



IFES supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to promote sustainable democracy.

She Leads Women's Leadership Program

Overview

She Leads, a flagship program of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), works to empower women with the skills and knowledge to participate and take on leadership roles in political and electoral processes through a series of beginner, intermediate and advanced training levels. To date, *She Leads* has trained over 2,600 women in four countries and continues to expand. Each program is tailored to the cultural and contextual needs of the country, and reflects lessons learned from successful *She Leads* alumnae. As a result of the program, *She Leads* alumnae have developed formal and informal personal networks, increased their self-confidence and taken on leadership roles to advance women's political participation.

Program Highlights

Applying Skills and Knowledge

A unique facet of the *She Leads* program is that participants have community mobilization assignments between trainings. The assignments help the women apply skills and knowledge from the trainings in their communities. These assignments have included conducting voter education, mobilizing voters to check the voter list and teaching others about the role of elected representatives, ultimately reaching over 100,000 individuals.

Becoming Leaders

She Leads alumnae report feeling better prepared and confident to serve as leaders in their communities, with participants twice as likely to think they could be a leader than before they started the program. *She Leads* alumnae have taken on leadership roles as elected officials, representatives on local councils or working groups, domestic observers, and party agents, formed their own community-based organizations, and felt more empowered to fill leadership positions. Two *She Leads* alumnae were even selected to serve as commissioners in the highest electoral office in their countries, carrying out executive duties and bearing the responsibility for electoral leadership.

Advocating for Change

IFES launched the "We Stand Together" campaign in 2017 at IFES' Second Annual Gender Conference in Myanmar. "We Stand Together" is a nationwide advocacy campaign calling for more women leaders and to encourage women's political participation. The campaign is run by a local partner and supported by *She Leads* alumnae. Supporters advocate to elected officials on the importance of women's political participation, mobilize their communities and collect photo petitions demonstrating support from them at regional-level roundtables.

At a Glance

2,600+

She Leads participants

2

She Leads alumnae selected as election commissioners in Indonesia

43%

She Leads alumnae ran for local office in Sri Lanka in 2018

57%

She Leads alumnae took on leadership roles in the 2017 regional elections in Indonesia



She Leads Curriculum

Beginner Training

In the beginner-level training, women gain technical knowledge on topics such as “Getting Involved in the Electoral Process,” “Women’s Leadership” and “Gender Equality.” Thus far, the beginner trainings have been adapted as a young women’s training and IFES is currently assessing the possibility of conducting *She Leads* with women living in former conflict areas.

Intermediary Training

The intermediary curriculum is a five-day course offering greater insight on technical topics such as “Ethical Leadership” and “Power Mapping” and develop additional leadership skills including strategic questioning and working with the media.

Advanced Training

Bringing together alumnae who have completed intermediary trainings, participants in the advanced training will partake in a multi-day course providing advanced technical training and leadership skills capacity-building such as “Personal Action Planning,” “Overcoming Objections” and “Advocacy.”



“Before the training, I hoped I might be a leader. Now I know I will be a leader.”
-Su Hlaing Tu (far left), Young Women’s Training participant

“After this training program we realized that our Tamil speaking sisters also have similar visions for a better country just like we do. And that we need to work together to make this vision a reality.”
-She Leads training participant, Sri Lanka



“Thanks to the knowledge I got from the training, I now have confidence to talk to MPs and senior people such as Ministers.”
-Aye Aye Myint

Success Story

She Leads Alumna Becomes Community Leader

Following her *She Leads* training, Aye Aye Myint, a farmer from a rural area in Myanmar, began taking on progressive leadership roles in community and regional initiatives such as organizing voter education trainings that were recognized by the Union Election Commission and participating in peace discussions. Further drawing on the skills and confidence gained from *She Leads*, as well as her commitment and passion for women’s empowerment, in 2016 Aye Aye ultimately set up her own organization, Taw Win Dhazin, to promote gender equality, leadership, and motivate her community to learn about women’s rights.

