

Submission by Debbie Kois

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MY EXPERIENCE OF THE 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

As a female candidate in the last election, I have encountered negativities and positivity, rather bad and good situation during the election, hence, I would like to bring all this out so to assist myself and others who still have the drive and intentions to contest in coming Papua New Guinea National General elections.

1. NEGETIVITIES

1.0 Endorsement and Nomination Under Party Banner

Having being empowered by UN Women, I was ready so I raised my hand to contest the Huon Gulf Electorate Seat. I made an expression of interest to the **INDIGENOUS LIBERATION PARTY** for their assistance and to contest the election under their banner or name. The party excepted my interest.

During the nomination period the General Secretary of the above party was in Lae, so he invited me to meet up with him to discuss my interest to contest the election.

After the discussion, I was confirmed as a potential Indigenous Liberation Party candidate to contest for the 2022 General Election under the party banner.

1.1 Funding from Political Party

It was also at that point in time that the Party Leader, advised me that the funding allocated to the party has not come through from the government therefore, if I had any personal money, I could use the money and they were going to refund my funds if and when the money comes in. That was exactly what I did. I used all the little funding I had to pay for my nomination fee under the party banner. and ran the campaign with my own funds.

To date, I am in the dark and wondering if the government ever funded the Indigenous Liberation party for the National Election because they had not even reimbursed any of my funds used to contest the election under the Indigenous Liberation Party banner.

1.2 Campaign

During the initial announcement of endorsement by the party, the subsequent nomination and the consequences faced leading up to the campaign, there was no funding or assistance forthcoming from the party. It was very tough going up against the menfolk and the sitting member. Whilst the men have all the facilities provided for by their parties, we women do not have any. Some of the male candidate and the sitting member have the money to campaign and lure people whilst a woman does not have such. The difference is a woman has been trained to be a good leader whilst men had no training except his dreams. I did not reach many LLGs or villages in my electorate because Huon Gulf Electorate is consist of land and sea LLGs. Two electorates, we have to cross the sea whilst one, we have to go up the river. I could not reached this LLGs but I only used the network that women have through church and women groups to bring my campaign across.

1.3 Election or Polling

1.3.1 This was the most crucial time because I did not have findings to be able to sustain my committees and scrutineers. The giant political parties and the sitting member had all the money in the world to bribe and lure people to vote for their candidates.

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No transport to transport scrutineers and committees around to monitor the polling.

1.3.3 Counting

There should be extreme security in the counting venue but there seems to be none. All people from rank and files were seen going in and out of the counting room. One can wonder what happened in that counting room. I had one or two scrutineers there but may have wondered off because I had no funds and could not meet their needs. I want to see that security in the counting room should come under the surveillance of a camera. Then I think transparency is prevail.

2. POSITIVITY

- 2.1 During the election I have seen and witness a lot of things that are positive and embraced them as changes that take effect in the attitudes of women towards election that where once dominated by men. I have seen and witness man putting up fights with their spouses or families refusing their demand to vote for a candidate of their family choice rather than going with their own choice to vote for a woman.
- 2.2 Women have now spoken out in the village making awareness and educating each other and empowering each other to give their 1,2 and three votes to women and men of their choice. Meaning their 1st preference goes to a women and if there is another woman, their second choice will go to that women and third to a man.

CONCLUSION

2022 PNG General Election was educational and a challenge for me. I have faced all odds but finally completed the race ~~running~~ against the man.

These are some point I would like to raise for the sake of improving the next General election for a women candidate.

1. Government must pump money into UN Women to educate and empower more women to contest the election
2. Parties must give in the candidate's name and the government should pay through UN women through a trust fund to assist women candidate.

3. Parties should give a report to UN Women on how they supported the women candidate financially and with resource.
4. Parties must make sure to provide all the necessity for their candidate empowering and ensuring that their chances of within the election is of their paramount interest.
5. All funding should be acquitted by the end of the election by all candidates with a copy to the Commissioner of Political parties office, Ombudsman Commission and the Electoral Commission, I stand corrected if this is already in place.

All in all the 2022 election was a great experience.



DEBBIE KAIS.