

Lessons from Kiev: Recapping the Election Data Academy

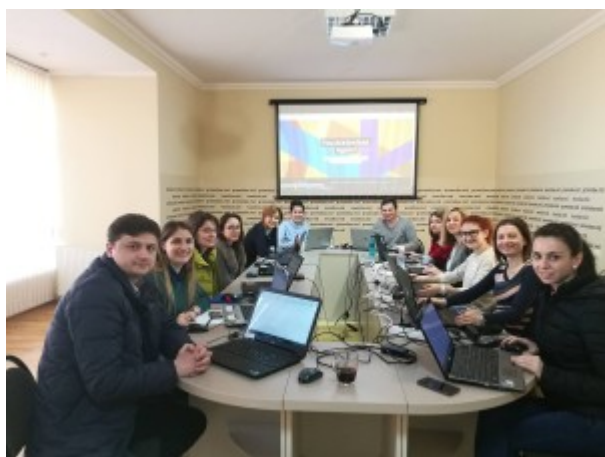
From February 20-23, 16 participants from 12 countries, including representatives from GNDEM member groups* convened in Kiev, Ukraine for an intensive four-day Election Data Academy. As part of the [Open Election Data Initiative](#) (OEDI), participating electoral experts and civil society leaders were led through interactive course modules that highlighted best practices for obtaining and using election data to advance electoral integrity, as well as given trainings on how to use various tools to collect, analyze, and manipulate data.

Over the course of four days, Data Academy participants went through three modules from OEDI, which were created for activists, civil society organizations, political parties, and journalists to learn how to analyze common datasets released during elections. The [first module](#) walked participants through how to review polling station lists and use Excel pivot tables to determine the number of polling stations and registered voters in each district. [Module 2](#), an introduction to summarizing data, prepared participants to take the concepts of types and categories of data and apply them to [Module 3](#), a tutorial on summarizing and analyzing polling station data.



Other Data Academy sessions included trainings on data visualization, such as using infographics to effectively show data trends and outliers; an introduction to data scraping tools like Python; and an overview of data conversion tools that allow users to manipulate election datasets. You can view the full four-day agenda [here](#).

Throughout the Academy, election experts and civil society leaders actively applied new skills not only to existing election data analysis challenges but also broader political process monitoring initiatives. For example, representatives from Burma and Tunisia were able to collaborate in writing code to compile a comprehensive spreadsheet of the 2014 Tunisia presidential election results that previously existed in more than 200 separate files. “Free play” time each day allowed Data Academy participants to practice using newly-learned tools on their own, exchange best practices with other participants, and see how others were using these tools to analyze data in their countries.



Participants have already begun transferring knowledge gained at the Academy to their peers. Following the four-day Data Academy, GNDEM member [Promo-LEX](#) hosted its own Data Academy in Moldova on Open Data Day, March 4. The Promo-LEX Data Academy focused on the concept of open data and discussed much of what was covered in Kiev. Specific training exercises included sessions on data manipulation and cleaning, summarizing data, and how to review a polling station list.

In addition to the three election data modules that are [available online](#), the OEDI team has created additional modules, focused on detecting bias in ballot qualification data and evaluating voter registration trends, that will soon be published. You will soon be able to test your skills with these modules on [OEDI's online academy](#). Finally, OEDI has compiled a [resource document](#) of data tools for transcribing data, scraping websites, and creating infographics.

*Representatives from the following groups attended the Data Academy: [People's Alliance For Credible Elections \(PACE\)](#), [Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement \(YIAGA\)](#), [Promo-LEX Association](#), [Civil Network OPORA](#), [Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center \(EMDS\)](#), [Mourakiboun](#), [R2C](#), and the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society.

More at: www.gndem.org