven up the atmosphere and foster participant enthusiasm.

Socialization is also designed to reflect the work characteristics of the target group. Activities with tea pickers in Sukanagara District are an example. The material goes beyond voting procedures and is linked to everyday issues such as children's health, family economic conditions, and government programs that directly impact households. This approach aligns with Lee and Kotler's (2019) social marketing principle, which prioritizes the needs of the target audience, rather than the interests of the sender.

The involvement of women as election organizers is a unique strategy that operates in layers, from the sub-district level to the polling station (TPS). The presence of female officials is considered to create a sense of comfort for female voters, both when receiving information and interacting at the polling station. In this sense, female election organizers not only perform administrative functions but also act as a communication bridge between institutions and women at the grassroots level.

Digital channels complement the overall strategy. Instagram, Facebook, X, TikTok, and official websites are used to expand the reach of information, and dissemination relies not only on institutional accounts but also on the personal accounts

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of all employees and ad hoc organizers. However, the General Elections Commission (KPU) recognizes the limits of this channel. Not all female voters, especially those who are elderly or live in remote areas, have the same access and ability to use digital platforms. Therefore, social media is positioned as a complement, not a substitute, for face-to-face outreach.

Program Effectiveness from the Perspective of Female Voters

Interviews with ten female voters in Ciranjang Village provide a more balanced picture of the program's reach. While outreach has reached most informants, it has come through various channels and with varying levels of understanding. Some have received direct outreach from the General Elections Commission (KPU) at the village hall, while others have received it through village officials, integrated health post (Posyandu) cadres, Family Welfare Movement (PKK) groups, social media, and even informal conversations at the market. Information dissemination has been ongoing, but it is uneven and still heavily dependent on available social media.

Media preferences are split by age. Older informants rely on television, while younger informants utilize Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. This finding reinforces the argument that a single digital-based strategy is inadequate for a region with a voter composition like Cianjur.

In terms of understanding, most informants were able to grasp information regarding voting procedures and the election schedule. The challenge lay in the delivery method. Formal language and technical election terms were considered unfamiliar to women in the community. Outreach in large forums such as village halls was also considered ineffective due to the noisy atmosphere, many participants talking among themselves, and the distant screen position making the material difficult to grasp fully. Door-to-door communication was preferred because the delivery was more focused and personal. Concise and to-the-point material was also considered more easily understood than lengthy presentations.

Interestingly, all informants stated that they always exercised their right to vote and never abstained from voting. Their motivation stemmed from their sense of citizenship, the hope of finding a trustworthy leader, and the belief that every vote matters. Some even expressed a critical stance toward vote buying, emphasizing that choices should be based on conscience, not material rewards. Nearly all informants stated that after receiving outreach, they better understood the connection between elections and their daily lives.

Despite this, several obstacles remain. Domestic workload was cited by all informants as a major obstacle; busy household and childcare often prevented them from participating in outreach activities. The distance of polling stations from their homes was

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a second issue, especially for women with limited mobility. Third, outreach schedules were not aligned with daily routines. Fourth, low digital and political literacy, particularly among older women or those with limited education, often accompanied by apathy due to disappointment with previous leaders. Fifth, lack of familiarity with the candidates.

Regarding the preferred method, informants' responses were fairly consistent: face-to-face meetings in small groups, in a familiar environment with daily activities such as religious study groups, integrated health posts (Posyandu), neighborhood association (RT/RW) meetings, or home visits. A relaxed atmosphere, visual aids, and door prizes enhance attendance, while too many participants reduce concentration.

When viewed side by side, the findings from the organizational and target perspectives reveal a clear connection. Personnel limitations forced the General Elections Commission (KPU) to adopt a multi-layered approach, mobilizing all staff, ad hoc bodies, and external partners. This approach expanded reach, but also explained why some female voters received information through intermediaries rather than directly from election officials. Consequently, the quality of communication varied and became difficult to control. Furthermore, complaints about formal language and overly large forums indicate that public and inclusive communication competencies were not yet fully distributed among field implementers, despite regular, tiered training.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the election socialization program by the Cianjur Regency KPU in an effort to increase female voter participation is the result of the synergy of four human resource management functions, namely planning and recruitment, training and development, performance management, and work relations.

First, with limited core personnel and a broad work area, the Cianjur Regency Election Commission (KPU) optimized existing resources through the division of tasks documented in the Terms of Reference, the use of ad hoc organizers during the stages, tiered training complemented by online learning and internal forums, and cross-unit coordination. Women's representation in ad hoc bodies increased from the 2024 General Election to the 2024 Regional Elections, although the proportion remained below one-fifth.

Second, the outreach program has expanded the reach of election information through a combination of face-to-face meetings with women's communities, door-to-door outreach, and digital media. However, its effectiveness still needs to be strengthened because evaluation relies primarily on output indicators, while measuring changes in understanding and voting behavior has not been optimal.

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Third, the success of socialization does not depend solely on communication strategies, but rather on the organization's ability to integrate HR management, internal coordination, leadership, and external collaboration networks in an integrated manner.

SUGGESTION

The Cianjur Regency Election Commission (KPU) needs to develop a results-based evaluation system for its outreach programs, not just the number of activities or participants. Such evaluations are designed to measure the extent to which the program has truly changed women's understanding, attitudes, and voting behavior, so that the results can provide a more accurate basis for program improvements in subsequent periods.

In terms of human resource management, mapping of personnel needs should be arranged more systematically by considering three things at once, namely the characteristics of the region that influence the number and placement of officers, the workload so that the distribution of tasks is proportional, and the characteristics of target groups with different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Competency development needs to be expanded beyond the technical aspects of elections. The following five competencies are relevant to the characteristics of women targeted: public communication, ensuring information is conveyed clearly and easily understood; digital literacy, given the significant role of online media; inclusive communication, ensuring all voter groups are reached, including vulnerable groups and people with disabilities; gender sensitivity, ensuring approaches are sensitive to women's specific challenges; and community management, ensuring sustainable relationships with women's networks at the grassroots level.

It is recommended that outreach strategies continue to be developed through a hybrid community-based socialization approach, a combination of three channels: face-to-face, which provides a personal touch, a community approach that expands reach through established social networks, and digital channels that offer efficiency and broader reach. All three complement each other's weaknesses.

It is recommended that future research quantitatively measure the effectiveness of the outreach program by tracking the gradual flow of change, from understanding, awareness, intention, to actual participation. This stepwise approach would address the limitations of this qualitative study, which failed to quantify the program's impact.

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