Youth Inclusion and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius

Dissemination of Findings Workshop

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Presented by
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The project “Youth Inclusion and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius” aims to promote and enhance the contribution of youth in politics and policy formulation.

The main objectives of the study are:

• To assess the political awareness of young people
• To measure the extent to which they are politically mobilised
Methodology

• A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods comprising of:

A structured questionnaire and Focus group discussions
Population Sample

The target population was 455 youth of 16 – 29 years old from secondary schools, universities, working youth and youth from Rodrigues.

Secondary Schools:
- Islamic Cultural College FVI (B&G)
- Modern College (B&G)
- Hamilton College (B&G)
- Loretto College Q.Bornes (G)
- Saint Esprit College (B)

Universities:
- University of Mauritius
- University Technology of Mauritius
- Charles Telfaire Institute
- Université des Mascareignes

Working Youth: Private and Public Sectors

50 Youth from Rodrigues
Structure of Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into four different themes comprising of 174 questions.

1. Voting Behaviour and Political Engagement
   a. Electoral indicators
   b. Voting/Political preferences
   c. Political Participation & practice
   d. Indicators of Political voice

2. Youth, Media and Social media
   a. The Relevance of the Media
   b. Forms of Media
   c. Frequency of Media Used
   d. Platform for political deliberation

3. Political literacy and knowledge of the system
   a. Tools about politics
   b. Political and civic knowledge
   c. The Mauritian political system

4. Youth Mobilisation and Transformation
1. Voting Behaviour and Political Engagement
A. Electoral Indicators

Did you vote at the last General Election, 2010?
- Yes: 23%
- No: 77%

If You voted, You casted your vote according to:-
- Party: 8%
- Ethnic group: 1%
- Charisma: 4%
- Programme: 9%
- Other: 1%
Do you intend to vote at the next General Elections?

- Yes: 64%
- No: 20%
- Undecided: 16%

If you intend to vote for the next general elections, You would cast your vote according to?

- Party: 13%
- Ethnic group: 2%
- Charisma: 8%
- Ideas/Program: 40%
- Other: 1%
Why you do not intend to vote?

- I am not interested in Politics: 9%
- I am disappointed by Politicians: 7%
- I feel voting is useless: 3%
- Other: 1%
Have you canvassed for a candidate or political party? 89% No, 11% Yes

Have you attended political meetings? 71% No, 29% Yes

Have you been proposed advantages in exchange of your vote? 89% No, 11% Yes
B. Voting/Political Preferences

To what extent are you interested in Politics?

- Not interested at all: 19%
- Not really interested: 37%
- Quite interested: 35%
- Very interested: 9%

Do you have a preference for somebody as a Leader?

- Yes: 36%
- No: 64%
They are all power minded. I don’t agree with their ideas. They don’t pay attention to the youth. I don’t believe they can bring change.

If No, Why you do not have any preference for a Leader?

They are all power minded: 25%
I don’t agree with their ideas: 8%
They don’t pay attention to the youth: 16%
I don’t believe they can bring change: 12%
Other: 2%

If Yes, What do you appreciate in this person?

His/Her Projects/Ideas: 12%
His/Her Engagement in favour of the youth: 8%
His/Her Charisma: 9%
Other: 1%
Preference for any Political Party

- Yes: 37%
- No: 63%

If Yes, Which Political Party do you have a preference for?

- Mainstream Parties: 33%
- New Emerging Parties: 2%
- Left Leaning Parties: 1%
- Parti Malin: 1%
C. Political Participation and Practice

What are the Platforms available to you as a young person?

- Voting: 34%
- Youth wings: 18%
- Activism: 6%
- Belong to a political party: 8%
- Political campaign: 14%
- Political meetings: 4%
- Expressing opinions on media/social media: 6%
- Signing petitions: 10%
Do you belong to a Political Party?

- No 91%
- Yes 9%

If Yes, What were your motivations in engaging in politics?

- Build a better future for my country: 3%
- Revolutionize Politics: 1%
- Change the system: 1%
- Build a better future for my family: 2%
- Boost my career: 2%
If Yes, Were your expectations fulfilled?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Really</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Expecting them to be fulfilled</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If You do not belong to a political party, Do you plan to engage in politics in the future?

- Undecided: 34%
- No: 46%
- Yes: 11%

If Yes, What would be your motivation in engaging in politics?

- Boost my career: 3%
- Revolutionize Politics: 2%
- Build a better future for my family: 1%
- Build a better future for the country: 4%
- Other: 1%
If No, What are the reasons why you are not wishing to join politics?

- Too much corruption: 6%
- I have family obligations: 5%
- My ethnic background affects my chance of entering politics: 6%
- Politics carry and image problem: 6%
- I better concentrate on my studies and/or get a good job: 11%
- My religious beliefs prevent me from engaging in politics: 6%
- Other: 6%
According to you, What are the reasons young people do not want to engage in politics?

- Young people lack knowledge of how to engage in Politics: 15%
- Politics don't give space to youth: 20%
- Politics is too communal: 16%
- Engaging in politics requires money: 11%
- Young people don't have enough political training: 12%
- Fear of repression: 10%
- Fear of losing their job: 13%
- Other: 3%
D. Indicators of Political Voice

Do you debate over Politics?

- Yes 34%
- No 66%
If Yes, with whom do you debate/discuss politics?

- Teacher/Lecturers: 2%
- Friends on Facebook: 2%
- Family/Relatives: 6%
- Schoolmates: 3%
- Spouse or boy/girl friend: 2%
- Friends: 10%
- Parents: 9%

If Yes, Where do you express your political opinions?

- Within a Political party: 2%
- On social network: 5%
- In the media: 2%
- At home: 15%
- At school: 8%
- At work: 2%
How free do you feel to express your political opinion?

- Not free at all: 15%
- Not free: 10%
- Neutral: 26%
- Free: 25%
- Very Free: 24%
Methods/Platforms to express views and opinions

Only 20% of the respondents express their views by:

• Taking part in protest, march or demonstration
• Signing a written or email petition
• Attending conferences on political issues
• Participate in organizing political events
VIEWS ON POLITICS

A matter of "Roder Bout"

For the Elders

Ethnically/Religiously Biased

An affair of dynastic families

Boring

Dirty

Can bring a better future for the country

Agree

Disagree

0
50
100
Political leaders are role models for the youth

Most political leaders are too old

Leaders of political party should be renewed regularly

Social workers are more efficient than political leaders

Politicians fail to address issues that concern youth

VIEWS ON POLITICIANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politicians fail to address issues that concern youth</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers are more efficient than political leaders</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders of political party should be renewed regularly</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most political leaders are too old</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political leaders are role models for the youth</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My vote can make a difference
My views are taken into accounts by political leaders
I have the possibility to participate in political change
Young people have lost confidence in politics
No room for youth in politics

Disagree
Agree
2. Youth, Media and Social Media

Do you follow politics in the media?

- Yes: 23%
- No: 77%

Out of these 23%, only 8% follow politics more than one times a week.

Do you follow politics on social media?

- No: 57%
- Yes: 43%
Do you debate over politics on social media?

- Yes: 43%
- No: 57%

Do you follow any political group on Facebook?

- Yes: 21%
- No: 79%
How free do you feel to express yourself on political issues on Facebook?

- Very Free: 12%
- Free: 17%
- Neutral: 16%
- Not Free: 15%
- Not Free at all: 40%
• Importance of Social Media

Without social media, young people would have no opportunity to debate over politics

Social media’s are an easy way for youth to connect with politics
3. Political Literacy and Knowledge of the System

A. Tools about politics

Have you been provided knowledge about politics?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%

Where have you been provided this knowledge about politics?

- At Home: 39%
- At School: 2%
- At University: 1%
- In a political party: 6%
- In the media: 3%
- In the social media: 2%
- In an association/NGO: 4%
- In Political Seminars: 6%
Do you agree that there is a Lack of Political education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do you think knowledge about politics should be imparted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In political parties</th>
<th>At university</th>
<th>At school in mainstream curriculum</th>
<th>At school in extra curriculum activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you think that there is a need for more tool to understand politics?

Yes 82%
No 18%

If Yes, What kind of tools?

- Schoolbooks: 62%
- CDs and Audio: 15%
- Sessions with Lecturers: 5%
### B. Political and Civic Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Approximate Answer</th>
<th>Good Answer</th>
<th>Wrong Answer</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Manifesto</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Executive</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Legislative</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituencies</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Notice Question</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Loser System</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Past the Post</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Good Answer</td>
<td>Wrong Answer</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When did MRU became a Republic?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the 3 Branches of the State</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many constituencies are there in MRU?</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many candidates does a citizen vote for?</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many Best Loser Seats are attributed?</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Youth Mobilisation and Transformation

• 85% - An electoral reform is necessary

• 83% - Electoral reform will help bring political change in the country

• 82% - It is important to publicly debate about the electoral reform

• 86% - An alternative political force is necessary in order to improve our democracy
According to you, what should the electoral reform promote in priority

- Stability: 25%
- Better representation of opinions: 18%
- Diversity: 8%
- More space: 10%
- More democracy: 21%
- Representation for Women: 18%
Highlights from Focus Group Discussions

• Interest to engage in politics – a tool that enable them to implement their vision for the country

• Not enough opportunities for the youth in politics.
• Youth Wings are very archaic – Replicating what older politicians do

• They need to be more active, creative and propose new ways of doing politics
• Voted:
  * Only for an experience
  * Civic Right
  * To contribute for the betterment of the country
  * Giving a chance to the political party which is in line with their ideologies
  * Pressure from parents to vote for specific parties.
• Political meetings: Very monologue

• Electoral bribery – Food, Money, Work, Permit (Taxi, Business..)
Concluding Remarks

• Youth disengagement/apathy cannot be ignored.

• Enhance Political literacy and awareness. Use formal education as well as civil society platforms to engage in delivery of relevant training.
• Political parties should ensure that they create a space for the youth.

• Politics should not be Business as usual. Mauritian Youth have a voice and want and need to be heard.

• Democratic consolidation cannot happen without the inputs of the young people of the Republic of Mauritius.
Thank You!