

YOUTH AND DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

Module 7: Electoral Processes



USAID (<https://bit.ly/2YluGz1>)

Free and fair elections are a defining feature of democracy. The electoral process provides an opportunity for political parties, citizens, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence the composition and direction of public institutions and policy.

In many countries, young people face structural or systems-level barriers for participation in democracy, including minimum age requirements for voting and running for elected office. Negative sociocultural norms also persist, such as the belief that youth do not have the ability or sufficient experience to organize advocacy efforts or serve as leaders within political parties or elected office. In order

to improve youth representation in public decision-making and allow them to better voice their needs and interests within the electoral process, it is necessary to dismantle formal and informal barriers to the full electoral participation of young women and men. These efforts may include working with youth on efforts to advocate for changes to the legal framework, electoral administration and oversight, political party practices and policies, and informal practices surrounding voting. Such efforts promote equality and human rights and help further inclusive democracy in support of the objectives under USAID's DRG Strategy.



INTERMEDIATE RESULTS AND ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

INTERMEDIATE RESULT	PYD FEATURES AND ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES	
The legal framework is strengthened to support equal participation in electoral processes for all citizens, including youth.	Skill-Building	Support and train stakeholders, including government officials, election administrators, legislators and staff, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media actors to analyze the constitution, electoral law, political party rules, relevant regional and global international treaties, and other applicable laws to identify inequalities preventing the full participation of youth in elections. Work with these actors to develop and implement recommendations for improvement.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Collaborate with the local government, United States Embassy, and others to leverage diplomatic interventions, where appropriate, to encourage creation or passage of draft law provisions that account for and remove barriers preventing youth participation in electoral processes.
Electoral management bodies and dispute mechanisms become more representative and inclusive of all citizens, including youth.	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Support electoral management bodies (EMBs) to improve representation of youth and other marginalized groups as personnel (including temporary personnel) such as voter registration and polling station workers.
	Safe Public Spaces	Support youth, electoral management body officials and staff, and citizen observer organizations to identify any policies and practices that may decrease access and safety for youth at polling stations. Assist these actors in developing and implementing solutions.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Educate young candidates, their campaign teams, and party poll watchers on electoral grievance procedures and encourage political parties to provide equitable legal and financial support to young candidates to file complaints.
Youth are promoted within political parties as leaders and candidates	Skill-Building	Provide technical assistance to potential young candidates in advocating within the party for their nomination. If nominated, support young candidates in running effective campaigns.
	Belonging and Membership	Educate party leaders on why and how to identify young candidates and on how to support them effectively with training, funding, access to opportunities and resources, and favorable positions within party lists or districts.
	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Work with political parties and young members to identify, recruit, and train youth within the party to compete for internally elected leadership positions.
Laws, policies and practices that have the effect or intent of discriminating against youth or other groups in the areas of voter registration, education and access are repealed or reformed to support more inclusive electoral processes.	Skill-Building	Provide technical assistance to youth-led CSOs, political parties, and government representatives in collecting feedback from a diverse range of citizens with a particular focus on youth, on barriers to voter registration, education, and election day access. Support youth-led initiatives to develop and implement solutions.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Support voter education efforts designed to reach and activate youth from diverse communities and encourage and facilitate their participation in elections. For example, collect survey data on how people of different ages receive information and tailor voter education efforts accordingly. Voter education materials also provide an opportunity to model youth participation in a variety of roles, including as candidates, poll workers, journalists, and others. Ensure voter education efforts begin sufficiently early to inform and mobilize young voters who are newly eligible to register.

Electoral violence is decreased, and incidents of violence are effectively addressed by law enforcement and other relevant government actors	Skill-Building	Support youth in creating and using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to rapidly, anonymously, and securely report incidents of electoral violence to relevant government bodies.
	Belonging and Membership	Facilitate coalition-building between organizations working on elections and electoral security and those working on promoting youth electoral participation in order to promote collaborative efforts to address election security issues.
	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Build awareness among law enforcement officials, political parties, EMBs, CSOs, media, and the public of the particular ways in which youth may be engaged in or targeted by violence during the electoral period. This may include harassment, violence, and intimidation targeting youth as voters, campaign workers, candidates, party poll watchers, non-partisan election observers, election administration staff, or journalists. It may also include efforts by political actors to recruit or “hire” youth to engage in acts of violence.
Electoral systems allow for the full participation of all citizens, and fully meet international standards.	Positive Norms, Expectations, and Perceptions	Support youth-led campaigns to raise awareness of regional and international standards for free and fair electoral processes and create public pressure for governments to adhere to those principles.
	Youth Engagement and Contribution	Assist political parties and government bodies in establishing and monitoring electoral quotas for young candidates to improve equality and representation of diverse youth in elected positions. Reduce barriers for youth to participate in elections.

ILLUSTRATIVE PYD OR YOUTH-FOCUSED INDICATORS

To effectively measure PYD or youth-focused outcomes, indicators should be selected that are practical to measure and pertain as directly as possible to the PYD feature the program addresses. It is important to disaggregate monitoring data by relevant social segments including sex, geographic location, marital status, marginalized or at risk populations, and age (e.g., early adolescence (10-14); adolescence (15-19); emerging adulthood (20-24); transition to adulthood (25-29)). As a complement to inclusive indicator development, a [complexity-aware approach to monitoring, evaluation, and learning \(MEL\)](#) is likely to be useful for many USAID programs focused on social change in complex environments.

PYD FEATURE	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATOR
Youth Engagement and Contribution	% change in youth reporting that their vote matters
Youth Engagement and Contribution	% change in youth registered to vote
Youth Engagement and Contribution	% change in youth who turn out to vote
Youth Engagement and Contribution	# of laws, regulations, or procedures drafted or amended to facilitate youth participation in the electoral process

PROGRAM EXAMPLE: PEOPLE AGAINST VIOLENCE IN ELECTIONS (PAVE) PROGRAM (BANGLADESH)

During the past five years, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has trained and mentored 185 young political activists—mostly members of political party student wings—to provide them with the tools and skills necessary to anticipate, mitigate, and prevent violence in elections and political processes. In response to recent protests led by university students that have sparked violent backlash from government, security forces, and young supporters of the ruling Awami League party, in August 2018, IFES piloted its first PAVE Youth module (an

offshoot of PAVE) with students from the University of Dhaka –many of whom had helped lead recent student protests –training participants on the sources of violence and how elections can be an opportunity to peacefully manage and mitigate conflict. Based on the success of the pilot and a recognition from the students themselves of the potential of PAVE Youth training, IFES is currently planning an expansion of this pilot.

PYD FEATURE	PROGRAM COMPONENT
Skill-Building	IFES has trained and mentored young political activists to equip them with the competencies and skills necessary to anticipate, mitigate, and prevent violence in elections and political processes.
Belonging and Membership	IFES fostered relationships between young activists, building trust and alliances to mitigate violence and foster constructive political engagement.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS




Empowering Malians Through Election, Reform and Governance Efforts (EMERGE) program (Mali) - This USAID program aims to advance peace, reconciliation and more accountable governance through credible and inclusive national elections, by strengthening the capacity of citizens to participate in elections. Implemented by NDI and Internews, the activity held a contest prior to the 2018 presidential elections to be the face of their voter education efforts. The contest was won by a young woman who took on the persona of “Electe” and did a series of very well received blogs, tweets and other activities to educate her fellow youth about the process and encourage them to participate.

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This module is a part of the Youth and Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Toolkit, which can be found at: <https://www.youthpower.org/youth-inclusion-drg-toolkit>.

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USAID YouthPower Learning generates and disseminates knowledge about the implementation and impact of positive youth development (PYD) and cross-sectoral approaches in international development. The project leads research, evaluations, and events designed to build the evidence base related to PYD. Concurrently, YouthPower Learning employs expertise in learning and knowledge sharing to promote engagement and inform the global community about how to successfully help transition young people into productive, healthy adults. YouthPower Learning supports the implementation of the 2012 USAID Youth in Development Policy to improve capacity and enable the aspirations of youth so that they can contribute to, and benefit from more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities.

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