



# Future Leaders



*IFES works to promote equal rights, justice and political participation of youth around the world.*

**Today, approximately half of the world's total population — around 3 billion people — are 25 or younger.**

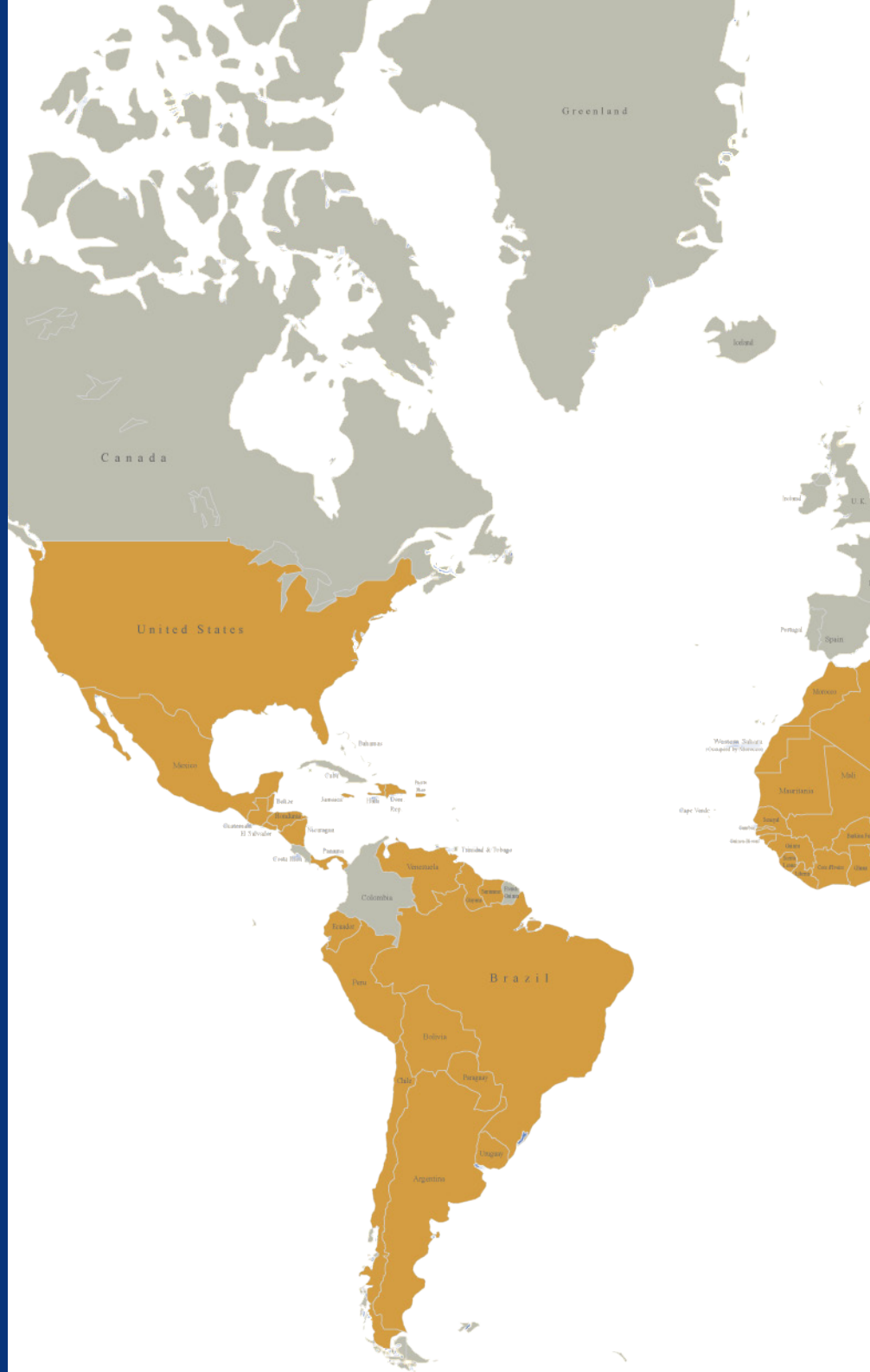
This could be the largest generation in history to transition to adulthood in the coming years. About 85 percent of today's youth live in developing countries.

IFES' youth-focused activities have included organizing youth debate clubs in Afghanistan, creating a civic education curriculum in Georgia and Yemen, promoting voter awareness and education in Indonesia, holding democracy camps that emphasize critical thinking and decision-making skills and producing thought-provoking public service announcements and music videos in Kyrgyzstan.

Youth programs focus on several key principles, including:

- *Involving the Community:* Advocacy and education increase when youth gain support for their causes in their communities
- *Developing Skills:* Informed citizens are the foundation of stable democracies
- *Tackling Crosscutting Issues:* Youth participation programs are inclusive of diverse and vulnerable populations to increase inter-group support
- *Embracing Youth Innovation and Technology:* In a globalized, technological world, youth are pushing the boundaries of traditional mediums to communicate across nations

**A true democratic process sees each citizen's potential to fully participate in the democratic processes of their countries.**



# Philippines

In order to reach out to vulnerable members of society, IFES held regional consultations with various sectors of society in the Philippines, beginning in 2009. To do so, IFES, along with its local partners, surveyed youth groups in order to develop outreach strategies ahead of the May 2010 national elections. The survey found that young people in the Philippines have one of the lowest voter registration rates in the entire country, around 52 percent. With these results in hand, IFES facilitated meetings between a cadre of youth representatives and election officials to discuss the hurdles to youth voting.

This dialogue resulted in several key outcomes, including satellite registration centers and a first-time voters groups organizing "Get Out the Vote" drives with civil society groups. An example of this program's success can be seen with the Tunga Responsible Youth Organization (TRYO) in Leyte, which, after

*"There's a radical – and wonderful – new idea here... that all children could and should be inventors of their own theories, critics of other people's ideas, analyzers of evidence, and makers of their own personal marks on the world."*

— **Deborah Meier**  
Educational Reformer and Writer

participating in IFES-facilitated meetings, held several voter registration drives in remote areas of Leyte and Samar. Not only was the organization able to reach marginalized youth, but it impacted outreach efforts of other organizations.

The TRYO worked to educate people with disabilities on registration issues as well. IFES' programming during this period helped register thousands of first-time voters.



# Kyrgyzstan

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The latest IFES-sponsored Democracy Camp in Kyrgyzstan took place in July and August 2011. This annual series is a highlight for high school students throughout Kyrgyzstan's seven regions.

Democracy Camps have been held by IFES periodically over the past 11 years. Tailored to sophomores, juniors and seniors, the 10-day camps are intended to develop students' problem-solving skills and promote values such as leadership, responsibility and civic participation. Using lectures, group work, competitions, theater and sports, these innovative summer camps provide a place where teenagers can discover their talent and potential. All leave with an increased sense of confidence and feel empowered to carry out projects to improve their schools and communities. This is exactly the kind of young, energetic demographic that Kyrgyzstan needs to continue building its democracy amidst recent upheaval.

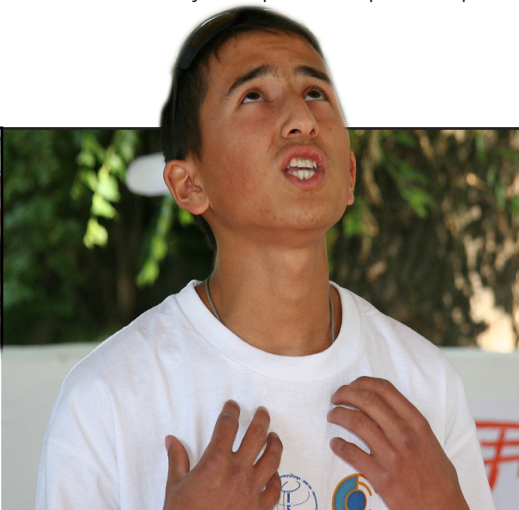
In 2011, more than 2,000 students applied to take part in the Democracy Camps. Participants experienced a

unique curriculum and joined a large alumni network dating back to 2000. Many of these alumni graduate from college, become active in their communities and give back to the camps by contributing their time as volunteers and mentors.

This project is part of a larger civic education and motivation effort that seeks to educate Kyrgyz Republic's next generation of leaders so that they can press for greater government transparency and accountability to the people through public participation.

*“Democracy camp helped me to learn the essence of democratic values, ideas about the role of youth in building of democracy as well as my personal involvement and contribution that I can add to this process.”*

— **Mirgulia Taalaibek kzy**  
Democracy Camp Participant



# Burundi

IFES' involvement with youth in Burundi helped students address non-violence and electoral conflict in their communities.

In collaboration with local youth organizations and electoral stakeholders, IFES wrote and promoted a Code of Conduct for young people. This code was intended to help youth play a role in keeping social cohesion and peace during the entirety of the electoral process. Following a launch event organized by IFES, the code was disseminated throughout Burundi.

Additionally, and in consultation with the electoral commission and in partnership with the Burundian Catholic Church, IFES organized three-day workshops to sensitize and train youth on civic and voter education, with special emphasis on non-violence and democratic values. The workshops, organized in all eight diocese of the country, brought together about 23,000 young men and women to discuss the elections and promote non-violence.

*“The young, free to act on their initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown.”*

— **Margaret Mead**  
American Cultural Anthropologist

IFES' involvement with youth in Burundi also included workshops on democratic foundations, voting and conflict prevention during the elections. IFES partnered with regional organizations and other stakeholders to organize programs for 640 university students from Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The workshops were held at university campuses in Rwanda. Discussion focused on helping students understand the stakes of the upcoming elections so they would be ready to face possible electoral conflicts. Students left with knowledge on avoiding electoral violence in their communities and how to play a role in preventing violence without being manipulated by politicians.



# Afghanistan

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IFES' two largest youth initiatives are the Future Leaders' Club (FLC) and the university debate clubs which work to enhance civic education and advocacy in Afghanistan.

The Future Leaders' Club is a training program for young women, 18-25 years old, who display a strong interest in political activism. Established by IFES as a pilot project in 2010, it continues to create to a vital network of young women who will become future leaders in Afghanistan.

The FLC program pairs training sessions on governance issues, public speaking and leadership building with opportunities where participants can apply these new skills.

In 2010, 20 young women successfully completed the FLC training program.

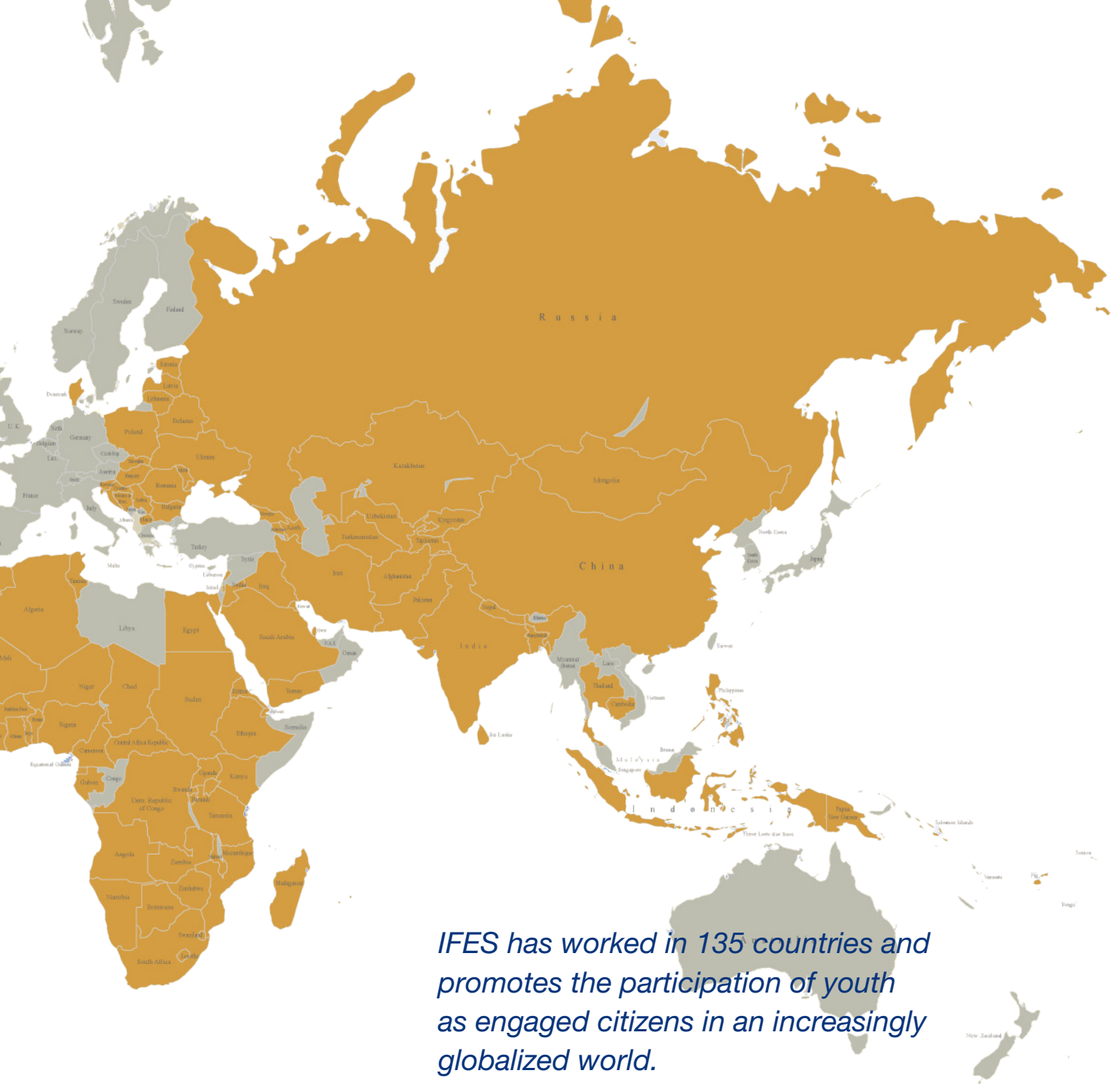
One of these members, Rangina Kargar, was later elected as the youngest member of the Afghan Parliament.

Following an expansion of the program into five additional provinces, approximately 150 FLC members participated in the 2011 program.

IFES also established the debate club program in June 2010 as the first university debate program in Afghanistan. The clubs were introduced to foster a culture of informed discussion through trainings in the British Parliamentary debate system.

The debate club program was also established to build students' skills in public speaking, communication, research, critical thinking, enhance self confidence and increase their ability to better organize information.





*IFES has worked in 135 countries and promotes the participation of youth as engaged citizens in an increasingly globalized world.*

# About IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is the global leader in election assistance and democracy promotion.

IFES promotes democratic stability by providing technical assistance and applying field-based research to the electoral cycle in countries around the world to enhance citizen participation and strengthen civil societies, governance and transparency.

Every IFES project is staffed by national and international personnel while partnering with local election management bodies and civil society organizations. This homegrown approach ensures that the expertise offered by IFES fits the needs of the country or context and the benefit of assistance outlasts the life of the project. Our work is nonpartisan and also includes projects that:

- Help citizens participate in their democracies
- Increase politicians' accountability to the electorate
- Strengthen government institutions

Since its founding in 1987, IFES has worked in 135 countries — from developing to mature democracies.

For more information, visit [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org).



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