



## FACT SHEET

# REGIONAL ELECTIONS TRAINING PROGRAM

### CHALLENGE

Electoral democracy across Southern Africa remains tenuous. Irregular and inadequately managed elections continue to entrench dominant political parties and the executives they support. Elections may be de-legitimized in a multitude of ways, with electoral commissions facing the majority of the blame when this occurs. Many election commissions lack constitutional independence as they still answer to the executive. While there has been important progress in advancing capacities to promote free, fair and transparent elections, a lack the ability to demonstrate independence from the ruling party and the capacity to adjudicate electoral processes impartially remains a challenge in the region.

### APPROACH

Under a five year, \$4.1 million partnership that runs through 2016, the University of South Africa (UNISA) promotes democratic electoral principles across Africa. UNISA works closely with the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to employ a unique distance learning model that increases the competency of elections officials. Elections officials receive hands on training in South Africa on election management, international norms, constitutional and legal aspects of elections. Participants are certified upon completion of coursework, mentorship and training activities in their home countries.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Increased competency of elections personnel.
2. Increased capacity of election management bodies throughout Africa to implement elections more effectively.
3. Enhanced partnership between South Africa and African countries to promote sound electoral principles and election management.



### RESULTS

- Unexpectedly high interest in the program, has led doubling of annual intake into the program and the creation of a training for Election Commissioners.
- 256 election officials (including 28 election commissioners) from 23 countries and SADC Elections Division have been trained.
- UNISA mobilized independent financial support from the Government of Botswana to train 32 of its elections officials through the program in 2012. A second training will be held in 2015.
- In 2014, MDEA launched its Alumni program in Gaborone, Botswana

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