

Empowering Overseas Indonesian Citizens: Voter Education Training for First-Time Voters

Yordan Gunawan¹

¹Faculty of Law, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia. E-mail:

yordangunawan@umy.ac.id

##Faculty of Law, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

##Jalan Brawijaya, Tamantirto, Kasihan, Bantul, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55183

Manuel Beltrán Genovés²

²Facultad de Derecho, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

##Facultad de Derecho, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

##C. Kelsen, 1, Fuencarral-El Pardo, 28049 Madrid, Spain

Abstrak

Partisipasi pemilih pemula di luar negeri, terutama di Spanyol, dalam pemilihan umum Indonesia tahun 2024 menjadi fokus utama pembahasan ini. Pemilih pemula di luar negeri memiliki potensi besar untuk memengaruhi arah politik dan kebijakan negara asal mereka. Namun, mereka juga dihadapkan pada sejumlah tantangan, seperti keterbatasan akses informasi dan kurangnya pemahaman tentang politik dalam negeri. Melalui pendidikan politik yang terarah, pemanfaatan teknologi dan media sosial, serta kerja sama dengan komunitas lokal, diharapkan partisipasi pemilih pemula di luar negeri dapat ditingkatkan dalam pemilihan umum 2024. Hal ini akan memastikan bahwa suara semua warga negara, tanpa memandang tempat tinggal mereka, didengar dan dihitung dalam proses politik Indonesia, serta memperkuat demokrasi negara tersebut secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: Partisipasi, Pemilih pemula, Luar negeri

Abstract

The participation of first-time voters abroad, especially in Spain, in the 2024 Indonesian general election is the main focus of this discussion. First-time voters abroad have great potential to influence the political and policy direction of their home countries. However, they are also faced with a number of challenges, such as limited access to information and a lack of understanding of domestic politics. Through targeted political education, the use of technology and social media, and collaboration with local communities, it is hoped that the participation of first-time voters abroad can be increased in the 2024 general elections. This will ensure that the voices of all citizens, regardless of where they live, are heard and be counted in Indonesia's political process, as well as strengthening the country's democracy as a whole.

Keywords: Overseas, Participation, Young voters

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Introduction

The evolution of democracy and voting systems from ancient Greece to the present age has undergone substantial changes. Georg Sorensen defines democracy as a concept derived from the Greek word's *demos*, means "the people," and *kratos*, means "government." Democracy is a system of governance that is established and driven by the populace, with the primary objective of serving the people's interests (Bennion and Laughlin, 2018). Initially, in Athens in 600 BC, democracy emerged as a direct form of governance wherein city residents convened to collectively make political determinations. Nevertheless, engagement in democracy was restricted to specific demographics, like as adult males, and underwent fluctuations during the Peloponnesian War. Subsequently, in Rome, despite not being a pure democracy, the Roman Republic engaged citizens in active involvement in the process of decision making. The mediaeval age was marked by an oppressive feudal regime. The Renaissance period witnessed the revival of democratic philosophy, with the impact of 18th-century Enlightenment thinkers like Montesquieu and Rousseau. Their views had a significant role in shaping the American and French Revolutions, which led to the creation of constitutional texts that laid the foundation for democratic values. During the 19th century, the progress of democracy entailed the extension of suffrage to groups that were previously marginalized and denied the right to vote. In the 20th century, the representational model of democracy emerged as the prevailing form of governance, when individuals choose representatives to make political decisions on their behalf. The emergence of global democracy was impacted by the process of decolonization, the establishment of the United Nations (UN), and the dissemination of democratic values following World War II (Saepudin et al., 2023).

With the 2024 election on the horizon, Indonesia confronts substantial obstacles and prospects in fortifying its democratic framework. The upcoming election is expected to serve as a significant benchmark for assessing the level of democratic development. Ensuring elections that are equitable, open, and devoid of deceit will be essential in bolstering the credibility of the administration. A significant objective is to enhance voter turnout, particularly among the younger demographic and women. It is imperative for authorities to guarantee the integrity and accountability of the entire election process, encompassing voter registration and vote counting. In addition, the campaign will focus on important matters such the economy, ecology, and social welfare, prompting extensive discussion (Peltoniemi et al., 2022). The 2024 election presents an occasion for Indonesia to bolster its democratic underpinnings, foster heightened civic engagement, and adeptly address the evolving societal needs. For Indonesia to secure a consolidated democracy in the future, it is crucial not only to achieve

successful elections, but also to maintain a steadfast dedication to surmount problems and reinforce democratic principles across all domains of the nation's existence (Lin, 2016).

The active engagement and consciousness of novice voters play a pivotal role in upholding the vitality of democracy leading up to the 2024 elections in Indonesia. The term "new voters" in accordance with Law no. 10 of 2008, specifically Chapter IV article 19 paragraphs 1 and 2, as well as article 20, pertains to Indonesian citizens who fulfil specific requirements (Harrison, 2023). According to Article 19 paragraphs 1 and 2, those who are Indonesian nationals, aged 17 or older, including those who are or have been married, are eligible to vote on election or voting day. It is important to recognize that, despite the rise in youth voter engagement in past elections, there are still several factors that can impact their degree of participation. A significant contributing aspect is a deficiency in comprehending the significance of suffrage and the influence of political affairs on everyday existence. Lack of adequate political education, both in educational institutions and in society at large, can hinder the motivation of new voters to actively participate in the democratic process. Furthermore, factors such as indifference and skepticism towards the political system, a perception that their vote will have no impact, or a dearth of knowledge regarding political candidates and policies can also impact the turnout of first-time voters (Maber, 2016).

Hence, it is imperative to enhance political literacy by means of formal education and social activities that foster understanding regarding the influence of voters in shaping the course of governance. Technology and social media play a crucial role in engaging and connecting with first-time voters. The utilization of digital platforms can serve as a means to distribute precise information, offer political instruction, and enable transparent conversations on critical matters. Engagement in the digital sphere can also encourage the active participation and involvement of young voters who are typically more acquainted with online media. Effective collaboration among the government, educational institutions, community groups, and mass media is crucial in addressing the preparedness of first-time voters. To ensure that the 2024 elections in Indonesia demonstrate active and democratic participation from all segments of society, particularly the influential youth generation, it is imperative to raise awareness, offer inclusive education, and establish a supportive political environment (Pons and Liegey, 2019).

Methods

The method used in this programme is specifically tailored to enhance the level of political engagement and understanding among Indonesian expatriates, particularly those residing in Spain. The training design is deliberately developed and guided by taking into account the

training objectives, participant characteristics, activity context, and available resources. The training programme is structured to foster interactivity, incorporating a blend of presentations, group discussions, case studies, and hands-on exercises to augment participants' comprehension and proficiency. The selection of training places is meticulously made to provide convenient accessibility for participants and to offer suitable amenities. The training for this program took place at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Madrid. The selection of participants took into account factors such as the quantity, educational qualifications, political knowledge, and specific requirements of the individuals. The program involves individuals who are newly eligible to vote. The training content covers fundamental knowledge of the Indonesian political system, the rights and responsibilities of voters, the overall process of general elections, and the significance of political engagement in a democratic society. Training methods encompass a range of approaches, including lectures, group discussions, election simulations, and skills training such as public speaking or the art of making informed choices. Data gathering is conducted to assess the efficacy of training in attaining objectives. Questionnaires were administered both before and after the training to get data on changes in participants' knowledge and attitudes. Participant observation was conducted throughout the training, and in-depth interviews were carried out with participants to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences in the training. The obtained data is subsequently analyzed to assess the efficacy of the training. Analysis can be conducted through diverse methodologies, including statistical analysis to quantify disparities pre and post training, qualitative analysis to provide a more profound comprehension of participant experiences, and triangulation analysis to compare data from multiple sources. The outcomes of this research are utilized to assess the efficacy of training, pinpoint areas of proficiency and deficiency, and develop suggestions for future enhancements. Therefore, the techniques employed in this service are meticulously designed and organized to accomplish the specified objectives.

Results and Discussion

General elections are one of the main pillars of the democratic system in various countries around the world. First-time voters, who are a relatively new group to the political process, have an important role in ensuring the survival and success of democracy (Dandoy and Kernalegenn, 2021). Especially in the context of the upcoming general elections in Indonesia in 2024, first-time voters are the main focus in efforts to strengthen the country's democratic foundations. However, attention to first-time voters is not only limited to domestic areas, but

also extends its scope to first-time voters abroad, including in cities such as Madrid and other cities in Spain, where there are significant Indonesian citizens (Sloam, 2014).

Context of the 2024 General Election in Indonesia

One of the most significant events that takes place in the political life of a nation is the administration of general elections. A similar sentiment may be said for Indonesia, a nation that honours cultural plurality, ethnic variety, and religious diversity for its citizens. Indonesia, which has a population of over 270 million people and is spread out over more than 17,000 islands, has been on a long and eventful road ever since it gained its independence in 1945 (Lewis, 2017).

The elections that will take place in Indonesia in 2024 will have a significant significance in the annals of the democratic history of this nation. Since the beginning of the reform period in 1998, Indonesia has been through a number of different political phases that have been fraught with tension. It is now widely acknowledged that the general election is a significant symbol for the maturation of democracy in Indonesia and for deciding the future course of political affairs (Erlina et al., 2024).

The democratic nation of Indonesia has made the holding of general elections one of the primary means by which it determines the course of policy and the individuals who will hold positions of authority. One way in which this is represented in the political process is that it requires active engagement from all sectors of society, including first-time voters, who are the next generation of the nation's successors (Galuh Larasati et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, despite the significance of this election, Indonesia is confronted with a number of obstacles that need to be conquered. Making certain that the process of holding general elections is carried out with a high degree of integrity and openness is one of the most significant concerns today. This entails diligently monitoring each and every step of the process, beginning with voter registration and ending with the counting of votes, in order to avoid fraudulent acts that might erode public faith in democratic institutions.

In addition to that, the election that will take place in 2024 is also a significant push to expand political involvement, particularly among people who are voting for the first time (Moeller et al., 2014). There is a significant possibility that new voters may become forceful agents of change in society. However, they are also susceptible to a wide range of external stimuli, which have the potential to affect the political choices that they make. As a result, it is essential for the government and other institutions to give first-time voters with sufficient

political education in order to enable them to make informed choices that are based on correct facts.

While the election in 2024 will provide Indonesia with a number of obstacles, it will also present a number of possibilities. Increasing the number of women who participate in political processes is one of these possibilities (Nasiruddin et al., 2023). There is still a large difference between the political engagement of males and women in Indonesia, despite the fact that Indonesia has made forward progress in providing women with possibilities to participate in politics. The election that will take place in 2024 has the potential to serve as a catalyst for increasing the number of women who hold political positions at all levels, from the legislative to the executive (Koc-Michalska et al., 2014).

In addition to that, the election that will take place in 2024 is a chance to reinforce the values of inclusive democracy and for the protection of human rights. By placing a high priority on democratic principles, Indonesia has the potential to serve as a model for other nations in terms of achieving peace, justice, and prosperity for all of its citizens.

In the grand scheme of things, the election that will take place in Indonesia in 2024 is a significant event in the history of democracy in this nation. The Indonesian government has the potential to build itself as a mature and responsible democratic nation via the process that is now being undertaken. In order for Indonesia to make progress toward a more positive and equitable future for all of its citizens, it is necessary to ensure that the process of holding general elections is carried out with a high degree of integrity and openness, and to encourage more political engagement from all sectors of society (Zorrilla-Velazquez et al., 2021).

The Importance of First-Time Voters Abroad

The importance of new voters in ensuring the continued viability of democracy is not confined to the domestic sphere alone; it also includes new voters in other countries (Regif et al., 2024). The Indonesian diaspora is dispersed over many different regions of the globe, which presents Indonesia with a unique set of issues and possibilities when it comes to assuring the political involvement of its inhabitants living outside of the country. This includes places in Spain such as Madrid, where there are substantial numbers of Indonesian nationals (Mvukiyehe and Samii, 2017).

They have a significant capacity to influence the political direction and policies of their home nations, which is why it is impossible to overestimate the significance of first-time voters who are located outside of their home countries. Their participation in the political process in Indonesia still has a tremendous influence, despite the fact that they are separated from their

country by a geographical distance. First-time voters in other countries have the potential to become agents of change in society by casting their ballots for candidates who reflect their beliefs and goals. This possibility is especially relevant in the context of the general election that will take place in Paris in 2024 (Scholte, 2014).



Picture 1. Overseas Election Committee which provides training on Elections Abroad, especially for New Voters located at the Indonesian Embassy in Madrid.

On the other hand, the involvement of first-time voters in foreign countries is also confronted with a large number of obstacles. The lack of access to information that is pertinent to political matters is one of the most significant issues. It is necessary to make further efforts in order to guarantee that first-time voters in other countries have the same access to information about candidates running in general elections as voters in the United States, as well as knowledge about the political platforms and programs that these candidates advocate for (Fithor and Afrizal, 2022).

In addition to this, first-time voters who are located outside of the country often have challenges while attempting to comprehend the nuances of our domestic political system. It is possible that they do not have an adequate grasp of the political problems that are presently emerging in Indonesia, as well as the political system and governance in general of the nation. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide first-time voters in other countries with political education that is both targeted and effective in order to prepare them to participate in general elections.

Furthermore, new voters residing abroad may struggle to understand the entire general election procedure. Voters must have a thorough understanding of the voting procedures in order to vote correctly, especially because different election systems in their countries may be challenging for some voters.

Despite the fact that they are confronted with a variety of obstacles, it is essential to keep in mind that first-time voters who are located outside of Indonesia have a significant potential to contribute to the growth of Indonesian democracy. Through the use of technology and social media, the government and other connected institutions have the ability to enhance the accessibility of political information to young voters located in other countries, as well as to enable discourse and discussion on subjects that are pertinent to politics. In addition, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and local communities may also assist raise the political knowledge and awareness of first-time voters in other countries. This will allow these individuals to make informed choices based on factual information during general elections (Ruslan et al., 2023).

In the context of the general election in Indonesia in 2024, it is anticipated that the government and relevant institutions would take tangible actions to boost the involvement of first-time voters in the political process of their home countries. This is because the government believes that first-time voters abroad play a significant role, particularly in the context of the general election. First-time voters who are located outside of Indonesia have the potential to become a vital part of Indonesia's democratic path toward a better and more fair future for all of its inhabitants if this is accomplished via planned and coordinated cooperative efforts (Tarrant et al., 2014).

Challenges and Opportunities

First-time voters abroad, particularly in Spain, are faced with a number of challenges that could affect their participation in the Indonesian general election. However, despite these challenges, there are also opportunities that can be exploited to increase their involvement in the political processes of their home countries (Fauzan et al., 2024).

Challenge:

1. **Limited Access to Information:** One of the main challenges faced by first-time voters abroad is limited access to relevant political information. They may not have the same access as domestic voters to information about candidates running in general elections, as well as about the political platforms and programs they promote.
2. **Lack of Understanding of Domestic Politics:** New voters abroad may not have sufficient understanding of political issues currently developing in Indonesia. They may also be unfamiliar with the country's political system and governance in general, which may hinder their participation in the political process.

3. **Difficulty Understanding the General Election Process:** The different electoral systems of the countries where they live can be confusing for some first-time voters abroad. They may need a deeper understanding of the procedures that must be followed to vote effectively.

Opportunity:

1. **Technology and social media:** Advances in information technology and social media open up new opportunities in increasing the access of young voters abroad to political information. The government and related institutions can utilize these platforms to provide accurate and relevant information about Indonesia's political process, as well as to facilitate dialogue and discussion on important political issues.
2. **Inter-institutional Cooperation:** Collaboration between the government, educational institutions and local communities can help increase the political understanding and awareness of first-time voters abroad. Through targeted and coordinated political education programs, first-time voters can be given a deeper understanding of the Indonesian political system and the importance of participation in the political process.
3. **Active Participation in Communities:** Indonesian communities abroad can be an important forum for increasing the political participation of novice voters. Through discussions, meetings and other activities, first-time voters can support and motivate each other to get involved in the Indonesian political process.



Picture 2. With training participants and outreach to new voters ahead of the 2024 elections in Madrid

By paying attention to the challenges and opportunities faced, the Indonesian government, the Indonesian Embassy in Spain and the Indonesian community abroad can work together to create a supportive environment for first-time voters to participate in the 2024 general elections. Through directed and coordinated joint efforts, first-time voters can become an integral part of Indonesia's political process and contributes to strengthening the country's democracy (Amrizal et al., 2018).

Strategies to Increase Participation

Increasing first-time voter participation abroad, especially in cities such as Madrid, Spain, requires a planned and coordinated strategy (Böcü and Baser, 2024). The following are several strategies that can be implemented to increase their involvement in the Indonesian political process:

1. **Targeted Political Education:** It is important to provide targeted political education to first-time voters abroad. This can be done through seminars, workshops, or online courses that discuss Indonesian political issues, the political system, and the general election process. The Indonesian Embassy in Spain can collaborate with educational institutions and local communities to organize these activities.
2. **Use of Technology and social media:** Information technology and social media can be effective tools for increasing first-time voters' access to political information. The Indonesian Embassy in Spain can use digital platforms to disseminate information about candidates, political programs and general election procedures to Indonesian communities abroad.
3. **Organizing Discussions and Meetings:** Holding regular discussions and meetings on relevant political issues can increase awareness and engagement of first-time voters abroad. The Indonesian Embassy in Spain can facilitate these meetings and invite political figures and academics to speak on certain topics.
4. **Voter Education Campaign:** Through a planned voter education campaign, the Indonesian Embassy in Spain can provide information to first-time voters about the importance of their voting rights, voter registration procedures, and how to vote effectively. This campaign can be carried out through social media, pamphlets and community events.
5. **Collaboration with Local Communities:** The Indonesian Embassy in Spain can collaborate with local communities, community organizations and educational institutions to increase the political participation of first-time voters abroad. This can be

done through collaborative programs, such as joint political education workshops, or social campaigns about the importance of political participation.

6. Use of Online Resources: Creating online resources, such as voter guides and video tutorials about the election process, can help first-time voters understand election procedures better. The Indonesian Embassy in Spain can provide these resources in multiple languages to meet the diverse needs of first-time voters.



Picture 3. Providing materials and insights is one of the strategies to increase Political Participation in the Democratic Party at El Retiro Park, Madrid

By implementing these strategies in an integrated and sustainable manner, it is hoped that the participation of first-time voters abroad, especially in Spain, can increase in the 2024 general elections. This will strengthen Indonesian democracy by ensuring the vote of all citizens, regardless of gender. where they live, are heard and counted in the country's political process (Boulianne, 2020).

Conclusion

The involvement of individuals who are eligible to vote for the first time in other countries, such as in Spain, had a substantial influence on the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia. Despite the fact that they are confronted with a number of obstacles, such as restricted access to information and a lack of comprehension of domestic politics, there are also opportunities to increase their involvement through the implementation of targeted political education, the utilization of technology and social media, and the collaboration with local communities. As a result of paying attention to these obstacles and possibilities, it is envisaged that the

involvement of first-time voters overseas may be raised in the general elections of 2024. This would allow them to become an important part of Indonesia's political process and contribute to the building of democracy in the nation.

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