

Electoral Integrity

The legitimacy of an election and public confidence in the resulting structures of democratic governance largely depend on the actual and perceived integrity of the electoral process. If citizens and candidates believe an election was unfair or poorly administered, they may not accept the outcome. To support credible elections, IFES works with election management bodies around the world on all aspects of election administration and across all phases of the electoral cycle, including long-term institutional capacity building.

In addition, IFES has developed an electoral integrity portfolio focused on three principle areas – election dispute resolution, fraud and malpractice mitigation, and political finance regulation – that builds on international standards and three decades of experience strengthening the effectiveness of election management around the globe.

IFES programs work to: support effective and fair investigation and arbitration processes and ensure the compliance of electoral justice systems with international

public law; promote the use of rigorous electoral integrity assessments and planning to deter and mitigate election fraud and malpractice; and bolster enforcement of political finance regulations to enhance transparency and deter non-compliance, corruption, and the abuse of state resources.

“The Independent National Electoral Commission’s long-standing partnership with IFES in preparation for the 2015 general elections resulted in a credible process accepted by Nigerian citizens and the international community. These elections have put Nigeria on the right path toward democratic stability,”

– Professor Attahiru Jega
former Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, Nigeria

About IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens’ right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by:

- Providing technical assistance to election officials
- Empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

For more information, visit www.IFES.org.

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Building Democracy



*Global Expertise.
Local Solutions.
Sustainable Democracy.*

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) envisions a world in which strong democratic institutions empower citizens to have a voice in the way they are governed.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by providing technical assistance to election officials; applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle; and empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process. Our areas of expertise include electoral integrity, participation and inclusion, accountability, research and surveys, and women's empowerment.

IFES empowers the underrepresented to participate in political life by promoting equal rights, justice and inclusion for women, youth, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities. We inform and encourage all individuals to add their voice to the democratic process as voters, candidates, election officials and civil society leaders.

IFES believes the right to vote is a fundamental political and human right and that true democracy allows each citizen to fully participate in the political and democratic processes of their country.



Participation and Inclusion

Democratic institutions flourish when all groups of society are represented. IFES' initiatives around the world seek to increase the participation, influence and representation of citizens in political processes and governance structures. An informed and empowered citizenry is a crucial component of a healthy and resilient democracy.

IFES supports a variety of civic education and training initiatives, including informing voters of their rights and responsibilities and conducting leadership and advocacy trainings to empower citizens to have a voice in the way they are governed. A key focus of IFES' work is inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups, such as persons with disabilities, youth, indigenous groups and ethnic and religious minorities.

IFES works to strengthen political participation and inclusion by conducting civic and voter education activities via diverse media, including face-to-face, radio, social media and street theater; providing technical assistance to government officials on how to implement international standards, such

as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; empowering civil society organizations to advocate for equal rights; and assisting citizen-led efforts to define best practices through the development of global tools such as the manual *Equal Access: How to Include Persons with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes* and the online resource ElectionAccess.org.

“Working with IFES has been a big encouragement for us when working on electoral issues. Their support has been essential toward building an inclusive and equal society in Myanmar.”

– Nay Lin Soe
Founder and CEO
Myanmar Independent Living Initiative

Accountability

The strength of democracies is dependent on the continued consent of the governed. This consent can be conferred or withdrawn during regular elections and other legal proceedings. Elected officials, as well as others who serve in democratic governments, have an inherent responsibility to uphold the constitution, fundamental human rights and the laws that have been adopted through democratic procedures and institutions. IFES views accountability as an essential principle of democracy that is based on an explicit set of rules and ethical standards and reflects the popular will.

IFES promotes accountability in the electoral process and beyond through the development and enforcement of laws and regulations governing political and campaign funding; oversight of the use of administrative resources by elected officials; and the application of codes of conduct that support professionalism and high standards of ethical behavior among election administrators and other electoral stakeholders.

Our work with both state and non-state actors also enhances transparency in the relationship between citizens and government officials and supports the power of citizens to sanction, impose costs or to remove government officials for unsatisfactory performance or actions by democratic means.

“IFES is an organization I have long admired, having become acquainted with it during the presidential election observation mission to Nigeria I led in 1999. The work IFES does is critical to advancing transparency and accountable governance, and creating more pluralistic and participatory societies worldwide.”

– U.S. Congressman Ed Royce



Research and Surveys

IFES conducts innovative applied research to identify socio-political and programmatic factors that impact the development of robust democratic institutions and processes, which informs the development of effective programming in the democracy and governance sector. IFES' research addresses emerging issues in the democracy and governance sector and utilizes research data to inform and evaluate programming that supports the democratization process.

Topical research on technical electoral areas addresses critical issues such as electoral integrity, the appropriate use of technology in elections, and conflict in elections in order to highlight key factors impacting electoral processes and to identify best practices for effective programs to sustain electoral and democratic development.

IFES' long-standing opinion research programs are focused on providing data on citizens' voices to inform and evaluate IFES programs of support, as well as to provide reliable data on the electoral and political environment impacting these programs. This topical and opinion research provides electoral

stakeholders with research findings that can bring clarity to often-opaque processes and identifies tangible programmatic approaches in challenging environments. With three decades of experience conducting applied research, IFES is an industry leader in using evidence-based approaches to address critical issues and advance innovation in democracy and governance programming.

“Due to IFES conducting public opinion polling since 1994, it owns a unique data collection on Ukrainian public opinion and its metamorphoses through the years. IFES has data that spans decades and tracks change over a long period on the same issues.”

– Dr. Vladimir Paniotto
General Director, Kiev International Institute of
Sociology, Ukraine

Women's Empowerment

Justice and equal rights for women and men are enshrined in international human rights standards and best practices in the pursuit of effective democratic government and social development. Women's political participation and leadership is often impeded by a labyrinth of barriers, including cultural attitudes and practices, socio-economics, conflict and violence against women and a persistent lack of access to information and education. Women and girls are often burdened by competing priorities and excessive household responsibilities that take away time and potential interest from political activities.

IFES works to fortify women in political and electoral processes as candidates and elected leaders, technical experts in elections, engaged civil society leaders and informed voters. IFES implements innovative women's empowerment activities to increase women's political participation and leadership.

IFES uses evidence and technical leadership to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment activities into our democracy and governance work by providing gender-sensitive technical assistance and

“Women's rights are human rights and human rights are the rights of all people. That is the basis of IFES' work and what we do together; it is to empower women for international peace.”

– U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee

analysis on electoral legal frameworks, election systems and the administration of elections. IFES also consults with a broad range of women's groups and leaders and takes into account the specific local context in which it operates to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment programming has an effective and lasting impact.

