

Election  
Bulletin



Issue  
2 of 2025

## THE AFRICAN CHARTER, EXPLAINED

### Q: What is the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)?

**A:** The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) is a legal framework adopted by the African Union (AU) in 2007 to promote democracy, rule of law, human rights, credible elections, and good governance across AU member states.

### Q: What is its importance in elections?

**A:** ACDEG plays a vital role in strengthening electoral processes in Africa by:

- Promoting free, fair, and transparent elections.
- Setting standards for democratic governance and the rule of law.
- Encouraging inclusive citizen participation and political tolerance.
- Condemning unconstitutional changes of government.
- Strengthening electoral institutions and enhancing the credibility of election observers.

- Supporting accountability and peaceful transfers of power.

### Q: What electoral provisions does ACDEG contain?

**A:** ACDEG outlines several electoral provisions to ensure democratic and credible elections:

#### 1. Free and Fair Elections (Article 17[1])

- Elections must be regular, transparent, free, and fair, reflecting the will of the people.
- Conducted by independent, impartial electoral bodies.

#### 2. Electoral Institutions (Article 17[2])

- Member states must establish independent, impartial, and well-resourced electoral bodies.

#### 3. Participation and Inclusion (Articles 3, 10, 17[3])

- Citizens have the right to participate in electoral processes without discrimination.
- Promotes equal access for women, youth, and marginalized groups to vote and run for office.

- States must foster an environment for inclusive political participation.

#### 4. Electoral Observation (Article 18)

- States should invite and facilitate impartial electoral observation missions.
- Observers must have freedom of movement and access to relevant information.
- Observations help improve practices and enhance transparency.

#### 5. Media Coverage (Article 27[8])

- States must ensure equitable media access for all parties and candidates.
- Media should operate freely and ethically, supporting informed public debate.
- Governments must protect journalists and uphold media freedom.

#### 6. Electoral Integrity and Transparency Article 3(7)

- Elections must follow proper legal procedures.

- Emphasizes the use of independent observation and respect for due process.

#### 7. Political Tolerance and Peaceful Competition Article 2(3) Article 8(1)

- Encourages political pluralism and discourages violence or intimidation during elections.
- Discourages violence and intimidation by promoting peaceful and legitimate transitions.

#### 8. Prevention of Electoral Malpractice Article 3(8) (Article 17)

- Prohibits fraud, manipulation, and misuse of state resources.
- Promotes accountability for electoral violations.

#### 9. Peaceful Transfer of Power (Article 23)

- Condemns unconstitutional changes of government, including those from falsified elections.
- Reinforces peaceful and legitimate transitions of power.

These provisions aim to build trust in electoral systems, promote inclusive governance, and ensure that political authority genuinely reflects the will of the people across the African continent

## AFRICAN CHARTER, YOTSANANGURWA

### Mubvunzo: Chii chinonzi African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)?

**Mhinduro :** African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) hwaro hwekugadzirwa kwemutemo hwakagamuchirwa neAfrican Union (AU) mugore ra2007 nechinangwa chekukurudzira hutongi hwejekerere, kushandiswa kwemutemo muhutongi, kodzero dzevanhu, sarudzo dzinogamuchirika pamwe nehutongi hwakanaka munyika dziri mumubatanidzwa weAfrican Union (AU).

### Mubvunzo: Ko yakakosherei panyaya dzesarudzo?

**Mhinduro:** ACDEG inoita basa guru rakakosha pakusimbisa mafambiro esarudzo muAfrica kubudikidza nekuita zvinotevera:

- Kukurudzira sarudzo dzinoitwa vanhu vese vakasununguka, pasina kubiridzira uye nenzira yakajeka
- Kuisa zviga zvinofanira kutevedzerwa pahutongi hwejekerere nekutevedzera zvatarwa mumitemo.

- Kukurudzira kuti vanhu vese vaite rupande rwavo musarudzo nekugamuchira kuti vanhu vese vane maonenero akasiyana-siyana panyaya dzezvematongerwo enyika.
- Kushoropodza kubviswa nekugadzwa kwehurumende zvisiri pamutemo.
- Kusimbisa mapazi anoona nezvekufambiswa kwesarudzo nekuona kuti vaongorori vesarudzo vanogamuchirika nekuvimbika.
- Kutsigira kubviswa nekugadzwa kwehutongi hutsva murunyararo uye nekukwanisa kutsanangurira ruzhinji panoda kujekeka.

### Mubvunzo: Ndezvipi zviga zviri muACDEG?

**Mhinduro:** ACDEG ine zviga zvinotaura pamusoro pemafambisirwo esarudzo kuti dziitwe nenzira inokoshesa hutongi hwejekerere uye dzichiitwa nenzira inogamuchirika.

#### 1. Sarudzo dzinoitwa vanhu vakasununguka pasina kubiridzira (Chinyorwa 17 [1])

- Sarudzo dzinofanira kugara dzichiitwa, nenzira yakajeka, vanhu vese vakasununguka, pasina kubiridzira uye dzichitaridza zvigo zveruzhinji.
- Dzichifambiswa nemapazi akazvimirira asina kurerekera kudivi rimwe chete uye asina rusarura. **Continued to Page 2**

**2. Mapazi anofambisa sarudzo (Chinyorwa 17 [2])**

- Nyika dzemuAU dzinofanira kuve nemapazi anoona nezvekufambiswa kwesarudzo akazvimirira, asina kurerekera kudivi rimwe chete uye ane zvekushandisa zvakakwana.

**3. Kuti vanhu vese vane chekuita nesarudzo vaite rupande rwavo musarudzo (Chinyorwa 3,10,17 [3])**

- Zvizvarwa zvenyika zvine kodzero yekupinda musarudzo nekuita rupande rwazvo pane zvese zvine chekuita nemafambisirwo esarudzo pasina rusaruro.
- Kukurudzira mikana yakaenzana yekuvhota nekukwikwidza kune kuvanhukadzi, vechidiki nevese vanotarisirwa pasi.
- Hurumende dzinofanira kukurudzira kuti vanhu vese vanzwe vakasununguka kuti vapinde mune zvmatongerwo enyika.

**4. Kuongororwa kwesarudzo Chikamu chemutemo 18**

- Hurumende dzinofanira kukoka vaongorori vesarudzo nekuve nechokwadi chekuti sarudzo dzaongororwa nemapazi akazvimirira asina divi raakarerekera.

- Vaongorori vanofanira kunge vakasununguka kufamba vachiongorora sarudzo nekubvumidzwa kuwana ruzivo rwavanoda.
- Ongororo yesarudzo inobatsira kunatsurudza mafambisirwo esarudzo nekuitwa kwesarudzo zvakajeka.

**5. Kushambadzwa kwesarudzo (Chikamu chemutemo 27[8])**

- Hurumende dzinofanira kupa mapato ese nevanokwikwidza mikana yakaenzana yekushambadza zvirongwa zvavo pamaterevhizhoni, marhedhiyo mapepanhau nezvimwe zvese zvinoshandiswa pakushambadza.
- Vanoshambadzira mashoko vanosanganisira vematerevhizhoni, marhedhiyo nemapepanhau vanofanira kuita basa ravo vakasununguka vachitevedzera tsika nemitemo yakanaka uye vachikurudzira makakatanwa anotaridza kuti vanhu vane ruzivo rwezvmatongerwo enyika.
- Hurumende dzinofanira kuchengetedza vatapi venhau nekuona kuti pane kusununguka pakufambiswa kwemashoko.

**6. Kufambiswa kwesarudzo kunoremekedzeka uye kwakajeka Chikamu chemutemo 3(7)**

- Sarudzo dzinofanira kuitwa nenzira dzinotevedzera mutemo.
- Kukohomedza kukosha kwekuve nevaongorori vakazvimirira nekuremekedzwa kwemafambiro esarudzo.

**7. Kugamuchira maonero akasiyana-siyana panyaya dzezvmatongerwo enyika nekukwikwidza murunyararo Chikamu chemutemo 2(3) Chikamu 8(1)**

- Kukurudzira kuve nemapato akawanda ezvmatongerwo enyika nekusakurudzira kurwisana kana kutyisidzirana panguva dzesarudzo.
- Kusakurudzira mhirizhonga nekutyisidzirana kubudikidza nekukurudzira kubviswa nekugamuchira hutongi hutsva murunyararo.

**8. Kudzivirira hutsotsi pakufambiswa kwesarudzo Chikamu chemutemo 3(8) (Article 17)**

- Kusabvumidzwa kwechitsotsi, kumbunyikidzwa pamwe nekushandiswa zvisirizvo kwemari nezvekushandisa zvehurumende
- Kukurudzira kukwanisa kutsanangura zvinogutsa panenge pakanganiswa mukufambiswa kwesarudzo

**9. Kubviswa nekugadzwa kwehutongi hutsva murunyararo (Chikamu chemutemo 23)**

- Kushoropodza kubviswa kana kugadzwa kwehurumende zvisiri pamutemo, kusanganisira sarudzo dzinoitwa nenzira yekubiridzira.
- Kusimbisa kubviswa nekugadzwa kwehutongi hutsva murunyararo.

Zviga izvi zvine chinangwa chekuti ruzhinji rwukwanise kuvimba nekugamuchira mafambiro esarudzo, kukurudzira hutongi hunokoshesa kuti munhu wese aite rupande rwake pasarudzo pamwe nekuona kuti hutungamiri hwezvmatongerwo enyika hunotaridza zvido zveruzhinji munyika dzese dzemuAfrica.

AFRICAN CHARTER, ICHAZWA

**Q: Iyini i-African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (i-ACDEG)?**

**A:** I-African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (i-ACDEG) yindlela yomthetho eyamukelwa yi-African Union (i-AU) ngo2007 ukukhuthaza umbuso wentandokazulu, ukusebenza komthetho, amalungelo oluntu, ukhetho olungela ukuqilibezela lokubusa kuhle emazweni onke angamalunga e- AU.

**Q: Iqakatheke ngani sikhangelane lokhetho?**

**A:** I-ACDEG idlala ingxenyane emqoka ekuqiniseni indlela eziphathelane lokhetho e-Africa sikhangelane lokulandelayo:

- Ukukhuthaza ukuba lokhetho olukhululekileyo, olungela ukuqilibezela njalo olumgceke.
- Ukumisa indlela ezikhangelelweyo zokubusa ngokwentandokazulu lokusebenza komthetho.
- Ukukhuthaza ukuphatheka kwezizalwane lokwamukelana ngokwehlukana ngezombusazwe.
- Ukusola ukukhutshwa kwabohulumende ngendlela ezingahambisani lesisekelo sombuso selizwe.
- Ukuqinisa ingatsha ezibona ngokuqhutshwa kokhetho lokwenza ngcono ukuthembeka kwabahlola ukuqhutshwa kokhetho.
- Ukusekela ukuba lomlandu lokutshiyela umbuso ngokuthula.

**Q: Iqukethe ziphi izethulo eziphathelane lokhetho i-ACDEG?**

**A:** I-ACDEG yethula izethulo ezinengi eziphathelane lokhetho ukuze kube lokhetho lwentandokazulu njalo olungela ukuqilibezela:

- 1. Ukhetho olukhululekileyo njalo olungela ukuqilibezela (Umugca 17[1])**
- Ukhetho kumele luqhutshwe ngezikhathi ezimisiweyo, lubemgceke, lukhululeke njalo lungabi lokuqilibizela luveze izifiso zabantu.
- 2. Ukhetho kumele luqhutshwe zingatsha ezizimeleyo njalo ezingathathi uhlangothi.**
- 2. Ingatsha eziqhuba ukhetho (Umugca 17[2])**
- Amazwe angamalunga kumele abe lengatsha ezizimeleyo, ezingathathi uhlangothi njalo ezilengebo zonke ezidingekayo ukuthi zisebenze kuhle.
- 3. Ukuphatheka lokungatshiyi loba ngubani ngaphandle (Umugca 3, 10, 17[3])**
- Izizalwane zilelungelo lokuphatheka endleleni zokuqhuba ukhetho kungekho kubandlulula.
  - Ukukhuthaza ukuphatheka ngokulinganayo ekuvoteni lekuncintisani ekhethweni sikhangelane labesifazana, abatsha lamaqembu atshiywe ngaphandle.
  - Izizwe kumele zikhuthaze umumo wokuphatheka kwezombusazwe kungatshiywa muntu ngaphandle.

**4. Ukuhlolwa kokuqhutshwa kokhetho (Umugca 18)**

- Izizwe kumele zimeme njalo zibone ukuthi kulamaqula angathathi uhlangothi ahlola ngokuqhutshwa kokhetho.
- Inhloli zokuqhutshwa kokhetho kumele zikhululeke ukuhamba njalo zifinyelele ulwazi oludingekayo.
- Ukuhlolwa kokuqhutshwa kokhetho kuphathisa ukwenza ngcono ukuqhutshwa kwalo kanye lokwenza ukuthi lubemgceke.

**5. Ukusakazwa kokhetho (Umugca 27[8])**

- Izizwe kumele zibone ukuthi amabandla onke ezombusazwe labancintisayo balamathuba alinganayo okwethulwa kwemikhankaso yabo yimisakazo.
- Abasakazayo kumele basebenze bekhululekile, bengenqi indlela zokuziphatha njalo basekele impikiswano ezilomnkatsho lomsoco.
- Ohulumende kumele bavikele intathelizindaba njalo baqakathekise ukukhululeka kwabesigaba sokusakaza.

**6. Ubuqotho bezokhetho lokubamgceke Umugca 3(7)**

- Ukhetho kumele lulandele indlela zomthetho ezimisiweyo.
- Kumele kuqiniseke ukusetshenziswa kwendlela ezizimeleyo zokuhlola ukhetho lokulandela indlela njengoba zimisiwe.

**7. Ukwamukelana ngokwehlukana kwezombusazwe lokuncintisana ngokuthula Umugca 2(3) Umugca 8(1)**

- Ukhetho kumele lulandele indlela zomthetho ezimisiweyo.
- Kumele kuqiniseke ukusetshenziswa kwendlela ezizimeleyo zokuhlola ukhetho lokulandela indlela njengoba zimisiwe.

**8. Ukwengqabela ukungaqhutshwa kuhle kokhetho Umugca 3(8) (Umugca 17)**

- Ukwengqabela ukuqilibezela, ukwenza ngobumenemene lokungasebenzisi kuhle ingcebo zesizwe.

- Ukukhuthaza ukuba lomlandu nxa kungaba lokwephulwa kwendlela zokuqhuba ukhetho.

**9. Ukutshiyelana umbuso lamandla ngokuthula (Umugca 23)**

- Ayikhuthazi ukukhutshwa kwabohulumende ngendlela engalandeli isisekelo sombuso selizwe kubalela ukuguqula ngobuqili impumela zokhetho.

- Iqinisa ukutshiyelana umbuso lamandla ngokuthula langendlela eyiyo.

Izethulo lezi zijonge ukuthi kube lokuthembeka kwendlela zokhetho, ukukhuthaza ukubusa ngendlela engatshiyi muntu phandle kanye lokubona ukuthi iziphathamandla zombusazwe zibusa ngokwentando yabantu kuzwekazi lonke le-Africa.



# ZESN HOSTS INCLUSIVE WORKSHOPS TO UNPACK ACDEG FOR ELECTORAL STAKEHOLDERS: PROMOTING BROADER DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE

As part of efforts to promote inclusive democratic governance, strengthen democratic principles and electoral integrity, ZESN convened a series of five civic engagement workshops between 11 and 19 June 2025. These half-day sessions were held in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo, and Mutare, bringing together a total of 145 participants from across Zimbabwe's diverse civil society spectrum.

Attendees included representatives of women's organisations, youth, persons with disabilities, media, the informal sector, residents' associations, and community-based organisations. The primary aim of the workshops was to deepen public understanding of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and to encourage its integration into civic programming and advocacy efforts.



ZESN Advocacy Officer Ethel Muchena said, "The workshops served as a platform to demystify the provisions of ACDEG, fostering informed dialogue and strategic advocacy around its implementation at national, regional, and continental levels." ACDEG is a key African Union instrument designed to promote democratic consolidation, rule of law, and credible elections across the continent.

"They also provided a platform for civil society organisations (CSOs) to explore the Charter's relevance to Zimbabwe's democratic course and reflect critically on their role in promoting its principles," Muchena said.

Participants discussed, in accessible terms, the Charter's key provisions, including Articles 44 and 45 of Chapter 10, which oblige Member States to domesticate the Charter through legislative, Executive, and administrative means.



Civic dialogue in motion during the ACDEG Workshop – Bulawayo.

It was noted that the African Union Commission is also mandated to support States in implementation, monitor progress, and develop performance benchmarks.



ZESN Research Officer Heather Koga weighed in, "despite Zimbabwe's ratification of ACDEG, a recurring theme across all five sessions was the clear gap between formal adoption and public awareness. While some participants were already conversant with ACDEG's core principles, many particularly those from the informal sector expressed concern that the Charter remains largely unknown at grassroots level. They emphasised that, as a sizeable demographic in Zimbabwe's socio-economic landscape, informal sector voices must be more intentionally included in democratic discourse."

Each city's workshop offered unique perspectives but echoed common concerns around implementation, participation, and accountability.

In Harare, participants engaged in an in-depth analysis of the Charter's legal obligations and its relevance to national governance structures.

Discussions centred on whether Zimbabwe's existing legal framework aligns with ACDEG and how civil society might contribute to shadow reporting to the African Union, in order to highlight Participants in Bulawayo observed that public awareness of ACDEG remains minimal, with both the government and civil society falling short in efforts to popularise the Charter. Media practitioners in attendance committed to increasing coverage of ACDEG through diverse formats, including fact sheets, infographics, and radio programming. The Church was also identified as a key stakeholder with the potential to convene communities and bridge the information gap.

In Masvingo, participants voiced frustration at what they described as a superficial approach to implementation.

Concerns were raised about the persistently low participation of women in governance and the inaccessibility of the state's biannual ACDEG implementation reports, which should ideally be made public to enhance transparency and accountability.

Mutare's deliberations focused on developing concrete strategies for mobilisation and education. There was strong consensus on the need to engage parliamentarians and political actors more robustly and rigorous civil society-led research into the barriers affecting women's political participation.

In Gweru, although familiarity with the Charter was relatively low, enthusiasm for advocacy was high. Youth participants proposed the creation of forums dedicated to promoting democratic participation and good governance.

Women leaders advocated leveraging social media to enhance outreach, while residents' associations and church groups committed to using town halls and public forums for community sensitisation. Persons with disabilities highlighted the need for materials to be produced in accessible formats and reaffirmed their commitment to advocacy around the Charter's full domestication.

Muchena highlighted that, many CSOs pledged to mainstream ACDEG into their programmes. Women's organisations committed to incorporating Charter principles into leadership training and social entrepreneurship initiatives. Disability rights advocates called for deliberate inclusion in awareness efforts, while youth-focused groups promised to push for increased electoral participation.

The workshops concluded with a unified call to both government and civil society to move beyond policy declarations and towards tangible action. Participants called for regular national dialogue sessions to assess implementation, and for inclusive strategies to ensure that marginalised voices are represented in electoral processes.

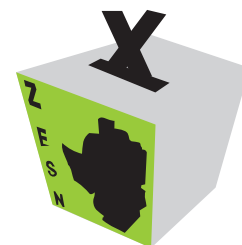


Pic: Group photo of participants at the ACDEG Workshop in Harare



Pic: Participants pictured during the ACDEG Workshop in Masvingo.





## STRENGTHENING CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH BRIDGE CUSTOMISED WORKSHOP - INTRODUCTION TO ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION IN BULAWAYO

ZESN conducted a three-day Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Customised Workshop on the Introduction to Electoral Administration at Holiday Inn Bulawayo from 27 to 29 May 2025. The workshop engaged 25 participants comprising of 12 women and 13 men drawn from Chapter 12 Institutions and civil society organisations.

The workshop was facilitated by BRIDGE Accrediting Facilitator Rindai Chipfunde Vava, supported by Thandeka Tatsvareyi, and Chifarai Sarah Masike. Using interactive BRIDGE methodologies, the team created a dynamic space where participants engaged through role plays, debates, and creative learning tools. Sessions were designed to promote both theoretical understanding and practical application.

Sessions were designed to promote both theoretical understanding and practical application. Participants explored essential electoral themes, including the role of elections in democratic governance, voter registration, electoral systems, boundary delimitation, and inclusion of marginalised groups. Special attention was given to civic and voter education, where participants designed tailored messages and delivery strategies for diverse communities. This is in line with ongoing efforts of keeping discussions on electoral issues alive as Zimbabwe prepares for the next harmonised elections.

“It is through such inclusive platforms that we begin to foster trust, transparency, and participation in our electoral processes.” Vava said, “key takeaways included the importance of applying international electoral standards, addressing gender disparities, and recognising disabilities as a factor in electoral participation.”



Pic: Group Participants at the BRIDGE Workshop in Bulawayo

“The BRIDGE workshop in Bulawayo created a space for stakeholders to not only learn but to co-create approaches for strengthening civic and voter education,” said BRIDGE Accrediting Facilitator Rindai Vava.

In today’s evolving democratic landscape, ensuring every citizen is informed, included, and empowered is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Resilient democracies are built on education, dialogue, and a shared commitment to peaceful and participatory governance.

## ZESN CONDUCTS BRIDGE CUSTOMISED INTRODUCTION TO ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP – MUTARE

ZESN conducted a BRIDGE Customized Introduction to Electoral Management Workshop from 20 to 22 May 2025 in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The workshop brought together 29 participants 14 women and 15 men from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Zimbabwe Media Commission, civil society, and faith-based organisations.

The primary objective was to strengthen the capacity of Chapter 12 institutions and civil society organisations to engage in sustained electoral advocacy throughout the entire electoral cycle. This initiative is part of ZESN’s broader efforts to promote reforms, particularly following the 2023 Harmonised Elections, by compiling and acting on recommendations from both domestic and international observer missions.



Pic: Group photo of participants at the Mutare BRIDGE Workshop

Led by experienced Accrediting BRIDGE facilitator Rindai Chipfunde Vava, with support from Tariro Shonhiwa and Thandeka Tatsvareyi, the workshop applied adult learning methodologies to encourage inclusive and participatory learning.

“Participants were not just recipients of information, but active contributors, sharing experiences and knowledge from their respective sectors,” said ZESN Special Projects Officer Thandeka Tatsvareyi.

The module was tailored to Zimbabwe’s pre-election context, focusing on key advocacy areas such as electoral systems, boundary delimitation, conflict resolution, gender and disability inclusion, access to electoral processes, ethics, and the use of ICTs in elections.

Tatsvareyi added that, “key takeaways included a stronger understanding of boundary delimitation criteria, the need for disability-inclusive electoral education, and recognition that institutions must strive to meet international electoral standards.

Participants also noted critical information gaps around key processes, highlighting the importance of educating the public to combat misinformation.”

As Zimbabwe prepares for future elections, this initiative marks an important step in ensuring inclusive, informed and credible electoral processes.