The Global State of Democracy IDEAthons

Exploring Democracy's Resilience

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International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Contents

Introduction

Is democracy really in trouble, or do recent events simply signal a temporary downward fluctuation? Are sceptics overreacting to sensational daily headlines, and losing sight of democracy's numerous advances over the last few decades? Under what conditions is democracy resilient when challenged?

To answer these questions, the first edition of International IDEA's biennial publication, *The Global State of Democracy*, explores the challenges and risks to democracy as well as the enabling conditions for its resilience—its ability to adapt and recover from complex challenges and crises.

In 2017, as part of the global launch of *The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience* and the Global State of Democracy Indices, International IDEA held a series of interactive and participatory events branded as 'IDEAthons'. Taking place in six cities—Amsterdam, Brussels, Colombo, Cotonou, Lima and Stockholm—the IDEAthons provided spaces in which participants brainstormed potential solutions to a set of challenges related to the themes of democratic backsliding, representation, corruption, economic inequality, migration, and inclusive peacebuilding (see Table 1).

The IDEAthons were engaging, collaborative events that combined formal presentations on a topic with interactive innovation labs. Participants—including experts, civil society actors, young policy influencers, policymakers, students, public officials and researchers— were encouraged to harness their collective knowledge to brainstorm concrete solutions to existing democracy challenges, by adapting the recommendations from *The Global State of Democracy* to their local context.

This report summarizes the main findings from each of the IDEAthons. The solutions put forward by the participants were targeted at relevant local actors, including governments, political parties, civil society organizations, the private sector and regional organizations.

Table 1. *The Global State of Democracy*: Launch events and IDEAthons

Date	Location	Format	Themes
12 November 2017	Cotonou, Benin	Launch and IDEAthon as part of the Regional Policy Dialogue	Representation, inclusion of young people
15 November 2017	Stockholm, Sweden	Launch and IDEAthon on the International Day of Democracy	Representation, inclusion of young people and women, corruption, democratic backsliding
16 November 2017	The Hague, the Netherlands	Launch	
20 November 2017	Lima, Peru	Launch and IDEAthon during the Annual Democracy Forum	Inclusion of young people, economic inequality, migration
28 November 2017	Oslo, Norway	Launch	
29 November 2017	Geneva, Switzerland	Launch	
29 November 2017	New York City, United States	Launch	
30 November 2017	Brussels, Belgium	Launch and IDEAthon	Representation, corruption
5 December 2017	Jakarta, Indonesia	Launch	
6 December 2017	Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Launch and IDEAthon	Representation
13 December 2017	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Launch and IDEAthon	Democratic backsliding, inclusive peacebuilding

Proposals take shape during the Brussels IDEAthon, 30 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/I. Haidau).

Conversations during the Colombo IDEAthon, 13 December 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Devaka Seneviratne).

Theme 1. Democratic backsliding

Threats from within: democracy's resilience to backsliding

What can be done when the instruments of democracy are used to undermine it from within? Threats to democracy from those in power constitute some of the gravest affronts to the global state of democracy today.

These leaders manage to increase their political power by manipulating electoral norms, restricting dissent and freedom of speech, and reforming the constitution to extend their terms in office—all within the legal framework of the democratic system. Most alarming, these actions have a ripple effect on the functioning of institutions beyond those directly targeted, and affect people's safety, wellbeing and livelihoods.

Some countries have diverted from this dangerous path towards authoritarianism. Read more about modern democratic backsliding in Chapter 3 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which focuses on factors that help resist or counteract democratic backsliding, including leveraging citizen preferences for democracy, generating change from the bottom up, and taking advantage of the remaining (if frail) checks and balances. It examines cases of recent backsliding in Hungary, Poland, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

In the democratic backsliding lab, participants discussed how civil society can be empowered to resist democratic backsliding in their countries.

Solutions: Colombo

Political parties and politicians, civil society organizations and the media must be accountable and transparent through the following actions:

- **Political parties and candidates** should make a declaration of assets of candidates and their families in elections, making asset declarations public.

- **Electoral commissions** should provide state funding of candidates (to ensure their participation in elections) of political parties (based on the votes they receive).

- **Civil society organizations** should conduct post-election monitoring of promises made by candidates/government, and 'police' media outlets on whether they are reporting fake/biased news.

- **Electoral commissions** should invest in voter education, with the aim to raise awareness and empower communities to better understand of the role of members of parliament/politicians.

- **Citizens and political parties** should call for the declaration of assets of civil society actors, and making asset declarations public.

- **Political parties and parliamentarians** should adopt model codes of conduct for media and self-regulatory measures on media reporting, especially during elections.

Concepts take shape during the Colombo IDEAthon, 13 December 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Devaka Seneviratne).

Theme 2. Representation

The changing nature of political parties and representation

Democracy relies on effective representation—responsive political leaders who can craft policy solutions for their societies. However, political party systems in established democracies are under threat as many citizens question whether traditional political parties can handle current challenges and crises, increasing apathy and distrust among voters. Traditional political leadership is caught between the centralization of policy decisions on the one hand, and disaffected voters on the other hand.

Increasing a party's inclusiveness—particularly of women and young people—can also restore trust. To remain competitive, party leaders should reach out to marginalized groups and ensure they are equally included in the party's internal democracy and decision-making.

Read more about the changing nature of political parties and representation in Chapter 4 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which examines how public trust in political parties, parliamentary institutions and political leaders, can be restored, with case studies from India, the United Kingdom, the European Parliament and Spain, as well as the use of referendums around the world.

Political parties, representation and inclusion

In the political parties, representation and inclusion labs, participants discussed new initiatives to ensure political parties are representative and responsive to their electorates.

Solutions: Cotonou

- **Citizens and civil society organizations** must ensure that the 'Office of the Citizen' is the highest office in the state. If one doesn't exist, an 'Office of the Citizen' that will give a voice to civil society, such as the Nigerian Office of the Citizen, should be created by decision makers.

- **Electoral commissions** must work with decision makers to reinforce freedom of candidacy outside of political parties.

  - For example, in Benin, many parties do not meet basic criteria to be recognized as a party. Candidates for president in Benin have not been vetted by parties and you do not need to be a party member to be a candidate.

- **Political parties** must be transformed, reformed and renovated by parties themselves as well as by civil society organizations.

  - For example, in Senegal, a coalition was established to depose the old socialist party in 2000. A strong candidate to represent the coalition was found and people were mobilized nationwide to secure money. The coalition visited neighborhoods, villages and cities with megaphones to raise awareness and funds. They won the election without the traditional financial means.

- **Regional organizations** such as the African Union should develop standard norms for partisan reforms in each region or country to adopt and adapt to their needs.

Solutions: Lima

- For their renewal, **political parties** should:

  - Become more attractive and accessible to the public. To do so, they should create greater links to local platforms, and strive to understand the demands, needs, challenges of the population and meet these with concrete actions.

  - Establish consultative mechanisms and use ICT technologies for parties that reach government to remain in touch with their party bases.

  - In relation to the Peruvian context, reinforce the Peruvian 'Week of Congressional Representation' (Semana de Representación) to strengthen the connection between the political bases and the parties.

  - Use information communication technology (ICT) to effectively reach constituents and also strengthen communication within parties.

- **Parliamentarians** should develop programmatic agendas and training for new members of government.

- In terms of political training, **electoral management bodies and commissions** should:

  - highlight and demonstrate the positive aspects of political organisation towards the general public; and

  - conduct intra-party training to help transmit on points many parties have in common: history, culture and projects.

- In terms of political training, **political parties** should identify and build the capacity of young talent for roles as future representatives, including headhunting talent at universities and elsewhere.

- In terms of political culture, **political parties** must respond to specific needs of the population, and to do this, constituency needs must be identified and elaborated on.
  - For example, national surveys on needs should be held to recognize and address these needs.
- Trust in politicians and candidates must be recuperated. **Parliamentarians** can achieve this by:
  - providing transparent CVs of politicians and candidates;
  - undertaking electoral and party reform to adjust to territorial divisions; and
  - using technology for greater transparency, and to facilitate more direct channels of communication in political engagement and representation by citizens and civil society organizations.

Solutions: Amsterdam

- Decision makers must ensure that **marginalized groups** (e.g. young people, migrants and people with disabilities) are granted greater access to political decision-making both at the local and national levels. This can be achieved by, on the one hand disempowering players who dominate the political sphere and, on the other hand, by empowering marginalized groups.
- Implementation to include marginalized groups should start from the bottom-up, using social **media, citizens' movements, and investigative journalism**. Specifically, this can be realized by compiling and publishing a yearly Transparency Report at the local and national levels containing a lobby register and an overview of which stakeholders have been involved in consultation and decision-making processes.
- **Local decision makers** should establish Minority Committees as part of local governments. These committees form a platform for engagement with marginalized groups. In 2018 a local government can seek to implement such a committee as an advisory body within a municipality.
- **Parliamentarians** should design and implement direct democracy instruments and methods so that people can empower themselves to influence decisions that impact them. In addition, governments get the chance to open up the decision-making process. Once the demand for these instruments is established the right to participate should be protected by law. (Local) governments can start with instruments such as participatory budgeting, learning from similar initiatives which have been successfully implemented in Brazil, and in cities such as Paris and Madrid.

Inclusion and young people

Increasing a party's inclusiveness—particularly of young people, who have historically been underrepresented—can help restore trust. Their marginalization from, and decreasing trust in, traditional party politics is of particular concern, as young people can make or break future models of representation. To remain competitive, party leaders should reach out to young people and ensure they are equally included in the party's internal democracy and decision-making.

Solutions: Stockholm (IDEAthon 1)

- Create continued dialogue meetings between the youth wings of political parties and local school students throughout Sweden.

- **Political parties** (or their youth wings) should visit Swedish schools once or twice each semester, and meet in a format that allows dialogue, questions and answers both ways.

- An independent or neutral moderator such as a teacher, should allow parties to introduce themselves and their programmers. Students (either as classes or as student groups) should be invited to do the same. Discussion should be encouraged.

- The aims of these events would be to:

    ◦ facilitate dialogue;

    ◦ allow students to ask questions about policy and ideology;

    ◦ allow students to give their opinions on what is important as youth, and allow them be part of the process; and

    ◦ allow political parties to present their ideas and policies to students more effectively.

Solutions: Stockholm (IDEAthon 2)

- **Students, civil society organizations and electoral commissioners** should collaborate to create a movement and platform for young people of different backgrounds to meet and engage in politics, while running a media campaign that promotes youth engagement.

- The media campaign should take this message of youth political engagement and re-write a version of the Swedish national anthem featuring musicians from various genres that draw in interest from different subgroups and through a video featuring national celebrities and use national holiday events to ensure engagement between elections and throughout the electoral cycle.

Inclusion and gender

Increasing a party's inclusiveness—particularly of women—can also help restore trust. Gender equality is a cornerstone of democracy and a prerequisite for sustainable development, as defined by the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5. To remain competitive, party leaders should reach out to women and ensure they are equally included in the party's internal democracy and decision-making.

Solutions: Lima

- **Electoral management bodies** should:

    ◦ establish programmes which help identify and articulate to the population (principally women) how legislation deals with gender, for example in relation to violence; and

- introduce parity or alteration to political party lists.
- **Civil society organizations** should establish a campaign to see which parties or movements work actively for equality, to identify potential allies for political reform initiatives.
- **Electoral commissions** and **political parties** should take a gender perspective to analyse the principal election proposals and candidates, and:
  - establish political schools for women, complete with spaces for dialogue with political parties to guarantee quality presence and women's rights;
  - promote executive directives for gender parity (regionally and locally); and
  - call for accountability in party finance on the topic of gender equality.

Interaction at the Geneva launch of The Global State of Democracy, November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA).

Theme 3. Corruption

Money, influence, corruption and capture: can democracy be protected?

Scandals involving money in politics have affected countries in every region of the world, fueling distrust in democratic institutions and actors and undermining the integrity of the political system by making the policy process vulnerable to capture. Big money in politics provides a disproportionate advantage to a selected few, and creates an uneven playing field for women and marginalized communities.

Furthermore, current policies that are intended to provide a counterweight often fall short: they have a limited scope, and the institutions that are supposed to enforce them are marred with constraints, while political parties face little accountability.

A wider, holistic approach is needed to better equip democratic political institutions to resist the negative influence of money, to empower citizens and to encourage accountability. Read more about money, influence, corruption and capture in Chapter 5 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which explores how democracy can be protected from the pernicious influence of money in politics, with case studies on Peru, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

In the anti-corruption labs, participants discussed new initiatives to equip democratic political institutions to resist the negative influence of money, to empower citizens and to encourage accountability.

Solutions: Lima

- **Parliamentarians** should:

    ◦ reform the Comptroller General of the Republic (in Peru), to increase its effectiveness and build up a normative track record; and

    ◦ initiate a reform for greater supervision of public resources.

- When it comes to the political party system, Peru has many disaffected citizens. Therefore, to foster adequate representation, incentives for citizens to participate in politics needs to be created or better articulated by **civil society organizations, the Electoral Commission,** and **parties** themselves.

- **Civil society organizations** should:
  - be empowered and trained to encourage political participation, as engagement in civil society movements should enable a transition to political platforms; and
  - combat corruption by empowering citizens and civic education, cultivating the potential for grassroots movements to hold politicians to account.

Discussions during the Stockholm IDEAthon, 15 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Studio Huusmann).

Theme 4. Economic inequality

Mind the gap: can democracy counter inequality?

Rising inequality has become the defining challenge of the century; it has profound implications for the health and resilience of democracies everywhere. Inequality—and the fears of social decline and exclusion it generates—feeds social polarization and the shrinking of a vital moderate centre. It also severely skews political voice and representation towards those who have resources and power.

This generates and perpetuates elites with outsized influence over shaping policy- and decision-making processes; this (im)balance of power determines the prospects for development and how progressive and equitable they are, including in the vital area of state performance and social services provision.

Over the long term, inequality can create imbalances in voice, representation, opportunity and access that disenfranchise segments of the population, and undermine trust in (and support for) democracy. This kind of alienation can also increase support for populist and extremist views and violent conflict—particularly among young people.

Read more about how democracy can counter inequality in Chapter 6 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which explores how democracies can tackle the political challenges posed by inequality and help make democracies more resilient, using case studies from Angola, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, the United States and Venezuela.

In the inequality labs, participants discussed new initiatives to enhance political inclusion and tackle the political challenges posed by inequality. In each lab, solutions were tailored to the local context and actors.

Solutions: Cotonou

- Parliamentarians and regional organizations should ensure that the state makes resources available for the implementation of development plans. Resources should also be made available to civil society organizations and citizens, to empower them to organize politically, and to be able to act as watchdogs on politicians.

Obiageli Ezekwesili introduces the new International IDEA publication, The Global State of Dmeocracy, at the IDEAthon held during the Regional Policy Dialogue in Cotonou, Benin, 12 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA).

Solutions: Brussels

Reaching the unreachable: data, knowledge and engagement of young people

- **EU parliamentarians** and **EU institutions** should adopt processes that are more participatory and more inclusive, without preconceived notions and ideas about outcomes—instead, listening to what local actors, citizens and civil society organizations have to say and how they want policies to be delivered.

- EU and national decision makers should support pilot projects in EU Member States to lower the voting age to 16.

- **Electoral management bodies** and **commissions** should develop school outreach project debates about political education among young people.

- **Academia** and **EU institutions** should disaggregate data statistics by gender and diversity; and use inequality as a theme for social media, reports and visibility campaigns.

Responsive and broad representation

EU parliamentarians and **EU institutions** should:

- promote gender and youth empowerment within political parties, to modernize them and to better tackle inequalities and to include other people traditionally excluded (e.g. people with less formal education);

- engage with independent activists to deal with EU institutions to tackle inequality, and support the work of human rights' defenders;

- introduce hearings where people can have an impact in policymaking—for example, the delegations should talk to actors other than governments, such as citizens and civil society organizations; and

- establish participatory projects (e.g. on budgeting, capacity for local authorities, strategies to reach those 'left behind').

Solutions: Stockholm

- Civil society organizations and parliamentarians should create a debate platform to bring the most pressing inequality issues to the forefront of political debate by:

  - creating a database ('Visualizing Inequality') that illustrates the changing dynamics between inequalities and democracy; and

  - fostering local dialogue, exchange of experiences and public debate across different sectors of society and propelled by 'celebrity ambassadors', about the rising inequality levels and community initiatives to tackle them.

Theme 5. Migration

Migration, social polarization, citizenship and multiculturalism

Fuelled by globalization, climate change and state failure, and due to its transnational nature, migration poses fundamental challenges to democratic societies on both the national and local levels, particularly in cities. It challenges the nation state and, by extension, policy areas that represent core components of state sovereignty, including citizenship.

Large migration flows strain democratic institutions' capacity to effectively integrate migrants into society, and call into question the extent to which governments should enable migrants' political participation and integration. Migration affects governments' ability to deliver public services. Public debate and concerns about migration, including whether multiculturalism 'works', showcase the polarization of societies and policymakers' dilemmas in the search for adequate responses. Migration also affects democratic institutions and processes in migrants' countries of origin, as citizens abroad seek to influence politics at home.

Read more about migration, social polarization, citizenship and multiculturalism in Chapter 7 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which assesses the democratic dividend of migration for destination and origin countries, and how policymakers can effectively address public concerns on migration while also reaping the benefits of inclusive and multicultural integration policies. It features case studies on Canada, Chile, Germany, Myanmar, South Africa, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.

In the migration labs, participants discussed new initiatives to increase political inclusion and integration of legal migrants and refugees at the local and national level.

Solutions: Brussels

- **Academia** and **policy advisors** such as think tanks should focus on identifying the key challenges of migration in the European context.

- **Parliamentarians** and **EU institutions** should (in the media and in politics) balance the debate with fact-driven arguments that can counter some of the anti-immigration messages. This includes shifting the sentiments of scarcity and insecurity in the host communities and also expanding the narrative to arguments of the collective gain of migration.

- **Parliamentarians, civil society organisations, citizens** and **migrants** themselves should work to build partnerships for discussion, connection, and information sharing. The management of migration cannot happen in silos, disconnected from migrants and host communities.

- **Parliamentarians** should take advantage of the important role that cities play in managing migration and showcase good practices to academia, civil society organisations and regional organisations such as the EU.

Solutions: Stockholm (IDEAthon 1)

- **Parliamentarians** should establish multi-party consultative committees for grassroots decision-making in Sweden under the motto 'Funds from the top, solutions from below'.

- The multi-party committees should be created by the central government and include local authorities and civil society.

- Civil society organizations and government should create awareness-raising and educative courses, to foster relationships between local authorities and migrant groups, encouraging them to be politically engaged.

- Parliamentarians should launch a central department of political inclusion and integration of non-Swedish residents.

- Parliamentarians should establish consultative committees at 'kommun' levels between 2018 and 2022.

Solutions: Stockholm (IDEAthon 2)

- **Local and national parliamentarians** should work together to establish multi-stakeholder boards that will check and control the implementation of guidelines or regulations for the participation of migrants in civil society. These boards should:

  - be established at the municipality level and comprise representatives of civil society organizations, local governments and migrant communities;

  - liaise with different stakeholders, including the private sector, universities, schools and labor unions, with the ultimate goal of increasing participation of migrants in civil society; and

  - carry out training and capacity-building activities to increase knowledge and awareness on the legal, administrative and practical issues related to the participation of migrants in civil society.

Presenting the outcomes of an IDEAthon at the Stockholm launch of The Global State of Democracy, 11 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Studio Huusmann).

Passionate debate during the Brussels IDEAthon, 30 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/I. Haidau).

Theme 6. Inclusive peacebuilding

Inclusive peacebuilding in conflict-affected states: designing for democracy's resilience

Countries emerging from armed conflict face a long and arduous road, characterized by multiple obstacles as well as many opportunities. Steps taken in the immediate post-conflict period have a tremendous impact on the country's future.

Read more about inclusive peacebuilding in Chapter 8 of *The Global State of Democracy*, which recommends implementing targeted and active inclusion in peacebuilding processes in order to activate and maintain consistent representative–constituent communication channels, give voice to individuals and groups who identify ways to challenge traditional notions of the democratic state, and facilitate broader access to the highest levels of decision-making as a guiding principle in state- and democracy-building processes.

It also recommends promoting such policies and practices in three key transitional processes: constitution-building, electoral design and rebel-to-political-party transformation, featuring case studies from Liberia, Nepal and Libya.

In the inclusive peacebuilding lab, participants discussed how the inclusion of marginalized groups in transitional political processes could be enhanced in their region.

Solutions: Colombo

Participants suggested actions for achieving genuine, effective and comprehensive participation of marginalized groups in post-conflict constitutional and electoral reforms. Beneficiaries, or the marginalized groups referred to, could include young people, women, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, internally displaced persons and ethnic and religious minorities.

In particular, participants made the following recommendations:

- **Electoral commissions** should hold capacity building and training activities to increase marginalized groups' understanding of and capacity to engage in constitutional and electoral reform processes.

- **Electoral management bodies** should improve accessibility to the polls for persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons through logistical and technical measures

- **Parliamentarians** and **civil society organizations** should establish a series of consultations and advocacy activities between policy makers and representatives of marginalized groups.

- **Electoral commissions** should create systematic and targeted voter education and civic education campaigns tailored to the needs of each specific marginalized group.

- **Decision makers** should involve military representatives in peace dialogues to increase the accountability and transparency of the military.

- Decision makers should reach out to target groups via:

  ○ social media campaigns (especially targeting younger people);

  ○ radio campaigns (especially for reaching groups living with limited electricity and Internet);

  ○ visual tools to reach out to people with low literacy levels, and to people with disabilities; and

  ○ using local and indigenous languages to reach out to specific ethnic or linguistic minority groups.

Participants at the Stockholm IDEAthon, 15 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Studio Huusmann).

Participants at the Stockholm IDEAthon, 15 November 2017 (Credit: International IDEA/Studio Huusmann).

About The Global State of Democracy

Is democracy really in trouble, or do recent events simply signal a temporary downward fluctuation? Are sceptics overreacting to sensational daily headlines, and losing sight of democracy's numerous advances over the last few decades? Under what conditions is democracy resilient when challenged?

To answer these questions, the first edition of International IDEA's biennial publication, *The Global State of Democracy*, explores the challenges and risks to democracy as well as the enabling conditions for its resilience—its ability to adapt and recover from complex challenges and crises.

International IDEA defines democracy as a political system that advances popular control and political equality. Democracy is a proven universal value for citizens all over the world, and should be accepted as a globally owned concept for which there is no universally applicable model. Democracy comes in multiple forms, which are in constant evolution, with no endpoint.

The Global State of Democracy seeks to address the lack of analytical material on democracy building and the quality of democracy internationally, and to bridge the gap between academic research, policy development and democracy assistance initiatives. It provides evidence-based analysis of the global state of democracy.

It introduces the new Global State of Democracy (GSoD) indices as a key evidence base to inform policy interventions and identify problem-solving approaches to trends affecting the quality of democracy. The target audience is policy- and decision-makers, civil society organizations and democracy activists and policy influencers (including the media and research institutes), as well as democracy support providers and practitioners.

<http://www.idea.int/gsod>

About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with the mandate to promote and advance democracy worldwide. Our vision is a world in which democratic processes, actors and institutions are inclusive and accountable and deliver sustainable development to all.

Our mission is to advance democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and an enabler of sustainable development, through support to the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels.

International IDEA advances its mission by providing analyses of global and regional democratic trends; producing comparative knowledge on good international democratic practices; offering technical assistance and capacity-building on democratic reform to actors engaged in democratic processes; and convening dialogue on issues relevant to the public debate on democracy and democracy building.

To achieve our mission, International IDEA contributes to the public debate on democracy and assists in strengthening processes, reforms, institutions and actors that build, advance and safeguard democracy, with a focus on three impact areas:

1. electoral processes;

2. constitution-building processes; and

3. political participation and representation.

The themes of gender and inclusion, conflict sensitivity and sustainable development are mainstreamed across all our areas of work.

International IDEA works worldwide. Its headquarters is located in Stockholm and it has regional and country offices in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations and is accredited to European Union institutions.

<http://idea.int>

In 2017 International IDEA launched a new biennial publication, *The Global State of Democracy*. The first edition, focusing on democracy's resilience, was promoted in cities around the world via a series of launches and 'IDEAthons': engaging, collaborative events that combined formal presentations on a topic with interactive innovation labs.

Participants in the IDEAthons—including experts, civil society actors, young influencers, policymakers, students, public officials and researchers—were encouraged to harness their collective knowledge to brainstorm concrete solutions to existing democracy challenges, by adapting the recommendations from *The Global State of Democracy* to their local context.

This report summarizes the main findings from each of the IDEAthons. The solutions put forward by the participants were targeted at relevant local actors, including governments, political parties, civil society organizations, the private sector and regional organizations.