

AMBASSADORS OF PEACEFUL ELECTIONS (AOPE)



Peace Ambassador Training Manual

AOPE

Promoting Democracy. Protecting Peace.

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Peace Ambassador Training Manual

This manual provides a structured training framework for AOPE Peace Ambassadors, equipping them with knowledge, skills, and values necessary to promote peaceful elections, civic responsibility, and democratic governance.

Training Purpose

To equip registered members with the knowledge, skills, and practical tools required to act as Peace Ambassadors capable of promoting peaceful electoral participation, preventing conflict, and strengthening democratic engagement at the community level.



1. Training Structure

- a) Duration: 3–5 Days (Intensive) or modular sessions
- b) Format: Designed for Hybrid Training Modules
- c) Approach: Participatory and scenario-based
- d) Outcome: Certified AOPE Peace Ambassador

Module 1: Introduction to AOPE & Identity

1. Vision

To nurture a peaceful, just, and informed society where elections are conducted with dignity, fairness, and national unity.

2. Mission

To promote peaceful elections, civic awareness, responsible political engagement, and national cohesion through education, advocacy, dialogue, stakeholder collaboration and community-driven campaigns.

3. Core Values

Integrity – Ambassadors of peaceful elections are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards by ensuring honesty, accountability, and consistency in all actions and decisions. Every activity is carried out with a commitment to truthfulness and responsibility.

Inclusivity – We value diversity and strives to involve all stakeholders, regardless of background, status, or belief. The organization creates an environment where every voice matters and participation is encouraged.

Non-partisanship – AOPE remains neutral and independent, avoiding alignment with political parties or partisan interests. This ensures fairness, credibility, and trust in the organization’s work in advancing democracy, good governance and peaceful participation.

Transparency – Members and affiliates commit to openness in its processes, decision-making, and resource management. Stakeholders are kept informed, and information is made accessible to promote accountability.

Peace and Unity – AOPE promotes harmony, cooperation, and mutual respect among individuals and communities. The organization seeks to bridge differences and work toward a shared vision of stability and togetherness.



4. Roles and responsibilities

- * Promote peace – Advocate non-violence across all electoral phases
- * Deliver civic education – Guide communities on responsible democratic participation
- * Monitor & report – Identify early signs of tension and report through AOPE channels
- * Engage communities – Support dialogues, forums, and peace campaigns
- * De-escalate conflict – Encourage calm, dialogue, and non-violent solutions
- * Mobilize youth positively – Redirect vulnerable groups toward constructive engagement
- * Uphold AOPE values – Maintain neutrality, integrity, and inclusivity
- * Represent AOPE – Act professionally and protect the organization’s credibility
- * Participate actively – Attend trainings and support program implementation

5. Code of Conduct (You are a symbol of peace—act like it, everywhere, always)

- Be non-partisan – Do not support or campaign for any political side
- Promote peace only – No involvement in violence, incitement, or disruption
- Act with integrity – Be honest, transparent, and accountable
- Respect all – No discrimination (ethnic, political, religious, gender, etc.)
- Use responsible communication – No hate speech, misinformation, or propaganda
- Follow the law – Operate within legal and institutional frameworks
- Do no harm – Avoid actions that escalate tension or risk safety
- Represent AOPE professionally – Protect the organization’s image at all times
- Report responsibly – Share accurate information through official channels
- Stay disciplined and active – Participate in trainings and assigned duties

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6. Non-partisanship

- > Encourage discernment of every political messaging and activities to;-
- > Embodying a thoughtful civic agency, supporting democratic processes but not political actors.
- > Scrutinize ideologies and make thoughtful political choices
- > Do not take sides, mobilize support for specific candidate(s), but encourage conversations that bring about in-depth understanding of what embodies informed decision, not blind loyalty.
- > Fairly and factually challenge misinformation and harmful narratives, but allow space for diversity of views without fueling division.
- > Encourage accountability without hostility or bias.
- > Strongly stand for constitutional values; rule of law, inclusion and good governance.



Module 2: Democracy & Elections

1. Principles of democracy

Popular Sovereignty- Authority rests with the people, exercised through free and fair elections and continuous civic participation.

Rule of Law- All individuals and institutions are subject to the law, applied equally and enforced independently.

Participation- Citizens have the right and responsibility to engage in political processes beyond voting-through dialogue, advocacy, and oversight.

Representation- Elected leaders act on behalf of the people and are expected to reflect their interests and aspirations.

Accountability- Leaders and public institutions must answer for their decisions and actions, and be subject to checks and oversight.

Transparency- Governance processes must be open and accessible, allowing citizens to make informed decisions.

Equality and Inclusion- All citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate, regardless of background or identity.

Protection of Rights and Freedoms- Fundamental rights—such as freedom of expression, association, and assembly—are guaranteed and safeguarded.

Separation of Powers- Government authority is divided among independent arms to prevent abuse of power.

Legitimacy of Process and Outcomes- Democratic outcomes are respected when processes are credible, lawful, and trusted by the public.

Key Insight

Democracy is not only about elections—it is a system of governance sustained by participation, accountability, and respect for the rule of law.

2 Electoral cycle

Electoral cycle refers to the continuous process of democratic engagement before, during, and after elections, not just the act of voting.

Key Phases

> Pre-Election Phase

Includes voter registration, civic education, political campaigning, and preparation by electoral bodies.

Focus: Awareness, inclusion, and informed participation.

> **Election Phase**

Involves voting, vote counting, and results declaration.

Focus: Transparency, credibility, and peaceful participation.

> **Post-Election Phase**

Covers dispute resolution, acceptance of results, transition of power, and governance.

Focus: Stability, accountability, and institutional trust.

Core Understanding

~ Elections are **not an event**—they are a process

~ Each phase carries **equal importance for democratic stability**

~ Failures in one phase often **affect the next**

3 Institutions

Democratic institutions are structures that organize, regulate, and safeguard governance processes to ensure legitimacy, accountability, and public trust.

Core Institutions

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)

Responsible for conducting elections, voter registration, and results management.

Example: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

Judiciary

Interprets the law, resolves disputes (including electoral disputes), and upholds constitutional order.

Legislature (Parliament)

Makes laws, represents citizens, and provides oversight over the executive.

Executive

Implements laws and policies, and is responsible for governance and service delivery.

Key Principles of Good Governance;

1. Transparency

- Decisions and processes are open to scrutiny.

- Example: publishing budgets and procurement details online.

- Why it matters: reduces corruption and builds trust.

2. Participation

- Citizens and stakeholders have a voice in shaping policies.

- Example: community forums, public consultations, youth councils.

- Why it matters: policies reflect real needs, not just elite interests.

3. Rule of Law

- Everyone is subject to the same laws, applied fairly.

- Example: independent judiciary ensuring justice even against powerful figures.

- Why it matters: prevents abuse of power.

4. Responsiveness

- Institutions act quickly to address public concerns.

- Example: disaster response units mobilizing immediately after floods.

- Why it matters: builds confidence in leadership.

5. Equity and Inclusiveness

- Governance must serve all citizens, especially marginalized groups.

- Example: policies ensuring access to education for girls and vulnerable children.

- Why it matters: no one is left behind.

6. Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Resources are used wisely to achieve results.

- Example: digitizing services to reduce bureaucracy and save costs.

- Why it matters: maximizes impact with limited resources.

7. Consensus Orientation

- Balancing diverse interests to reach decisions acceptable to all.

- Example: coalition governments or community mediation.

- Why it matters: reduces conflict and promotes unity.

Oversight & Accountability Institutions **National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)**

~ Promotes national unity and addresses hate speech and ethnic tensions

Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC)

~ Ensures integrity and combats corruption in public service

Independent Media

~ Provides information, promotes transparency, and holds power accountable

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

~ Advocate for citizens' rights, monitor governance, and promote participation

Role in Democracy

- * Ensure **free, fair, and credible elections**
- * Provide **checks and balances**
- * Protect **citizens' rights and freedoms**
- * Promote **accountability and good governance**

Key Insight

Strong institutions, not strong individuals, are the foundation of a stable and functioning democracy.

4 Dispute resolution

Electoral dispute resolution refers to the **legal and institutional processes used to address complaints, grievances, and conflicts arising before, during, and after elections.**

Where Disputes Are Handled

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)

Handles pre-election disputes (e.g., nominations, voter registration issues)

Judiciary (Courts of Law)

Determines **election petitions and results disputes**

- * Magistrates' Courts (some electoral cases)
- * High Court (Parliamentary & County elections)
- * Supreme Court (Presidential election petitions)

Types of Electoral Disputes

- > Candidate nomination disputes
- > Voter registration and eligibility issues
- > Campaign-related violations
- > Results and tallying disputes
- > Post-election grievances and petitions

Key Principles

- > **Legality** – All disputes must be handled within the law
- > **Timeliness** – Disputes must be resolved within set constitutional timelines
- > **Fair Hearing** – All parties are given an equal opportunity to be heard
- > **Finality** – Court decisions must be respected

Role of Citizens & Peace Ambassadors

- > Encourage use of legal channels—not violence
- > Promote acceptance of lawful outcomes
- > Discourage mob justice and political incitement
- > Support calm and informed public discourse

Key Insight

Disputes are normal in a democracy—violence is not. What matters is how disputes are resolved.



Module 3: Conflict Analysis

1. Causes of conflict

- Political competition** – High-stakes elections and winner-takes-all perception
- Ethnic polarization** – Identity-based mobilization and mistrust
- Misinformation & propaganda** – False narratives that inflame tensions
- Youth vulnerability** – Unemployment and exploitation for political agendas
- Weak trust in institutions** – Perceived injustice or lack of credibility
- Historical grievances** – Unresolved past conflicts and injustices
- Resource disputes** – Land, jobs, and economic inequalities

2. Risk identification

- Hotspot areas** – Regions with a history of electoral violence
- High political tension** – Competitive races or controversial candidates
- Inflammatory messaging** – Hate speech, divisive rhetoric
- Mobilization patterns** – Unusual gatherings or group formations
- Community divisions** – Visible ethnic, political, or social fractures
- Trigger events** – Arrests, disputed nominations, or results delays

3. Community mapping

- Identify key actors:
 - Community leaders
 - Youth groups
 - Religious leaders
 - Local authorities
- Understand community dynamics:
 - Ethnic composition
 - Political affiliations
 - Historical tensions
- Map risk areas and safe spaces:
 - Potential hotspots
 - Dialogue venues
 - Security presence

Key Insight

Effective conflict prevention begins with understanding the people, the environment, and the signals before escalation occurs.

Module 4: Peacebuilding

1. Mediation

- Mediation is a structured intervention process where a neutral party facilitates resolution between conflicting groups
- As a mediator in a tensed dispute, a peace ambassador should:
 - Maintain strict neutrality and impartiality
 - Allow each party equal opportunity to present issues
 - Guide parties toward mutual understanding and practical solutions
- Mediation shall be applied in:
 - Community disputes resolution forums
 - Politically driven tensions
 - Localized conflicts

2. Dialogue

- Dialogue is a facilitated engagement process designed to promote understanding and prevent conflict
- It comprises:
 - Provision of safe and inclusive spaces for expression
 - Encouraging respectful listening and structured communication
 - Addressing grievances, perceptions, and misinformation
- Dialogue shall be used to:
 - Reduce polarization
 - Strengthen social cohesion
 - Build consensus on community issues

3. De-escalation

- De-escalation refers to immediate actions taken to reduce tension and prevent violence
- A Peace Ambassador shall:
 - Use calm, controlled, and non-provocative communication
 - Avoid confrontation and discourage inflammatory behavior
 - Create physical and emotional distance between conflicting parties where necessary
- De-escalation shall prioritize:
 - Safety of all individuals
 - Containment of the situation
 - Prevention of further escalation

Module 5: Youth Engagement

1. Youth vulnerability

Youth are identified as a **high-risk group for political manipulation and exploitation** due to unemployment, economic pressure, and social exclusion

Common risks include:

- > Recruitment into **organized political goons for perpetration of violence and disruptive activities.**
- > Exposure to **misinformation and manipulation**

Peace Ambassadors have a responsibility to:

- > Promote **discernment of information, critical thinking and informed political awareness**
- > Discourage participation in **violence, incitement, and illegal activities**
- > Redirect youth towards **constructive civic and community roles**

2. Leadership

Youth and women leadership is a **core driver of democratic stability and community influence.**

Peace Ambassadors should:

- > Identify and nurture emerging youth leaders at community level
- > Promote issue-based leadership over personality-based politics
- > Facilitate women and youth participation in dialogue, civic forums, and community initiatives
- > Encourage responsibility, accountability, and service-oriented leadership

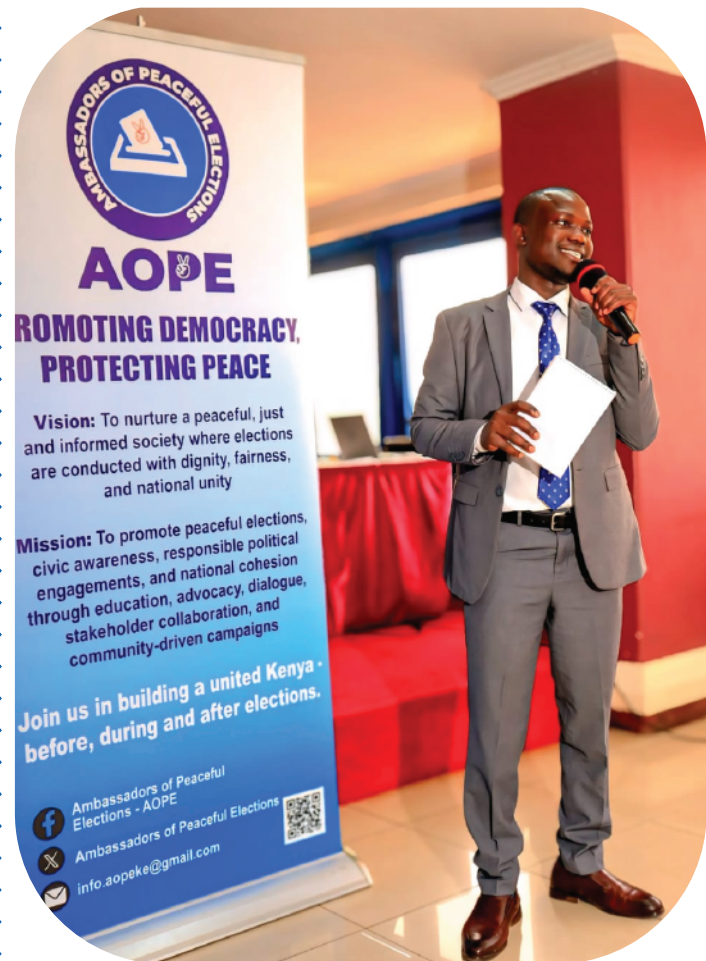
- * A mature democracy should allow for expression without oppression and suppression, nurture good leadership and encourage participation.
- * Leadership must be nurtured, inclusive and objective. A leadership that protects the interest of the people and prioritize social cohesion, protection of fundamental human rights, and advance economic growth.
- * A service-oriented leadership that uplift the vulnerable members of the society, prioritizing posterity and nationhood over self-exalting political validations at the expense of peace, stability and continuity.
- * Participation and inclusion in leadership must create space to empower vulnerable groups in the society (women, youths, and persons living with disability), and protect the spaces for common good as opposed to negatively exploiting them for political scores through manipulations.

3 Ethical participation

Ethical participation requires citizens to engage in politics **lawfully, responsibly, and with respect for democratic principles.**

Peace Ambassadors should at all times:

- > Promote peaceful and informed participation in democratic processes
 - > Discourage hate speech, bribery, voter manipulation, and unlawful mobilization
 - > Encourage respect for:
 - ~ **Rule of law**
 - ~ **Electoral outcomes and legal dispute mechanisms**
 - ~ **Rights of others with differing views**
- Emphasis shall be placed on **participation that strengthens democracy and public trust.**



Module 6: Communication

1. Misinformation

Misinformation refers to false or misleading information spread intentionally or unintentionally, often in heightened political environments and contests.

Common forms include:

> Fake news, altered and AI generated content, rumors, and unverified claims.

Ambassadors of Peaceful Elections have a patriotic obligation to at all times:

> Verify information before sharing using credible sources
> Challenge false narratives with facts, not emotion
> Avoid amplifying unverified or inflammatory content
> Encourage discernment of information and responsible sharing
Emphasis shall be placed on accuracy, responsibility, and public impact

2. Social media use

Social media is a powerful tool for *influence, mobilization, and information sharing.*

Ambassadors of Peaceful Elections are without doubt expected to:

> Use platforms responsibly and professionally
> Share accurate, educational, and non-partisan content
> Conduct advocacy and sensitization
> Avoid engagement in:
o **Online arguments and provocation**
o **Hate speech or political propaganda**

Maintain digital discipline and accountability at all times

3. Peace messaging

Peace messaging involves *deliberate communication that promotes calm, unity, and responsible civic behavior.*

Peace messaging does not mean turning a blind eye at *wrongdoings and clear violation of human rights, democracy, accountability.*

Messaging shall:

> Be clear, factual, and culturally relevant
> Promote tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity
> Counter fear, division, and incitement

Delivery channels include:

> Community dialogue and public forums
> Mainstream and Social Media platforms
> Digital campaigns
> Peaceful petitions to authorities, institutions and public offices.

Module 7: Community Engagement

1. Mobilization

~ Mobilization is the *structured process of engaging communities to participate in civic and peacebuilding activities*

~ **AOPE** adopts a structure that runs from national to grassroots level to enable her:

> Organize forums, barazas, and outreach activities
> Encourage active and informed civic participation
> Promote issue-based engagement over political alignment
> Address real national and community level issues around democracy, peace and good governance
~ Mobilization primarily aim at participation that is lawful, informed, constructive, and inclusive.

2. Inclusion

Inclusion ensures *equal participation of all groups in community and democratic processes*

Key groups include:

> Youth, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities

Peace Ambassadors shall:

> Facilitate *accessible and inclusive engagement spaces*
> Ensure *diverse representation in dialogue and activities*
> Address *barriers to participation and representation*

Inclusion shall strengthen equity, legitimacy, and social cohesion

3. Trust-building

- Trust-building is the *process of strengthening confidence between communities, institutions, and stakeholders.*

The organization through all its structures and members shall:

- Maintain consistency, transparency, and accountability in engagements
 - Promote open communication and respectful interaction
 - Encourage collaboration between communities and institutions
- Trust-building shall support long-term stability and cooperation

Module 8: Social Cohesion

1. Managing differences

- Democratic societies are characterized by *diverse political, ethnic, religious, and social perspectives*.
- These differences (political, ethnic, religious) shall be managed through *structured local engagement mechanisms*.
- As an organization, through our structures and members, we shall leverage the existing community and relevant governmental and institutional structures to:

- *Organize and facilitate community, and inter-community barazas and dialogue forums at local and grassroots level*
- *Engage local administration (Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Nyumba Kumi structures) for coordination*
- *Involve community elders and opinion leaders to guide discussions*
- *Organize transgenerational dialogues to bridge generational gaps to coexistence.*

- Our approaches to pressing issues at all times emphasize:

- *Issue-based discussion, not identity confrontation*
 - *De-escalation before positions harden*
- Managing differences shall ensure *coexistence without suppression of views*.

2. Reconciliation

- Reconciliation shall be conducted using *existing community dispute resolution structures*.

Ambassadors of Peaceful Elections shall:

- ~ Convene *joint forums* involving:
 - * Community leaders
 - * Religious leaders (churches, mosques)
 - * Local administration
- ~ Support restorative dialogue processes where affected parties are heard
- ~ Refer complex or sensitive cases to:
 - * *Judiciary (courts)* where necessary
 - * Relevant authorities for formal intervention

Focus shall be on:

- > Restoring relationships
- > Preventing retaliation or recurring conflict

3. Unity

Unity shall be strengthened through shared community activities and consistent engagement

Peace Ambassadors shall:

- ~ Promote inter-community forums, joint activities, and peace campaigns
 - ~ Work with:
 - * Religious institutions
 - * Youth groups
 - * Community-based organizations
 - ~ Integrate peace and civic messages into everyday community spaces
- Unity shall be built through:***
- > Shared responsibility
 - > Continuous interaction throughout electoral cycles, beyond election periods



Module 9: Leadership & Ethics

1. Integrity

~ Integrity in leadership refers to *honesty, consistency, and adherence to the Constitution and rule of law*

In Kenya's governance context, it requires:

- * Rejection of corruption and abuse of office
- * Transparency in decision-making and public service

Citizens are expected to:

- * Demand integrity from leaders
- * Reject inducements such as bribery and vote-buying

Integrity is foundational to credible leadership and public trust.

2. Accountability

Accountability is the obligation of leaders and institutions to *answer for their actions and decisions*

In Kenya, accountability is exercised through:

- * Oversight by **Parliament**
- * Enforcement by institutions like the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
- * Judicial review by the courts

Citizens play a role by:

- * **Questioning leadership decisions**
- * Participating in *public forums and civic processes*

Accountability ensures *responsiveness and responsible governance*

3. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence in leadership is the ability to manage *emotions, communicate responsibly, and make balanced decisions under pressure.*

- In political and community settings, it requires:

- Avoiding incitement, inflammatory language, and reactive behavior
- Demonstrating restraint, empathy, and respect for differing views

- It is essential for:

- Conflict-sensitive leadership
- Maintaining stability during high-tension periods such as elections

Application to Peace Ambassadors

- > Promote value-based leadership and informed citizen expectations
- > Encourage communities to prioritize integrity and accountability in leadership choices
- > Model emotional discipline in all engagements

Key Insight

Democratic leadership is not defined by power, but by integrity, accountability, and the ability to act responsibly under pressure.

Module 10: Deployment

1. Election roles

Peace Ambassadors shall be deployed to *support peaceful, informed, and orderly electoral processes*

Key roles include:

- Conducting civic education and voter awareness
- Promoting peaceful participation and lawful conduct
- Observing and documenting community dynamics and tensions

~ Ambassadors shall **not interfere** with official processes of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission or security agencies but collaborate through partnership in specific jurisdictions and modalities signed in working agreements/MOUs and subject to accreditation by the electoral body

~ Deployment shall remain non-partisan, visible, and community-focused

2. Safety

Safety is a *primary requirement during all deployment activities.*

The organization shall at all times for safety of its deployed officials and members:

- * Cooperate with security agencies to ensure safety and protection during structured interventions
- * Avoid *high-risk or volatile environments*
- * Refrain from *physical intervention in violent situations*
- * Follow guidance from *security and local administrative authorities*

Priority shall be given to:

- > **Personal safety**
- > **Safety of community members**
- > **Situational awareness at all times**

3. Reporting

Reporting ensures timely, accurate, and coordinated response to emerging issues.

Peace Ambassadors shall:

- . Report incidents, risks, and observations through designated AOPE channels
 - . Provide factual, clear, and unbiased information
 - . Avoid spreading unverified or sensitive information publicly
- Reporting shall support:*
- . Early warning systems
 - . Decision-making and intervention planning

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