

## **EISA**

"Making it happen" – encouraging citizen participation: Case Study: South Africa

Engaging with democracy poses a challenge to all role-players to move from passive participation to active participation. Democracy cannot be sustained if citizens only participate every four or five years at election time. For democracy to survive, it must aspire to participatory as well as representative forms of democracy. Participatory democracy is driven by people and, unless its citizens develop the "know-how" that embraces democracy as a way of living, reflecting the broad principles of democracy. While there are numerous organisations that support citizen participation and voter education programmes, some since 1994, and others subsequently, this case study looks at three interventions supporting a voter education programme for the South African 2009 national and provincial elections and the 2014 national and provincials and a citizen participation in local governance programme focussing on strengthening governance processes and strengthening local capacity for engagement with civic leaders. All three programmes took place in the Gauteng Province and more specifically, the Johannesburg area. The case studies look at the lessons learned from interventions contributing to entrenching participatory democracy.