

Peaceful and inclusive elections



STAR Ghana supported over 110 projects and initiatives that contributed to achieving peaceful and credible presidential and parliamentary elections in 2012 and 2016.

Our approach

The STAR Ghana Foundation works to advance a healthy, functioning and inclusive democracy. We are non-partisan and work with others to ensure that our democracy works for all Ghanaians. We support initiatives aimed at making elections peaceful and based on issues that matter to all citizens.

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Our approach included support for activities before, during and immediately after elections, with a particular focus on voter education, peace and security, issue-based campaigns, observation and monitoring, and inclusive participation. We supported strategic initiatives which helped to build trust and credibility of the election process by improving collaboration, systems and processes.

STAR Ghana supported partners to provide civic and voter education using social media, radio, events and materials to educate people why they should vote, how to vote and how to engage in positive debate with others. Many of our grant partners have demonstrated considerable success in ensuring marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, women and youth, actively participated in the election process.

Empowering women to vote

Women became more aware of their civic responsibilities and were able to play a full part in the elections thanks to the work of Global Action for Women Empowerment (GLOWCA).

GLOWCA worked in the Volta region, reaching more than 12,000 people with messages about the importance of voting. Women's participation increased from 46 per cent in 2012 to 65 per cent in 2016 in project areas, while rejected ballots dropped by 72 per cent. GLOWCA also worked in communities to ensure that alcohol was not sold on election day to prevent voters becoming too rowdy.

'[Most of] us women were able to vote, which hasn't happened before. The education we got made us change our minds.'
Enyonam Danyo, community member and first-time voter.

Cracking down on hate speech

The Media Foundation for West Africa's work reduced incidents of hate speech, contributing to peaceful elections. With our support, they monitored radio stations nationwide and reported on the use of offensive campaign language on air. They 'named and shamed' individuals who used offensive language, as well as the radio stations which broadcast them. Hate speech reportedly fell by 75 per cent from April to December across 70 radio stations.

Election peace and security

Our partner BEWDA secured peace before, during and after the 2016 elections in Bawku Traditional Area. This was a significant change in an area which has experienced tensions along ethnic lines that often become heightened during elections. Inter-ethnic peace committees developed and implemented peace plans, held community peace meetings, broadcast radio announcements and organised activities for youth.

Interfaith groups came together to form the Forum for Action on Inclusion, Transparency and Harmony (FAITH) platform, which focused on ensuring that all political parties accepted the outcome of the 2016 election. The FAITH platform used community radio and dialogue to mediate in election-related disputes. Over 12 million Ghanaians were reached by religious leaders who used community radio, church services and Friday prayers in mosques as platforms to share positive messages with congregations about their duties as citizens during the election process.

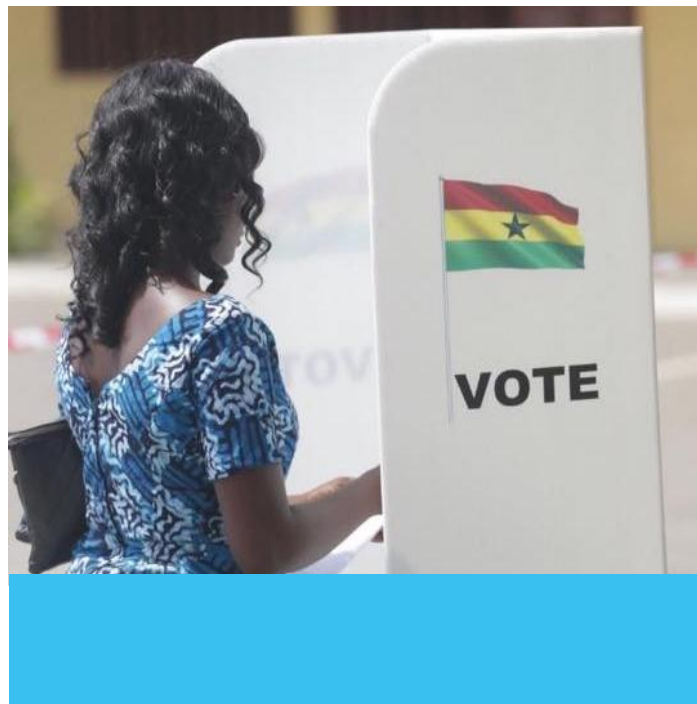
‘The FAITH platform has brought about commitment among religious groups – Christians and Muslims, working together. With this unity, we were able to have access to the various political leaders and policy makers to make sure there were peaceful elections. We talked to traditional chiefs to do away with bias and conflict during elections. The fact that STAR Ghana recognised our importance, and gave us the framework and resources, went a long way to enhance the success of our work.’ Hajia Ayishetu Abdul-Kadri, chair of the FAITH platform committee and chair of the Federation of Muslim Women Association in Ghana.

Music for peace

The Musicians’ Union of Ghana showed how music can influence a generation and serve as a tool for national unity. The union, which has 4,200 members, held peace walks, secured radio airplay for peace songs on stations nationwide and held three concerts, one live on GTV on the eve of the elections, reaching a national audience, especially young people.

Media coverage

STAR Ghana worked with national and local media organisations to ensure that voters had full and accurate information, and could participate in debates and dialogue with prospective candidates. We sponsored the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation to broadcast the influential presidential debates for the 2012 and 2016 elections.



Digital election special

Blogging Ghana’s ‘Ghana decides 2.0: The Voices’ campaign promoted the voices of young and marginalised people online providing a platform for comprehensive coverage and discussion of key issues around the election.

STAR Ghana’s SMS Voices platform enabled trained citizen representatives, particularly in remote and marginalised communities across six districts, to raise election issues with the Electoral Commission, National Commission on Civic Education and the Ghana Police Service. Reporters raised a variety of issues ranging from security threats and accessibility of polling stations for people with disabilities. State partners took action as a result, for example deploying security personnel to a polling station in the Nzema East District and relocating a polling station that was not accessible by wheelchair.

About STAR Ghana Foundation

The STAR Ghana Foundation belongs to all Ghanaians. Our vision is to see a well-informed and active Ghanaian citizenry able to contribute to transformational change that advances democracy, accountability and social inclusion.

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