



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

Bridging the Digital Divide – Young Indonesians with Disabilities Translate Virtual Learnings into Community Action

“Through the ENGAGE training, I’ve gained insight as well as great friends. I had the opportunity to be more courageous and confident. I learned a lot about new things, especially about the importance of elections and the importance of the contribution of youth with disabilities in building the nation.”

– 23-year-old participant with hearing and visual disabilities

To accommodate restrictions in Indonesia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)** and the Indonesian Disabled People’s Association (PPDI), a local partner, adapted the flagship Engaging a New Generation for Accessible Governance and Elections (ENGAGE) political and civic leadership course into a virtual program for young Indonesians with disabilities. Participants learned civic education concepts, strengthened their

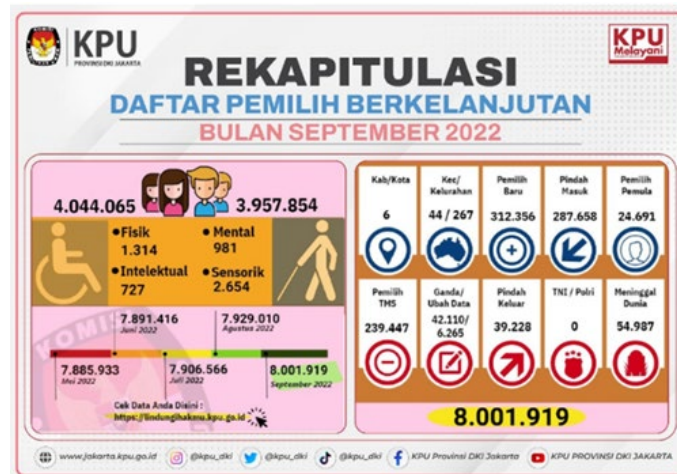
leadership skills, and participated in community projects and internships. As a result of the ENGAGE course, participants prepared recommendations to make electoral processes more accessible for Indonesia’s election management bodies, making a tangible impact in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in democratic processes.

Through a partnership with Jakarta Muhammadiyah University, IFES and PPDI identified course facilitators and reached a wider network of students with disabilities. Over a series of 20 modules, participants explored topics such as democracy, human rights frameworks, and the political and electoral systems in Indonesia. Students engaged in interactive exercises such as community mapping, role playing scenarios, and video and journaling homework assignments. The program involved working on building confidence through skills such as public speaking and problem-solving. To complement the training modules, IFES and the General Elections Commission (KPU) organized a virtual tour of KPU headquarters connecting participants with KPU officials and allowing participants to learn more about the electoral process and the 2024 national elections.

As a culminating exercise to apply knowledge and skills from the training, participants worked in small teams to implement projects to improve inclusion efforts within Indonesia’s election management bodies, KPU, and the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu). ENGAGE teams developed recommendations to improve the accessibility of Bawaslu’s website, increase the participation of persons with disabilities in Bawaslu through employment opportunities, increase ballot accessibility and voter data on persons with disabilities, and increase the overall participation of voters with disabilities in elections.

Bawaslu and KPU responded enthusiastically to project recommendations. Bawaslu Commissioner Lolly Suhenty emphasized her hope that trainings like ENGAGE will be conducted in the future to reach a larger audience of young Indonesians, expressing optimism for increasing youth engagement ahead of Indonesia’s 2024 elections.

An official at KPU Jakarta responded to the ENGAGE program, stating “we are very happy ... to accept PPDI friends who are interns at KPU Jakarta... We hope that friends with disabilities will not only increase as voters but also be involved in organizing voters and even become election members. All of your participation is very meaningful for holding elections in the future.”



Data Release Infographic on Voters in the Jakarta Area

In September 2022, in response to ENGAGE community project recommendations, KPU Jakarta issued an infographic on voters with disabilities in the Jakarta area, as suggested by ENGAGE participants. These public infographics and data releases play an important role in addressing the lack of public data on voters with disabilities and recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in the electoral process. Following the community projects, seven participants completed internships at KPU and Bawaslu to further their professional development.

IFES' ENGAGE program has been recognized by the Zero Project with a 2023 Innovative Practice Award. You can read more about the Zero Project and the award [here](#).