



Strengthening National and Local Judicial Systems and Promoting Reconciliation Processes (1999 - 2004)

Realizing through experience and research that legal principles are not firmly rooted in Congolese society and that the justice system needs support to restructure itself to meet internationally accepted legal norms, IFES designed a project aimed at strengthening Congolese legal culture and encouraging legal reform in the DRC. In October 1999, IFES, in consortium with Global Rights, launched a long-term project entitled "Strengthening National and Local Judicial Systems and Promoting Reconciliation Processes in the DRC." This project was funded by USAID with Great Lakes Justice Initiative funds.

Grassroots Civic Education Program

This program built upon structures established by IFES' Peace and Democracy Initiative. With the help of 750 extension workers and trainers and using a "tool box" of visual pedagogical materials, IFES highlighted the role of the justice system in creating and maintaining a democratic nation via public forums, media events and university and school programs in all accessible DRC provinces.

Access to Legal Information

IFES extended the holdings of the Democracy Resource Centers in Kinshasa, Kikwit and Lubumbashi to include materials related to the rule of law, including legal texts, textbooks, and documents about the rule of law, legal reform and human rights. In order to extend the reach of the resource centers, IFES supported the creation and distribution of a core "kit" of fundamental legal books and materials to key civil society leaders, bar associations and human rights groups in the provinces.

To help civil society's participation in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), IFES and Global Rights provided support to a *mise en commun* (development of common interests) workshop in the town of Bukavu in the eastern DRC in October 2001. It was attended by civil society delegates from the eastern provinces and allowed them to develop common positions on the ICD agenda.