

A Guide to  
Effective Political  
Communication in  
Ghana





Support and  
Cooperation



Democracy  
and Pluralism



Knowledge and  
Life-Long Education

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# Foreword

Generally, campaigning in Ghana with very little money is almost impossible. The same applies to campaigning for political positions. Whether or not one is capable of being a leader is not the issue, rather what seems to be the important thing is how one can use a campaign strategy (usually expensive) to drum home one's message. Sad, but it appears that those who flaunt their wealth during campaigns are usually better positioned to win elections.

Those at the losing end are usually those who cannot afford to do expensive campaigning, usually women and the youth, even when their messages are good enough and they may have the possibility to succeed.

Much as political parties make their money largely from filing fees of election candidates, the amounts that these candidates must pay are exorbitantly high. This leaves some candidates if not most of them with the big challenge of how to raise money for their campaigns.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) has followed this trend for some time, and as part of efforts to make political leadership not the preserve of the elite, we collaborated with Elephantlogic, a strategic consultancy company with lots of experiences in campaigning, to conduct a study and come-up with a publication on how to campaign and win elections with a low budget.

This Guide, divided into five modules, primarily looks at the various simple ways to organise campaigns that will cost very

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little money. The first module discusses the message. This module discusses how to couch your message to whip up support throughout the campaign period and the need to be consistent. The second module looks at the voters and the constituency. This second module details how to analyse your constituency and even your competitors. Module three, resources, outlines some suggestions on least expensive campaigning. Illustrations are included to simplify the ideas and suggestions. In module four – urban and rural areas – the different forms of campaigning for urban and rural target groups are discussed. The final module annexes checklists and examples for politicians, both young and old.

This Guide is practical, based on the experiences of campaign managers and is intended to help anyone with the desire to stand for elections – whether parliamentary or presidential elections. It may be geared towards parliamentary more, but it is indeed for all sorts of positions that one needs to stand for and requires some sort of campaigning.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung will like to thank Svenja Hinrichs and Kajo Wasserhoevel who came all the way from Germany to conduct the study. We also thank all political party representatives, campaign managers, former flag bearers, media personnel and the people of Kweiman, a suburb of Accra, who shared their experiences on how the campaign terrain in Ghana is, during the study of campaigning in Ghana, in preparation for the publication of this Guide. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung appreciates you and your invaluable contribution to this Guide!

Enjoy reading!

Daniela Kuzu  
Resident Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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# Content

How do I use the Guide? – Usage instructions	7
Module I – The message	11
<i>The election campaign</i>	14
<i>Pledge card</i>	14
<i>Enthuse people</i>	15
Module II – The voters and the constituency	21
<i>How do I analyse the constituency?</i>	21
<i>Analysis of the constituency</i>	21
<i>Topics and target groups</i>	23
<i>Who are my competitors?</i>	25
<i>Pre-election nomination procedures</i>	25
<i>Candidates of other parties – political opponents</i>	26
<i>Who is my team?</i>	27
<i>Youth campaign</i>	29
<i>Additional target groups</i>	31
Module III – Resources	33
<i>Street campaign</i>	34
<i>The classic distribution campaign</i>	36
<i>Street tango</i>	36
<i>The ground newspaper</i>	38
<i>Desires wall or wailing wall</i>	39
<i>Media work (radio, print, TV)</i>	40
<i>Organise advocates and supporters</i>	41
<i>The chiefs</i>	42
<i>Telephone campaign</i>	43
<i>Online campaign</i>	43
Module IV – Urban and rural areas	45
<i>Different forms of campaigns for urban and rural areas</i>	45
<i>Special conditions in a rural constituency</i>	45

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<i>Notes for the campaign in rural constituencies</i>	45
Module V- Annex	49
<i>Checklists and examples</i>	49
<i>Campaign preparation checklists</i>	49
<i>Pledge card example</i>	52
<i>Example of a uniform layout</i>	53
<i>Practical tips in writing a press release</i>	55
Final comments	57
<i>Campaign and budget</i>	57
<i>Elected! What now?</i>	58
Bibliography	59

*“Look at the people around you and talk about the things that are really important to you.”*

# How do I use the Guide? – Usage Instructions

The decision to stand as candidate for a political office is no doubt one of the most important decisions you can make in your life. Why? Because a candidacy has far-reaching implications for you personally and most certainly for your family and friends as well. It is really important to think things through before becoming a candidate!

In your candidacy, you will have many different types of friends - people who appreciate you and support you in an honest, straightforward manner; people who always stand behind you, even if you make a mistake some time or another, or when they notice that you cannot win the election; and people who support you because they have ulterior motives. You will especially notice which friends and acquaintances are honest with you and which ones are not when you stand for election as a candidate.

There will be people who respect you even though they have political opinions which differ from yours. There will also be people, however, who are hostile towards you. You will have to endure this as well and be able to cope with it. Having different opinions is part of democracy.

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You will experience all kinds of things in your campaign. You will have both good experiences and bad ones. And you will have many emotional ups and downs – every day, for weeks and months. You have to be able to endure this as well and be sure that in spite of this you maintain your positive traits and do not lose sight of your strengths.

So before you read this Guide and plunge into the practical preparation for your campaign, you should think through why you want to stand as candidate. It may be helpful to take out a sheet of paper and jot down all of the reasons why you think standing for election is a good idea and why it is not. Examine your thoughts closely and honestly! Look at this sheet of paper every now and then and think about whether the arguments “in favour of” outweigh the “reasons against”. Discuss the reasons for a candidacy with your family and your friends! They might have additional ideas which are important in making your decision.

You will need a lot of support from them. That is why you should make sure you include them in your decision-making.

Before you stand for election, you should speak with women and men who have already served as candidates (successfully or unsuccessfully) in your region before. They can report on their experience firsthand and you will see how valuable this is.

This Guide will provide you with a lot of tips and ideas on things you need to take into account in a candidacy and in a campaign. It is based on plenty of experience in the conception and organisation of electoral campaigns.

However, every election campaign is unique! The worst thing one can say in a campaign is: “that is the way we have always done things!” No campaign is the same as any other one, no discussion has already taken place once before, every individual wants to be

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perceived and addressed in a unique way.

For this reason, this Guide is not a general or patent “recipe” for all election campaigns. It offers you tips, checklists and some ideas to think about. But you yourself have to carry out the campaign. Nobody can assume this responsibility for you.

Again, planning is no doubt important and all well and good, but you will recognise in the course of the campaign that there are a lot of things you had not thought about and you will learn more and more with every passing day. Planning and flexibility will be important elements for you in every campaign you do.



*Always keep a small notebook with you in which you can record your experiences in the campaign every day. Jot down what you have learnt on the particular day. A crucial prerequisite for success in any election campaign is the ability of the strongest individual in your campaign to learn. And that individual is you – the candidate!*

This Guide has a modular structure. You can read it from the beginning to the end. Each of the modules is structured the same way: they begin with a summary, then examine important points in depth and end with a checklist and additional tips on work resources.

We hope that this Guide will help you in making your decision to stand for elections (or perhaps sometimes not to stand), that it will support you in your campaign organisation and that it will also be fun for you to read sometimes.

When you begin an election campaign, you will be lacking many things: time, money, sometimes the energy to deal with stress. There will be no shortage of one thing – suggestions. Scarcely a day will go by on which real and false friends don't make suggestions. More often than not you will not know which ones you

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should listen to and which ones you should not.

If you do not know exactly in which category you should place someone who makes suggestions to you, the best thing to do is look closely at people and talk to them about what is important to you.

# Module I – The Message

You want people to vote for you. You want them to place their trust and confidence in you. They give you part of their power and energy for a period of time so that you can go to the capital and do something for them.

They send you off on a mission.

They trust you. They hope and expect that you will not forget them, that you will get things moving for them and then return to them, report honestly and not leave them alone. They, the citizens living in your constituency, are the most important for you. Never forget them and they will support you, lift you up and help you along when the going gets tough!

That is the way things should be. That is what you want to achieve and you can achieve it, but it is a long path with much hard work. Where do I stand now? Where do I want to go? Write down your goals!

Voters are curious.

They will want to know a lot about you, about your family, how you grew up, about your education, what you like to eat and what hobbies you have. Above all, however, they will also want to know why you want to be a politician. What can you do for them and what you want to change and improve?

And this brings us to your very personal platform and your personal message:

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Think about

- what motivates you to engage in politics;
- what stages and encounters in your life have shaped you;
- how you want to speak about yourself, your career and your family and
- where you want to draw the borderline to your private life.

Think about all this and write it down! You will be asked about these things again and again and it is a good idea to use your answers so that your future voters can better understand you and so you can gain their support.

Your party has a platform which you know and which you can discuss in detail. But this platform applies to the entire country.

You should prepare a small platform for your constituency! This platform is your mission, your credo. It describes your plans for the constituency and is your calling card for the voters. This will make the differences between you and your political opponents visible.

Your platform should be specific and concrete. The more concrete you are, the better voters can assess which candidates only speak in general terms and which ones have fresh new ideas for their constituency. Of course you will be confronted with many demands and you will not be able to satisfy all of them, but rather only a small part. Perhaps you will be in the fortunate position to help someone here or there even before the election – but that will be the exception.

And that leads to the question as to whether it is wise to make lots of promises? No, it is not wise.

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No matter whom you ask:

People are sceptical when it comes to politics and politicians.

They have seen many come and go.

Many have spoken to them in glowing terms and have promised a lot. Very few of them have also only kept a few of their promises.

With your small personal election platform, you will thus have to decide:

- If you want to do things the way many others do, then promise everything. You may then perhaps win an election. But you will not be able to build a permanent, reliable relationship with your voters in this way. People run into each other again and again in life and the next time they will vote for someone who promises even more and who is “new”. Voters have a good memory – one should never forget that. They will especially remember the things which you promise them in a personal discussion and will resent it if what was promised is not delivered without an explanation of why it could not be achieved.
- If you choose the solid approach and only promise what you can deliver, you will be able to honestly state in your campaign what is possible and what is not. This sincerity takes courage at the beginning, but you will see: it builds a very stable foundation for your political work (and your possible re-election).

You should develop your personal electoral platform together with your friends, your family and your party, but above all with the voters in your constituency. When it is finished it should not be an endlessly long list. Instead, it should state five clear-cut, straightforward ideas which you stand for and are entering into politics to fight for.

## The Election Campaign

### Pledge Card

Sum up your most important goals for the constituency succinctly. A tried-and-proven method is to print these goals on a small calling card and hand it out to voters in order to make your personal goals clear to them. If you print out a calling card on two sides, you can place your photograph, name and address on the opposite side. You will find an example for the pledge card in the Annex. This pledge card should be your constant companion in the electoral campaign. If possible every voter should receive one because you make an important agreement with voters with your personal electoral campaign promise tailored to your constituency. That is why you need to formulate it carefully and think it through very carefully which promises you want to make and whether you will be able to meet these in a four-year period. Many voters – but also the political competition – will keep the cards and remind you of your promises later. It is better, however, to state clearly what you intend to do and later demonstrate what you have achieved than to be general and vague. Invite voters to take part in the development of your electoral platform and to get involved. This will help you achieve two things:

- You will make it clear from the very beginning that you want to involve the voters in the constituency and not only show your face every three years in order to get their votes. You are interested in hearing their opinion. That is very important to you.
- Secondly, you make yourself known and introduce yourself.

## Enthuse People

The entire world was impressed with the energy, vitality and enthusiasm which Barack Obama instilled in his campaign in 2008.

Of course conditions in the USA cannot be compared with any other country in the world. Incredible sums of money are invested in American election campaigns. A lot of research is performed and no flyer, no poster, no television advertisement is used without sufficient research. Television continues to play a very important role and in 2008 the electoral campaign on the Internet also had a major impact on the result.

But all this was not the key to the success of Barack Obama. The key was that he filled people with enthusiasm and was above all able to convince them to become part of the campaign themselves.

Enthusiasm, energy, passion, perseverance – these are all the energy reserves which you can tap into in your constituency. The enthusiasm and the commitment of your comrades in arms is the most important resource in your campaign – in addition to your own energy and your ideas. By the same token, respect and humility play a major role. You must always be aware that you cannot be successful without the enthusiasm and energy of your campaign team and your voters. Always treat your team with respect and act with humility before voters. Humility in this case means that you must not be arrogant or impatient if people do not understand you immediately – you want to represent these people in parliament later, so you must understand them and have patience. They are your pride; they are the ones who vote for you so that you can fight for them.

## Conveying Messages

You want to win an election in a constituency and this means that you have to win over more voters than your competitors. If you are very hard-working, you can talk to thousands of voters personally in your campaign or they will come to your campaign rallies. What impression do you want to convey and what information do you want them to receive?

They will receive a personal impression of you and listen to you. Above all they will discuss this experience with their friends, their families or colleagues. Every voter you speak to or who takes part in a rally can become an ambassador in your electoral campaign.

Imagine that a voter is now supposed to convey a message for you. If you have told him so much and it was not clear what is particularly important to you, he will not be able to be a good ambassador. So before each electoral campaign think about what your ambassadors should remember. Formulate short, clear messages which are easy to remember.

## Tell Stories

Well-founded knowledge is important. But you need to know all about the major political topics. You have to be able to explain things. Neither does it hurt to become acquainted with important facts, for example relating to economic and social conditions.

But in a discussion – for example with other candidates in your constituency – it is usually not the person who relates the most facts who wins, but rather the one who gains the trust and liking of the audience. Nevertheless it is important to be competent and honest. It is also a good idea to find out about one's audience, to look at them and address them personally.

The crucial factor, however, is to communicate your ideas and

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experience in stories.

There are two reasons for this:

1. First of all, people can remember stories easily.
2. Secondly, each and every topic immediately becomes more vivid and above all credible if one can link it to personal experiences.

Here are some examples of how you can embed the topics which are important to you in a “story”. You will always have to find your own method and tune it to your respective audience. The following three points are always decisive:

- Your voters must know what you want and what you consider to be wrong and right.
- Your voters must notice that your conviction is not feigned, and rather that you have developed it based on your personal experiences and encounters.
- Your voters must understand why your goals should also be their goals.

Here are a couple of examples of how this can be achieved:

### Example 1 - School

*This is how not to do it:*

“The schools in our constituency are in a deplorable condition. If you elect me, I will make sure that more is invested in our educational system. If I become your deputy, I will energetically support the 15-point plan of my party for “better schools in Ghana”.”

*This is how to do it:*

“I see a lot of mothers and fathers here. And I know from my own

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family how important it is for all of us that our daughters and sons are well educated, able to attend good schools in sturdy buildings with good books and bright teachers. Yesterday I was in [name of town, village etc.] and I visited the school there. It was in a sorry state. The teacher, Mr. Akko, told me that he has been waiting for money to perform the most urgently needed repairs for three years now. I cannot improve everything overnight, but I will make sure that Mr. Akko does not have to wait another three years.”

### Example 2 - Health

*This is how not to do it:*

“The health system is priority number one for me! I will make sure that three new clinics are built in our constituency and in a few years the health care here is as good as in the capital. ”

*This is how to do it:*

“Which of you have someone in your family who was seriously ill last year? Raise your hands. Almost everyone! And how many of you were helped effectively and immediately by doctors and hospitals? I don’t see as many hands. If someone takes ill in your family – mother, father, brother or sister or your own child – you worry so much. That is when we need effective help quickly. That is when we need hospitals which are easy to reach, doctors who are well trained and have enough medicine. If we want to achieve that here, we have to fight a long hard battle for it. I want to fight that battle with your help.”

### Example 3 - Employment

*This is how not to do it:*

“Vote for me. I will create new jobs for us and will not forget anyone who supports me. The candidate of the other party only provides jobs for his supporters. I will put an end to that.”

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*This is how to do it:*

“My parents used to work all day. From early in the morning until late at night. They did not have any weekends, any holidays and usually worked at three jobs at once to get by. As a child I learnt early on what hard work means. I will not lie to you and simply promise jobs. I do promise, however, that I will do everything I can to make sure that men and women who work hard are protected better, and that young people receive a good education and training.”



# Module II – The Voters and the Constituency

How do I analyse the Constituency? You know your constituency. Do you really know it?

Before you start the actual campaign, you should get a precise picture of your constituency.

- You must know its geography.
- You must know the history of the constituency.
- You must understand special aspects of the regional culture.
- You must know what the biggest political challenges are in the region.
- You must find out who the most important opinion-leaders in the constituency are.

If you want to win this constituency, everyone must get the message and know it inside and out.

## Analysis of the Constituency

Obtain good maps of your constituency.

Look at the special attributes of the landscape, nature, roads and

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paths, villages and towns very closely and go over it in your mind again and again. You will encounter voters who expect you to know these things. Moreover, precise knowledge of local conditions is an important prerequisite in the logistic planning of your campaign.

Another key step is to obtain all available data on voting behaviour to date and analyse it in detail. By the same token, it is important to see where the strongest bastions of your party and those of the competition are. It is especially interesting to find out whether there are groups of new voters who are yet to take part in any elections who can be addressed. Perhaps there are people among your friends or family who like to analyse statistics and can help you in your analysis.

This analysis will help you allocate your time and energy effectively.

- Where are the people who traditionally vote for your party in elections? Their districts definitely have to be addressed on a continuous basis. You have to make sure that there is a high voter turnout in these traditional bastions of support.
- Where are the bastions of the political competition? It does not make sense to invest too much time and energy in districts which traditionally vote for the competitors. If there is no reason whatsoever to believe that anything major will change here, it is better to use one's time in a more intelligent manner.
- Where can undecided voters be found? Especially in undecided constituencies, the so-called swing voters decide the result. These are perhaps only 2- 3% of the voters. Whoever wins these votes usually wins the constituency. Find out about whether there are certain districts in your constituency in which there have been considerable fluctuations in voting in the past.

- Find out which districts a large number of new citizens have moved into.
- Find out where primarily young voters can be directly addressed.

In addition to the analysis you can also think about whether you know someone who has been living in your constituency for a long time and who can tell you a lot, for example about old stories and myths. Perhaps there is an old established family among your friends and acquaintances which is familiar with these things. Try to find out whether your party has had a candidate in the past who can help you with his/her knowledge.

You can download a pdf file from the website of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Ghana ([www.fesghana.org](http://www.fesghana.org)). You can refer to the FES publications – Elections 2004 and Elections 2008 showing the voting results for all electoral districts in the last two elections (2004 and 2008).

## Topics and Target Groups

Certain topics and problems in your constituency are especially important. These should be assigned an important place in your electoral platform and you should address these repeatedly in your campaign. List the most important target groups in your constituency and think about which of your goals are shared by these groups. This will help you make an initial priority list of the most important target groups in your campaign.

The second step is to compare this list with the information which you have been able to obtain on results of past elections. No-body achieves the target group of “all”.

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At any rate it is a good idea to decide which groups you want to reach with which arguments at a reasonable expense in terms of time and money.

You must repeatedly discuss this with your electoral team so that they can also plan properly. When you have decided on certain target groups – for example small business people (such as taxi drivers/trotro owners/market women) – it is very helpful for representatives of these groups to work on your campaign team and also make it clear to the public that they support you.

Perhaps there are well-known representatives of the target group in your constituency who can publicly announce that they are supporting you.



*Illustration 1*  
*A market woman publicly showing her support for the candidate*

There are no doubt a large number of target groups in your constituency. And you will not be able to win all their votes, but it is worth thinking about whether certain target groups can also influence other target groups. Think about to what extent certain groups – solely by virtue of their profession – enjoy a high level of respect and/or influence. This is definitely not only the case with teachers and doctors, but also sellers at markets. They speak with a lot of people every day. There are target groups which are very

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grateful when one addresses them personally. It is worth thinking about which special information material or advertising resources you have and how to use these effectively. Talk to people who have been active in the target groups in past election campaigns to find out what experience they have had. What functioned well and what did not? Speak with persons of trust from the target group, as they will no doubt be able to give you many tips. Think about whether there are certain material or give-aways which fit particularly well with the everyday working lives of this target group and which would therefore be gladly received (e.g. pens).

### Can I Organise Target-group Events?

Sometimes one is invited by organisations of a target group (youth organisations, women's organisations, football clubs, etc.), but this generally occurs less frequently than desired. Just organise such an event yourself! One often finds that the target group reacts very positively because no candidate has chanced upon the idea before.

The selection of the key target groups is one of the most important decisions you have to make in this campaign. Your crucial two or three target groups must among other things fit together and reinforce each other. You must make sure that you do not promise everyone everything and thus, appear to be arbitrary and lacking integrity in terms of your political profile. The main interests of your most important target groups should complement and reinforce each other.

## Who are my Competitors?

### Pre-election Nomination Procedures

It may be the case that you have to go through an internal pre-election procedure to win the nomination of your party. There are internal party rules which have to be respected in these nomina-

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tion procedures.

In a nomination procedure it is important to always keep two things in mind at the same time:

- You want to win the majority in the party for the nomination while at the same time during this internal party procedure you have to keep in mind that this internal contest will also be followed by your future voters and they will gain an initial impression of you. In addition, this party nomination procedure should be conducted in such a manner that the winner and loser can carry out the electoral campaign together afterwards.
- That is why you should also talk about your own experiences and argue about concrete things! Show why your party has a better chance of succeeding in the constituency if you are its candidate. It is not a good idea to put down competitors in order to win the nomination. It is better to show people that you interact with your opponent in a confident but fair manner. This conveys security, integrity and trust.

## Candidates of other Parties – Political Opponents

You should devote most of your time and energy to explaining your own platform and your own message, but you must of course also address the platform of your opponents.

It is common approach to have a member of your campaign team monitor the political opponent and find out whether there is any new information.

Voters want to be able to recognise the differences between the parties and candidates. They want to know what their stance is towards their issues and interests. It is also a democratic obligation

for candidates to support this opinion-formation process among voters and make their own contribution to this process. This side of the campaign will again and again lead to situations in which overstatements are made; things are exaggerated and formulated in pointed terms. Our recommendation, however, is to stick to objective political arguments in the contest with political opponents. You have a different opinion, you may dispute and debate issues, you fiercely contest one another to win the support of the voters. But you do this by democratic means and there should be fair competition between democrats. Respect for the opinion of the other side should never be lost. That is why it is important to keep discussions objective and not get personal. Voters observe very closely how candidates interact with one another and usually turn away from it all when candidates start mud-slinging.

### Who is my Team?

This brings us to one of the most important points in the organisation of your campaign: your team. Nobody can carry out a campaign without a team. Barack Obama – to take one successful example from the recent past – himself says that he never would have become President of the United States if he had not had such a great team behind him in the campaign. It is very important for you never to underestimate this and that you constantly are aware of it. A good team is the first essential item upon which electoral victories are built.

You cannot organise a campaign without a good campaign team. You need people who support you in your work and help you reach as many voters as possible. Your team is your crew: it makes sure that you always have sufficient material. It makes sure that you arrive at the next rally or appointment on time. It makes sure that things you promise are then delivered afterwards. It makes sure that you are always accompanied and supported. Without

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your team a campaign will not function properly. Lots of experiences show that one needs a core team in which all questions relating to the organisation and topics are discussed openly and in which you have complete trust and confidence. You will not always make the right decision and every candidate makes mistakes. The difference between the winner and the loser is that they learn from their mistakes and they have people surrounding them who can draw their attention to this. So make sure that you set up a team in which you can also be criticised, and you should deal with criticism in a constructive way. Learning from mistakes and admitting these to oneself means growing as an individual.

Key people you need on your team include:

- One person who has the complete overview of your appointments, dates and who can agree to or cancel these appointments. Nobody else should do this and especially not you yourself because you can otherwise cause considerable chaos quickly!



*Illustration II  
Campaign team strategising*

- A person who takes care of the many organisational things which come up in a campaign in a reliable manner and with tremendous endurance.
- A person who can support you in writing texts for your own material and/or press releases.

When you have put your team together, always remember: your team can only work well if you inform it regularly. The best method is to have times, for example once a week, in which everybody gets together. At this meeting you can then inform them how your week was and what appointments are coming up the following week. You can discuss together what appointments are very important for you and you can delegate various tasks. This takes time, but when everybody is always informed about everything it will save you time in the end as well. These meetings should be an opportunity to discuss things together and to exchange new ideas. Perhaps a member of your team who is not in charge of taking care of press work has a great idea for an interview. When everybody feels involved then the work is also much more fun.

You must trust your team as individuals and you must also be convinced that they can perform the tasks assigned to them. If you find that individual members or parts of your team make mistakes, you must talk to them and intervene to correct things. You should always be aware that there is no overtime in a campaign.

## Youth Campaign

The overwhelmingly largest group of voters are under 30. For this reason alone, it is logical to assign major priority to the youth campaign. It is good to have people from different generations on your campaign team in order to integrate as much experience as possible in your strategy. In spite of this, it has repeatedly proven to be the case that an independent, concentrated youth campaign

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can be very successful.

You should reserve enough time to address young voters; above all, you should form a working team for the youth campaign as early as possible. You will recognise immediately that many young people with an incredible energy, passion and creativity will want to help you in your campaign. Their commitment is indispensable.

When you have formed such a team you should start off by carrying out a planning and strategy workshop with them. You should address the following questions there:

- What is the situation of young people in my constituency?
- What are the topics and projects which are particularly important to young people?
- What is your message for the young people?
- Are there certain organisations, associations, projects and persons who are important to young people in your constituency and whose support you should therefore attempt to gain?
- At what places and times can young people in your constituency be addressed about politics?
- Have there been particularly successful types of electoral campaigns for the target group of young people in the past?
- Are there especially popular musicians in your constituency who can act as ambassadors for you with young people?
- What are some especially creative or appealing campaign ideas for the campaign focusing on young people?

When you discuss this together, many practical ideas will come up which can be organised in the campaign targeting young people. In the second step you have to devise a realistic time schedule and plan the different measures together. Your “youth campaign” team should also receive a realistic budget. Appoint a contact person on this team who is in charge of supervising all activities and performing the coordination.

### Additional Target Groups

Of course there are additional target groups in your campaign, such as women, doctors and nurses, taxi drivers, trotro drivers, teachers, market women, government employees and many more. For practical reasons alone, it makes sense, however, to develop a campaign message which appeals to as many voters at the same time as possible and then concentrate on two or a maximum of three additional special target groups. This does not mean that persons in whom you place your trust cannot work intensively for you separately in certain parts of a group in addition.



# Module III — Resources

What resources can be used to address and reach voters? This question is one of the most important.

- you should think carefully of how to use your limited budget and that should inform your campaign strategy.
- You should look at how diverse your constituency is and that determines whether it is possible to be present as a candidate everywhere .

Carrying out an election campaign in cities appears simple at first glance because there are many places where one finds many people (football fields, marketplaces, shopping precincts, etc.). But people in these places are often preoccupied with other things; they do not have any time and are not interested in listening to a political speech. With all the distractions in cities, it may very well be the case that an intensive electoral campaign goes virtually unnoticed.

In general it is of course important to make as many contacts with voters as possible in election campaigns. The last contact is on the election day, when citizens go to the polls and read your name on a ballot or recognise the symbol of your party. As many positive contacts as possible must be organised in the weeks leading up to this day.

You and your campaign team must think about how to create as many repeated contacts to voters as possible with the available resources. You have your message. You have your plan.

Now you have to apply resources in a clever way and make sure that people notice you!



*Be noticed!*

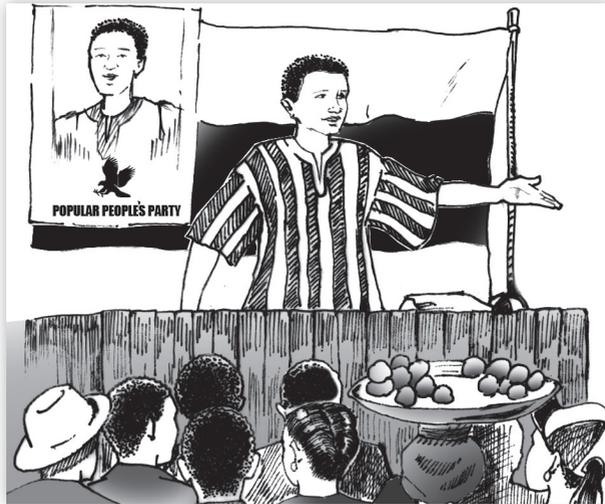
- *When voters see a flyer or a newspaper, when they see a poster or look at an Internet site which has been made by your campaign team, they must be able to recognise at a first glance that it is from you.*
- *Always use the same layouts! Decide what the corporate identity of your campaign should look like in the campaign team*
- *Use catchy slogans so that voters will immediately understand and recognise your message and arguments during a discussion in which you or your supporters take part. This can be successful if you have thought intensively about and decided on the slogan for your campaign.*

## Street Campaign

In addition to traditional campaign methods, some of which demand considerable resources and time (such as visiting homes), you can also make yourself known with a so-called “street campaign” and present your goals in it. There are many types of possible activities here, and they do not have to cost much money. (See illustration II), but in the course of the campaign and together with your team, ideas and activities will no doubt occur to you which will work well in your constituency.

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Your campaign team is extremely important in the street campaign because you would scarcely be perceived as alone. A group of persons attracts more attention. It is a good idea to buy team T-shirts for your campaign team at the beginning of the campaign. They do not have to cost a lot. They should all be the same colour – best is a striking colour. You can print your picture on the back and on the front your name and your claim or, for example, “vote for ...”.



*Illustration III*  
*Candidate addressing voters in a public place*

In the street campaign it is important to find locations and times that you can reach as many people as possible. Offer to speak to people, but accept it when they do not want to speak with you as well and move on in a friendly way. Nothing is worse than when voters feel pressured. Imagine you are at a marketplace with your children, you do not have much time, you are carrying your groceries and people all of a sudden try to drag you into a political discussion.

## The Classic Distribution Campaign

Get your team together, if possible wearing the same T-shirts, and go into town or to the marketplace where there are a lot of people. If your budget allows, you can for example offer water free of charge (together with your pledge card). Together you should hand out your pledge card and if your team meets someone who is interested in getting to know you and discuss issues with you, they can bring him to you. You should communicate your view-points and goals to this citizen in a brief meeting and tell him that you would be pleased if he would support you.

## Street Tango

With street tango you find a busy intersection with a traffic light. Equipped with a banner or posters, your team walks across the intersection with your banner as soon as the light for vehicles turns red. This is supposed to be fun, which is why this form of campaign is more of something for young people from your team.



*Illustration IV*  
*Street tango with dancer wearing a party t-shirt*

You should have music or perhaps even a singer with you and sing or play music and spread good cheer with the banner when you cross the intersection. You do not necessarily have to be there yourself for this form of campaign – the banner with your name, your photograph, your message/slogan and your request for people to vote for you can also be presented by your team itself. (See illustration IV)

### The Ground Newspaper

A ground newspaper is an oversized “newspaper page”. Take a large sheet of paper or a large plastic foil and write on the page in large letters: “What things should I fight for on your behalf as your candidate?” The voters can write down their desires – or better yet they can tell their desires to someone on your team and they will then write them down (write in a legible manner in big letters). It is helpful to have your team start things off so that the paper is not empty and it already has something on it.

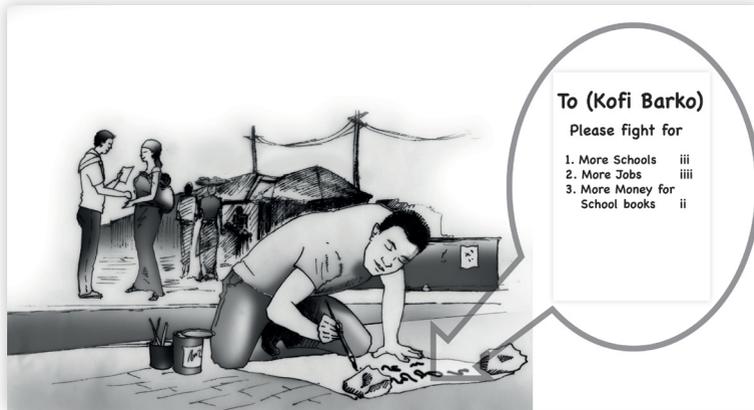
The big paper is laid on the ground, e.g. on a sidewalk or a market place and weighted down with stones. You will find that many people will stop to look at it because they are curious. You or a member of your team can then approach them, introducing themselves (or the candidate) and asking them in a friendly way to express a desire or communicate a task for the candidate. If people support a certain desire which has already been written down, you or your team can simply add a tally-mark next to it.

It is important that you have enough space at the location – don’t put the ground newspaper down in a place where people have to step over it to carry on along their way.

The ground newspaper also helps overcome many people’s shyness, as opposed to approaching them directly. They can look at the paper themselves at their leisure, and then

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approach you on their own.



*Illustration V  
Ground newspaper*

How do I make a ground newspaper?

There are different ways of making a ground newspaper without a large budget or major expense:

- on paper
- on a large foil

Material for the ground newspaper

- paper
- pens, e.g. waterproof markers (if you use a plastic foil), colour markers
- stones as paperweights

Make sure that people write in letters which are big enough and that it is easy to read. Sometimes it is also simpler to have someone from your team write down what the people say to him.

## Wall of Desires or Wailing Wall

Using a long “wall” made of stones, wood or other material, people can write down their

- a) worries
- b) complaints
- c) desires

To do this, you only need standard-size sheets of white paper, black pens and scotch tape or pins.

At the end of the day you can invite a couple of journalists to come to your wall and show them what issues trouble people, at the same time explaining how you want to improve things.



*Illustration VI*  
*Candidate reading wishes and worries voters have written whilst a media person covers*

## Media Work (Radio, Print, TV)

In politics you can explain your goals to people in a direct conversation with them. You can only reach a limited number of people by visiting them in their homes, with letters or telephone campaigns, however, which is why you also have to use the media for communication.

This includes electronic media, television, daily and weekly newspapers and above all radio.

At the same time, you always depend on people who control access to media, i.e. radio reporters and editors or journalists. Editors and reporters decide whether and how they report on politics or a certain candidate. These are also the people who invite candidates to take part in a round of discussions on television or radio. Good media work thus makes sure that you are able to present your positions frequently and in enough detail in the press.

So you have to take media work very seriously.

- It should be clear who is in charge of media work on your team if you cannot always attend to this yourself
- Observe and monitor the media and think about how you can approach individual editors and reporters and how important they are in your constituency.
- Working with the press means seeking contact – don't wait for the press to come to you. You have to approach newspapers or local radio stations yourself.
- If there is a mistake in a report, your reaction should always be appropriate. You should never threaten a journalist. Mistakes can always happen. Try to talk to journalists about how the mistake could have happened and deliberate together how to correct a mistake in a

report without you or the journalist losing face.

- You and your team have to respect freedom of the press. You will frequently experience that a journalist who interviews you is of a different opinion than you. In these cases it is always very important to remain friendly! Sometimes it helps to say something like:  
“I am pleased that Mr. / Ms. ... is so involved in politics. I understand her arguments very well, but I have a different opinion on this issue ...” Convince journalists with solid arguments in discussions!
- You should only invite journalists to meetings when you really have something to say.

You will find practical tips on how to draft a press release in the Annex.

## Organise Advocates and Supporters

In this case, this means special supporters. These should be people who are well-known and respected in your constituency. This could include, for example:

- teachers,
- doctors,
- traders
- small business people at the local level or
- actors / artists.

Try to gain as many of these supporters as possible and keep a small list with their names during the campaign. Inform your sup-

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porters about your goals so that they can also “speak for you”. If you carry out an online campaign, you can involve your supporters in it. They can appear on your homepage / on your Facebook site / your blog with their names and possibly a photograph and write a couple of lines like:

“I support (your name) because: ...” The reasons should be short and concise.

If you have especially well-known supporters, you can also run a small newspaper advertisement. Here as well a photograph of your supporter and explanation of why he is supporting you will suffice.

*(Important note: you always need to ask your supporters for permission to publish their names – it may be the case that the teacher in a village supports you, but is not allowed to, or does not want to, say so publicly. To avoid problems here you should always ask for permission first.)*

If you are not doing any online campaign, you can ask your supporters to come to rallies or to help out in your street campaign every now and then.

## The Chiefs

You know that the local chiefs in your constituency play an important role in everyday life. We urge you to approach them at the beginning of the campaign and inform them about your activities. Explain to them what you are planning – when and where. Even if they do not support you publicly, it is important to involve and inform them.

## Telephone Campaign

Another resource in the campaign is of course the telephone. More and more voters have one or more cell phone(s). You can either call them directly or send them a text message.

Keep two things in mind:

- Money. Sometimes it is possible to buy contingents of telephone minutes or text messages from mobile telecommunications providers at lower prices.
- The telephone numbers: collect as many telephone numbers as possible and other address data from voters at every opportunity. At every rally, at every street campaign and on all the material you use there should be a place where people can provide this information (together with their consent for you to use this in the campaign) and of course there should be a separate area on your website where people can enter their addresses and tick off a box indicating how they would like to support you. For example, they can help you distribute flyers, or help you in the street campaign, or hand out your pledge card in their neighbourhood.

If you are not able to surmount these two obstacles (money and telephone numbers), you can set up your own small working unit to perform the telephone campaign. The decisive factor in a telephone campaign is to have as many brief, friendly contacts with voters as possible. The task is not to invest expensive telephone time in endless discussions with voters. If you notice that a conversation might take longer than expected, you need to end the call on a friendly note and call the next voter.

## Online Campaign

The American presidential campaign in 2008 showed the entire world how important the Internet has now become for cam-

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paigns. Barack Obama was successful in using the Internet to unleash a movement for change in America. Many people supported him personally and financially via the Internet, thus making possible his election to become President of the USA.

Conditions in your constituency cannot be compared to those of the United States. In spite of this, there are no doubt voters in your constituency who have Internet access, use an e-mail address or are also involved in a social network (for example Facebook). Here are just a few things which you can do in an online campaign without spending too much.

- Build a good, clearly structured and appealing candidate website. This is your calling card on the Internet. You introduce yourself, clearly state your aims and what you are all about; you inform people how to get in touch with you; you state the dates for the next campaign rallies, meetings and reports in short texts with pretty pictures from past rallies.
- Create an e-mail mailing list and collect e-mail addresses to which you regularly send a newsletter. In this (weekly) newsletter, you can report on new developments in the campaign and repeatedly draw attention to the possibility to support your campaign in practical terms (not only financial ones).
- Set up a fan page on Facebook and collect supporters there. Provide current information on your campaign work and react to comments and suggestions every day there. Invite your Facebook friends to special discussions.
- Twitter: this is a special, very quick format. It only makes sense to use this when this short news service is already being used by a large group in your constituency and you can also use it regularly.

Otherwise in online campaigns the rule is: you do not have to do everything, but what you do must be good.

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# Module IV - Urban and Rural Areas

## Different Forms of Campaigns for Urban and Rural Areas

### Special Conditions in a Rural Constituency

Of course it makes a big difference whether you are carrying out your campaign in a rural or urban area.

In urban areas, for example, an online campaign is an absolute must – in rural areas you must consider whether your voters have access to the Internet.

In an urban area there are many places where there are a lot of people and a lot is going on. It is easier to perform a street campaign there. In rural areas it is important to visit people at home and find out when and where there are markets.

### Notes for the Campaign in Rural Constituencies

If you are standing for election in a rural constituency, certain areas of the campaign of course involve major expenses in terms of time and money. It is important to keep the differences with a campaign in a city in mind. Here are 10 things to keep in mind in a campaign in a rural constituency:

You must be much more careful with how you use your time and

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plan your campaign much more carefully. You will spend a lot of time moving from one point to the other.

You will not be able to plan exactly at which time of day you will arrive at your destination, as travel may take a long time depending upon the condition of roads and traffic. You must take this into account in your planning – and announcements! It is not good to make voters wait for hours to see you or if many have already left when you finally arrive much later than planned.

You will need more money in your campaign budget for transportation and petrol.

You should always make sure those supporters who travel with you know the region and roads so that you do not needlessly lose time by taking the wrong routes. Perhaps your supporters can also speak the local language and help you in translating.

You should check to make sure that you have enough financial resources for a campaign bus. You can then equip this bus with sufficient material and also use it as advertising platform. The campaign bus can be your travelling office.

It is helpful to have the bus equipped with loudspeakers or megaphones. This will allow you to stop on route and deliver brief campaign speeches.

In rural constituencies it is all the more important to have well-known and recognised supporters. They can speak on your behalf, solicit support and exercise considerable influence in smaller village communities.

Think carefully whether there are certain times and places in your constituency where many people always gather together (markets, festivals, bus stops and stations) and use these locations regularly over a long period of time in order to make yourself known.

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Think about what the differences are compared to a city and how you can take advantage of these! One example: many voters in your constituency spend many hours every day going to and from their work. That is why they are more interested in the issue of roads and traffic in rural than urban areas. Maybe you have an idea on this topic and can turn it into a campaign message. Find out in detail what people in your constituency do for a living and what you can do as their future representative make their life easier.



# Module V - Annex

## Checklists and Examples

### Campaign Preparation Checklists

Here are several items which you have to think about at the beginning

1. Analysis of the constituency
    - a. Look closely at your constituency at the beginning, try to learn as much as possible about it.
    - b. Talk with important people who know your constituency well and for a long time.
    - c. Ask whether you can obtain data on your constituency (size, population, unemployment rate, number of schools, etc.).
  
  2. The budget
    - a. Make a financial plan. How much money do you have at your disposal?
    - b. How great will your expenditure be?
    - c. How much in donations do you need?
  
  3. Your team
    - a. Write down what tasks your team must perform.
    - b. Write down who you would like to have on your team and what they have to be able to do.
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- c. Think about whether there is a place where you can meet.
- d. Obtain T-shirts for your team so that people will always recognise them.

#### 4. The planning calendar

- a. Make a planning calendar together with your team. It ends on election day.
- b. What important dates are there which you can perceive already at this point?
- c. Try to find out whether there are important dates for your competition.
- d. Enter holidays and key events (important football matches, festivals, market dates, etc.) in the calendar.
- e. Keep the planning calendar up to date during the entire campaign together with your team.

#### 5. Your message

- a. Together with your team write a one-page summary of yourself. Who are you? What have you done in your career so far? Why do you want to become a politician? At this point you should already be thinking about what you want to tell people about your private life.
- b. Together with your team write down the goals of your party.
- c. Together with your team write down your goals for your constituency.
- d. Think together about which of the goals are the fifteen (15) most important ones.
- e. Put together your own electoral platform for your constituency based on these fifteen (15) goals.
- f. When you have decided on a layout, produce the pledge card together with your team.

6. Your competition
    - a. Look very closely at the opposing candidates.
    - b. Write down together with your team what you know about the candidates and the other parties.
    - c. Appoint a member from your team to monitor the opposing candidates during the campaign.
      - i. What are the promises being made by the opposing candidates in the campaign?
      - ii. How is the opposing candidate organising his campaign?
      - iii. When does he have important dates?
  
  7. The media
    - a. Together with your team think about what the most important media in your constituency is.
    - b. Make a list of the names of the most important journalists.
    - c. Think about which journalists you or members of your team already know.
    - d. Think about which journalists it would be good to introduce yourself to.
    - e. Draft a brief biography of your life and career.
    - f. Make a press mailing list for your press releases.
    - g. Appoint someone from your team to be responsible for the press and public relations work.
  
  8. Your supporters
    - a. Together with your team make a list of your possible supporters.
    - b. Make a list of supporters and think about which supporters can do what for you.
    - c. Appoint someone in your team to be responsible for assisting supporters during the campaign.
  
  9. Your target groups
    - a. Together with your team think about which target groups are especially important to you in your campaign.
    - b. Think about whether it makes sense to address one of
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the target groups with material specially made for it (this is always important with young people, for example).

c. Think about which of your goals fit to which target group.

### 10. Layout

a. Together with your team think about whether you will have a certain colour for your campaign.

b. Think with your team about a claim.

c. If you still need a logo, think about whether you can make it yourself or whether you need help. If this is too difficult, a claim will suffice.

d. Appoint someone from your team to be responsible for the layout of your campaign.

### Pledge Card Example



*Illustration VII*  
*Candidate giving out his pledge card to a voter*

## Example of a Uniform Layout

There are two variants here: the first one is that your party has its own corporate identity and makes available both the layouts and advertising to its candidates.

With the Social Democratic Party in Germany it is required to always use the colour red – and the logo of the SPD (a square with a white “SPD” in letters). If your party does not do that, you have to make a logo yourself. It should be simple and still be easy to recognise for people. Then you have to talk to your team and explain to them that the layout has to be placed on all advertising in your campaign. To make your own layout you need a computer and a word-processing programme.

In the first step, think about:

- What colour you want to use (NOTE: find out ahead of time what colours the opposing candidate is using so that there is no danger of confusion here)
- Think about your slogan very carefully. The claim which you think about using at the beginning of your campaign will accompany you throughout your entire campaign. So it is definitely worth taking an afternoon together with your team to think about this together. “Yes, we can” is the famous claim from the Obama campaign. A claim is supposed to use one or more words to state what you stand for. Other examples include: innovation and justice, more justice, free education, etc.
- Think about whether there is a symbol which goes with your slogan – a logo. This does not necessarily have to be the case. If nothing occurs to you or it is too complicated, you can simply create your slogan in a certain script or colour – that is also enough. For the German Social Democrats, the logo is a red square with SPD in it. The Republicans in

America have an elephant in their logo. When you have come up with a logo, try to find out whether it is already being used by other parties. You cannot you simply use the apple from the company Apple – if anyone finds out about this, it could cost you a lot of money.

One example of a personal logo could be an Adinkra symbol. Everybody in Ghana is familiar with Adinkra symbols. Look for something for which you want to stand in politics, for example, honesty.

Let's assume that you have decided to use black, grey and white as your colours and your slogan is 'Employed Youth for the Development of Ghana' and your logo is a landing eagle. Your layout could then look like this:



*Illustration VIII  
Banner*

This is your banner. This banner should among other things be on every press release, every flyer, below your e-mail address, on every poster, etc..

## Practical Tips on Writing a Press Release

Journalists usually do not have much time. They decide in the first three seconds whether your press release is worth reading or whether to throw it into the dustbin without reading it.

1. The first second of attention: Who is the sender?
2. The second second of attention: Is the headline current or the topic important for readers?
3. The third second of attention: Is the most important message at the beginning?

Here are a couple of practical tips:

1. Make sure you have a nice signature

As a result of the large amount of information for the press which an editor has to read every day, the decision whether to print your press release or not often only takes a few seconds.

2. Write for journalists, not for later readers

Your press release should first of all arouse the interest of journalists and not make their work unnecessary. After all, journalists themselves know how they need to write for their readers – probably better than you.

3. Clear language

Here as well, the task is to use clear language with short, easy-to-understand sentences.

4. State the most important things first

In articles which are too long, the parts which come later are of course chopped off. You make it easier for editors to work when you place the most important information at the beginning of your press release. Moreover, nobody wants to struggle their way through a long text in order to find out at the end that the release does not provide any important

news. Make it clear in the first paragraph who did what when where how and why. The details are then provided later in the text.

5. "Tell one story only"

Think about what the "story" behind your release should be. Your press release needs to have a common theme which stimulates readers to continue reading without overtaxing them. At most, you should only briefly touch on secondary aspects.

# Final Comments

## Campaign and Budget

A campaign does not always have to be expensive – it does not cost anything to enthuse people.

We know that it is difficult to carry out a campaign in Ghana without a large budget of your own. Traditionally gifts and give-aways are expected and not everybody can finance things like this. In addition to low budget campaigns, which we have presented here, it is very important to be sincere and credible with voters. Initial contact with them can look like this, for example:

“Hello. My name is ... I am contesting on the ticket of ... Party as candidate for .... parliamentary elections. I would like to tell you what my aims and objectives are and what I would like to change if I am elected.

Unfortunately I cannot give you any presents. I myself do not have a large budget and for this reason can't hand out gifts like others do. But I would like to work so that we are all better off ... I think that is important that in politics everyone has a chance and not only those who can carry out a campaign with lots of money.”

You do not need to be embarrassed about this. The task is not to buy voters, but rather to convince them. Tell them your story and tell them why you are passionate about engaging in politics and what you would like to change if you are elected.

A T-shirt as a gift might be worn for one year. A politician in the

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capital who fights for the interests of his voters is infinitely more valuable to them.

## Elected! What now?

One thing is still very dear to us. We have already mentioned it several times: when the campaign is over, the next one begins. In football they say “after the match is before the match”. Don’t forget this. Remember the promises which you have made – write them down and take them with you to the capital. You will not be able to achieve all of them. If something is not possible, then this has to be explained to people. The next election is in four years. Then at the latest they will ask you what has become of your promises. If you cannot explain your successes and why you were not able to achieve certain things, then your voters may become upset. It is better to directly approach voters and say to them: “I promise this to you, but we are not able to finance this at present/ the other side outvoted me ...”, etc.

It is also important to visit your constituency during the legislative term and be open to the desires and needs of the population again and again. Go to market places, visit people in their homes in isolated areas every now and then so that people have the feeling that they have not been forgotten. It is not good to only show up before the next election.

If you have carried out an online campaign, then keep all of your voters up to date. Keep writing the blog about your work, stay on Facebook, etc.!

The best campaign is the work entrusted in you which you perform over the four years of the legislative term!

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Campaigning in Ghana is generally expensive. This is a huge deterrent to people who are capable to stand for elections and have inadequate funds, especially the youth and women. This book gives pointers on how to:

Prepare for campaigns;

Run campaigns with very little funds;

Move away from personalised campaigns to issue-based ones and couch catchy phrases for campaigns.

This publication was made possible by Elephantlogic and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ghana.

Elephantlogic, with lots of experiences in campaigning, is a strategic consultancy company in Berlin where Svenja Hinrichs and Kajo Wasserhoevel work.

Svenja Hinrichs, Managing Director at Elephantlogic GmbH, has gained a wealth of experience in German national politics since 1998. She has assisted in a total of three SPD German federal election campaigns. From 2002 to 2005, she was the Head of the Office of the Federal Minister of Education and Research. Following this, she managed the "Planning and Strategic Communication" Department in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs between 2005 and 2008.

Kajo Wasserhoevel, State Secretary (retired), has acquired extensive experience in organising national campaigns in Germany - this includes the German federal election campaigns in 1998, 2002, 2005 and 2009. He was awarded the politics award for best campaign manager of the year for his work as campaign manager for the SPD in 2005. He has spent many years working in various roles in state and federal ministries and is familiar with the mechanisms of public service and legislation, thanks to his work as the former State Secretary in the Federal Employment Ministry (2005-2008) and as the leader of the planning group for the SPD parliamentary group.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a political not-for-profit organisation with offices worldwide. It has been operating in Ghana for over 40 years now. Some of the topics FES works on are: political participation, economic development & social justice, security policy, gender and youth.

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