



Report to

**THE HONOURABLE MINISTER
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

BOSELE AND GROOTLAAGTE POLLING DISTRICTS
BY-ELECTION



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Honourable Minister
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Private Bag 006
Gaborone

The Honourable Minister,

In accordance with Section 65 A (13) of the Constitution of Botswana, we are submitting to you on behalf of the Independent Electoral Commission, a report on the activities associated with the preparations for, and conduct of the 2023 Local Government by-elections in Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts, following the passing away of their respective Councillors.

On the 15th February 2023, the Honourable Minister of Local Government and Rural Development issued two (2) Election Instruments, pursuant to Section 154 (2) of the Electoral Act, for the nomination and election of representatives of Local Authorities. Additionally, the instruments designated 2nd March 2023 as Nomination Day and 25th March 2023 as polling day.

The by-elections for the two Polling Districts were held on the 25th March 2023 as directed by you through the Election Instruments. We now have the pleasure to submit our report on this elections.

Thank You.

Yours sincerely,



Honourable Justice Barnabas Nyamadzabo
Chairman
INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION



Mr. Jeff Siamisang
Secretary IEC
INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report presents an extensive evaluation of the Local Government by-elections held in the Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts. The by-elections were conducted successfully, and results were released timely, attesting to adherence to the Electoral Act and an unwavering commitment from all stakeholders towards ensuring a credible and transparent electoral process.

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the various aspects of the electoral process, including the preparatory stages, campaign activities, and the overall conduct of the by-elections in both Polling Districts.

The pre-election campaigns were generally characterised by a spirit of cooperation and adherence to the existing laws and regulations. However, there were a few instances of political intimidation by some party campaigners, which were duly noted. Nonetheless, all parties involved in the electoral process demonstrated commendable conduct, contributing to a harmonious electoral environment.

Pre-By Election Phase

Sensitisation and Outreach

The Secretary to the Commission conducted a number of sensitisation meetings for candidates and training sessions for poll staff in both polling districts. These events aimed at familiarising all stakeholders with the existing legal framework and clarify their roles in facilitating seamless electoral processes. Notably, the engagement with political parties fostered open communication between politicians and the IEC, resulting in enhanced election administration. These engagements cultivated mutual responsibilities and commitment among stakeholders, which ultimately led to peaceful and credible election outcomes.



Stakeholder meeting addressed by the Secretary, IEC in Ghanzi

Outreach efforts were also extended to schools, clinics, tribal administration offices, and kgotla meetings. Moreover, the Outdoor Broadcasting Van was also deployed across Bolese public spaces to publicise the by-election and inform the public about the polling date and voting procedures.

Issuance of duplicate Cards

In an effort to encourage participation in the by-elections, duplicate voter registration cards were issued to individuals who had lost or misplaced their original cards in both polling districts. These duplicates were provided at polling stations and IEC offices to guarantee that no one was disenfranchised due to lost or misplaced registration cards.



Ghanzi Outstation Issuing Duplicate Voter Registration Cards in Grootlagte

Media and Elections

Acknowledging the vital role of media in elections, the Commission implemented targeted communication strategies to ensure all stakeholders remained well-informed about the by-elections and associated electoral processes. Media campaigns were primarily conducted through various channels, including social media platforms, radio, television, and print media.

Radio & Television

Owing to their wide-reaching coverage, Radio Botswana (RBI) and Botswana Television (BTV) were utilised extensively to disseminate information to the public regarding the by-elections.

Print Media

As part of its publicity strategy, the Commission used various publications to engage with the wider public. Botswana Daily News, given its extended news cycle and distribution, served as an ideal medium for disseminating advertisements pertaining to the by-elections.

Social Media

The IEC and BW Government Facebook pages, and the IEC website were used to engage with young people and the general electorate to promote their involvement in the by-elections. This effort was aimed at fostering greater participation in the electoral process.

Recruitment of Election Officials

As shown in Table 1 below, during the Bosele and Grootlaagte by-elections, ninety (90) Public Officers were recruited as poll staff, comprising two (2) Returning Officers, seven (7) Assistant Returning Officers, and additional staff members serving as Presiding Officers, Polling Officers and Tallying Officers. All poll staff went through training preparing them to conduct the elections in compliance with the electoral legal framework, and ensuring an efficient, effective and well-structured process.

Table 1 Breakdown of Poll staff according to position.

BOSELE POLLING DISTRICT		GROOTLAAGTE POLLING DISTRICT	
Returning officers	1	Returning officers	1
Assistant Returning officer	4	Assistant Returning officer	3
Presiding officers	3	Presiding officers	6
Polling officers	12	Polling officers	6
Tallying officers	6	Tallying officers	6
Police officers	16	Police officers	19
Cleaners	4	Queue Marshalls	3
TOTAL	46		44
Grand Total		90	

Logistics

Logistical planning played a pivotal role in the by-elections, ensuring that the Commission promptly adopts efficient strategies to guarantee a coordinated and comprehensive approach. A considerable aspect of the election preparations entailed securing transport and the acquisition and packaging of election materials.

Ballot Papers

The Commission facilitated the production and distribution of 2,800 ballot papers for the by-elections. This included 850 ballot papers for Grootlaagte polling district and 1,950 for the Bosele polling district.

Polling Booths

In order to guarantee that all voters, including those with special needs, had an opportunity to vote freely and in secret, two (2) specially designed polling booths were supplied at each polling station.

Distribution of Election Materials

In order to ensure proper conduct of the by-elections, all election materials were made available on time. The Returning Officers took charge of obtaining and distributing sensitive electoral

materials to each polling station's Presiding Officer. Meanwhile, other election materials in the form of tents, polling booths and receptacles were allocated equally between the two polling districts.

ELECTION PHASE

Nominations

Pursuant to Section 35 of the Electoral Act, nominations for the Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts were accepted on the 2nd March 2023. Five candidates were validly nominated to participate in the Bosele Polling District by election, while four candidates were validly nominated for the Grootlaagte Polling District by-election. Table 2 below lists the validly nominated candidates and their parties.

Table 2: Nomination lists for Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts

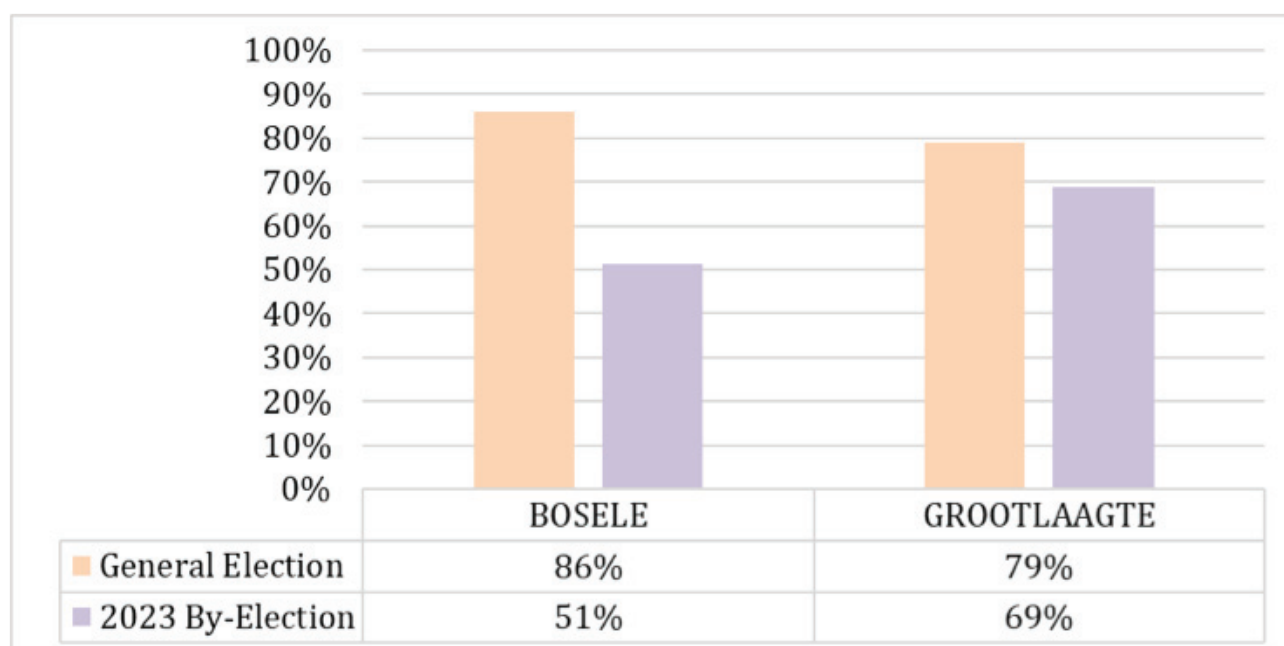
BOSELE POLLING DISTRICT	GROOTLAAGTE POLLING DISTRICT
Mr. Kaelo Aubrey Kgomotso Botswana Congress Party	Mr. Moretlwa Petro Botswana Democratic Party
Mr. Isaac Oageng Moseki Botswana Democratic Party	Mr. Theko Kopanelo Botswana Movement for Democracy
Ms Olebile Hellen Sesupo Botswana Labour Party	Mr. Malesele Jacob Independent Candidate
Mr. Montsho Selo Molomo Independent Candidate	Mr. Tjitemisa Sehakgamaleng Umbrella for Democratic Change
Mr. Mpule Maplanka Umbrella for Democratic Change	

Polling

Voter Turnout

Figure 1 presents the voter turnout in the March 2023 by-election for Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts. In Bosele, 911 or 51% of the 1,773 registered voters participated in the election. The Grootlaagte Polling District experienced a voter turnout of 69%, which equates to 565 of the 821 registered voters. A common pattern in by-elections is the reduced voter turnout in comparison to general elections. This trend was apparent in the recent by-elections, where the voter turnout was significantly lower than during the 2019 General Elections. Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite being low, the voter turnout for the Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts was an improvement when compared to past by-elections held in other areas.

Figure 1. Voter Turnout of Bosele and Grootlaagte By-elections



Counting

Subsequent to the closing of the polls, the Presiding Officers diligently performed a ballot paper account for each polling station and transported the ballot boxes to the designated Counting Centres, where the Returning Officers meticulously conducted the verification process prior to initiating the vote counting procedure. This method ensured that the sum of used and unused ballots corresponded with the total number of ballots initially distributed to the Presiding Officer.

Under the vigilant supervision of the Returning Officers, the counting of ballots commenced. As the votes were enumerated, each candidate's accumulated total was recorded on a tally sheet. This systematic approach has demonstrated enhanced accuracy and transparency of the counting process, as well as the expeditious announcement of election results.



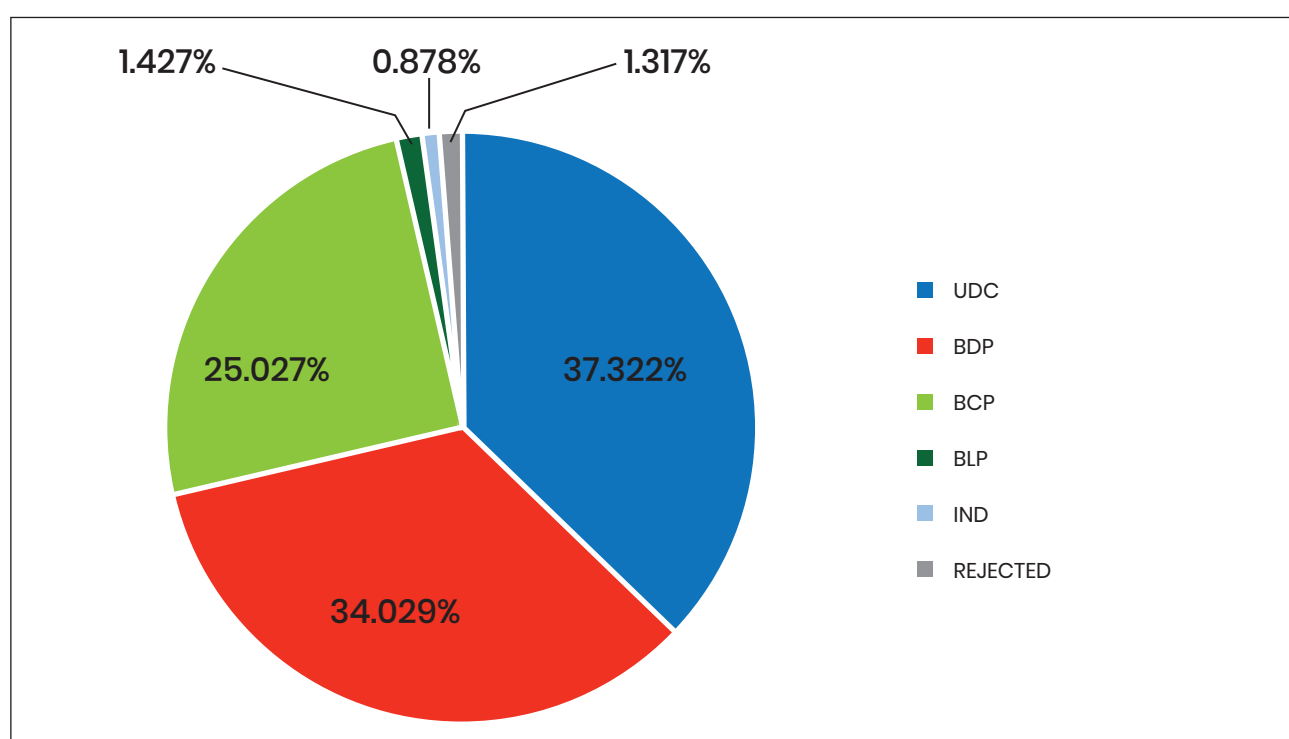
Counting process at Bosele Polling District Counting Centre

Results

In accordance with Section 77 of the Electoral Act, the Returning Officer is granted the authority to declare the poll results at the Counting Centre and subsequently submit them to the Secretary to the Independent Electoral Commission. The results of the Bosele and Grootlaagte by-elections were announced without any reported incidents.

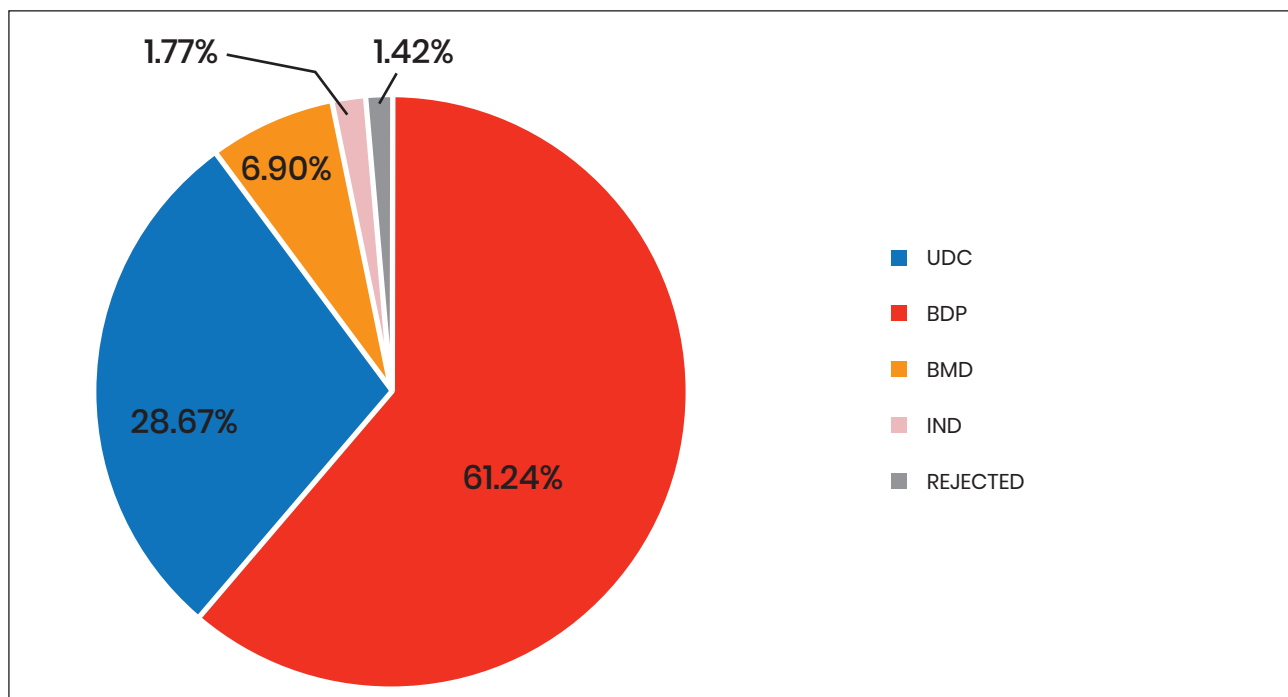
Figure 2 below displays the vote distribution among political parties in the Bosele Polling District. The Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) secured 37.322 % (340) of the vote share, followed by the Botswana Democratic Party at 34.029 % (310) and the Botswana Congress Party at 25.027 % (228). Botswana Labour Party secured 1.427 % (13) votes while the Independent candidate received 0.878 % (8) of the votes. Furthermore, a total of 13 or 1.37% of the votes were recorded as rejected.

Figure 2: Results for Bosele Polling District By-election



In the Grootlaagte Polling District, as reflected in Figure 3, the Botswana Democratic Party received the highest number of votes with 61.24 % (346), followed by the Umbrella for Democratic Change with 28.67% (162) and the Botswana Movement for Democracy with 6.90 % (39). The Independent candidate secured 1.77 % (10) of the votes, and 7 or 1.42% of the ballots were identified as spoiled votes.

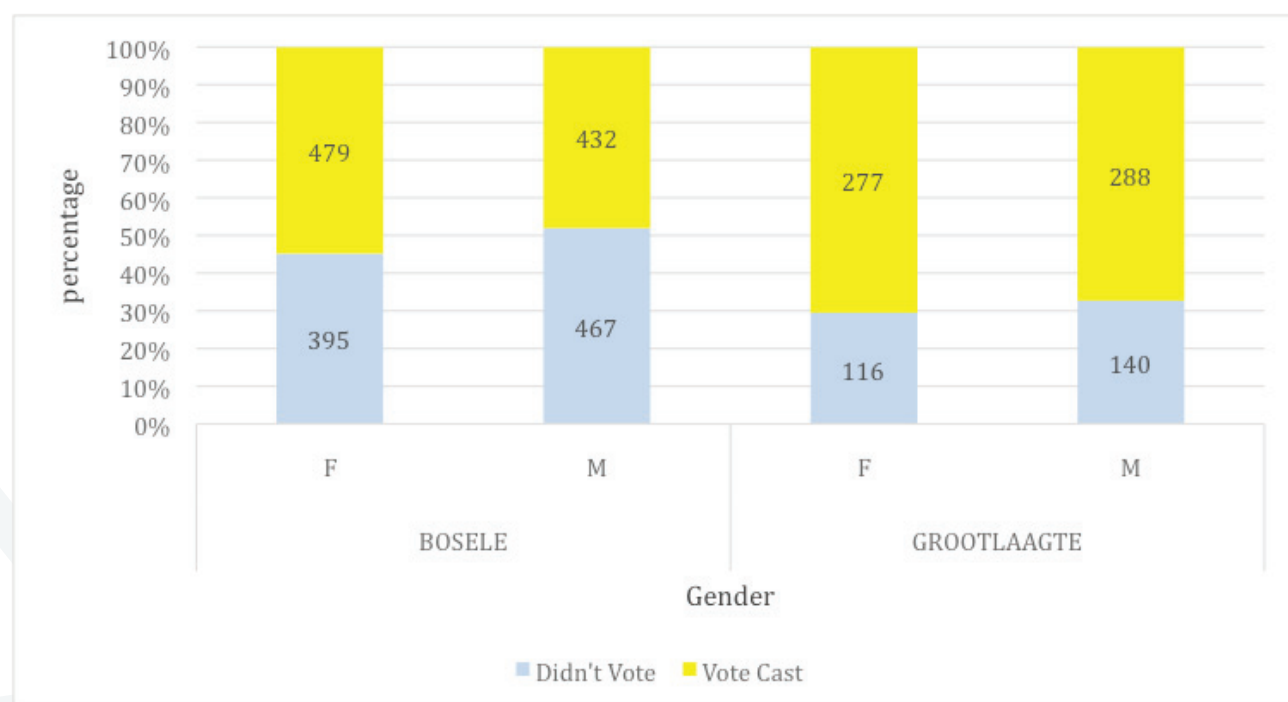
Figure 3: Results for Grootlaagte Polling District By-Election



Results Disaggregated by Gender

Figure 4 depicts the vote distribution in the Bosele and Grootlaagte by-elections, categorized by gender. In Bosele, 55% of the 874 registered females voted, while in Grootlaagte, 70% of the 393 registered females cast their ballots. Comparatively 48% of the 899 registered males voted in Bosele, while 67 % of the 428 registered males voted in the Grootlaagte Polling District. Consistent with previous by-elections, a higher percentage of females than males participated in the Bosele by-election.

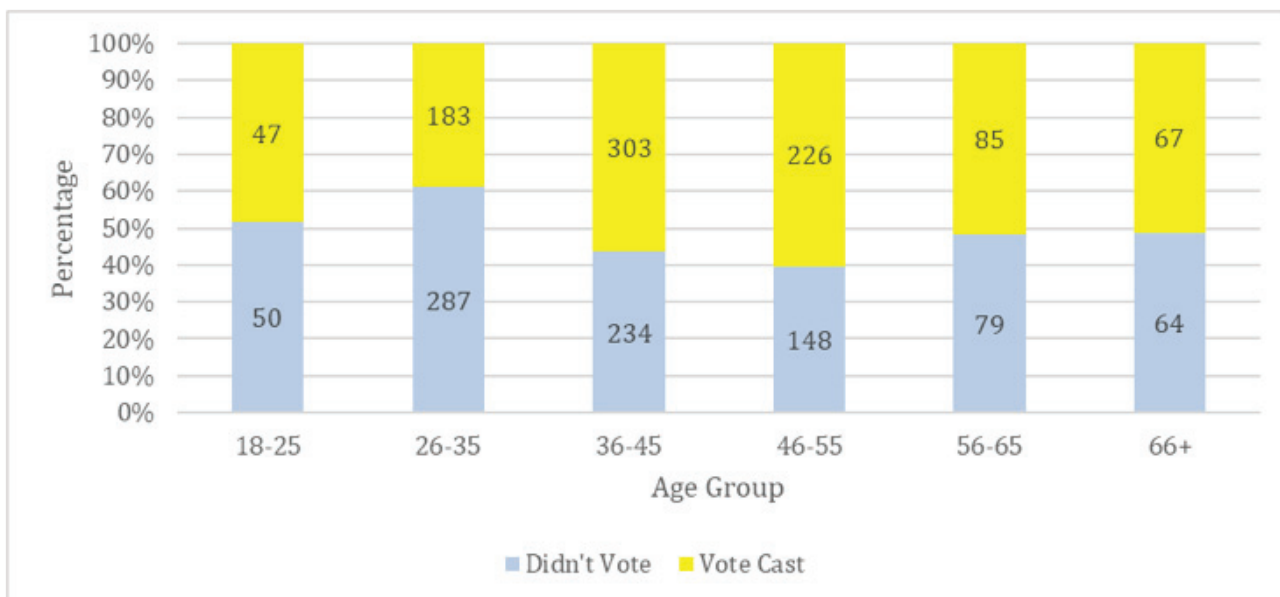
Figure 4: Percentage of Votes of Bosele and Grootlaagte Disaggregated by Gender



Results Disaggregated by Age

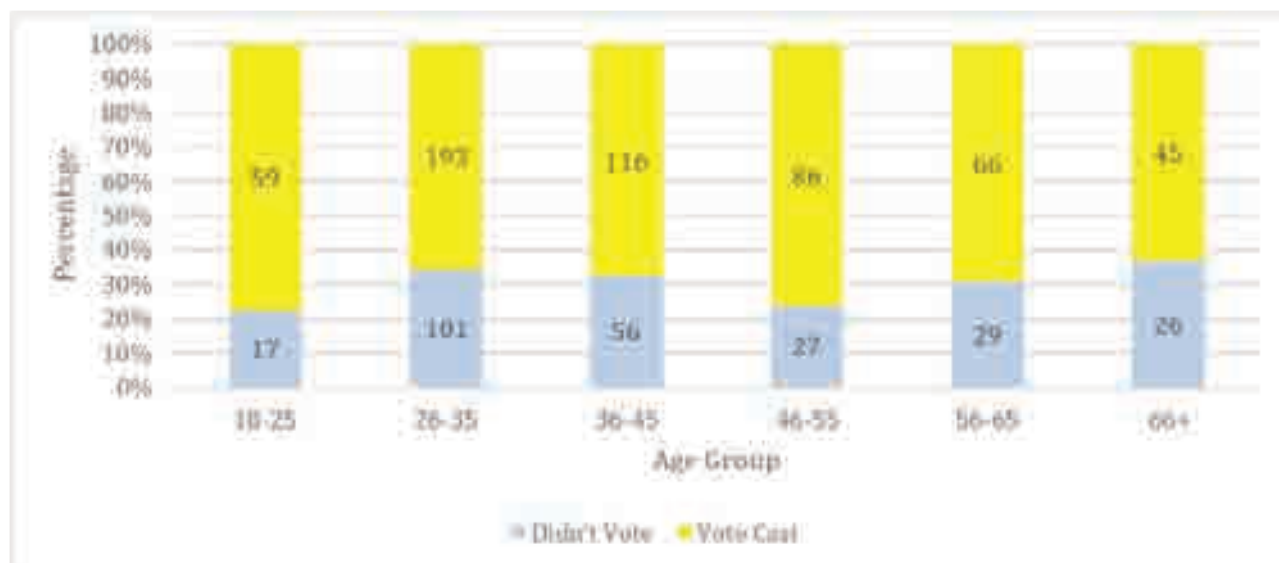
Analysis of votes by age groups indicates that youth participation in elections continues to be limited. Only 47 or 48% of registered voters aged 18-25 and 183 or 39% aged 26-35 participated in the Bosele by-election. Conversely, an average of more than 54% of individuals aged 36 and above voted, which emphasises the widespread voter apathy among the younger generation. This finding emphasises the importance of implementing voter education initiatives specifically targeting the youth to encourage them to participate actively in upcoming elections.

Figure 5: Percentage of votes for Bosele Polling District disaggregated by Age Group



As reflected in Figure 6, in the Grootlaagte by-election, the analysis presents a contrasting situation. Participation rates in the by-election were 59 or 78% for registered voters aged 18-25, 193 or 66% for those aged 26-35, and an average of 69% for the age groups between 36 and above. This outcome confirms the 2022 Voter Apathy study's findings that, comparatively, voter apathy impacts urban youth more than those in rural areas. This further emphasizes the need to implement voter education initiatives that specifically target urban youth to promote their participation in future elections.

Figure 6: Percentage of votes for Grootlaagte Polling District disaggregated by Age Group



Election Observation

Election observation is a vital component in assessing the level of adherence to democratic election principles. The Bosele and Grootlaagte by-elections received coverage from twenty (20) local news agencies, enabling increased scrutiny of the electoral process.

Election Petitions

Election petitions constitute an integral element of the democratic process, ensuring that electoral outcomes can be challenged in cases of perceived discrepancies or misconduct. The electoral legislation allows petitioners to dispute election results based on allegations of irregularities, disqualification, corruption, or illegal practices. A voter or candidate in a voting district is entitled to file a petition with the High Court. Such a petition must be submitted within thirty (30) days following the announcement of the election results, and the High Court is required to hear and adjudicate the matter within ninety (90) days of the petition's filing. It is noteworthy that no petitions were lodged to contest the outcomes of the by-elections held in the Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts, reflecting the overall credibility and integrity of the electoral process.

Budget and Expenditure

Elections inherently involve significant expenses. The total budget for the Bosele and Grootlaagte by-elections amounted to Four Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand, Five Hundred and Ninety-Three Pula and Thirty-One Thebe (P435, 593.31). This budget encompassed crucial pre-election activities and materials, including publicity, workshops, and election materials, to guarantee a seamless and credible electoral process. The final expenditure on preparations leading up to Election Day amounted to a total of Three Hundred and Sixty Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety-Seven Pula Fifty-Nine Thebe (P360, 497, 59).

Payment of Poll Staff

Poll staff are paid according to authorised requirements through an official payroll system that calculates individual deductions. Currently, election officials' payments have all been processed, ensuring fair compensation for their exceptional work. The payment for Police Officers on-duty at the Grootlaagte by-election has been processed.

Table 3 Bosele & Grootlaagte Polling Districts Budget and Expenditure

GROOTLAAGTE POLLING DISTRICT			BOSELE POLLING DISTRICT		
	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE		BUDGET	EXPENDITURE
Poll staff Overtime	72,228.78	69,783.80	Poll staff Overtime	99547.78	82552.48
IEC Staff Overtime	18,340.01	20,912.73	IEC Staff Overtime	25770.76	15810.25
Police Officers	18,340.01	Nil	Police Officers	42945.00	37485.00
Poll Staff Training & refreshments	28,939.00	28,867.00	Poll Staff Training & refreshments	67190.00	28620.50
Airtime (RO, PEO & PO)	1,200.00	1,200.00	Airtime (RO, PEO & PO)	1200.00	1196.95
Subsistence allowance (Imprest & night outs)	61,858.00	59,127.50	Subsistence allowance (Imprest & night outs)	0.00	0.00
Domestic & Household	940.00	785.09	Domestic & Household	2527.02	2313.00
Office supplies	4,069.00	3,812.05	Office supplies	750.00	
Service charges (portable Toilets)	6,500.00	6,489.24	Service charges (portable Toilets)	0.00	0.00
Personnel Emoluments	4,472.64	Nil	Personnel Emoluments	4685.34	1542.00
Total	216 887.44	190,977.41	Total	244 615.90	169520.18

Challenges

Despite the overall success of the by-elections, there were a few incidents that are worth mentioning as they contravened the Electoral Act and the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, thereby posing challenges to the smooth execution of the election process at Bosele and Grootlaagte.

- Some party members canvassed for votes from voters queuing to vote, contrary to Section 113 (1) (a) of the Electoral Act. This action is illegal and is viewed as an attempt to influence voters in an unfair manner, which can create an impression of bias and threaten the credibility of the electoral process.
- Contrary to Section 113 (1) (g) of the Electoral Act, party members came to the Polling Stations wearing party regalia. This is a violation of the provisions of the Electoral Act, which prohibits the wearing of party regalia at polling stations. The presence of party regalia can intimidate voters and create an impression of bias, which can undermine the credibility of the election process.

-
- The presence of intoxicated individuals at polling stations posed a serious threat to the peaceful conduct of the electoral process. Such conduct had the potential to intimidate voters, create confusion, and cause chaos at the polling stations, ultimately undermining the credibility of the electoral process. To foster a peaceful and credible electoral process, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders, most notably political parties, to undertake voter education initiatives that underscore the gravity of voting with a conscious and sober disposition.
 - During the campaign period, there were instances where some political parties deliberately disrupted campaign activities of other political parties, which violated the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and posed a threat to peaceful campaigning.

Conclusion

Despite a few incidents of unruly and illegal behaviours that posed challenges to the smooth execution of the by-elections at Bosele and Grootlaagte Polling Districts, the by-elections were, in the main conducted successfully. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) acknowledges the need for regular engagement with political parties to cultivate collective responsibility in ensuring the success of future elections, thereby maintaining the peaceful decorum that defines the culture of Botswana. The IEC remains committed to promoting fair and credible elections in Botswana and upholding the highest standards of professionalism and transparency in all electoral processes.

Furthermore, the appendices section in this report contains disaggregated results by gender (Appendix A), age group (Appendix B), as well as by age group and gender for each polling station (Appendix C) for the benefit of our stakeholders.



APPENDICES

BOSELE AND GROOTLAAGTE POLLING DISTRICTS
BY-ELECTION

Appendix A: Votes cast by Gender

		FEMALE			MALE			
FEMALE	FEMALE	Didn't Vote	Vote Cast	Total	Didn't Vote	Vote Cast	Total	Grand Total
BOSELE	Bosele Primary School	196	308	504	220	278	498	1002
	Lot 6415 (Extension 20)	75	106	181	125	100	225	406
	Taung Primary School	124	65	189	122	54	176	365
BOSELE Total		395	479	874	467	432	899	1773
GROOTLAAGTE	Farm 142-NK (Vickerman)	17	18	35	21	21	42	77
	Farm 5NK (Van Vuuren)	11	7	18	27	16	43	61
	Grootlaagte Primary School	88	252	340	92	251	343	683
GROOTLAAGTE Total		116	277	393	140	288	428	821
Grand Total		511	756	1267	607	720	1327	2594

Appendix B: Votes cast by Age Group

		18-25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65		66+		Grand Total
Polling District	Polling Station	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	
BOSELE	Bosele Primary School	19	28	144	122	106	205	68	141	43	51	36	39	1002
	Lot 6415 (Extension 20)	17	16	73	49	45	59	38	49	15	14	12	19	406
	Taung Primary School	14	3	70	12	83	39	42	36	21	20	16	9	365
BOSELE Total		50	47	287	183	234	303	148	226	79	85	64	67	1773
GROOTLAAGTE	Farm 142-NK (Vickerman)	5	7	17	19	11	8	1	4	2	1	2		77
	Farm 5NK (Van Vuuren)	1	1	16	10	9	2	1	5	6	4	5	1	61
	Grootlaagte Primary School	11	51	68	164	36	106	25	77	21	61	19	44	683
GROOTLAAGTE Total		17	59	101	193	56	116	27	86	29	66	26	45	821
Grand Total		67	106	388	376	290	419	175	312	108	151	90	112	2594

Appendix C: Polling Station vote cast per Age Group by Gender

			18-25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65		66+		
Polling District	Polling Station		Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Didn't Vote	Vote Caste	Grand Total
BOSELE	Bosele Primary School	Female	12	23	67	69	54	104	30	66	21	27	12	19	504
		Male	7	5	77	53	52	101	38	75	22	24	24	20	498
	Total		19	28	144	122	106	205	68	141	43	51	36	39	1002
	Lot 6415 (Extension 20)	Female	4	8	22	24	20	30	14	26	9	9	6	9	181
		Male	13	8	51	25	25	29	24	23	6	5	6	10	225
	Total		17	16	73	49	45	59	38	49	15	14	12	19	406
	Taung Primary School	Female	8	3	33	6	41	18	23	18	8	13	11	7	189
		Male	6		37	6	42	21	19	18	13	7	5	2	176
	Total		14	3	70	12	83	39	42	36	21	20	16	9	365
BOSELE Total			50	47	287	183	234	303	148	226	79	85	64	67	1773
GROOT-LAAGTE	Farm 142-NK (Vickerman)	Female	2	3	11	9	1	4		2	2		1		35
		Male	3	4	6	10	10	4	1	2		1	1		42
	Total		5	7	17	19	11	8	1	4	2	1	2		77
	Farm 5NK (Van Vuuren)	Female	1		3	3	3			1	2	3	2		18
		Male		1	13	7	6	2	1	4	4	1	3	1	43
	Total		1	1	16	10	9	2	1	5	6	4	5	1	61
	Grootlaagte Primary School	Female	10	24	32	89	13	47	12	44	10	29	11	19	340
		Male	1	27	36	75	23	59	13	33	11	32	8	25	343
	Total		11	51	68	164	36	106	25	77	21	61	19	44	683
GROOTLAAGTE Total			17	59	101	193	56	116	27	86	29	66	26	45	821
Grand Total			67	106	388	376	290	419	175	312	108	151	90	112	2594



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