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Therese Pearce Laanela leads the Electoral Processes Unit at International IDEA, a democracy-focused intergovernmental organization based in Stockholm, Sweden.

She has 28 years of experience working with elections on the field, headquarters and policy levels. She served as a founding staff member at International IDEA. Through work with IFES, The Carter Center, UNDP and IDEA, Therese has been deeply involved in the development of a variety of seminal publications, networks, evaluations, databases and training curriculum on electoral administration. These include the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the BRIDGE election management course package, and comprehensive evaluations, and policy recommendations on electoral assistance for UNDP and for the Australian and Swedish Governments.

She began her elections work in Cambodia in 1992-93 as a District Electoral Supervisor for the UN sponsored first multi-party election. Next she worked with UNDP and the Mozambican Electoral Commission to organize the first post-war elections of 1994. She has served in dozens of international election observer electoral assistance missions and speaking engagements in Africa, Europe, and Asia for organizations such as the OSCE, the European Union, and the Carter Center.

Her doctoral studies at the Australian National University examine issues relating to trust in electoral institutions, while her Master's Degree from the University of Stockholm focused on the links between political financing, corruption and electoral systems in Japan.