



IFES supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to promote sustainable democracy.

People Against Violence in Elections Program

People Against Violence in Elections (PAVE) is an International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) election security initiative that provides local leaders and influencers with the tools and skills needed to anticipate, mitigate and prevent electoral violence through peace-building activities.

Objectives

PAVE has three interrelated objectives:

1. To impart knowledge to a diverse group of stakeholders with different political, ethnic and religious affiliations on the causes of electoral and political violence, contrasted with functioning democratic processes;
2. To prepare community activists to engage in peace building and advocacy initiatives in their local communities and across the country; and
3. To mobilize the general public to participate in political processes, thereby strengthening democracy and building resilience both locally and nationally.

Approach

The PAVE program is designed to help participants better understand the root causes of violence, how violence hinders free and fair participation in democratic processes and what individuals and organizations can do to help reduce violence. Participants learn how societies can manage conflict through democratic governance without resorting to violence. Through experimental, hands-on training, the PAVE program teaches participants to link newly-acquired conflict and elections skills with opportunities for dialogue and avenues for civic advocacy.

Training sessions are combined with practical actions: program alumni form a collective peace-building group supporting each other in their efforts to increase harmony, co-existence, and civic engagement in their communities and beyond. The most active, influential members of the group are elected to serve as "peace ambassadors," who form a network of leaders advocating for peaceful political processes in their country.

Results

IFES has trained more than 4,000 people across Bangladesh, including local leaders, political party members, community, religious and traditional leaders, civil society and youth activists, leading female change-makers, and members from marginalized groups. Participants have reported conducting more than 430 peace-building initiatives, including community interventions such as peace rallies, distribution of public awareness materials and roundtables involving members and supporters of competing political parties, which have reached more than 60,000 individuals across the country. Almost all (97 percent) peace ambassadors and PAVE training alumni say they have taken part in informal initiatives after the training to promote peaceful political engagement with friends, family members and other members of their communities. Additionally, 89 percent of dispute resolution in their communities. Plans are underway to implement PAVE in other countries.

"This training is a timely initiative. We all are tired of violent politics and we need to stop this. This training will help us a lot in establishing peace in our locality ... We need a critical mass prepared to work for peace."

-Sk. A Wahed Maruf,
Mathureshpur Union Council,
Bangladesh



Training Modules

PAVE Introductory Training [Knowledge]

The Core PAVE module is designed to help participants identify the root causes of violence, learn how to deal with conflict in society through non-violent electoral processes, foster dialogue between opposing groups and link these efforts with tangible initiatives to mitigate electoral and political violence. The PAVE curriculum, built from IFES' experience in countries prone to electoral violence, trains participants to analyze sources of electoral violence and understand conflict dynamics throughout the electoral cycle. Participants are also exposed to the concept of the electoral process as an opportunity to peacefully manage and mitigate conflict.

PAVE Engage [Skills]

Building on the introductory module, PAVE Engage equips core PAVE alumni to reach beyond their current spheres of influence by further building their mobilization and peace-building skills. PAVE Engage encourages participants to apply these skills to assume a grassroots coordination role within and across their communities. PAVE Engage participants gain further knowledge on codes of conduct and conflict resolution while also building practical skills, such as how to effectively develop relationships, conduct non-adversarial advocacy and outreach, facilitate difficult conversations and organize town hall meetings and other peace-building events.

PAVE Lead [Leadership]

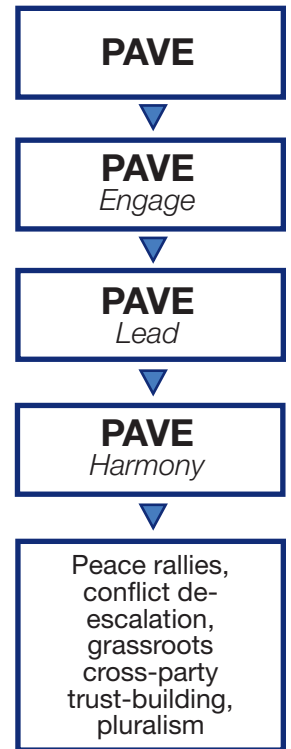
PAVE Lead is a personal leadership development course that builds on the skills and knowledge learned through the core PAVE and PAVE Engage modules. Based on IFES' experiences with electoral violence and peace building, one of the underlying causes of political violence is the absence of moral and ethical leadership. Encouraged by feedback from PAVE participants, IFES developed PAVE Lead to furnish the most active PAVE participants with the skills they needed to lead their communities in more constructive and peaceful electoral management. PAVE Lead focuses on providing training on effective leadership, inspiring current leaders to act ethically with courage and conviction and encouraging participants to take on leadership roles. The training is comprised of personal development exercises and basic leadership tools.

PAVE Harmony [Community Outreach Workshop]

PAVE Harmony is a community-based workshop module based on the key principles of dignity, security and diversity, which are underscored by the Constitution and national anthem of Bangladesh. PAVE Harmony has a simple theory of change: Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes about their community and country and consider how they are governed and the rights of themselves and others. This reflections will lead to the realization that the right to dignity, security and diversity of human beings cannot be comprised. With this change in attitude, PAVE Harmony seeks to prompt behavioral change. Like all PAVE components, PAVE Harmony is designed to encourage people to take personal responsibility for coexistence, tolerance and constructive political engagement in their community and country. PAVE Harmony is intended to be delivered to a broader audience with potentially little formal education.

For more on IFES' PAVE program, please visit <https://www.ifes.org/PAVE>

The development of the PAVE program has been supported by the United States Agency for International Development and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development. The PAVE Harmony module was co-created by IFES and The Hunger Project – Bangladesh.



“Previously we did not like to even see the faces of our opponents. There was an extreme level of rivalry among party activists, especially among the ascending students leaders...’ In our small country, this [PAVE] training is furthering an ideology of peaceful coexistence, political ideals, values and sacrifice, [and] is certainly playing a vital role in the development of our nation.”

-PAVE trainee and Bangladesh Nationalist Party member