



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.

IFES Youth Programming

Overview

With almost 50 percent of the world's population 25 years old or younger, engaging youth in politics is key to building democratic stability and future leadership. IFES promotes the political rights of youth and encourages their participation in all stages of the electoral process.

IFES youth programming includes initiatives in voter education, democracy camps and mobile voter registration to mobilize the youth vote on Election Day. IFES looks for innovative ways to connect youth with political leaders using social media and new technology; foster youth leadership; promote engagement in civic life; and advocate for the political rights of young people.

Project Highlights

Afghanistan: IFES' University Debate Club, the first national debate club formed in Afghanistan, aims to foster a culture of debate and give youth the opportunity to enhance their public speaking, research and critical thinking skills. In June 2013, over 200 students from 20 universities covering all corners of Afghanistan arrived in Kabul to compete in the 2013 Afghanistan National Debate Tournament. Since the club's inception in 2010, IFES has trained over 600 students in British Parliamentary Debate.

Kyrgyzstan: During local council elections in November 2012, IFES piloted a volunteer institute that allowed young people to experience an election, selecting 29 alumni from its long-standing Democracy Camp project. Working with IFES trainers, these 29 high school students took an active part in training poll workers across the country. They also observed voting on Election Day. Because all volunteers were under the voting age of 18, this experience gave students their first close-up view of the election process.

Georgia: In June 2013, IFES held a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the United States Agency for International Development and IFES' six new partner universities in Georgia. The MoU sets the framework for IFES' civic education course, "Democracy and Citizenship," at these universities from 2013 onward. First unveiled in 2011, this innovative course is designed to strengthen students' understanding of civic responsibility and encourage their participation in public life, covering government systems, human rights, civil society and civic participation. By fall 2013, the class will be offered at 20 universities throughout Georgia.

Tunisia: I Watch, a youth-run watchdog organization that promotes transparency and accountability in Tunisia's government, is working with IFES to sharpen its campaign finance skills. IFES has trained this organization on political and campaign finance monitoring techniques and building advocacy strategies. Recently, I Watch completed its guide to monitoring campaign finance: *Handbook on Campaign Finance in Tunisia: Issues and Monitoring*.

