

# NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION LAUNCHES MASTER TRAINER PROGRAM FOR CIVIC EDUCATORS

written by NEC Press | June 13, 2025



On June 13, 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) commenced the rollout of a Master Trainers' Program for Civic Educators. This training program was rolled out in two sessions, from June 10-13 and 17-20, 2025, in Juba, and included 50 participants from the NEC, including representatives from the State High Elections Committees (SHEC), as well as state and non-state actors. The training was based on the NEC's civic and voter education strategy, with support from the United Nations Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN IEAT). In this context, the NEC training manual on civic education covers five topics: i) democracy; ii) governance; iii) human rights; iv) elections; and v) peacebuilding, and an additional program to support civic educators' presentation and training skills.



The training program aimed to assist NEC, SHEC, civil society, and other stakeholders in concepts, approaches, and activities on civic education to support a harmonized approach to civic education initiatives by the NEC and other electoral stakeholders in South Sudan.

The NEC has prioritized civic and voter education and sustained stakeholder engagement to bolster an electoral process that is transparent, inclusive, and peaceful. By the end of the program, two cohorts of master trainers were trained, a total of 50 trainers. Subsequent to this master training program, a training of trainers, composed of civil society, youth groups, and other stakeholders, will be rolled out at the state and county levels in order to support a nationwide electoral-focused civic education initiative.

“Forging partnerships and collaboration with key stakeholders such as state entities, civil society, media, and political parties will be instrumental in conducting a nationwide civic

and voter education program”, remarked Honorable Thabo Abosuh Ajang, NEC Commissioner responsible for civic and voter education.

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## **NEC and the Central Equatoria State High Committee boost awareness of the electoral process among CSOs in Juba**

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On 8 April 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) held a consultative meeting with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Central Equatoria State (CES) to discuss the NEC’s electoral mandate and potential areas for cooperation between the NEC and CSOs. This meeting, hosted by the NEC State High Election Committee (SHEC) in CES, was the first convened by the NEC with state-level CSOs in this state. It followed a national-level consultative meeting between the NEC and CSOs in January, as well as nine (9) similar meetings held in each state of South Sudan during March 2025.

This one-day event brought together 48 representatives from state-level CSOs such as community and faith-based groups, youth and women’s organizations, networks for persons with

disabilities, and media representatives. The primary objective was to enhance public awareness of the electoral process and to strengthen relationships and partnerships between the NEC, SHECs, and CSOs. Notably, the event exhibited excellent inclusiveness, with 50% of participants being women.



The NEC Chief Electoral Officer, Hon. Mac Maika Deng, officially opened the meeting and shared the progress and challenges of the election preparations. These challenges primarily relate to aligning the electoral timeline, the constitution-making process, and census timelines, as well as the necessity for political and legal clarity and financing.

The Chairperson of the CES SHEC, Alphayo Philip Lako, introduced participants to the meeting agenda, which covered topics such as civic and voter education, voter registration, and overall election preparations at both the national and state levels. Additional subjects included the inclusiveness of the electoral process, the neutrality of NEC and SHEC members, capacity building for electoral stakeholders, and collaboration in the electoral process.

After the NEC and SHEC presented the framework for the electoral process, the CSO representatives discussed their activities and potential areas for support and collaboration with the NEC and SHEC.

During group work sessions, participants identified challenges regarding the upcoming elections and proposed collaborative solutions. Subsequently, these points were presented and discussed with the entire plenary. The discussions yielded valuable insights that the SHEC members gratefully received.



At the end of the meeting, the NEC and SHECs committed to convening regularly to share information on the electoral process and to maximise the essential role of CSOs as extended arms for civic and voter information, as well as being observers and watchdogs of the process. The CSO participants pledged to strengthen their collaboration with the election

management body to ensure transparency and a coordinated approach to the electoral process. They also committed to supporting comprehensive public awareness campaigns related to civic and voter education once they receive clarity on the way forward.

The UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT), which includes the UNMISS Electoral Assistance Division and the UNDP South Sudan Electoral Support Project, provided both technical and financial support for the meetings.

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# **NEC Consults with Civil Society in Bor and Yambio to Enhance Electoral Awareness**

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On 26 March 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the State High Election Committees (SHECs) of Jonglei and Western Equatoria states organized consultative meetings with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bor and Yambio.



The one-day event brought together 79 representatives of state-level CSOs (45 from Bor including 19 women, and 34 from Yambio including 13 women), including community and faith-based organizations, youth and women's groups, as well as media representatives, to raise public awareness of the electoral process and strengthen relationships and partnerships between the NEC, SHECs, and CSOs. The NEC Board and Secretariat members from Juba also participated in these events. The NEC and SHECs informed of challenges associated to the electoral timeline – namely as related to the Constitution-making process timeline, political and legal clarity needed, in addition to financing. The discussion included topics and coordination on civic and voter education, voter registration, and overall election preparations at both national and state levels. Other topics covered included the inclusiveness of the electoral process, the neutrality of NEC and SHEC members, the roles of and capacity building for electoral stakeholders, and collaboration in the electoral process, among others.



After the two events, the NEC and SHECs agreed to meet regularly to share information on the electoral process and coordinate the essential role CSOs play in the electoral process – as extended arms for civic and voter information, and as observers and watchdogs of the process. The CSO participants committed to strengthening collaboration with the election management body to ensure transparency and a coordinated approach to the electoral process. They also pledged to support comprehensive public awareness campaigns associated with civic and voter education upon clarity on the way forward. The UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT), which includes the UNMISS Electoral Assistance Division and the UNDP South Sudan Electoral Support Project, provided both technical and financial support for the meetings.

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# **SHEC Induction workshop Scheduled for October 8-11**

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The National Election Commission is preparing for national elections, scheduled for 22 December 2026. To implement elections, the NEC will rely on a field structure consisting of a High Committee at a state-level (SHEC) in each of the ten states. Each SHEC consists of a chairperson, deputy chairperson, and three committee members appointed by the NEC.

In April and May 2024, the members of the NEC visited the States to meet with stakeholders and consult about for SHEC appointments. On 17 June 2024, the Chair of NEC, Prof. Abednego Akok Kachuol, announced the establishment of the High Committees at the State-level. The fifty (50) committee members took their oath of office in Juba on 11 July 2024 and will begin the task of refurbishing their offices.

To prepare the SHECs for their task, NEC with the support of the UN-Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN-IEAT), will deliver an Induction Workshop from 08-11 October 2024 in Juba.