



2018

ELECTION ACCESS OBSERVATION TOOLKIT



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Election Access Observation Toolkit

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ELECTION ACCESS OBSERVATION TOOLKIT

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ABOUT IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a non-profit organization that supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. IFES views inclusive political participation as a human rights issue and collaborates with election management bodies (EMBs), disabled people's organizations (DPOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) to reduce barriers to political participation for persons with disabilities.

One out of every seven people in the world has a disability, yet citizens with disabilities remain under-represented in political and public life. Participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process provides the basis for mainstreaming their inclusion in all aspects of society by breaking down social stigmas and increasing the accountability of elected representatives. IFES works to strengthen political inclusion by:

- Providing technical assistance to EMBs on how to implement international standards such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- Empowering persons with disabilities and civil society organizations to advocate for equal rights; and
- Assisting citizen-led efforts to define best practices through the development of global tools such as the Equal Access manual and the online resources available at www.ElectionAccess.org.

IFES began working to advance the political and electoral rights of persons with disabilities in 1997 and has since worked in more than 60 countries to include people with disabilities in the political lives of their communities.

In recognition of its efforts, IFES was the 2011 recipient of the InterAction Disability Inclusion Award, an annual award presented to international development organizations that work toward greater disability inclusion within their programs and management. IFES' disability rights programming also received two Innovative Practice Awards in 2015 from the Zero Project, an initiative of the Essl Foundation. The awards provide a platform for global sharing of the most innovative and effective solutions to problems faced by persons with disabilities.

IFES has supported DPOs and national election observation groups on election access observation in 12 countries worldwide, including Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Ukraine, with funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The *Election Access Observation Toolkit* collates good practices and lessons learned from these initiatives and is a resource for DPOs and election observation groups to facilitate better access for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in election observation.

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Support for election access initiatives from DFAT, USAID and GAC empowered advocates to take part in the observations described in this document.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGENDA	General Election Network for Disability Access
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
BSEIPH	Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (Haiti)
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CEC	Central Election Commission (Kosovo)
CEP	Provisional Electoral Council (Haiti)
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DAM	Disability Access Monitoring
DiA	Democracy in Action (Kosovo)
DoGP	Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation
DoP	Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation
DPI	Disabled People's International
DPO	Disabled People's Organization
EU	European Union
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GNDEM	Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IEOM	International Election Observation Mission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems

JPPR	Voter Education Network for the People (Indonesia)
KPU	General Election Commission of Indonesia
LTO	Long-term Observer
OAS	Organization of American States
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPDI	Indonesia's Association for Persons with Disabilities
STO	Short-term Observer
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is estimated that there are one billion persons with disabilities, or 15 percent of the world's population.¹ Persons with disabilities encounter barriers as they participate in elections as voters, observers, candidates, election officials, and in other ways. Election observation provides the opportunity to collect data on the barriers that persons with disabilities encounter so that recommendations can be made to election management bodies (EMBs), political parties, and others to make processes more inclusive. It also demonstrates leadership of persons with disabilities in their communities.

To ensure that the perspectives of persons with disabilities are included, mainstream observer groups should include observers with disabilities, as well as questions on inclusion. Standalone election access observation missions can provide additional data to complement mainstream observer groups.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is structured into several sections.

The first part provides information on the international and regional foundations for inclusive elections and for inclusive election observation. It includes examples of the types of barriers that persons with disabilities encounter when they participate in and observe elections, as well as some strategies to increase access.

¹ World Health Organization and World Bank “World Report on Disabilities” (2011).

The second part of the toolkit provides step-by-step instructions for conducting a standalone election access observation. It explains why these complementary activities are important for ensuring that data on access of persons with disabilities is gathered during observations.



A poll worker with a disability from Washington, D.C., talks to international observers from Indonesia during IFES' U.S. Election Program. Source: IFES.

The third part of the toolkit provides step-by-step instructions for conducting an election access

observation. There are examples of both long-term and short-term election access observations and the checklists that might be used during each. At the beginning of each section is an “About this Tool” box that explains how the checklist or other tool can be used. Election observers are encouraged to adapt the checklists to their context and should reference their use of IFES’ *Election Access Observation Toolkit*.

The fourth part of the toolkit includes disability-inclusive questions that could be added to the observation checklists of mainstream observers.

Finally, the appendix has resources, such as observer reports from election access observations, for further information.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15 percent of the world’s population, or one billion people, have a disability. Sixty percent of persons with disabilities are women.² Even though international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) protect the political rights of women and men with disabilities, they are very often left out of the political process.

Election observation provides an opportunity for civil society to bring attention to gaps in compliance with international election standards and to illuminate barriers to meaningful participation of all citizens. For people with disabilities, access to the political process is particularly important as it demonstrates to the general public that they are equal citizens who make valuable contributions to society.



A voter poses outside an accessible polling station in Myanmar in April 2017.
Source: Myanmar Independent Living Initiative.

² World Health Organization and World Bank “World Report on Disability” (2011).

Numerous barriers hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities, for example:

- Physical barriers to the polling station
- Lack of assistive devices such as tactile ballot guides
- Lack of voter education materials in accessible formats such as sign language
- Legal barriers that disenfranchise people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities
- Lack of engagement by political parties, including not providing political campaign materials in accessible formats, and
- Social stigma that discourages candidates with disabilities from running for office.

Through election observation, observers can highlight some of the causes for unequal conditions among voters, reasons for low voter turnout, issues related to independent voting, and common barriers to the equal participation of persons with disabilities in elections.

Including people with disabilities as election observers ensures their perspectives are brought to the attention of election management bodies (EMBs) and government officials. Many barriers encountered by people with disabilities are experienced by older people, parents with young children or those with temporary injuries, so ensuring that observations address access issues can have a broad impact on many citizens. Including people with disabilities as observers also provides citizens with disabilities with the opportunity to be recognized as leaders in their communities, combating cultural beliefs and stereotypes about capacity. As members of the observation team, women and men with disabilities can be visibly engaged in the electoral process. Their inclusion sends a message to others that people with disabilities are equal citizens who have the right to choose their leaders and engage with policymakers.

About This Toolkit

The *Election Access Observation Toolkit* aims to provide disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and election observation organizations with the background and tools to incorporate a disability rights perspective into domestic and international observation missions.

IFES has found that a twin-track approach to electoral observation is the most effective approach to addressing barriers. This approach combines disability-focused election access observation missions conducted by DPOs with complementary efforts to include a disability lens in mainstream observation. Election access observation fills a critical gap; it is not possible for international and domestic observer groups to look at every aspect of inclusion for people

“As a person with a disability, my presence as an observer was an unusual experience for those present at polling stations. I think that the members of the election commissions realized that the voting from home option for voters who are unable to move independently is not the only way to create favorable voting conditions. [...] I am convinced that there should be more people with disabilities as observers.”

-Iryna Tverdokhlib,
observer in Poltava region,
Ukraine, 2017



with all types of disabilities. Long- and short-term election access observation provides DPOs and EMBs with tangible data on access to the electoral process. DPO-led observation also places people with disabilities in visible leadership roles, which breaks down stigma. EMBs benefit from concrete, evidence-based recommendations from people with disabilities themselves.

International and domestic observers should also integrate questions related to disability inclusion throughout their checklists, recruit people with disabilities as observers and publish their findings in accessible formats. States should also strive to include women and men with disabilities as 15 percent of seconded observers. The reports of international and domestic observer groups are used by government stakeholders, civil society and the donor community as a barometer of a country's democratic progress and as a guideline for future governance initiatives. By including reference to the political rights of people with disabilities in these reports, mainstream observer groups can hold governments to account for their commitments under the CRPD.

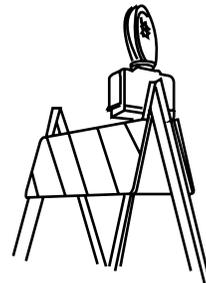
BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION

Persons with disabilities face numerous barriers to their full political participation. These barriers can include attitudinal, communication, environmental and institutional barriers.

- **Attitudinal barriers** are stereotypes or stigma about persons with disabilities. Stereotypes about the capabilities of persons with disabilities and cultural beliefs about the causes of disability are persistent. Observers with all types of disabilities may encounter stigma as they play a leadership role in the community.

- **Communication barriers** occur when formats or methods of sharing information are not accessible. For example, printed materials are not accessible to persons who are blind, and radio is inaccessible to persons who are deaf.

- **Environmental barriers** include physical accessibility, such as the entrances to buildings, architectural design and set-up within the buildings.



- **Institutional barriers** are laws and policies that are not inclusive of persons with disabilities. For example, an EMB may not have a process included in its policy for persons with disabilities to jump the queue or to otherwise take priority during voting, or an observation group may not have a policy to provide reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpretation during observations.

The chart on [page 22](#) provides additional examples of the barriers that persons with different types of disabilities might encounter as they participate as election observers.

Additionally, election violence or threats of violence can disproportionately impact citizens with disabilities. People with disabilities have also reported being hesitant to vote or serve in a leadership role such as a candidate, observer or polling official because of the threat of violence. When conducting an election access observation, organizers should ensure there are feedback mechanisms for observers to report any issues. An example of an incident report can be found on the following page.

“I did not vote because my family did not feel comfortable letting me go since in that location there was a gun shooting and a Deaf person could be in larger risk.”

-Janeris,
young woman with a disability
who participated in an election
access observation,
Dominican Republic, 2012

“During the observation, I plan to make sure that the forthcoming election will be inclusive for persons with disabilities...in terms of accessibility...because most of us do not turn up to vote because we fear...the hostile environment.”

-Naomi Mandella,
woman LTO with a physical disability,
Kenya, 2017



Sample Incident Report

About This Tool

Observers can use the sample form below when taking part in a long- or short-term observation to capture detailed information about fraudulent events or electoral violence that has taken place. When filling out an incident report, make sure to document as much as possible so that investigators can effectively use the information.

Incident Report	
Name:	
Gender:	
Observer No.:	
Date:	
Municipality:	
Election:	
Location of Incident:	
Time of Incident:	

No.	Question	Answer
1.	Which of the following best describes the incident? Please check the box.	<input type="checkbox"/> Observer prevented from observing <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation/harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Physical/sexual violence <input type="checkbox"/> Voting/counting suspended <input type="checkbox"/> Vote buying/bribery <input type="checkbox"/> Ballot box stuffing <input type="checkbox"/> Other
2.	Please describe any victims of the incident.	Gender: Affiliation: Disability:
3.	Please describe any perpetrators of the incident.	Gender: Affiliation: Disability:
4.	How did you learn about the incident? Please check one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Witnessed the incident <input type="checkbox"/> Heard about the incident from someone else
5.	Please provide in the space below a detailed description of the incident:	

Types of Barriers to Inclusive Electoral Observation

Type of barrier	Examples	How it affects persons with different types of disabilities	
		Auditory	Intellectual
Attitudinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption about capability • Stereotypes • Stigma • Intersectionality of disability and other identities, such as gender or religion 	In some countries, Deaf persons are feared by others because they do not know what sign language is	Persons with intellectual disabilities may not be treated as equal citizens by others
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information during trainings or observation materials not available in accessible formats 	Poll workers and other voters may not know sign language; lack of sign language interpreters	Some complex words or phrases may be difficult to understand
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up polling stations • Inaccessible lodging and training facilities 	Low light can make it difficult to understand facial expressions or read lips	Lack of clear signage can make it more difficult to navigate independently
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No policy for reasonable accommodations • Accommodations are not budgeted • Legal restrictions 	Policies or laws that include restrictions on persons who do not speak the official/majority language	Policies or laws that restrict legal capacity or participation in observer groups

Physical	Psychosocial	Visual
It may be assumed that persons with physical disabilities cannot observe independently or be leaders	Team partners may use derogatory terms such as “insane” or “crazy”	It may be assumed that persons with visual disabilities cannot observe independently
Some disabilities may affect speech	Information may need to be repeated; interacting with new people may be stressful	Printed materials, such as checklists are inaccessible
Observers who use wheelchairs may be regarded as obstructing voting	Crowded spaces may induce anxiety	Objects in the path or uneven ground are hazardous
Policies that require observers to prove they are “healthy”	Policies that restrict persons who live in institutions from participating in observations	Policies that do not provide for reasonable accommodations, such as assistants

Mitigating Barriers to Inclusive Electoral Observations

Although observers with disabilities may encounter numerous barriers, as described in the chart above, organizers can provide remedies to ensure that all persons can take part in an election observation. These reasonable accommodations allow observers with disabilities to participate alongside others to conduct an election access observation or a mainstream election observation. For example, in 2017, IFES supported Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) in Timor-Leste to conduct an election access observation. Observers who were blind were provided a checklist in braille so that they could ask the same questions as other observers. The chart on page 25 provides additional suggestions for making election observation inclusive of persons with all types of disabilities.



An observer with a visual disability uses a braille checklist during an election access observation in Timor-Leste in 2017.
Source: RHTO.

Disability Type	Possible Accommodations*
All	Deployment schedule timing and transport Cascade training methodology may not be possible if DPOs lack experienced trainers Training venues and materials should be accessible
Auditory	Budget for sign language interpreter for each observer Deploy in locations that have Deaf communities so voters and poll workers can be asked questions in sign language
Intellectual	Checklists with simple language Pair with another observer Use wordless or easy-to-read formats for training materials
Physical	Budget for assistants
Psychosocial	Schedule time for breaks throughout the observation Pair with another observer
Visual	Checklists in braille to interview poll workers and voters Pair with another observer Budget for assistants

*Always ask observers with disabilities about their preferred accommodations, which may not be included here. At the same time, do not assume that all observers with disabilities will need or want these accommodations.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ELECTION ACCESS

When developing observation checklists, election observers refer to key international standards and regional agreements. The legal framework that supports the right of women and men with disabilities to take part in political life provides the basis for determining whether an election is inclusive of the disability rights community. Numerous international and regional mechanisms call on states to recognize barriers and provide access.

International Legal Foundations

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) calls for universal and equal participation as the foundation for elected government and for participatory, credible elections that uphold international obligations such as United Nations (UN) conventions and international good practices. The CRPD calls on states to ensure proactively the rights of people with disabilities. The CRPD contains the most comprehensive description of the political rights of people with disabilities. The treaty's definition of disability includes women and men who have physical, visual, auditory, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. It also notes the



A voter in Georgia, a country that ratified the CRPD in 2014, uses a magnifying sheet to read the ballot. Source: IFES.

double marginalization that women with disabilities experience in all aspects of political and public life. At the time of this writing, the treaty has been ratified by 174 UN member states, more than 90 percent, which demonstrates broad consensus on the rights outlined in the CRPD.

Grounding Disability Inclusion in the Legal Framework

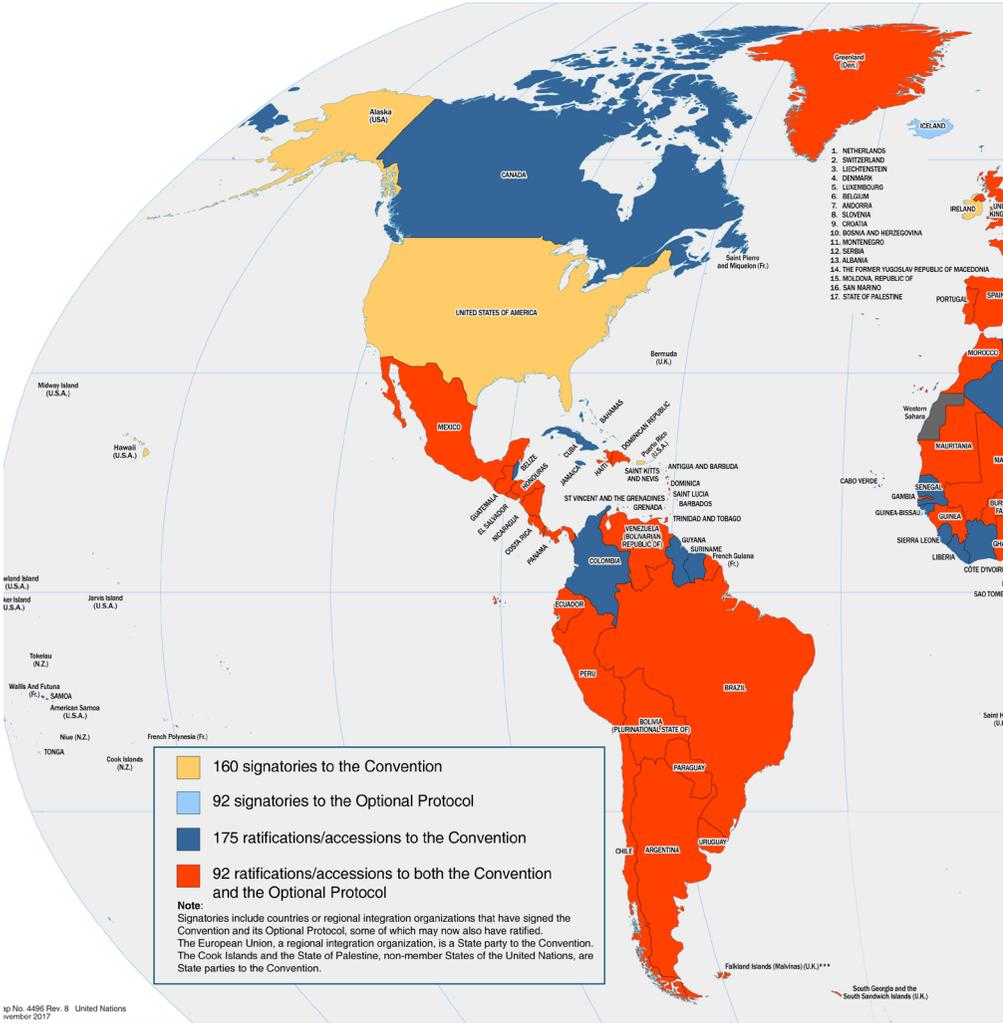
“Does the station appear to be accessible to physically challenged persons, including the elderly? The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities establishes an obligation for states to take measures to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility. This requires that people with disabilities will have an opportunity to participate on an equal basis in both rural and urban areas.”

-Carter Center Mozambique Election Observation Checklist, 2014



Article 29 of the CRPD explicitly protects the rights of women and men with physical, visual, psychosocial, intellectual, and auditory disabilities to vote, run for office and take part in political life on an equal basis as other citizens. In addition to supporting their participation in elections, Article 29 upholds the right to take part in political life more broadly, which includes serving as election observers.

Not Signed
 Signed Convention
 Signed Convention &

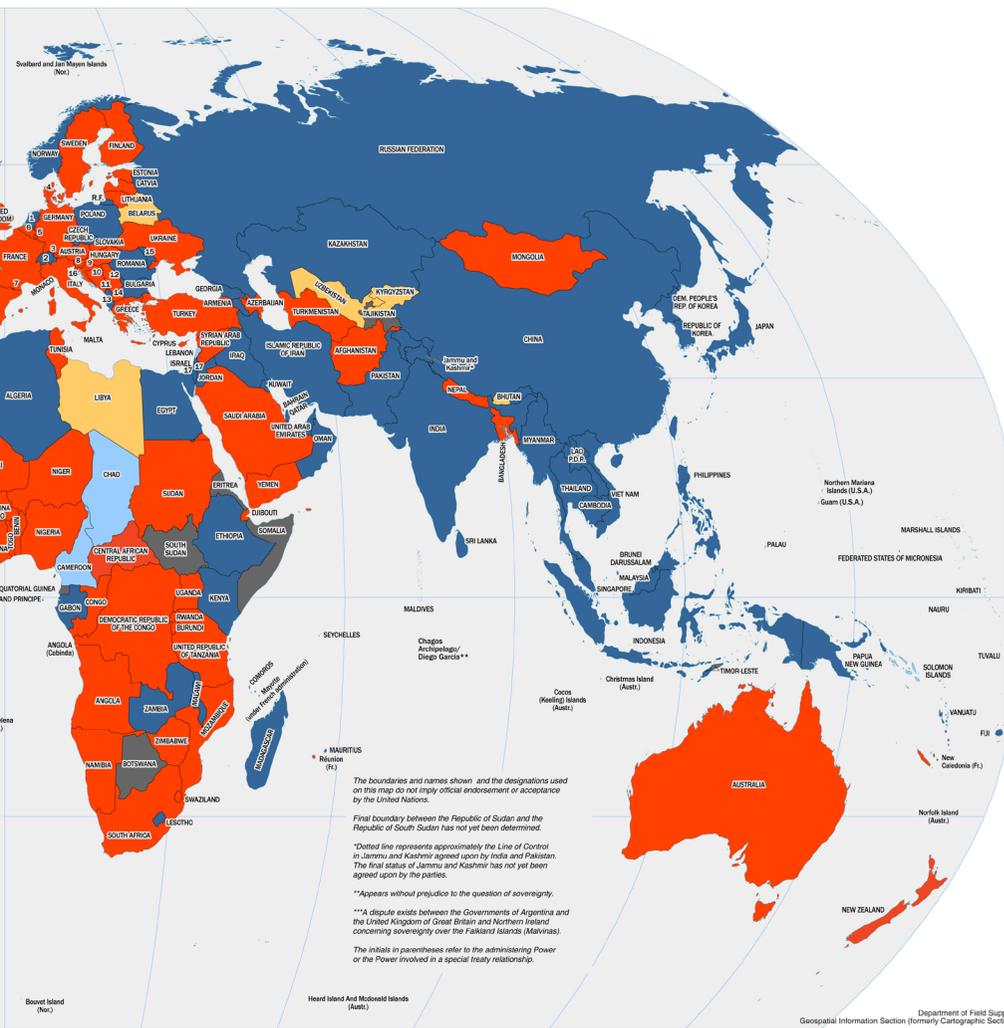


Map of countries that have signed or ratified the CRPD and Optional Signatures and Ratifications as of November 2017. Source: UN Enable.

Protocol Signatures and Ratifications

& Protocol ■ Ratified Convention ■ Ratified Convention & Protocol

19 September 2017



“States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake: (a) To ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others ... including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected.”

-CRPD Article 29

Article 12 of the CRPD protects the right to equal recognition before the law of persons with all types of disabilities. In the context of voting, Article 12 guarantees that women and men with disabilities under legal guardianship, many of whom have psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, retain their right to vote. People with these types of disabilities are more likely to be marginalized from public life as a result of both legal barriers and stigma. General Comment Number 1 (2014) by the CRPD Committee calls on states to realize the rights of all persons with disabilities to vote and stand for election.



A woman with an intellectual disability casts her ballot in the Philippines. Source: IFES.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, as well as accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. To reach this goal, SDG Target 16.7 measures “responsive,

inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making.” Data collected toward Target 16.B is disaggregated by disability, as well as other factors. Target 16.B calls for non-discriminatory laws and policies to ensure that the rights of all citizens, including citizens with disabilities, are realized.



An observer notes an inaccessible location during a long-term election access observation in Kosovo, 2014. Source: IFES.

Regional Instruments

Several regional instruments support the right of persons with disabilities to participate in the political process on an equal basis as others. These protections range from enforced mechanisms through bodies such as

the European Court of Human Rights to declarations that demonstrate acceptance of recognized rights. The regional instruments captured below are the most relevant examples for disability rights in elections and are also most likely to be utilized when developing elections observation questions.

Regional Instruments that Support the Rights of Persons with All Types of Disabilities to Participate in Political Life

EUROPE: *Kiss vs. Hungary*, European Court of Human Rights – persons under guardianship retain the right to vote

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Moscow document – OSCE member states must ensure the equal opportunity of persons with disabilities to participate fully in the life of their society

Revised Interpretative Declaration to the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters on the Participation of People with Disabilities in Elections, European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) – removed a clause that restricted the right to vote based on a court decision

ASIA: Incheon strategy, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) – Goal 2: “promote participation in political processes and in decision-making,” Target 2.B – measures whether reasonable accommodations are provided to citizens with disabilities

The General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA) organized a regional dialogue with EMB representatives in Bali, Indonesia, in 2012. The Bali Declaration produced by the EMBs calls for equal access of persons with disabilities, including “as candidates, election management body officials, poll workers, and observers.”³ EMBs recognized that persons with disabilities have the right to be integrated into all aspects of political life and acknowledged their value as election observers. In 2015, at the Third AGENDA Regional Dialogue,

3 General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA), “Bali Commitments on Equal Access to Elections,” (2012).

4 General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA), “Jakarta Addendum to Address Overlapping Forms of Marginalization,” (2015).

participants recognized the “unique barriers encountered by people with disabilities who also identify with another marginalized group” in the Jakarta Addendum.⁴ The document reflects the values of CRPD Article 6, which supports the rights of women with disabilities and acknowledged other groups who might experience multiple forms of marginalization.

STANDALONE MISSIONS VS. MAINSTREAMING

Election observations result in the collection of evidence that informs election commissions, citizens, and others about the credibility and inclusivity of the electoral process. Integrating people with disabilities into observations also leads to increased media attention, which shows women and men with disabilities not only as equal citizens but also as leaders in the community. Additionally, observers with disabilities can provide crucial first-hand experience that can help to inform the mission. Whether this information is gathered by international or national observer groups or disability-focused observations, the data lead to recommendations for change.

Standalone observations are focused on election access and may be conducted by DPOs and other national or international civil society groups. For a standalone observation, checklists include only questions on accessibility and inclusion, such as whether polling station staff are trained to support voters with disabilities or how many polling station staff have disabilities. Standalone observations provide more in-depth analysis of disability inclusion than observations that mainstream questions on disability access. Targeted observations are centered entirely on election access of persons with all types of disabilities. Election access observations may collect more detailed reports and have the opportunity to engage disability rights advocates with extensive experience on access and inclusion.



A voter in Kenya who uses a wheelchair takes part in a photo shoot for a voter education campaign. Source: IFES.



Women and men with disabilities in the Dominican Republic were trained by IFES to conduct an election access observation in 2012. Source: IFES.

Including questions on disability access in a domestic or international election observation checklist is called **mainstreaming**. Through **mainstreaming**, data on electoral inclusion is collected alongside other data, such as when a polling station opened or

if the counting process was transparent. For example, an observation mission might choose to mainstream disability into a long-term observation by asking observers to consider barriers to candidates with disabilities or within its short-term observation checklists by integrating questions about polling station accessibility and availability of assistive devices, among many other issues in which disability can be integrated. The mainstreaming approach can help to ensure that election stakeholders recognize disability inclusion throughout their work. International and domestic observer groups should aim to ensure at least 15 percent of their observation teams are comprised of people with disabilities, reflecting the WHO-estimated percentage of people with disabilities worldwide. It is also critical to ensure that women with disabilities are included on observation teams since women with disabilities encounter compounded barriers because of their gender and disability.

CONDUCTING STANDALONE ELECTION ACCESS OBSERVATIONS

Observations provide the tools for disability rights advocates to gather data related to access throughout the electoral cycle, which forms the foundation for recommendations to improve electoral processes. IFES has trained DPOs and national observers to conduct observations that focus on disability inclusion, also called election access observations, for local and national elections in 12 countries.⁵ This section includes good practice guidance for organizing election access observations based on IFES' experience.

Long- and Short-Term Observation

Long- and short-term observations provide different kinds of data on disability inclusion. Long-term observations start before Election Day and include a more in-depth analysis of the electoral process. They can include the voter registration period, a review of the legal framework, dispute resolution processes, practices of the EMB, political party campaigns, and other activities and take place over the course of the electoral cycle, the time before, during and after elections. Short-term observations take place on Election Day. Observer groups go to polling stations and speak with voters, candidate or party proxies, observers, and election officials about the process to determine if persons with disabilities had access to vote.

5 IFES has trained DPOs on election access observation in: Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Ukraine, and Timor-Leste.

After a long-term observation mission, and sometimes also after a short-term mission, observation groups write a report with their findings. Findings might include data on the barriers that voters with disabilities encountered during a particular part of the electoral cycle, such as voter registration or on Election Day. Those findings can then be used to advocate for more inclusive electoral processes. More information on long- and short-term election access observations is available in this chapter.



Persons with disabilities in Kenya practice using a contextualized observation checklist during a workshop led by the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK) and IFES. Source: IFES.

Organizing an Election Access Observation

About This Tool

This step-by-step set of instructions provides guidance on the actions that need to be taken to put together an election access observation. Advance planning is essential to conduct an election access observation successfully. IFES, based on experience conducting several dozen election access observations, has developed the following good practices for organizing successful missions.

1. Identify a DPO and national observer partner

Local DPOs are the ideal partner for conducting an election access observation. In addition to their knowledge of the local context, DPOs are experts of their own disability rights experience. DPOs can also reach out to national and international observer groups to participate in elections.

2. Contextualize checklist and create a post-voting questionnaire

Using a sample checklist as the foundation for an observation is helpful because it builds from good practices. However, it is important to contextualize checklists to fit local laws and electoral regulations. Sample questions for an election access observation checklist for long- and short-term observation are available in the “Sample Long-Term Election Access Observation Checklist” and “Sample Short-Term Election Access Observation Checklist” sections. The checklist should be contextualized to local laws and regulations before use. The “Contextualizing an Election Access Observation Checklist” section provides suggestions for how to do so, and observers should reference their use of IFES’ *Election Access Observation Toolkit*. Checklists from past

observations are available in the reports that are linked in the annexes of this publication.

The post-voting questionnaire is used during short-term observation for interviews with persons with disabilities who voted. During a long-term observation mission, observers can also speak with persons with disabilities who did not vote.

3. Recruit women and men with different types of disabilities

A diverse observer group consisting of women and men with different types of disabilities provides a variety of perspectives. The data collected from diverse observers creates a holistic picture of electoral inclusion. It is also important to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made available. Organizers should consult with observers with disabilities about the support that they want and should trust observers on their decisions about support. Make sure that all observers are accredited with the EMB.

4. Train observers

An election access observer training may need to accommodate persons with different levels of experience with elections. Observers without disabilities may have participated in mainstream observations in the past but may not have much experience observing for inclusion. Some DPO participants may not have a lot of knowledge about elections beyond their own experiences voting. It is good practice to include people with disabilities as trainers. At the training, provide observers with a t-shirt, hat, or other item identifiable to the EMB.



Observers with disabilities in Malaysia pose together at the end of their training. Source: AGENDA.

5. Set up a group communication tool

Using WhatsApp, Viber or another communication platform, is critical for ensuring that all observers are in communication throughout the observation. If there is an incident or threat of electoral violence, participants can let each other know which areas to avoid to stay safe. As with other observations, set up a contact schedule with each observer at staggered times throughout Election Day. Observers should use the incident reporting form on [pages 20-21](#) to document any issues they encounter.

6. Deploy observers

As with all election observations, it is important to determine a good sampling frame for the selected locations. If locations are not selected at random, note the rationale and how this impacted the reliability of the results in the final report. During an election access observation, ensure that at least 50 percent of the participants have disabilities. DPO members can be paired with mainstream observers. The Indonesia Case Study on [pages 43-47](#) is a good example of this system. Alternatively, DPOs can manage the entire process. Ensure that accessible transportation is arranged.

7. Conduct a voluntary survey of voters with disabilities after they have voted

Gathering data on the information voters with disabilities received about the election and on their experience voting can provide a different picture to that of observing as voting is taking place.

8. Analyze the data from the observation

The checklists that are collected from the observation provide critical information on the access and inclusion of persons with disabilities to the electoral process. Before releasing a statement or holding a press conference (Step 9), make sure to gather a few data points that can be shared.

9. Hold a press conference or issue a press release on Election Day

A press conference brings attention to disability inclusion during the electoral process. During an Election Day press conference, share why it was important to conduct the observation and provide some information on how many observers were involved.



A member of the election access observation team in Nepal was interviewed about his experience.

Source: IFES.

For standalone missions, holding a press conference after Election Day when there are fewer competing media interests should be considered.

10. Conduct a debriefing workshop

After the observation takes place, a debriefing workshop provides the opportunity to share experiences and to compile data from the activity. Discussing what they observed, participants also learn about electoral access from each other and lessons learned for the next observation.

11. Write and disseminate report

A report with the findings of the observation mission consolidates the information gathered and presents the information in a way that is meaningful. For example,



Participants of an election access observation in Haiti take part in a debrief to share their experiences. Source: IFES.

individual reports may detail the lack of accessibility features at one polling station, while the report is an opportunity to describe how many polling stations observed are accessible to persons with disabilities. It is also important to share the report with electoral stakeholders such as other DPOs, EMBs, media outlets,

and others. The report could be disseminated electronically or with a launch event and should be available in accessible formats so persons with different types of disabilities can read it, such as audio, braille, easy-to-read and simple text.

12. Advocate for more inclusive elections

The observation report can be the basis for advocacy initiatives. Since the report details both good practices and the accessibility gaps observed, DPOs can use the report to advocate with EMBs, political parties, parliaments, government agencies, and other stakeholders to make changes that lead to more inclusive elections. The Haiti Case Study on [pages 76-78](#) provides examples of the initiatives taken by an EMB as a result of the findings shared in DPOs' observation reports.



A LTO discusses inclusion with a candidate for office in Kosovo. Source: IFES.



A woman with a physical disability checks in to vote in Indonesia in 2014.
Source: AGENDA.

ORGANIZING AN OBSERVATION: INDONESIA CASE STUDY

The General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA), a creative partnership of DPOs, CSOs and IFES in Southeast Asia supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, conducted an election access observation with the Voter Education Network for the People (*Jaringan Pendidikan Pemilih untuk Rakyat*, or JPPR) in Indonesia, the General Election Commission of Indonesia (KPU), Indonesia's Association for Persons with Disabilities (PPDI), and other partners, of the Indonesian presidential elections in 2014. The observation assessed access of voters with disabilities in five areas: voter education, voter registration, polling stations, voting process, and voter turnout. Observers collected data from 470 polling stations, conducting interviews with staff at each polling station. They also interviewed 789 persons with disabilities who voted and 387 persons with disabilities who did not vote.

AGENDA facilitated trainings for 300 domestic election observers, of whom half were persons with disabilities and half were

experienced national observers. The training, which took place over a two-week period, provided the opportunity for people with disabilities to learn how to be an election observer and sensitized national election observers to the barriers encountered by people with disabilities. The training incorporated a polling station simulation to sensitize observers to the barriers faced by voters with different types of disabilities. Once trained, election observers were divided, pairing 30 observers with disabilities with 30 national observers for missions in each province, ensuring that each team would have the opportunity to learn from a colleague with a different background. This division of observers allowed for maximum visibility of persons with disabilities working as election observers and gave national observers an insight into disability inclusion.

Observers found that persons with disabilities were one of the targeted groups organized by the KPU into “democracy volunteers.” Volunteers from five sectors of voters – first time voters, religious groups, women’s groups, marginalized groups, and persons with disabilities – were provided voter education training materials to increase their participation. However, voter education efforts did not include accessible formats, such as braille, audio, or easy-to-read. Public service announcements over television did not provide sign language interpretation. AGENDA surveyed voters with disabilities on the quality of voter education materials and found that most of the voters with disabilities who saw the materials said they were good (32%) or acceptable (55%). However, as the materials were not accessible to people with sensory or intellectual disabilities, these segments of the disability community did not benefit from the KPU’s efforts.

Indonesia’s fixed voter list system posed another challenge for increasing inclusion during the election, as families did not encourage persons with disabilities to register to vote because of cultural norms, or they did not realize that persons with

disabilities have the right to vote and be elected. AGENDA noted that voter registration officers did not collect data on persons with disabilities, and they had a limited understanding about how this information informs and impacts future election efforts.

AGENDA observed 789 persons with disabilities casting votes on Election Day in 470 polling stations. Ninety-one percent of those interviewed felt confident about casting a vote in secret, while 7 percent did not and 2 percent did not respond to the question. Since Indonesian law guarantees a right to voting assistance, it was noted that 255 observed voters with disabilities had an assistant who signed the form required to obtain assistance in the voting booth. Even so, the election access observation mission noted that it is unclear how assistants are allowed to help persons with disabilities and if all assistants actually signed the form. AGENDA estimated that 2.7 voters per polling location had a disability, out of every 600 to 800 voters – a very low turnout.



Indonesian voters who are blind use a braille ballot in 2017. Source: AGENDA.

Few persons with disabilities were involved as staff during the elections. Only 20 of the 470 polling stations observed (4%) included poll workers with disabilities. Additionally, 40 percent of the polling station officers interviewed told the mission that they were not informed about accessible elections, and 38 percent were not able to explain accessibility. Although all poll workers are required by law to attend a training on polling and vote counting procedures, only 46 percent of those interviewed had done so.

Attitudinal barriers in Indonesia are one of the primary challenges for increasing inclusion of persons with disabilities in political life, the observation mission found. Stigma against the disability community, which discourages persons with disabilities from claiming their rights, is pervasive among family members and government and elections officials. Family members of persons with disabilities are also often discriminated against, causing them to discourage a family member with a disability to vote. The election access observation mission directly challenged misconceptions about what persons with disabilities can and cannot do. The participation of persons with disabilities in the observation mission showed that they are equal members of the community, with skills and knowledge to contribute.

Observers' recommendations highlighted major areas for improvement, including the importance of collaboration among DPOs and other stakeholders, such as CSOs and the KPU, to raise awareness of disability rights. Based on the election access observation mission's report, the KPU has taken steps to ensure future elections are more inclusive. In 2015, AGENDA worked with KPU to develop an EMB self-assessment tool to determine where gaps exist that can be addressed to make elections accessible to all. Through this collaboration, a checklist was created and shared with all 101 KPU staff around the country for their use and subsequent feedback. KPU also expressed interest in a training for local staff to sensitize them on inclusion. IFES piloted its Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) module on Disability Rights and Elections in Jakarta, Indonesia, as a result of KPU's engagement on disability inclusion. AGENDA has built on these successes by sharing experiences worldwide, including presenting to dialogues in Egypt, Fiji, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to encourage action from other EMBs within and outside of the region.

Good Practices from Indonesia

Train observers both on electoral knowledge and disability rights

Election observers took part in a simulation of accessible election practices to better understand the electoral process and to understand barriers persons with disabilities might face while voting.

Interview persons with disabilities who did and who did not vote

AGENDA observers noted low voter turnout among persons with disabilities and took steps to determine the cause.



Conducting a Long-Term Election Access Observation

Long-term observation takes place during the weeks or months before and after Election Day. LTOs look at the electoral process more broadly during the pre-election phase, when EMBs are organizing the elections and political events are taking place, and in the post-election phase when election complaints are adjudicated. They may make recommendations such as making sure that voter education is available in multiple formats or updating electoral legislation to harmonize with the CRPD.

Sample Long-Term Election Access Observation Checklist

About This Tool

The Long-Term Election Access Observation Checklist, which was developed based on a checklist IFES used in Kosovo, asks targeted questions to determine the inclusion of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle, including in the legal framework, EMB, voter registration process, political parties, civil society, and post-election.

This checklist should be modified for the context in which it is being used by adjusting questions, such as if reasonable accommodations are required for political events.

Disability Access Long-Term Observation Checklist

Name:	
Gender:	
Observer No.:	
Municipality:	
Election:	
Date:	

Legal Framework

No.	Question	Answer	
		YES	NO
1.	Are there laws or regulations that SUPPORT the electoral rights of persons with disabilities? Please elaborate:		
2.	Are there any laws or regulations that RESTRICT , or could potentially restrict, the electoral rights of persons with disabilities? Please elaborate:		

No.	Question	Answer	
3.	<p>Are there any regulations or guidelines issued by the election management body (EMB) that guarantee accessibility for persons with disabilities in the elections? Please elaborate:</p>	YES	NO

Election Management Body

4.	<p>Does the content of the EMB's public information campaign inform persons with disabilities about how to register as a voter?</p>	YES	NO
5.	<p>Does the EMB actively recruit persons with disabilities to work as EMB employees (other than poll workers)?</p> <p>If yes, how?</p>	YES	NO
		<p>Number of women EMB staff:</p>	
		<p>Number of men EMB staff:</p>	

No.	Question	Answer	
6a.	Does the EMB provide reasonable accommodations such as a sign language interpreter to staff?	YES	NO
6b.	Does the EMB provide reasonable accommodations such as a sign language interpreter to candidates?	YES	NO
7.	Are there persons with disabilities who have been nominated to EMB positions during the elections on a municipal level?	Number:	Don't know.
8.	Are there persons with disabilities who have been nominated to positions at a polling station level, such as poll workers?	Number:	Don't know.
9.	<p>Are matters related to accessibility for persons with disabilities included as part of the EMB's agenda?</p> <p>If yes, which issues?</p>	YES	NO
10.	Does the EMB produce informational materials specifically targeting persons with disabilities to inform them about their electoral rights, to build awareness of the right to participate on an equal basis as others?	YES	NO

No.	Question	Answer	
11.	<p>Does the EMB produce informational materials in formats that are accessible with visual disabilities, such as audio or braille?</p> <p>Briefly describe the materials:</p>	YES	NO
12.	<p>Does the EMB produce informational materials in formats that are accessible to voters who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, such as subtitles or in sign language?</p> <p>Briefly describe the materials:</p>	YES	NO
13.	Does the EMB have a database of potential voters with disabilities?	YES	NO
14.	<p>When selecting polling centers, how does the EMB examine accessibility for persons with disabilities?</p> <p>Please elaborate:</p>		

No.	Question	Answer	
15.	Does the EMB procure polling station materials that are accessible to persons with disabilities?		
	a. accessible voting booths	YES	NO
	b. assistive devices, such as magnifying sheets	YES	NO
	c. other (please describe):		

Legal Framework

16.	<p>What data is used as the basis for voter registration?</p> <p>Describe:</p>		
17.	Did the EMB registration for voters with disabilities occur in a timely manner?	YES	NO
18.	Are there any barriers to persons with disabilities being included in the voter lists?	YES	NO

No.	Question	Answer	
19.	<p>Does the data used for voter lists include any information on the types of disabilities a voter has or on the type of accommodation they might require?</p> <p>Describe:</p>	YES	NO

Candidates, Parties and Campaigns

20.	<p>How do political parties select their candidates? Is any consideration given to selecting candidates with disabilities?</p>
21.	<p>Do any political parties advocate for a quota for candidates with disabilities?</p> <p>Specify the parties that advocate for a quota.</p>

No.	Question	Answer	
22.	Are there any political parties that selected persons with disabilities as candidate/party agents? How many persons with disabilities have been selected?	Total	
		Men:	Women:
23.	How many candidates with a disability have been nominated by political parties?	Total	
		Men:	Women:
24.	Are there any potential candidates who were rejected by political parties because of issues related to their disability? Details:	YES	NO
25.	Are there any candidates, nominated by parties, who were rejected by the EMB because of issues related to their disability? Details:	YES	NO

No.	Question	Answer	
26.	<p>Do political parties hold campaign events in venues that are accessible to persons with disabilities?</p> <p>If so, list which parties hold events in accessible venues:</p>	YES	NO
27.	<p>Which political parties have met with DPOs to discuss policies important to persons with disabilities?</p>		
28.	<p>Which political parties have policies that respond to the needs of persons with disabilities?</p>		
28a.	<p>Describe the disability-inclusive policies:</p>		

No.	Question	Answer
29.	Which political parties produce information materials specifically for persons with disabilities to inform them about party platforms and policies?	
30.	<p>Do political parties produce campaign materials in formats that are accessible to voters with visual disabilities to inform them about party platforms and policies?</p> <p>If so, list the political parties and the content/media used/format:</p>	
	Political Party	Content, Media and Format
31.	<p>Which political parties produce campaign materials in forms that are accessible to voters who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, such as subtitles or in sign language?</p> <p>List the political parties and the content/media used/format:</p>	
	Political Party	Content, Media and Format

No.	Question	Answer	
32.	Are there persons with disabilities who have been elected for national-level positions in government?	Number:	Don't know.

Civil Society

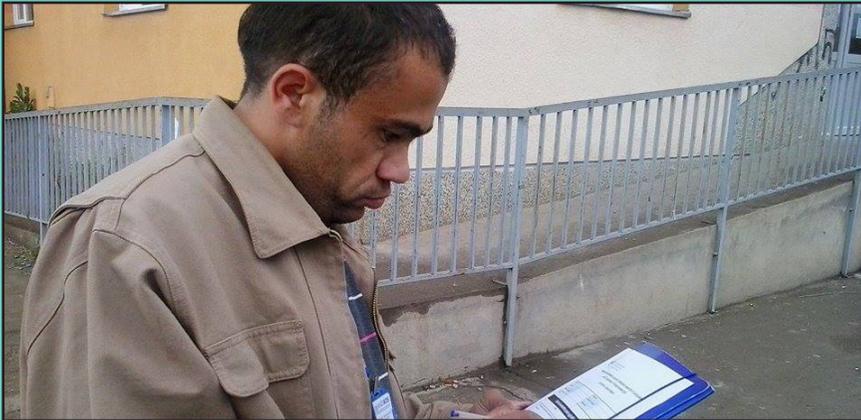
33.	Which civil society organizations (CSOs) advocate for electoral rights of persons with disabilities?		
34.	Which CSOs conduct civic and/or electoral education campaigns specifically for persons with disabilities? List the CSOs and the content/media used/format:		
	CSO Name	Content, Media and Format	

Post-Election		
35.	How many persons with disabilities were elected to serve on the national or local government? Which political parties do they represent?	Number:
36.	How many complaints about access to the election and/or treatment by election officials or parties were lodged by persons with disabilities?	Number:
37.	Other comments:	

Disability Access Long-Term Observation Checklist for Political Events	
Name:	
Gender:	
Observer No.:	
Municipality:	
Election:	
Date:	
Time of observation:	
Political Party:	

Political Events			
No.	Question	Answer	
1.	Was the event publicized among disabled people's organizations (DPOs)?	YES	NO
2.	Was information about the event provided in accessible formats such as braille, audio, sign language or easy-to-read versions?	YES	NO
3.	Was accessible transport to the event available (perhaps provided by event organizers or others)?	YES	NO
4.	Did the venue for the event have parking close to the entrance for disability access?	YES	NO
5.	Did the location have:		
	Toilets or washrooms that could be used by persons with disabilities?	YES	NO
	Enough accessible seating?	YES	NO
	Enough space for wheelchair users to move around easily?	YES	NO
	Hallways that are clear of obstacles, both on the ground and hanging from above?	YES	NO
	Level ground, if the event is outdoors?	YES	NO

6.	How many speakers at the event had a disability?	Number: Types of disability:	
7.	Did any of the speakers focus on issues related to disability rights? If yes, what issues were addressed?	YES	NO
8.	How many persons with disabilities were among the audience?	Number (estimate):	
9.	Did the event include a sign language interpreter or live captions so that people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing could participate?	YES	NO
10.	Were materials in formats that would be accessible to people who are blind or have low vision, such as braille or audio formats?	YES	NO



A LTO with a disability makes notes outside of a polling station. Source: IFES.

ELECTION ACCESS OBSERVATION THROUGHOUT THE ELECTORAL CYCLE: KOSOVO CASE STUDY

It is estimated that approximately 200,000 of Kosovo's 1.7 million citizens have a disability. In the recent past, little attention has been paid to support and encourage participation of persons with disabilities in Kosovo. Democracy in Action (DiA) and HandiKos, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), observed the accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the June 2014 parliamentary elections, called the Disability Access Monitoring (DAM) project. This program engaged 30 long-term observers and 200 short-term observers with disabilities, who were trained to monitor the pre-election period (long-term observation) and Election Day (short-term observation).

The significant involvement of the disabled people's organization (DPO) community brought attention to major areas for improvement in Kosovo's electoral process and was the first

time that DPOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) collaborated to identify and support new and improved practices to promote the active involvement of persons with disabilities in electoral processes. DAM also contributed to the advancement of persons with disabilities as equal members of society.

DiA and HandiKos authored a report with findings from the long- and short-term observation, which included a list of recommendations for changes to be made in order for future elections to meet standards for disability inclusion. Kosovo's Law on General Elections, as well as regulations regarding the Central Election Commission (CEC), protect the rights of voters with disabilities and require the CEC to make voting accessible. Even so, DiA and HandiKos found that these mechanisms were limited.

DiA and HandiKos organized both long- and short-term observation for the project. Long-term observers, who observed 421 political events, such as campaign rallies and debates, and 45 Municipal Election Commission (MEC) visits, noted that only two political parties, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and Vetevendosje Movement, nominated candidates with disabilities. Only 2.6 percent of the observed events included speakers with disabilities, and DiA and HandiKos noted that MECs did not keep clear records of the number of persons with disabilities living in their districts. Additionally, no ramps or lifts were available at 93 percent of the observed political events before the election, and only 54 percent of polling stations were accessible, restricting access of persons with disabilities to participate in political events and to vote. Out of 18,832 polling station commissioners, only 63 commissioners, or 0.03 percent, were persons with disabilities. Kosovo's "1 in 50" law requires that employers include at least one person with a disability for every 50 employees, and the CEC did not meet this requirement.

No community-based voter education activities targeting voters with disabilities were organized at the local level by electoral authorities. According to the CEC, mobile teams are available to travel to voters who are not physically able to go to a polling station. The observation teams noted, however, that only 1,347 voters used this service, which they attributed to the dearth of awareness campaigns.

The CEC greatly increased outreach campaigns to persons with disabilities, particularly those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Even so, though some advertisements included sign language, the CEC did not provide informational materials in braille for voters with visual disabilities, nor in easy-to-read format for persons with intellectual disabilities. Despite efforts to provide voter education during the campaign period, there was low turnout among persons with disabilities on Election Day, according to DiA and HandiKos.

DiA and HandiKos provided a number of recommendations for the CEC, MECs, and political parties. Several recommendations related to updating voter education, both at the national and local levels, in order to ensure that voters with disabilities are aware of their rights and motivated to participate. In order to do so, DiA and HandiKos noted that the CEC should coordinate with DPOs on voter education, registration of persons with disabilities, mobile polling teams, and increased election participation for voters with disabilities. Additionally, platforms and policies should be developed in consultation with DPOs, and persons with disabilities should be encouraged to be actively engaged in parties, as candidates, and as at least 10 percent of those nominated for positions on the MECs. The report also called for space to be made available and accessible for persons with disabilities to contact the government with any issues with access.

One of the recommendations for the CEC involved mapping where voters with disabilities live in order to provide better access. DiA and HandiKos, with the support of IFES, created a database that collects information about disability access at the national, municipal, and local levels. The website contains information on access to MECs, polling centers, party offices, and campaign venues. This information will guide election officials in making updates to existing polling locations, as well as provide voters with useful information.

Good Practices from Kosovo

Debrief with stakeholders after the observation is complete to gather recommendations

DiA and HandiKos recommended that political groups coordinate better with DPOs on voter education and registration.

Involve DPOs and individuals with disabilities in every part of the observation process

The project reached 30 long-term observers and 200 short-term observers with disabilities.

Use trainings to build skills of participants on rights of persons with disabilities so they can become advocates beyond the observation mission.



Election access observers are trained in Pristina.
Source: DiA and HandiKos.

Conducting a Short-Term Election Access Observation

The findings from a short-term observation focus on access to the voting process and inclusion of poll workers with disabilities. Questions on the physical accessibility of the polling station, the number of voters with disabilities observed, the availability of assistive devices, and if poll workers have been trained to assist persons with disabilities without pressuring them to vote a certain way are common to short-term checklists. These reports can inform not only the day of voting in future elections but also training and development of other materials to ensure that all voters have access to participate.

Sample Short-Term Election Access Observation Checklist

About This Tool

The Short-Term Election Access Observation Checklist, which was developed based on checklists used by IFES in Kosovo and Indonesia, asks targeted questions to determine the accessibility on Election Day. It focuses on the physical spaces used and the training poll workers have received for supporting persons with disabilities, including providing election information. This checklist should be modified for the context in which it is being used by including targeted questions, for example, on standards for polling station access that are set in law and assisted voting policies established by election commissions. One checklist should be used per polling station. Observers may use additional copies of the checklist as they visit additional polling stations.

Election Day Disability Access Observation Checklist

Name:	
Gender:	
Observer No.:	
Date:	
Municipality:	
Election:	
Polling Center No.:	
Polling Station No.:	

Access to the Polling Center on Election Day

No.	Question	Answer	
1.	Is the polling station on the ground floor?	YES	NO
1a.	If the polling station is not on the ground floor, is there an elevator or a lift available?	YES	NO
2.	How many steps are there at the entrance of the polling station?	Zero	Number:
2a.	If there are steps into the polling station, is there a ramp available for voters with disabilities to use?	YES	NO

3.	Does the polling center have:		
	Toilets or washrooms that could be used by persons with disabilities?	YES	NO
	Enough accessible seating for each person who requires accessible seating?	YES	NO
	Enough space for wheelchair-users to move around easily?	YES	NO
	Hallways that are clear of obstacles, both on the ground and hanging from above?	YES	NO
	Voting area free of obstacles?	YES	NO
	Wide entrances and exits?	YES	NO
4.	For voters with disabilities that arrive by car, are they provided a parking space close to an accessible entrance?	YES	NO
5.	For voters with disabilities that arrive by car, are they provided a parking space close to an accessible entrance?	YES	NO
6.	Is there an accessible route provided from the parking space to the entrance of the building?	YES	NO
7.	Are paths to the voting area free of obstacles that would prevent voters with disabilities from accessing the voting area?	YES	NO
8.	Is there a desk at the polling station to provide assistance to persons with disabilities?	YES	NO

9.	<p>Are there any poll workers that appear to have a disability?</p> <p>If yes, what type of disability do they appear to have:</p>	YES	NO
10.	<p>Have poll workers been trained to support voters with disabilities? (question should be asked to poll worker)</p>	YES	NO
11.	<p>Were persons with disabilities allowed to be assisted by a person of their choice in order to vote?</p> <p>If no, please describe:</p>	YES	NO
12.	<p>Did an assistant or poll worker intimidate or otherwise unduly influence a voter with disability?</p> <p>If yes, please describe each incident:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	YES	NO

13.	In total, how many voters received assistance? How many were women?	Total:	Women:
14.	a. How many assistants of women with disabilities were women? b. How many assistants of men with disabilities were women?	A:	B:

Election Access Questions Targeting Persons with Different Types of Disabilities

Visual Disability

15.	Does the polling station have a voting guide in braille or in an audio format?	YES	NO
16.	Does the polling station have a voting guide in large font?	YES	NO
17.	Are magnifying glasses or sheets for reading ballots provided?	YES	NO
18.	Are tactile ballot guides or ballot marking guides provided?	YES	NO
19.	Is there sufficient light in the voting area?	YES	NO

Physical Disability

20.	Is the writing surface in the voting booth low enough for all voters to reach?	YES	NO
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21.	Is there enough space for voters who use assistance devices to be able to get into the voting booth to vote?	YES	NO
22.	Are voters with disabilities able to reach the ballot box when depositing their ballot?	YES	NO
23.	Are any assistive devices available to assist with dexterity issues, such as large grip pens or alternative voting methods?	YES	NO
Auditory Disability			
24.	Are poll workers offering communication to support Deaf voters? For example, are they using sign language or writing information down?	YES	NO
25.	Are polling staff providing information on the voting process to voters who are hard-of-hearing by speaking slowly and with a clear expression?	YES	NO
26.	Are there professional sign language interpreters assisting Deaf voters to communicate with the poll workers?	YES	NO
Intellectual or Psychosocial Disability			
27.	Do voters with intellectual disabilities appear to have difficulty understanding the words on the ballot paper?	YES	NO

28.	Do voters with intellectual disabilities appear to be uncertain about how to vote?	YES	NO
29.	Were voters with psychosocial disabilities offered a quiet place to wait to vote?	YES	NO
30.	Were any voters with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities denied access to vote based on their disability? Please comment:	YES	NO
31.	Is the ballot paper easy to understand for a person with an intellectual disability? For example, did it include pictures of candidates or images from each party? Please comment:	YES	NO
Other			
32.	In the space below, please provide any other comments on the electoral process.		

Election Access Voter Questionnaire

Name:	
Gender:	
Observer No.:	
Date:	
Gender of interviewee:	
Municipality:	
Election:	
Polling Center No.:	
Polling Station No.:	
Disability type of interviewee:	

Election Access Voter Questionnaire

1.	Did the officers note your disability or request accommodations in the registration process?	YES	NO
2.	Did you feel intimidated at the polling station?	YES	NO
3.	If you had an assistant, were you able to choose one freely?	YES	NO
4.	Did you find the ballot paper easy to understand?	YES	NO
5.	Did you have enough time to vote?	YES	NO
6.	Did you receive adequate information about the candidates?	YES	NO

7.	Was it easy for you to mark the ballot paper?	YES	NO
8.	Were you able to vote without any difficulties at the voting booth?	YES	NO
9.	Did you understand how to insert the ballot paper into the box?	YES	NO
10.	Did you find it difficult to identify the pictures on the ballot paper?	YES	NO
11.	When casting your vote, did you choose based on pictures, letters, or numbers?	YES	NO
12.	What is your overall impression about the voting process at the polling station?		
13.	<p>Did you hear about/follow/attend a voter education event held by an election management body on accessible elections?</p> <p>If so, what information did you get from it?</p>	YES	NO

14.	<p>What kind of information did you receive related to the general election?</p> <p>How did you get that information?</p>		
15.	Do you think that the media has provided enough electoral information that is accessible for persons with disabilities?	YES	NO
16.	Do you think that the political parties have provided enough electoral information that is accessible for persons with disabilities?	YES	NO
17.	<p>Are you aware of any friends, family members or relatives with disabilities who are not listed in the voter list?</p> <p>If so, do you know why they are not listed? Please explain.</p>	YES	NO
18.	<p>What do you think would make elections more inclusive of persons with disabilities?</p>		



Election access observers on Election Day in Haiti, 2015. Source: IFES.

OBSERVING ELECTION DAY: HAITI CASE STUDY

It is not uncommon for Haitians with disabilities to be excluded from electoral rolls or to be unable to access information about when, where and how to participate in elections. As a result, women and men with disabilities are essentially barred from political life in Haiti. To promote elections accessible to all, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) organized a series of observations during the 2015 elections. During the legislative elections held on August 9, 2015, a pilot team of 30 Haitians with disabilities conducted Haiti's first election access observation at 15 polling stations across the city of Port-au-Prince. Observers scrutinized the schools and marketplaces selected as polling stations by the Provisional Electoral Council (Conseil Électoral Provisoire, or CEP) to determine how accessible and inclusive voting procedures were for persons with disabilities. Subsequent observations were held for the country's legislative and presidential elections on October 25, 2015, during which the pilot observation was expanded to six cities nationwide.

With support from the Haitian Office of the Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (Bureau du Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Intégration des Personnes Handicapées, or BSEIPH), IFES and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the participants in all three observations watched CEP staff serve voters amid noise and crowds. They kept track of how many voters and staff were persons with disabilities and took note of the physical structure of the polling stations, spotting common issues such as uneven stairs, dimly-lit voting rooms with little privacy and ballot boxes that were placed too high for some voters to reach. Comments were written on an observation checklist in Haitian Creole, which observers had helped to adapt to the Haitian context.

“It is one thing to hear about [inaccessible polling stations] and be told about it, but it is another thing to see it for yourself.”

-Luckner Médélus,
election observer

In a debriefing held with observers after the first observation in Port-au-Prince, participants expressed their surprise at discovering the full extent of the inaccessibility of the voting places they visited, commenting that challenges regarding physical accessibility, such as uneven floors and a widespread lack of ramps, made safe navigation nearly impossible for many persons with disabilities. Other significant problems included inaccessible voting materials and extremely low turnout of voters with disabilities. These challenges were also encountered in other cities across the country and noted in preliminary recommendations for improvement made after the second observation.

In their recommendations, observers emphasized the need for more accessible election materials, from voter education to ballots, advocating for the provision of information in audio or tactile formats (such as braille) and in sign language. They also

noted that, in addition to the issues with physical structures and materials, safe and accessible transportation would be a serious challenge for many voters. Observers urged the CEP and other Haitian government institutions to begin addressing selection of polling places as critical for access to political participation. Importantly, observers strongly recommended that there be greater dialogue between the CEP, BSEIPH and DPOs about improving election accessibility for the future.

After receiving feedback on election access in August, the CEP began to take some steps to address election inclusion and accessibility. For example, they started integrating images of persons with disabilities in their voter education materials, distributed a public announcement reaffirming their support for inclusion of women and men with disabilities, and encouraged their staff to keep the needs of voters with disabilities in mind.

Good Practices from Haiti

When possible, contextualize tools to the local environment

Prior to the first observation, local disability rights representatives reviewed the proposed observation checklist and tailored it to match Haiti's context. The checklist was translated into both French and Haitian Creole for ease of use by all observers.

Facilitate strong communication between observation teams

The post-observation period is important for observers to reflect on what they have learned, network with their counterparts in different parts of the city or country, and brainstorm ideas on how to support future work in this area.



Contextualizing an Election Access Observation Checklist

About This Tool

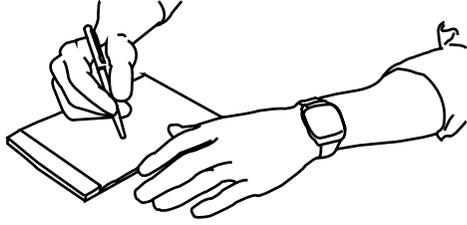
This section includes good practices for contextualizing an election access observation checklist to the laws, policies and procedures used in a country. It provides instructions for collecting information to use as the basis for contextualization. The table below includes sample questions to be updated based on the country's laws, policies and procedures.

To write a comprehensive report on inclusion in an election observation, DPOs and others that conduct election access observations should start by adapting the checklist used to fit the local context. The following documents provide guidance for determining how to contextualize election access questions:

- The country's Constitution
- Statutes or legislation on disability rights (sometimes called a disability law)
- Statutes or legislation on elections (sometimes called an election law)
- Policies and procedures of the country's election management body (EMB)
- EMB disability inclusion strategy, if one exists
- Poll worker training materials
- Civic and voter education materials

After highlighting in the documents above the provisions related to disability-inclusive participation, questions about different parts of the electoral process can be developed. These questions on registration of voters with disabilities, voting procedures, and inclusion as electoral officials help observers

to determine gaps in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all parts of the process. Sometimes national laws or policies are not harmonized with the CRPD. In these cases, it should be noted which national laws or policies are not compliant with the CRPD, if the country has ratified the treaty. Sample questions for long- and short-term observation are available below with information on how to contextualize questions to fit the local framework.



	Illustrative Questions	What to Contextualize
Election Day	<p>Was the polling station accessible to persons with disabilities, such as location on the ground floor, with step-free entry?</p> <p>Are persons with disabilities given priority to vote?</p>	<p>Legal requirements or EMB procedures, such as width of door, height of steps, etc.</p>
	<p>Were poll workers prepared to assist voters with disabilities?</p> <p>Is there a help desk at the polling station that provides assistance to persons with disabilities?</p>	<p>Specific provisions for support to persons with disabilities, such as poll workers allowed to guide voters who are blind, etc.</p>
	<p>Are poll workers offering nonverbal communication to assist voters with auditory disabilities, such as sign language, tapping them on the shoulder to get their attention, and writing things down?</p>	<p>Requirements to have a certain number of sign language interpreters per polling station and regulations on how to support voters</p>

	Are voters allowed an assistant of their choice?	Laws or regulations that require those who assist or guide voters with a disability to fill out a form
	Is an assistive device available to help voters with visual disabilities vote independently and in secret, such as a tactile ballot guide or magnifying glasses?	Laws or regulations that require assistive devices be made available at polling stations
	Do voters with intellectual disabilities appear to have difficulty understanding the words on the ballot paper?	Note if law or provision requires ballots to be available in easy-to-read or wordless format
	Is there a path free of obstacles to the entrance of the polling station?	Local regulations relating to outside of polling stations, such as distance from the road, etc.
	Were voters provided the opportunity to vote from home if they could not come to the polling station to vote? Were voting teams organized for voters with disabilities who reside in medical institutions?	Provisions for mobile voting or voting from home if they exist in the legal framework

	Is the ballot box low enough for all voters to reach?	Include any height requirement for the ballot box
	Are voters with disabilities allowed enough time to vote?	Note if there is a time limit on voting
Legal Framework	Are there any laws or regulations that restrict, or could potentially restrict, the electoral rights of persons with disabilities?	Laws that restrict the rights of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, including language such as “unsound mind”
EMB	Does the EMB actively recruit persons with disabilities to serve as poll workers or permanent staff?	Provisions for hiring persons with disabilities such as government quotas or EMB regulations
	Is there a database of voters with disabilities or information about accommodations to be provided by the EMB?	Laws or regulations on collecting information during voter registration
	Are voter registration and voter education materials available in multiple formats such as braille, sign language, audio, and easy-to-read?	Laws on access to information or accessibility

Political Campaigns and Events	Did the event include a sign language interpreter and/or live captions so that people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing could participate?	Regulations, laws or provisions that require campaigns to be made accessible
	How many candidates with a disability have been nominated by political parties? How many were women with disabilities?	Voluntary party quotas that have been enacted or funds made available to candidates with disabilities
	Did event speakers focus on disability rights issues?	Draft laws or regulations
Post-Election	Were complaint procedures accessible (e.g. access to sign language interpretation)?	Laws, regulations, or procedures that require processes to be made accessible
	If complaints are made online, is the EMB's website accessible?	



A Nigerian voter answers questions during voter registration. Source: IFES.

MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY IN INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC OBSERVATION MISSIONS

Election access observations can be complemented by mainstreaming disability into both international and domestic election observation groups. Observer groups can include questions on electoral access and disability rights advocates as observers in their missions. International observers are guided by the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation (DoP). The DoP is a key document signed by 51 election observation groups and election-focused organizations that recognizes inclusion of persons with disabilities in the electoral process as important for democratic processes. It calls on observers to take note of barriers to persons with disabilities.

Domestic observers are guided by the Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations (DGoP), a document initiated by the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and endorsed by networks of observers in regions around the



Observers from AGENDA met with security forces during elections in Indonesia.

Source: AGENDA.

world. Principle 20 calls on domestic observers to include findings on discrimination and recommendations to remove barriers against marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, women, youth, and others. Code of Conduct Point 6 requires domestic observers to help safeguard these rights.

Opportunities for Expanding Inclusion

International and domestic observer groups have begun gathering data on disability inclusion, but there remains much work to be done in this field. Creating policies on recruitment of observers with disabilities and checklists that include common barriers to persons with different types of disabilities, as well as language on recruiting persons with disabilities to serve as international observers, makes observer missions more inclusive of persons with disabilities and supports the collection of data on access. Additionally, international and domestic groups can include questions from election access observation missions in their checklists.



A voter with a visual disability waits in line at an accessible polling station in Myanmar in April 2017. Source: MILI.

Good Practices for Mainstreaming Disability in International and National Observation Missions

1. Include targeted questions on access of persons with all types of disabilities in observer checklists.

When conducting an election observation, questions targeting the inclusion of voters with physical, visual, auditory, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities should be included. Mainstream observers may not have a background in disability inclusion, so providing targeted questions on how voters, candidates, and others are taking part in elections can help them to determine the barriers that exist. Like most other questions on mainstream observation checklists, contextualizing questions related to disability inclusion is important. For example, a country might have a policy related to how many voters an assistant can support or that a certain number of tactile ballot guides be made available at each station. Sample questions are available in the next section.

Working with local DPOs

In Thailand in 2013, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) worked directly with civil society partners from underrepresented communities, including persons with disabilities, older citizens, and others, organizing workshops in collaboration with the Thailand Human Rights Commission. These workshops results in a petition to the Parliament of Thailand and Election Commission of Thailand for greater access. Such efforts point to ANFREL's broader strategy for integrating persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle.

Finding Local Partners

Connecting with DPOs in the country where the observation is taking place can be a challenge, particularly in places that have low internet penetration and a lack of infrastructure. When DPOs are hard to find, an international organization such as International Disability Alliance (IDA) or Disabled People's International (DPI) may be able to provide contact information.

2. Recruit persons with disabilities to serve as observers and collect data on how many observers with disabilities serve in mainstream observation missions.

Persons with disabilities are the best experts on their participation and inclusion. They should be proactively recruited to serve as observers in national and international observations as well as standalone election access observations. Observer groups should aim to have 15 percent of their team comprised of people with disabilities in order to reflect the proportion of people with disabilities in society. In addition to providing valuable insights for the report, facilitating the inclusion of persons with disabilities as observers is an effective way of breaking down social stigma. Additionally, women with disabilities should be integrated as observers for their unique experiences resulting from double marginalization. Diversity of disability type also can be a benefit to a mission, since persons with different types of disabilities experience different barriers to their inclusion. Serving as an observer allows people with disabilities to be viewed as leaders of the community and to demonstrate their skills and abilities. Inclusion has a double benefit as it aids observer groups in developing greater knowledge about disability rights and supports DPOs in learning more about the electoral process.

3. Standalone election access observations are a useful complement to mainstream election observation missions.

Election access observations collect more detailed information and provide nuanced feedback to inform election stakeholders and policy makers more effectively on disability inclusion. Disability rights advocates can use the comprehensive election observation reports to advocate for specific recommendations with policymakers to increase access to the political process. Standalone observations also provide a pipeline of experienced observers with disabilities who could later serve on mainstream observation teams. A standalone observation could also be conducted by one member of a mainstream observation team.

Reporting on Access for People with All Types of Disabilities

The EU IEOM to Jordan’s report was not limited to physical accessibility but also described inaccessible voter information materials for persons with visual disabilities and a legal framework that “uses inappropriate arbitrary terms, such as ‘imbecile’ and ‘unsound mind’, to disqualify citizens from voting and candidacy in breach of Jordan’s international obligations in that regard.”



The Independent Election Commission of Jordan and IFES produced a public service announcement in 2013 with instructions for each step of the voting process, including a description of who may be an assistant (if one is requested). Sign language interpretation, animation and on-screen text were used to increase accessibility for Jordanians with disabilities. Source: IFES.

Disability Rights Questions for Consideration by Domestic and International Observer Groups

Providing adequate descriptions of the elements of an accessible building or inclusive policy is key to integrating a disability rights perspective since observers not already familiar with disability rights may not have sufficient information to make informed determinations about inclusion and access. Questions related to legal barriers, accessible information and assistive devices are often omitted. These types of questions more directly impact people with intellectual, psychosocial, visual and auditory disabilities.

Through IFES' experience conducting election access observations and in designing questions to be included in mainstream observation checklists, questions on inclusion have been developed for consideration by international and domestic

observer groups. When developing questions on election access, focusing on the access of persons with different types of disabilities should be integrated with more general questions. In the examples provided below, sample questions, organized thematically, are not exhaustive but rather a starting point for discussions on how observers can integrate a disability lens into their reporting. The recommendations provided in this toolkit are intended both to make election observation more inclusive and to use election observation to integrate persons with disabilities in electoral processes. The data that observers collect has the potential to inform EMBs and to engage voters with disabilities, building more inclusive elections.

Reporting on Access for People with All Types of Disabilities

“For the first time, to facilitate voting rights for persons with disabilities, the SEC, in co-operation with civil society, mapped polling stations that were wheelchair accessible and placed this information online. It also produced Braille [sic] ballot sleeves for some polling stations.”

-OSCE Election Observation Report,
Macedonia, October 2017



Observers in the Dominican Republic learn about election access standards during a training in 2012. Source: IFES.

About This Tool

This table includes sample questions that international or domestic election observation missions could add to their checklists to mainstream disability rights. These questions can be integrated into specific sections of observation checklists or included as a separate section on disability rights.

Disability Rights to Consider in Long-Term Observation Checklists	
Legal Framework	<p>Is the legal framework free from barriers that could exclude persons with disabilities, such as requirements to speak a language, which could exclude sign language-users?</p> <p>Are laws consistent with Article 29 of the CRPD which guarantees the right to participation in political and public life for persons with all types of disabilities?</p> <p>Are laws consistent with Article 12 of the CRPD, which guarantees legal capacity of persons with disabilities, including voting for persons under guardianship?</p>
Election Management	<p>Does the EMB actively recruit persons with disabilities to work as EMB employees?</p> <p>Does the EMB provide reasonable accommodations such as a sign language interpreter to candidates and staff?</p>

<p>Voter Education and Information</p>	<p>Was voter education information disseminated in accessible formats, such as easy-to-read, braille, audio, sign language, and captioning?</p> <p>Does the EMB’s public information campaign inform persons with disabilities about how to register as a voter?</p>
<p>Voter Registration</p>	<p>Are persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities prohibited from registering to vote?</p> <p>Are voter registration drives held in locations that are physically inaccessible to persons with disabilities?</p> <p>Does the voter registration process include formats accessible to persons with disabilities (such as braille, sign language interpretation, etc.)?</p> <p>Does the data used for voter registration include any information on the types of disabilities a voter has or on the type of accommodation they might require?</p>

<p>Candidacy, Political Parties, and Campaigns</p>	<p>Is any consideration given to selecting candidates with disabilities, such as a voluntary party quotas?</p> <p>How many candidates with disabilities have been nominated by political parties?</p> <p>Have any potential candidates been rejected by political parties or the EMB because of issues related to their disability?</p> <p>Do parties produce information materials specifically for persons with disabilities to inform them about party platforms and policies?</p> <p>Do parties produce campaign materials in formats that are accessible to voters with visual disabilities such as braille or audio? Or to voters who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, such as subtitles or in sign language?</p> <p>Were political parties' events conducted in accessible venues (e.g. accessible entrance and seating, wide hallways clear of obstacles)?</p>
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Post-Election	<p>How many persons with disabilities were elected and duly installed to serve in the national or local government?</p> <p>How many complaints about access to the election and/or treatment by election officials or parties were lodged by persons with disabilities?</p> <p>Was the complaint adjudication process accessible to persons with disabilities?</p>
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Disability Rights to Consider in Short-Term Observation Checklists	
Polling Station Entry	<p>Was the polling station accessible to persons with disabilities, such as a location on the ground floor, with step-free entry?</p> <p>Is there a path free of obstacles to the entrance of the polling station?</p> <p>For voters with disabilities who arrive by car, are they provided a parking space close to an accessible entrance?</p> <p>For voters with disabilities that are being driven to the polling center, do they have access to a drop-off area?</p> <p>Is there an accessible route provided from the parking space to the entrance of the building?</p>

<p>Waiting Area</p>	<p>Is there a quiet space for voters with psychosocial disabilities to wait and to vote?</p> <p>Does the polling center have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets or washrooms that could be used by persons with disabilities? • Enough accessible seating? • Enough space for wheelchair users to move around easily? • Hallways that are clear of obstacles, both on the ground and hanging from above? • Wide entrances/exits?
<p>Assistance and Training</p>	<p>Were persons with disabilities allowed to be assisted by a person of their choice in order to vote?</p> <p>Was the electoral staff prepared to assist voters with disabilities?</p> <p>Are there any poll workers that appear to have a disability?</p> <p>How many assistants of men with disabilities are women?</p> <p>How many assistants of women with disabilities are women?</p>

Accessible Voting	<p>Is an assistive device available to help voters with visual disabilities vote independently and in secret, such as a tactile ballot guide or magnifying glasses?</p> <p>Is the voting booth low enough for voters who use wheelchairs to reach? Is there enough space to get into the voting booth?</p> <p>Do voters with intellectual disabilities appear to have difficulty understanding the words on the ballot paper?</p> <p>Is the ballot box low enough for all voters to reach?</p>
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CONCLUSION

Conducting both standalone election access observation missions, as well as integrating disability rights into domestic and international observer missions, is the most effective way to ensure the unique perspectives of women and men with different types of disabilities are addressed in election observation.

Election access observation missions are a highly effective method for integrating disability inclusion into the electoral process. Comprehensive feedback on the extent to which elections are credible and inclusive of all citizens, including the right of persons with physical, visual, auditory, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities to participate, as well as the potential attitudinal, legal, informational, physical, and other barriers that they encounter throughout the electoral cycle, supports the mission toward credible and inclusive elections.

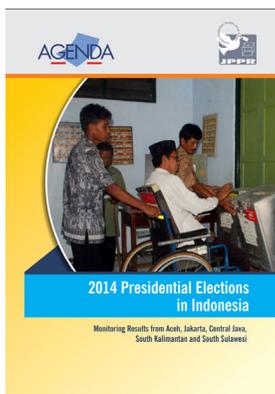
International and domestic observer groups can play a role in increasing both the representation of persons with disabilities and reporting on disability inclusion in elections. To integrate a disability rights lens into election observation, election observations would benefit from the expertise of persons with disabilities and their organizations. Recruitment of teams in which 15 percent of observers have a disability would reflect the proportion of people with disabilities in society. Furthermore, including observers with disabilities as part of mainstream observations demonstrates leadership of persons with disabilities. The active engagement of leaders with disabilities in roles such as observers breaks down stereotypes about disability and models inclusion.

Lessons learned from standalone election access observations demonstrate how inclusion of detailed questions on disability and recruitment of observers with disabilities can lead to tan-

gible increases in access to political process. When inclusive, election observation can enhance the political participation of citizens with and without disabilities. The recommendations provided in this toolkit are intended both to make election observation more inclusive and to use election observation to integrate persons with disabilities in electoral processes. The data that observers collect has the potential to inform EMBs and to engage voters with disabilities, building more inclusive elections.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Resources



AGENDA reports

PPUA Pencha and AGENDA, [*Accessible Elections for Persons with Disabilities in Five Southeast Asian Countries \(2013\)*](#)

JJPR and AGENDA, [*2014 Presidential Elections in Indonesia: Monitoring Results from Aceh, Jakarta, Central Java, South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi \(2014\)*](#)

The AGENDA network produced this report on its election access observation in Indonesia with chapters on how the observation was organized and its findings: [*AGENDA, Disability Access and Inclusion in the Political Processes of Four Southeast Asian Countries \(2016\)*](#)



Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), founded in 1997, conducts election observation and trains civil society groups in Asia. ANFREL makes its mission reports available on [its website](#).



Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE)

IFES has developed the first Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections ([BRIDGE](#)) module on disability rights and elections. The module, which uses BRIDGE's interactive adult learning methodology, includes lessons on access of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle as voters, candidates, election officials and observers. Activities in the new BRIDGE module highlight disability inclusion as a key component of credible and inclusive elections.



The Carter Center

The Carter Center's election observation reports are available online via CarterCenter.org. Preliminary statements and final reports for many country observations contain analysis of the credibility and inclusivity of elections.

Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations

The [Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations](#) (DGoP) was developed through a consensus process by representatives of electoral observation networks and commemorated in 2012 by over 160 election organizations. The initiative was led by the GNDEM and includes standards and good practices for domestic observers.

Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation

The [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#) (DoP) was endorsed by 23 organizations in 2005 and, at the time of this writing, has been endorsed by 52 organizations. It includes guidance for conducting election observations based on international legal standards and good practices.

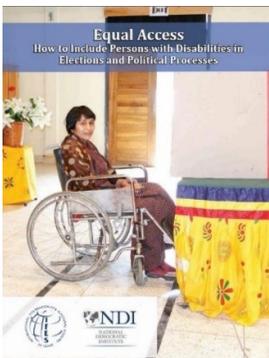
ElectionAccess.org

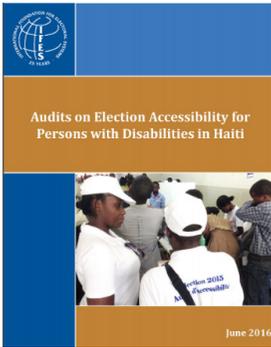
ElectionAccess.org, the world's first global clearinghouse for resources on disability inclusion in political life, contains a library of relevant legal excerpts and examples of voter education posters, radio shows, videos, and flyers from around the world. The site, managed by IFES, also includes numerous accessibility features.

Equal Access Manual

[*Equal Access: How to Include People with Disabilities in Elections and Political Processes*](#), published by IFES and the National Democratic Institute in 2014, contains practical examples of disability inclusion throughout the electoral cycle. It is intended for use by election officials, DPOs, and other electoral stakeholders.

Equal Access is available in 10 languages, including Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, English, French, Nepali, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Urdu, and Uzbek.

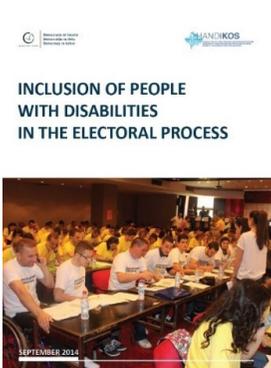




Haiti report

[IFES, *Audits on Election Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Haiti* \(2016\)](#)

IFES organized election access observations in Haiti in 2015 and 2016. The report describes the process by which the observation took place, as well as recommendations for making electoral processes in Haiti more inclusive of persons with disabilities.



Kosovo report

[Democracy in Action and HandiKOS, *Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Electoral Process* \(2014\)](#)

This report, written by IFES' partners Democracy in Action (DiA) and HandiKOS details the long-term election access observation conducted by disability rights advocates in Kosovo in 2014. Sections of the report include information on the methodology and strategy of the activity, as well as an analysis of the legal framework, campaigning, and Election Day.



OSCE/ODIHR

[Our Right to Participate – Promoting the Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political and Public Life Recommendations \(2016\)](#)

The “Our Right to Participate” experts conference, of which IFES was a participant, resulted in a set of recommendations to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to ensure equal opportunity to participate fully in public life.

Timor-Leste report

[RHTO and IFES, *Disability Access Monitoring* \(2017\)](#)

This observation report, produced by RHTO and IFES, provides insights from the October 2017 elections. The report also provides recommendations for strengthening inclusion in the electoral process to the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration, the National Election Commission, the Timor-Leste government, media and other DPOs. RHTO’s evidence-based report provides a platform for RHTO and other DPOs to continue to advocate for upholding the political rights of persons with disabilities. The report is available in English and Tetum.



Annex 2. Definitions

Terminology	Definition
Accessible	A site, facility, work environment, service or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in and/or use safely, independently and with dignity by persons with disabilities
Accessible formats	Print, audio or visual information that is accessible to persons with disabilities
Assistive device	A tool that aids completion of a task or other function that might otherwise be difficult or impossible
Attitudinal barrier	Stereotypes about persons with disabilities or stigma that affect access
Auditory disability	Conditions that affect hearing; a person may be deaf or hard-of-hearing
Barrier	A restriction to the access of any process, building, or materials
Braille	Writing system comprised of raised dots used by people who are blind or have low vision
Checklist	Questions used by election observers to gather information about the electoral process
Communication barrier	Restricted access due to formats or methods of sharing information that are not accessible
Disabled people's organization	A civil society organization that is run by and for persons with disabilities

Terminology	Definition
Easy-to-read	Text where the content, language, illustrations and graphic layout are simplified for ease of use by persons with intellectual disabilities and/or non-native speakers of a language
Environmental barrier	Physical buildings that limit access of persons with disabilities
Institutional barrier	Laws and policies that are not inclusive of persons with disabilities
Intellectual disability	Term used when there are limits to a person’s ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life
Long-term observation	A mission in which persons gather information about processes throughout the electoral cycle (before and after Election Day)
Mainstreaming	Process whereby persons with disabilities are integrated as equal participants and leaders in assistance programs and society
Person-first language	Terminology that uses a “person” word before the disability-related word such as “voters with disabilities” or “woman who uses a wheelchair”
Physical disability	Conditions that affect mobility, movement, or the body
Psychosocial disability	Conditions that affect cognition, emotion and behavior

Terminology	Definition
Reasonable accommodation	Provision of materials or environment that allow persons with disabilities to participate and contribute on an equal basis with others
Short-term observation	A mission in which persons gather information about processes on Election Day
Sign language	A form of communication that uses hand signals
Tactile	Raised symbols that can be used in contexts in which persons are not fluent in braille
Universal design	All buildings, materials and processes are designed to be accessible for both persons with and without disabilities from their inception
Visual disability	Conditions that affect eyesight; persons may be blind or have low vision



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