



International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy
and Electoral Assistance

15 YEARS
1995 – 2010

Supporting
Democracy
Worldwide

15 stories on democracy support »

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GRAPHIC DESIGN: KSB Design/Kristina Schollin-Borg

PHOTOS: Fredrik Naumann/Panos Pictures (cover), University of Newcastle, Australia (p 10), Aldas Kirvaitis (p 12), Gerry Lauzon (p 14), Dominique Kramer (p 16), Adam Gault/Getty Images (p 18), IDEA/Peru (p 20), Adam Wiseman (p 22), Hans Hendriksen (p 24), Rita Rai and Cecilia Bylesjö/IDEA (p 26), UN Photo/Joao Araujo Pinto (p 28), Hughes Léglise-Bataille (p 30), Mihai Potirniche/© European Union, 1995–2010 (p 32), Wayan Vota (p 34), UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran (36)

PRINTED: Trydells Tryckeri AB, Sweden

ISBN: 978-91-85724-99-4

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15 Years of Democracy Building

For the past 15 years International IDEA's vision has been to support democracy building worldwide. What was not so evident when the Institute started up was just how it would go about doing this.

Clearly though, as many authoritarian and undemocratic governments were collapsing around the world, a pressing need was emerging for more knowledge on electoral systems and practical information on how to run elections. So this is where IDEA started.

Out of this work came the Institute's first handbook, a classic work, the handbook of *Electoral Systems Design*. In retrospect, the knowledge contained in this book laid down the foundation for IDEA's subsequent work.

The Institute realised quickly that, although properly managed free and fair elections were important to democracy, they were not the be-all and end-all of it: other issues needed to be addressed and resolved for democracy to take root. So, early on, IDEA



started looking at democracy opportunities in deep rooted conflict, and building comparative knowledge resources on elections management, codes of conduct, political parties and more.

Against this background, International IDEA was invited to facilitate local dialogues on democratic development in several countries including Burkina Faso, Georgia, Guatemala and Nigeria. Questions raised in these deliberations about how to make a country and its institutions more democratic

created an appetite for knowledge beyond electoral management and the best electoral system – a quest that seeded work on political parties, gender in politics, conflict resolution and reconciliation, and constitution building.

From the outset International IDEA has applied one principle consistently, one which is reflected in all of its handbooks and other knowledge resources – there is no single prescription for how to improve and deepen democracy! Consequently, the Institute develops its knowledge resources based on the comparative experiences of democracy building in countries around the world, knowledge that can then be selected, adapted and applied by people in other countries in their own contexts in their own time.

Where exactly does this information come from? Not just political scientists and academics – who certainly play a key role – but, importantly, from the valuable networks of election administrators, politicians, civil society and others involved in conducting democratic processes. In short, empowerment through access to, and sharing of, information and advice based on proven experience.

Very early on International IDEA stated that genuine democratization could not occur without the full participation of women in political life. Accordingly, one of IDEA's early handbooks, *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, first published in 1998, became a seminal work. Today gender issues permeate everything IDEA does and are integrated into all of its programmes and knowledge resources.

Building capacity and strengthening elections management is a priority in many different countries. Recognizing the growing potential for information technology to provide access to knowledge and information across the world, International IDEA and its partners instigated the development of two landmark resources: the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network in 1998 that makes material on elections available worldwide – and which has become the most dynamic collections of information in its field – and the BRIDGE training curriculum in 2000, which is probably the world's most comprehensive training programme for electoral management.

IDEA's in-country work attempts to give a local voice to democracy reform; to foster local ownership

of the reform process. Starting with dialogues, IDEA later formed a partnership with the UK Audit team from Essex University and established the *State of Democracy* methodology, putting the means of assessing democracy and coming up with a reform agenda in the hands of normal citizens.

Democratic reform often stems from the design or implementation of constitutions. IDEA has developed considerable experience supporting inclusive constitution building processes from countries as far apart and with different issues as Nepal and Bolivia.

Along the way, IDEA digested the lessons of its own experience and engaged more assertively in the wider policy debate about what constitutes effective electoral assistance. In 2003, IDEA was granted Observer status by the United Nations General Assembly. Moreover, it has developed a strong and continuing relationship with the European Union marked most recently in 2009 by the compilation of views from other regions about the EU's democracy policy and assistance programmes. International IDEA has also developed ties with the African Union following on from its engagement with the

New Partnership for Africa's Development such that, in 2008, a Joint Activity Plan to implement the African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance was launched.

These are all small but bold steps contributing towards democracy building processes. They are a reflection of the determination and commitment of our Member States – mainly small and medium-sized democracies from all continents – that support our Institute. They are a reflection of the Institute's credibility, flexibility and its ability to play a neutral role and bring opposing parties or factions together to discuss a common reform agenda. They are a reflection of the strength and value of IDEA's knowledge resources and practitioner networks built up over the past 15 years.

Most of all, they are a reflection of the efforts of the many individuals and organizations committed to bringing about democratization in their own countries. Here are 15 of their stories.

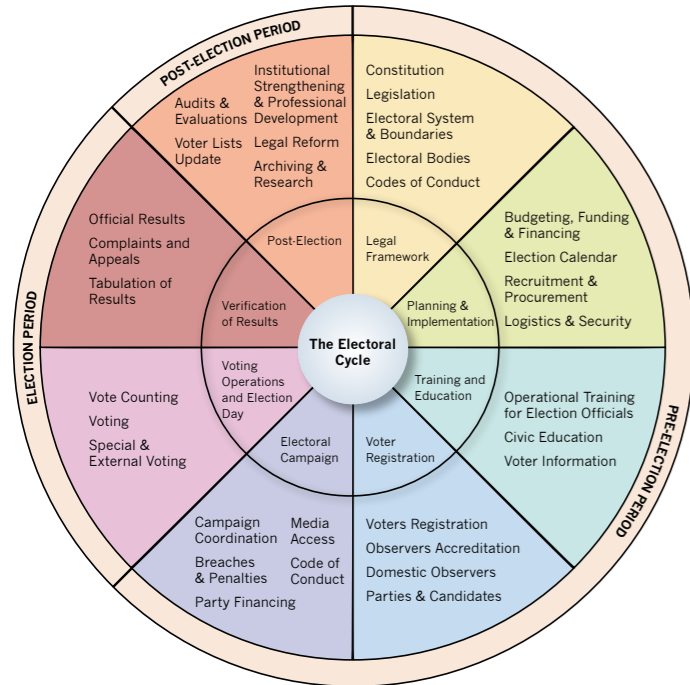


VIDAR HELGESEN, *Secretary-General*

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Elections: a continuous cycle



The electoral cycle approach has become the gold standard for Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), assistance providers and donors to determine the most effective form of electoral assistance required in any given country. This approach considers not only those activities undertaken on Election Day, but also the whole series of activities and processes undertaken after, between and leading up to each election – in other words, the entire electoral cycle. Electoral assistance projects in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, Sierra Leone and Togo, which were considered successfully implemented, were informed by the electoral cycle approach.

In the late 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin wall, many countries organized multiparty elections for the first time. The main challenges that faced those elections were identified as lack of experience and a knowledge gap. The international community was keen to provide assistance to these elections, but the knowledge and experience on their side was also limited, and support often resulted in short-term and costly interventions focusing on isolated electoral events.

Recognizing the obstacles to the implementation of long-term assistance, International IDEA and the European Commission (EC) developed a visual planning and training tool in 2004 that could help development agencies, electoral assistance providers and electoral officials in partner countries to understand the cyclical nature of the various challenges faced

in electoral processes. This tool has become known as the *Electoral Cycle Approach*.

“We drew a circle on the wall,” says Paul Guerin, IDEA Senior Programme Manager. “It’s a simple visual tool that has been adopted by main assistance providers and donors, such as the European Commission and United Nations Development Programme, and to which the UN Secretary General’s report to the General Assembly in 2009 refers.” (see page 28).

The concept of the electoral cycle, which focuses on the post-election period and the possibilities of providing long-term support and developing local capacity in between elections, rapidly gained consensus among practitioners and development agencies. Its conceptualization was completed with the publication of the European Commission *Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance*, the International IDEA Handbook on *Electoral Management Design* and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) *Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*. This approach

was officially endorsed by the EC and UNDP for every electoral assistance project from the moment the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance* was signed in April 2006.

As a means to spread the knowledge about the approach IDEA worked with the EC and UNDP to build a five day training course on the subject specially targeting development agencies, electoral assistance providers, donors and Electoral Management Bodies.

It was piloted in Brussels and Tanzania in 2006. Since then it has been held in Accra, Dar es Salaam, Maputo and Milan. Because of its popularity, an eLearning course was developed in 2008 as a means of widening access to such training.

The “paradigm shift” towards the electoral cycle approach has now taken root. There is still considerable work to be done before this evolution can be completed however; capacity building, both at the development agency and partner country level, will be the way forward to continue its implementation.

PUBLICATIONS

- Making Electoral Assistance Effective: *From Formal Commitment to Actual Implementation* (ACE “Focus on...” Series) (2009) also available in French
- Electoral Management Design: *The International IDEA Handbook* (2008) also available in Arabic

ONLINE

- ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network www.aceproject.org/electoral-advice/electoral-assistance/electoral-cycle

Platforms for pushing reform in Burkina Faso and Georgia

In a number of fledgling democracies – such as Burkina Faso and Georgia – it was the local people themselves rather than the international community that led dialogues to work out the reforms needed to improve democratic processes and institutions. These ‘dialogues for democratic development’ included politicians, political parties, academics, NGOs and civil society, the media and others with a vested interest in securing a democratic future.

In both Burkina Faso and Georgia International IDEA played the role of ‘honest broker’, bringing opposing forces together on neutral ground. As the dialogues progressed, IDEA convened meetings for the partners and supported them with a broad range of information, allowing them to make concrete recommendations towards reform on electoral systems, voting methods, conflict resolution, options for social inclusion, gender quotas, the role of EMBs, political parties and electoral dispute resolution mechanisms.

In Burkina Faso one of the earliest dialogues took place in 1997. The aim, according to Senegal’s Adama Dieng, distinguished international lawyer and former IDEA board member, was “to increase the opportunities for dialogue, consensus-building and consultation within the Burkinabe society . . . to suggest new

avenues for democratic development and thereby generate new dynamics to advance democracy.”

The government responded positively to the conclusions emerging from the dialogues to make reforms in the political system. It established a cabinet of national unity and created a truth commission to investigate past crimes and end impunity.

At the time IDEA left Burkina Faso the reins for promoting democracy lay in the hands of the Centre for Democratic Governance (CDG), an NGO established with the help of IDEA. Today this NGO still lobbies on issues like constitutionalism and electoral reform.

In Georgia a similar dialogue process occurred with local people taking charge and coming together to reflect on their situation and articulate a reform agenda some ten years after independence. In 2001 IDEA was asked to coordinate a two year programme of dialogues among activists, practitioners and academics to tease out a vision for Georgia.

The Rose Revolution of 2003 underscored the public’s desire for democratic structures which involved limits to presidential power. Opposing positions needed to be reconciled and IDEA played a central role in facilitating the dialogues that brought people together to agree on solutions to the concerns including the conduct of elections, the balance of power between the parliament and the presidency, and increasing the level of participation in political life.

IDEA has long since closed operations in Georgia, but key partner organizations such as the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development and the Centre for Democratic Studies continue to this day to push the debate forward.

“The CDG brings together the governing majority and the opposition, which is quite an achievement in the local context.”

AUGUSTIN LOADA, *Director, Centre for Democratic Governance, Burkina Faso*

PUBLICATIONS

- Democracy in Burkina Faso (1998)
- The Reform of the Electoral System in Burkina Faso (1999)
- Democracy at the Local Level: *A Guide for the South Caucasus* (2003) also available in Russian



Reconciliation after conflict

Countries with vastly different histories such as Cambodia, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Zimbabwe have each managed reconciliation processes as a means to emerge from periods of violent conflict towards greater democracy. Their experiences in turn have been used to find pathways towards democracy in similar situations elsewhere.

Reconstructing broken ties between people after a violent conflict or finding a means of peaceful coexistence is as urgent as rebuilding infrastructure and facilities. As South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, “Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace.”

Preventing a recurrence of previous conflict is an essential element in building lasting democracy, and is the focus of International IDEA’s studies on reconciliation. Drawing on examples of healing, justice, truth telling and reparation from Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and South Africa, International IDEA published its first handbook *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict* in 2003 that highlights lessons that can be considered when addressing similar situations around the world.

The handbook is available in French and associated material has been developed in Sinhala, Tamil, Burmese and Spanish to meet country-specific needs.

Having been through the process himself, Archbishop Tutu said about the book, “The practical tools and lessons from experience presented in the handbook will inspire, assist and support others in their supremely important task.”

It is important to understand that reconciliation is not only about forgiveness, morality, religion or sentiment; it can also have a pragmatic effect, as a tool to learn about how to coexist.

And reconciliation does not happen overnight; its impact might be felt in generations to come so a focus on long-term processes is needed.

“Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace.”

DESMOND TUTU, *Archbishop Emeritus, South Africa*

PUBLICATIONS

- Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: *Learning from African Experiences* (2008) also available in French
- Verdad, justicia y reparación: desafíos para la democracia y la convivencia social (*Truth, Justice and Reparations: challenges for democracy and social coexistence*) (2005)
- Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: *A Handbook* (2003) also available in French

ONLINE

- Reconciliation Resource Network www.idea.int/rrn

Peru's first

Peru has made significant progress towards restoring the credibility of its political institutions and reclaiming civil liberties after the collapse in 2000 of the Fujimori presidency that was tainted by corruption and authoritarianism.

A key initiative in the process was the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the adoption by the Peruvian Congress in 2003 of legislation to reform political parties.

“Re-establishing laws to govern and strengthen political parties was critical,” explains Kristen Sample, IDEA’s Head of Mission of the Andean Region, “especially considering that democracy was constantly interrupted.”

The journey began with the 12 main political parties coming together in a working group to develop a common

political parties law

reform agenda and come up with a bill to regulate the parties. Experience of party regulation in other countries – particularly in other Latin American countries – was compiled for the working group by International IDEA and Peru’s Asociación Civil Transparencia. This information formed the basis of several dialogues held among experts and practitioners who were brought together from across Latin America to exchange their knowledge and practical experience with their Peruvian counterparts.

When it came to drafting the legislation, IDEA was requested to provide technical inputs into the construction of the regulations covering the official registration of parties, the supervision by the National Office for Electoral Processes, the internal elections, the limits to private financing and media exposure.

The new law also set a 30 per cent quota for women in both general and internal party elections. “If parties are the gate-keepers of political life, it is important for them to work in a gender-friendly way,” Sample argues. To support the ambition of the law IDEA published a manual

in 2008 aimed at Latin American audiences containing 95 best practices for promoting greater participation by women in political life.

Even though passage of the new law on parties in Peru in 2003 was groundbreaking, it is clear that the real work for the parties lies in the implementation phase, as significant internal reforms and modernization efforts are necessary if parties are to fully comply with the law.

“The drafting of the law showed that it is possible to get members of political parties ... to discuss issues of common interest that lead to the development of a specific product.”

PERCY MEDINA, *Secretary-General, Asociación Civil Transparencia, Peru*

PUBLICATIONS

- Ley de Partidos Políticos: La construcción de un consenso (*Political party law: building consensus*) (2004)
- Del dicho al hecho: Manual de buenas prácticas para la participación de mujeres en los partidos políticos latinoamericanos (*From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Political Parties*) (2008) also available in English

Knowledge empowers democracy

What started back in 1998 as a project to make material on elections available worldwide – the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project – has become the most dynamic collection of information in its field, currently accessed on the internet by 1.2 million visitors per year. Now called the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the project provides a platform for global, regional, national, governmental and non governmental players to share expertise on electoral management.

How big should a polling station be in relation to the number of voters it serves? What size budget is required for voter registration? What is the best format for ballot papers? What needs to happen to allow for voting from abroad?

These are all questions ACE can provide answers to, or a range of options on. “The goal is not to provide election professionals with a prescription of what to do,” explains Ola Pettersson, Assistant Programme Officer at International IDEA, “but to facilitate informed decisions.”

And, as if ACE isn't encyclopaedic enough, it is constantly being expanded and updated. Most of this work is done by the ten ACE Regional Electoral Resource Centres located throughout the world. These Centres ensure that ACE is a living, growing resource by adding material based on developments in their own regions and in their own languages.

Adding to its appeal is the facility for people to obtain advice direct from some 200 electoral experts located around the world. For example, when the Zimbabwean Electoral Support Network (ZESN) sought guidance in 2009 on what constituted fair rules for appointing a new electoral commission, they used that advice to put pressure on the government.

IDEA is one of the original ACE partners, hosting the secretariat and continuing to participate in its growth. The present partners include the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA), Elections Canada, the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the UN Department for Social Affairs (UNDESA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), with the European Commission as an ex-officio member.

ACE is supplemented by other web based resources developed by IDEA and its partners

such as the Voter Turnout database, a statistical compilation of voter turnout in all presidential and parliamentary elections since 1945, the iKNOW Politics (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics) network that aims at increasing the participation and effectiveness of women in political life, among others (see box).

ONLINE

- ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network www.aceproject.org
- iKNOW Politics www.iknowpolitics.org
- Voter Turnout database www.idea.int/vt
- Unified Database: Community-supported democracy and election data www.idea.int/uid

“Some issues are not in textbooks so getting it from the practitioners is always practical and relevant. In most cases responses are received speedy and timely.”

RINDAI CHIPFUNDE, *Director, Zimbabwean Electoral Support Network*

Global training meets local needs

In 2010 the global training curriculum for election administrators, BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections), won the UN Public Service Award in the category *Improving the delivery of public services* for contributing towards more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide.

Developed in 2000, the comprehensive BRIDGE training curriculum with its 24 modules represents the most ambitious attempt ever undertaken to cover the spectrum of electoral processes. Coupled with a facilitator accreditation programme, BRIDGE is the result of a partnership between five organizations: Australian Electoral Commission, International IDEA, International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES), UN Electoral Assistance Division, and the UN Development Programme.

A decade on, BRIDGE is now available in a wide range of languages, its curriculum has been adapted to different regions, and countless thousands of electoral administrators have benefited from its training.

The course emphasizes the principles underlying all properly run elections, while drawing practical examples from different countries. A highly interactive approach is used for learning since peer-learning and sharing experiences with other participants is an essential part of the training.

Apart from the professional empowerment of successive generations of BRIDGE participants, there is a multiplier effect as knowledge is passed on to colleagues as local training is provided by BRIDGE accredited facilitators.

“In my opinion the BRIDGE training is very useful as it is based on the practical and implementation methods,” says Ghanashyam Bhandari, a district election officer from Nepal.

This is corroborated by others who undertake the programme. The Chair of Uganda’s Electoral Commission Dr Badru M Kiggundu says that BRIDGE training undertaken by his staff in 2009 has meant “an enormous capacity contribution to the human resource of my institution.”

And in Mozambique for instance, the consequence of BRIDGE training for members of the Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections during the lead up to the 2003 local government elections resulted in less administrative errors being reported in the polling stations, despite the occurrence of other irregularities.

Currently in its second version, BRIDGE now aims at expanding its success with Electoral Management Bodies and targeting others such as observer groups, media, civil society and the security forces. BRIDGE is also evolving to become more geared towards democracy and governance – trialled successfully in Bhutan and Vanuatu in 2009. The inclusion of democracy and governance into the BRIDGE curriculum will form an important new growth point for the programme, fleshing out the full name of BRIDGE.

“Your institution’s outstanding achievement has demonstrated excellence in serving the public interest and . . . it will be an inspiration and encouragement for others working for the public service.”

HAIYAN QIAN, *Director, UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management*

PUBLICATIONS

- Electoral Management Design: *The International IDEA Handbook* (2008) also available in Arabic
- Direct Democracy: *The International IDEA Handbook* (2008)
- Electoral System Design: *The New International IDEA Handbook* (2005) also available in Arabic, Burmese, French, Nepali, and Spanish

ONLINE

- **BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections):** www.bridge-project.org



Multiplying knowledge and skills in Peru

Public perception and approval of peruvian political parties has long been among the lowest in the region. To improve their standing, the political parties called upon International IDEA and local partner Asociación Civil Transparencia as long ago as 2002 to provide capacity building designed to strengthen political organizations. The programme was designed to improve the country's political organizations members' and local leaders' knowledge on the role and responsibilities of political parties, and on women's participation and leadership in political organizations.

Built into the programme were modules on how the participants themselves could train other members of their political organizations. Thus, by the time the second phase of the programme ended in December 2009, over 3,500 leaders had benefited directly or indirectly from the training, and at least four political organizations had implemented formal party training programmes of their own using International IDEA's methodologies and training materials.

How did it all begin? International IDEA and Transparencia started working with the parties in 2002–2003, initially focusing on Peru's first-ever political party law, facilitating inter-party roundtables to assist the process (see page 14). The outcomes of the collaboration in later phases of the programme have resulted in the members of national and regional parties developing their own strategies for promoting multi-party political dialogue, for consensus building and for improving the parties' internal agendas.

Several political organizations have also organized internet based courses; the one organized by the party "Perú Posible" for instance, was regarded as 'very successful' by its National Secretary of Women's Affairs, Isabel Montalvo Roel.

In 2008, around 100 women from political parties in 12 regions across the country embarked on a capacity building programme designed to equip them for political leadership, and dealing with media and equality issues. As well as strengthening their leadership capabilities and improving the quality of debate within their parties, these women

have delivered replica training exercises in their own social and political organizations so that today, over 800 women have benefited.

And more recently, ahead of the 2010 general elections, International IDEA was involved in training 300 people from 42 political organizations on strengthening parties, equal opportunity, the electoral system, governance issues and economic policies. Not only has this new phase of work involved developing web-based support for the participants but this support now serves as a 'virtual space' (www.evirtual.com.pe/idea) for them to share their knowledge and experience among their peers.

"I acquired much knowledge ... which strengthened my leadership ... I was able to offer many seminars myself about the same topics ... to other women and men in my party."

ISABEL MONTALVO ROEL, National Secretary of Women's Affairs of "Perú Posible"

PUBLICATIONS

- MÓDULO AVANZADO DE FORMACIÓN POLÍTICA (*Advanced Course for Political Training*) *Economía y competitividad (2005)*, *Reforma y modernización del Estado (2005)*, *Comunicación política en campañas electorales (2006)*, *La equidad de género desde los gobiernos regionales y locales (2007)*

ONLINE

- IDEA Internacional: Plataforma virtual (*International IDEA: Virtual Platform*) www.evirtual.com.pe/idea



Changing political party rules in Mexico

The political heat generated by the 2006 elections when Felipe Calderón won the Mexican presidency by a margin of only 0.5 % over the rival leftist candidate ensured that pressure for greater fairness and transparency in the electoral system could not be ignored. Shortly afterwards the Senate embarked on an ambitious programme of political and electoral reform which Congress adopted by the end of 2007.

To begin this process the Senate needed specialized comparative knowledge on electoral matters and, in March 2007, invited International IDEA to assist by providing technical expertise on these issues. The cooperation focused on two priorities: strengthening Mexico's electoral institutions, and injecting greater transparency into the financing of political parties.

Within a few months of signing a cooperation agreement, a Senate Committee and IDEA brought together specialists on party financing from across Latin America to address the reform agenda. The initial "Mexico City" seminar held in August 2007 was

followed by a series of one-to-one meetings between Mexican legislators and IDEA staff that facilitated their efforts to work through the various options.

As the work progressed, politicians were able to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal. International IDEA further facilitated the discussions among legislators who grappled with the question of political advertising in election campaigns – whether to use a model of buying free airtime in electronic media, or forbid it completely in all media, or only allow it in electronic media – and what types of sanctions need to be applied to those not complying with the rules.

"IDEA's approach was a consultative one, presenting several possibilities," said Daniel Zovatto, IDEA Director for Latin America based in Costa Rica. "Lawmakers," according to Zovatto, "were able to pluck what they judged most suitable for their own realities."

And, as a result, the rules of the game changed substantially – parties were no longer able to

purchase advertising in the broadcast media, which levelled the playing field and subverted the impact of money flowing into party treasures from illicit sources. It also meant that parties had to campaign more vigorously in communities across Mexico, ensuring greater contact with the concerns of ordinary Mexican voters.

The reform package was successfully tested in the 2009 federal mid term elections. Afterwards, the Mexican electoral authorities organized a seminar with support from International IDEA to assess the new laws. The assessment suggested that the legislation needed to be adjusted to improve monitoring of radio and television, and the sanctioning powers of the electoral bodies needed strengthening.

The relationship between Mexico and IDEA continues to this day and, in 2010, Senate President Carlos Navarrete is working to extend the Senate's partnership with International IDEA to secure the Institute's ongoing assistance to the country's future political reform processes.

PUBLICATIONS

- Regulación jurídica de los partidos políticos en América Latina (*Legal Regulation of Political Parties in Latin America*) (2006)



Taking the pulse of a country's democracy

Giving the citizens of a country the ability to assess their own democracy is a potent means of enlisting broad support for democratic reform. This is what the State of Democracy (SoD) assessment framework has encouraged in over 20 countries since its introduction ten years ago.

Take Mongolia: Mongolia chose to use the SoD in 2005–6. Its history suggested it was one of the countries least likely to move towards internationally accepted models of democracy. Yet, the results of the assessment provided the government with some clear indicators for improving democratic governance, which led to a commitment to adopt a broad agenda for improving democracy, human rights and anti-corruption.

State of Democracy is an analytical tool that can be used by the citizens of any country around the world to probe, question and assess the quality of their governments and democratic institutions. Strengths and weaknesses can be identified for example, in the electoral system, or in the parliament, the role of the media, in political parties and so on – which can lead towards the development of an agenda for reform.

The SoD is the fruit of a partnership between International IDEA and the UK Democratic Audit. It was piloted in 2000 and guided by two basic principles: “popular control over decision-making” and “equality among citizens in the exercise of that control”. The methodology is adaptable to old, new and emerging democracies and allows for a broad spread of information to be gathered, making the assessments more useful than if they were only based on numbers.

Thus, in the case of Mongolia, the assessment team was able to customize the assessment methodology to make it relevant to the Mongolian context, and ensuring that the views of Mongolia’s nomadic population were heard alongside that of academics and others located within cities with greater experience of government. In fact, the Mongolian government incorporated the outcome of the audit and used it as a basis from creating an additional national Millennium Development Goal, MDG 9, focusing on democracy, human rights and anti-corruption (see page 28). Based on the SoD framework Mongolia continues to examine

the status of these three elements every year, monitoring progress using indicators specifically developed for this purpose.

Today, International IDEA supports countries conduct their respective SoDs by providing training and technical support as necessary on how to conduct the assessments and coaching the national assessment teams. IDEA’s comparative knowledge resources – handbooks on electoral systems or political parties for example – are provided to assist those reviewing their democracy to make more informed judgments about their own situation.

“Our government has incorporated the outcome of the audit exercise into the country’s Millennium Development Goals mix, by uniquely creating a new goal, MDG 9, focused on Democracy, Human Rights and Anti-Corruption.”

H.E. MS. OCHIR ENKHTSETSEG, *Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the UN*

PUBLICATIONS

- Assessing the Quality of Democracy: *A Practical Guide* (2008) also available in Spanish

ONLINE

- State of Democracy Network website www.idea.int/sod

10



Sitting trust at the table of negotiations in Nepal

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 and Nepal's Constituent Assembly (CA) elections two years later ended a decade of Maoist insurgency and civil war, popular protest and constitutional stalemate. The resulting popularly elected 601-member Constituent Assembly formed in 2008 comprised 33 per cent women, 8 per cent Dalit (up from 0), and the Maoist party becoming the biggest party in the legislature and the Constituent Assembly. The first meeting of the CA also ended the centuries old monarchy and declared Nepal a republic.

Through the provision of a non partisan platform for dialogue, International IDEA has been supporting Nepal since 2006, working with political parties and civil society to design and to elect the Constituent Assembly and build the new constitution. In facilitating the dialogues, IDEA has been pushing for a Constituent Assembly and a constitution that is gender inclusive and supports the rights of minorities and ethnic groups, and provided its published works that contain comparative experiences from other countries around the world.

Given the fractures within Nepalese society these processes have not always gone smoothly – underlining the need to build mutual trust before any consensus can be formed. For example, although the agenda about rights, inclusion, self-determination, accountability and responsiveness is, by and large, shared by the political parties at the level of election manifestos and submissions, a degree of elite resistance still exists. The question remains whether the party elites are able and visionary enough to draft and agree on a constitution which realises these goals, even if this goes against their immediate interests.

Once the CA began its work, it formed various thematic committees that were charged with preparing preliminary drafts and concept papers for the new constitution. These committees consulted many different organizations and individuals, and sought the opinions of people from all districts including Nepalese living abroad. Studies and research carried out by various national and international institutions were also taken into account, together with the views from political parties, experts, civil society bodies, professional organizations and others. Public consultations are planned to be held on the first draft constitution as well.

At the CA's bidding, International IDEA and the Nepal Law Society put together an expert team to analyze and prepare commentaries on the draft concept papers and preliminary drafts of the constitution from a legal perspective. The political issues on the other hand were reviewed by a team – consisting of members of the Constituent Assembly – representing the different political parties. The resulting commentaries

provided suggestions, and identified and analyzed outstanding issues and concerns arising from the texts for consideration by the Assembly.

Although the original timetable envisaged for the new constitution to be promulgated was May 2010, the process at the time of writing has been delayed for a further year due to a number of political differences that are presently being resolved.

“As a chair of this committee, I feel myself responsible for making every person participate in the process of constitution building. Linking public consultation and public ownership is a very good idea. Certainly this gives us a long-lasting and democratic constitution. IDEA’s view is similar to ours ... our objectives complement each other.”

PRAMOD GUPTA, *Chair, Public Opinion Collection and Coordination Committee, Nepal*

PUBLICATIONS

- Creating the New Constitution: A Guide for Nepali Citizens (2008) also available in Nepali
- English-Nepali Glossary of Federalism Terms (2009)
- A Glossary of Constitutional Terms English-Nepali (2007)

ONLINE

- More resources on Nepal www.idea.int/asia_pacific/nepal



Spotlight on democracy building in the UN

Building democracy is intimately related to the three pillars of the United Nations – development, peace and security, and human rights. By 2004 almost a third of the UN’s 192 Member States had requested its assistance in conducting elections. Today the UN continues to meet the challenge of supporting the new wave of democracy throughout the world.

Over the years the UN relationship with International IDEA has deepened resulting in 2003 in the UN General Assembly granting the Institute “Observer” status.

In November 2007, the UN Secretary-General’s report to the General Assembly recognized the Institute’s role as a key partner among the intergovernmental democracy movements and organizations in supporting the UN on democracy issues, and made a specific acknowledgement on the strength of the cooperation between the UN, the International Conferences on New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD), and International IDEA.

In November 2009, the UN Secretary-General again highlighted International IDEA’s contributions to the General Assembly, acknowledging the Institute as a key partner in collaborating with the UN in developing knowledge resources on democracy issues, and developing networks of experts and practitioners on

electoral processes, political parties, constitution building, democracy assessments and gender. In his report he embodied several specific recommendations made by IDEA, for example, “the implementation of self-assessments of the state of democracy by Member States with the aim of identifying areas for action and entry points for policy reform.” (document A/64/372, paragraph 88).

In fact, back in 2005, Mongolia’s use of IDEA’s citizen-led national assessments of the quality of democracy led to the development of an agenda for change – the National Plan of Action – which in turn, led to the adoption of the country’s national Millennium Development Goal 9 on democracy, human rights and anti-corruption (see page 24). Today, no less than 20 countries worldwide have used the methodology and more are in the pipeline.

Though disseminating the Institute’s comparative knowledge resources to UN Member States is

important, the fact that much of the source of information is derived from the global South is of greater appeal as it directly fosters the cross fertilization of ideas on the issues surrounding democracy building. Whether it be comparing the experience of electoral processes among Arab nations, or how a large and diverse society like India conducts elections, or describing the role of political parties in conflict-prone countries, or how traditional justice mechanisms work in post-conflict situations in Africa, IDEA is able to draw this local knowledge into the UN family.

On 8 November 2007, the General Assembly proclaimed 15 September as the International Day of Democracy, which provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world.

ONLINE

International IDEA at the UN
www.idea.int/un



Advocacy triggers tangible electoral results in Bolivia

The 2009 elections saw Bolivian women win 47 per cent of the seats in the Senate and occupy half of the ministries after the national elections. This was a direct result of the Temporary Electoral Law mandate securing gender equality and parity, with provision for the alternation of male and female candidates on party voting lists.

Besides the solid increase in the number of women in the Senate (up from 3 per cent in the 2005 elections), the number of women in the Chamber of Deputies also increased, and now lies at 25 per cent. This means

that today, the Plurinational Legislative Assembly comprises 30 per cent women.

Why did women do so well? President Evo Morales had much to do with this, calling for women to make up 50 per cent of all government positions. His call was taken up by the Women's Coordinating Committee which, with support from International IDEA and several local partner organizations, launched a campaign with the slogan "We share your dream, Mr President". This campaign resulted in the drafting and approval of Article 9 of the Temporary Electoral Law that crucially deals with equity opportunities for women and men.

During this campaign, International IDEA provided various inputs including dissemination of its publications on boosting women's participation and quotas, and facilitating a women's caucus across party lines that gave more prominence to gender issues and promoted networking. IDEA also conducted a series of

three day training courses across Bolivia to around 150 women candidates covering the details of the electoral framework, how to present oneself as a candidate, and how to boost women's participation in the political process.

This work built on IDEA's previous engagement in Bolivia during the constitutional reform process prior to 2009, when training was provided to women members of the Constituent Assembly to develop the new constitution. Seminars were arranged that included people from other Latin American countries, facilitating the sharing of experiences and good practices. The seminar framework was based on a similar model used by IDEA in Nepal and Peru during their constitutional reform processes.

PUBLICATIONS

- Los caminos de la paridad. Mujeres participación y representación en el proceso post constituyente (*Paths to Parity: Women's Participation and Representation in the Post-Constituent Assembly*) (2009)
- Del dicho al hecho: Manual de buenas practicas para la participación de mujeres en los partidos políticos latinoamericanos (*From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Political Parties*) (2008) also available in English

ONLINE

- Global Database of Quotas for Women www.quotaproject.org

From regional consultations to EU policy

The European Union (EU) has become the largest provider of democracy assistance in the world, yet little is known of what others think of it as a partner. Through a series of global consultations, International IDEA set about finding how the EU can best assist democracy building efforts worldwide by getting feedback on the impact of its democracy building policies and practices. As input to the Swedish Presidency, the recommendations arising from these consultations were positively received by the EU and incorporated into the European Parliament Resolution of October 2009 on democracy building in the EU's external relations. Moreover, in November 2009, they were incorporated into the EU Council conclusions on democracy support and its Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in EU External Relations.

Throughout 2008 in the lead up to the Swedish EU Presidency the following year, IDEA mobilized its network of partner organizations in Africa, Asia, the Arab World, Latin America and the Caribbean, conducting consultations with a wide range of individuals and organizations in these regions that were familiar with EU democracy assistance on the ground.

As expected, while the assessments varied from region to region, there were many common viewpoints and perspectives. The most crucial viewpoints were summarized in the main recommendations emerging from the consultations: the EU needs to tap its own experience to inform external action; apply a broader understanding of democracy; stand by its long-term commitments; and move towards genuine partnerships – presenting a sound basis on which the EU could adjust its policies and respond better to the needs of its partners worldwide.

The findings of the global consultations were presented to Swedish Development Cooperation

Minister Gunilla Carlsson when Sweden took over its six month presidency of the EU in July 2009. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, the EU is setting up the European External Action Service towards the end of 2010 that will operationalize certain EU activities and programmes. The challenge now is how this Service will move on the EU Council's conclusions and Agenda for Action over the forthcoming years.

“The EU countries are models of democracy ... but at the same time one feels that the problems of the EU and the problems of the developing world are probably a little different. Therefore local emphasis, local focus, local variation is also very necessary.”

DR S Y QURAIISHI, *Election Commissioner, India*

PUBLICATIONS

- Democracy in Development – *global consultations on the EU's role in democracy building* (2009) also available in Arabic, French and Spanish

ONLINE

- Democracy in Development Web Portal www.idea.int/eu



Africa's commitment to democracy

The African Union's (AU) adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in 2007 is an historic commitment to democracy. “[This] is a big step in the right direction; a watershed in the democratic development of Africa,” according to Abdalla Hamdok, Director at the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

His view was echoed by Emile Ognimba, AU Political Affairs Director who added, “This will expedite the AU efforts to democratize the continent.”

Throughout the 2000s International IDEA has had an ongoing relationship with the AU which resulted in 2007 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on working together. Assisting with the drafting of the Charter formed the basis of this partnership.

The high priority assigned by the AU to translate the Charter into action led the AU to approach IDEA again, specifically to bring its broad knowledge of issues around elections and political reform into the process. This resulted in the launch of the Joint Activity Plan (JAP) in 2008, committing the AU and IDEA to an initial five-year programme of activities designed to support democracy in Africa.

As IDEA Secretary-General Vidar Helgesen noted, “The Joint Activity Plan is designed to respond to the challenges facing democracy across the continent: making democracy work better for development, peace and security through strengthening political institutions and processes.”

The JAP has two main strands: capacity building for the AU Secretariat (including the Political Affairs Department which is responsible for the Charter), and implementing projects under the Charter such as BRIDGE courses (see page 18) throughout Africa and other activities falling under IDEA's mandate.

A key aim of the JAP is to bring the knowledge resources of the global South to Africa. Sharing the experiences of Latin America and Asia with Africa – made available via International IDEA's networks and knowledge resources – is contributing towards strengthening countries abilities to drive their own democratic processes and reforms forward by adapting what has been done successfully elsewhere.

Since late 2008, action to begin implementation of the JAP has included a workshop in Benin on constitution building, an ongoing programme of BRIDGE courses for election administrators; a seminar to ascertain how to reduce the spiralling violence during elections witnessed in some recent election campaigns such as in Kenya and Zimbabwe; assistance in preparing the theme document on the 2011 AU Summit on Shared Values and the secondment of four staff to capacitate the Political Affairs Department. An IDEA Liaison Office to the AU is presently being established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as an integral part of strengthening the roll out of the Joint Activity Plan.



Collaborative learning across political parties in Sudan

Sudanese political parties, though debilitated through many years of civil war, put aside their differences over the last few years to focus on a common goal: acquiring the knowledge necessary to participate in future elections. Yet, though the credibility of the 2010 elections in Sudan was rightly disputed, progress has certainly been made.

Building properly functioning political parties was highlighted as a major priority by party members in Sudan throughout the early 2000s. They understood there was an urgent need to build capacity in electoral processes, internal democracy, and gender equality if elections were to be successfully conducted.

In cooperation with a number of local and international partners, IDEA was invited to lead a capacity building initiative from 2006 up to the planned elections in 2010.

In phase one of the programme, leaders of the six major political parties attended workshops on, for example, election observation, the role of party agents, polling and appropriate codes of conduct.

In the second phase, the training included similar capacity building workshops for 24 smaller parties. These parties formed a ‘Coordination Committee’ to liaise with International IDEA and determine the priority areas for training and follow-up activities, while ensuring their knowledge would be transferred to other members.

Working with the 240 women candidates became an important focus during this time, coaching them on how to present themselves to the electorate and canvassing issues on housing, health, gender policies, access to education, and their own security – a critical topic in the Sudanese context. It was important for the female candidates to build their own networks and collaborate on matters of common interest, regardless of party affiliation.

Although there are many reservations about the 2010 elections, not everything is lost. “The elections did take place and parties were engaged in preparing for them,” says Manal Ali Basheir, a Sudanese gender activist and IDEA’s project manager in Sudan. Even though Sudan only signed the African Charter on women’s rights immediately before this election, “women inside the parties are now raising their voices,” Basheir observes. And while the 25 per cent gender-quota stipulated in Sudan’s provisional constitution is not as high as desired, gender is now firmly on the political agenda.

“The programme is about strengthening the voice of women candidates, preparing them to campaign, but also to do their work in the Parliament.”

RUMBIDZAI KANDAWASVIKA-NHUNDU,
Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA

International IDEA at a glance

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide.

International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change through providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics.

What does International IDEA do?

In the field of elections, constitution building, political parties, women's political empowerment, democracy self-assessments, and democracy and development, IDEA undertakes its work through three activity areas:

- providing comparative knowledge and experience derived from practical experience on democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world;
- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and

processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so; and

- influencing democracy building policies through the provision of our comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.

Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, it has offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



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International IDEA's Member States are all democracies and provide both political and financial support to the work of the Institute. The Member States include Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ghana, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Japan has observer status.

