Building CEC Capacity Through Targeted Training and Evaluation

IFES Ukraine

IFES assists election management to plan and responsibly implement their operations through all phases of the electoral process. To sustainably improve the Ukrainian electoral process and promote free, fair and legitimate elections, a consistent approach to capacity-building is necessary. IFES is the primary technical assistance provider to the Central Election Commission (CEC).

IFES works closely with election management to enhance skills and knowledge through activities and, in cooperation with the Commission, implemented a national electoral operations cascade training program for lower-level commissions. In order to build trust between the CEC and civil society, political parties and the media, IFES proposes to continue inviting other stakeholders to CEC trainings to strengthen their ability to work together for mutual benefit.

Joint IFES-CEC Training Center

Following the October 2014 parliamentary elections and the October 2015 local elections, when IFES’ training reached almost 118,000 election commissioners throughout Ukraine, IFES and the CEC in 2016 established the joint IFES-CEC Administrative Center for Training of Election Process Participants (the Training Center) to promote sustainable professional development within the CEC.

The Training Center focused on an interactive training methodology for electoral stakeholders and provides a wide range of professional training, electoral background materials and information and specific Election Day procedures covering accounting, political finance, accessibility and information technology.

Cascade Training

In every electoral cycle, IFES works directly with the CEC’s Secretariat to prepare and coordinate large-scale cascade training for commission staff at all levels – including the territorial, district and precinct levels – to provide them with knowledge and practical skills on electoral management and administration.

The training combines lectures with question and answer sessions and electoral procedure video tutorials. Participants apply their knowledge and skills during an interactive mock vote-counting exercise. From 2014 through 2019, IFES trained 12,000 district level commissioners and 210,000 precinct commissioners throughout Ukraine.

State Voter Register Service Program

Without an accurate voter register, credible elections cannot be held in Ukraine. The register is maintained by the State Voter Register Service, which also plays an essential role in assisting election commissions perform their duties.

IFES conducts State Register of Voters (SRV) staff trainings throughout Ukraine to ensure critical coordination and communication between election commissions and the SRV and address conflict-related challenges, including voting rights of internally displaced persons. IFES, in close cooperation with the CEC Secretariat and the SRV, conducted over 80 regional trainings throughout Ukraine for 2,000 SRV and territorial election commission members highlighting unique scenarios and utilizing training tools.
BRIDGE Training Builds Capacity and Creates Links Between the CEC and Stakeholders

IFES conducts customized workshops using the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) curriculum. BRIDGE is an internationally recognized modular professional development program with the objective to enhance levels of trust between different electoral participants, share information and institutional knowledge and generate solutions and relevant good practices based on international experience.

BRIDGE training has been implemented in Ukraine since 2015 with 28 modules conducted for representatives of the CEC, journalists, academicians, political parties and civil society activists. BRIDGE modules addressing electoral systems, civic education, gender and elections, electoral rights of people with disabilities, political finance and strategic planning are translated and adapted to the Ukrainian context.

Background Material for Election Management

For each electoral cycle IFES develops, updates and expands a wide range of training materials, including a tutorial video, manuals, infographics and other user-friendly, comprehensive resources to train electoral commissioners throughout Ukraine. A joint IFES-CEC working group was established to ensure quality control and a comprehensive format for all training and educational materials.

Manuals for territorial, district and precinct election commissions outline key electoral procedures and responsibilities of election commissioners and serve as a reference guide to ensure professional and effective election administration during each election.

The joint IFES-CEC Training Center provides commissioners with a video tutorial adopted for all elections – presidential, parliamentary and local. The video tutorial contains a detailed explanation of electoral law and administrative procedures and serves as a comprehensive resource for electoral commissioners. From 2014-2019, IFES developed and distributed over 300,000 manuals, leaflets, posters and other reference products for electoral commissioners at all levels.

122,000 manuals for the DECs and PECs developed and distributed before presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019

Needs Assessment and Lessons Learned

To build on lessons learned and sustain and further reforms, it is essential to carefully evaluate every electoral event. IFES and the CEC work with Ukrainian electoral stakeholders after each national election to learn from successes and mistakes with the objective of improving the system ahead of future elections. Evaluation events are conducted after each election exclusively for the CEC, the SVR, lower level commissions and other professionals engaged in the technical organization and conduct of elections. While the findings of such meetings are not published, they provide the CEC detailed information about improvements for the next elections. Internal evaluation allows the joint IFES-CEC Training Center to develop curriculum and provide different types of training to strengthen the CEC’s capacity.

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