

DEMOCRACY STARTS WITH DIALOGUE



Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

DEMOCRACY STARTS WITH DIALOGUE

THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY (NIMD) STRIVES FOR INCLUSIVE AND TRANS- PARENT DEMOCRACIES BY ASSISTING POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEVELOPING DEMOCRACIES.

Our approach is characterized by dialogue.

NIMD provides safe environments for political parties in a country to meet, overcome distrust and work together on political issues. We also work directly with parties to strengthen their organizational and programmatic capacities. Furthermore, we foster a democratic culture by providing political education programmes for (potential) politicians.



This brochure describes our vision and our approach.



WHO WE ARE

NIMD was founded in 2000 by seven Dutch political parties. This multiparty identity provides us with the legitimacy and unique opportunity to work on an impartial basis with all political parties in a country and encourage dialogue between them.

DEMAND FOR DEEPER DEMOCRACY

NIMD believes that multiparty democracies create the best conditions for socio-economic development, the protection of human rights and political stability. Today, 122 countries are formal electoral democracies. However, over the last decade, it has become clear that democratic transition does not always result in democratic consolidation.

Citizens in developing democracies want more than just being able to vote. They demand more influence, 'deeper' democracy and expect politics to be about the public good. Whilst political parties play an essential role in making this happen, in reality, they often lack the capacity to adequately communicate with citizens and represent their needs and interests, including those of marginalized groups. Consequently, citizens are left feeling unheard and frustrated.

OUR MISSION

Multiparty democracies need accountable leaders and political parties. NIMD assists parties in strengthening their organization and formulating viable policy alternatives and provides a safe environment where they can meet, and discuss political issues. We also foster democratic skills and behaviour by setting up democracy schools and informal educational platforms. This contributes to open, stable and inclusive democratic systems.

Even though each country is unique and the democratic process in each country is different, there are also similarities. That is why we also invest in knowledge sharing by organizing regional exchanges and peer to peer learning activities for the political parties that we work with. As NIMD works in more than 20 countries worldwide, the exchange activities range from regional meetings to cross-continental learning activities.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

IMPARTIALITY

Our approach is non-partisan. We are not affiliated with one specific political denomination and we work with all parties across the political spectrum.

INCLUSIVENESS

We provide a platform for discussion for both ruling and opposition parties. All parties take part in the dialogue with an equal voice.

DIVERSITY

We encourage the equal participation and representation of marginalized groups and empower representatives of these groups to take part in the policy-making process.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP

We work on an equal basis with our local partners. Our programmes are locally set and reflect local demands.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Political transformation, building trust and strengthening political parties takes time. Therefore, we invest in long-lasting relationships with the local partners and political parties.

TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE OF STRENGTHENING AND BRINGING POLITICAL PARTIES TOGETHER.



NIMD WAS FOUNDED BY SEVEN DUTCH POLITICAL PARTIES

Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA)
Christian Democratic Appeal

ChristenUnie (CU)
ChristenUnion

Democraten 66 (D66)
Democrats 66

GroenLinks (GL)
Green Party



Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)
Labour Party

Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)
Reformed Political Party

Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy

WHAT WE DO

IMPACT ON THREE LEVELS

NIMD seeks to make an impact on three levels: political system, actor and culture level. These levels are interrelated. For instance, political parties can only take up their role if the political system and environment allow them to do so. If the rules of the game are not clear or the system is not open to all parties, the democracy will remain weak. At the same time, democratic systems need political parties and democrats in order to function and provide the stability and conditions needed for development. That is why the actor and culture level are also important. The infographic shows how the three levels are interrelated.

POLITICAL SYSTEM LEVEL:

CREATING A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

At political system level we contribute to inclusive and representative democratic systems. In our view, dialogue between parties is key to achieving this goal. We bring parties together to talk and decide on the rules of the game. In that process we emphasize the importance of openness towards all parties as well as clear and transparent rules of the political game.

POLITICAL ACTOR LEVEL:

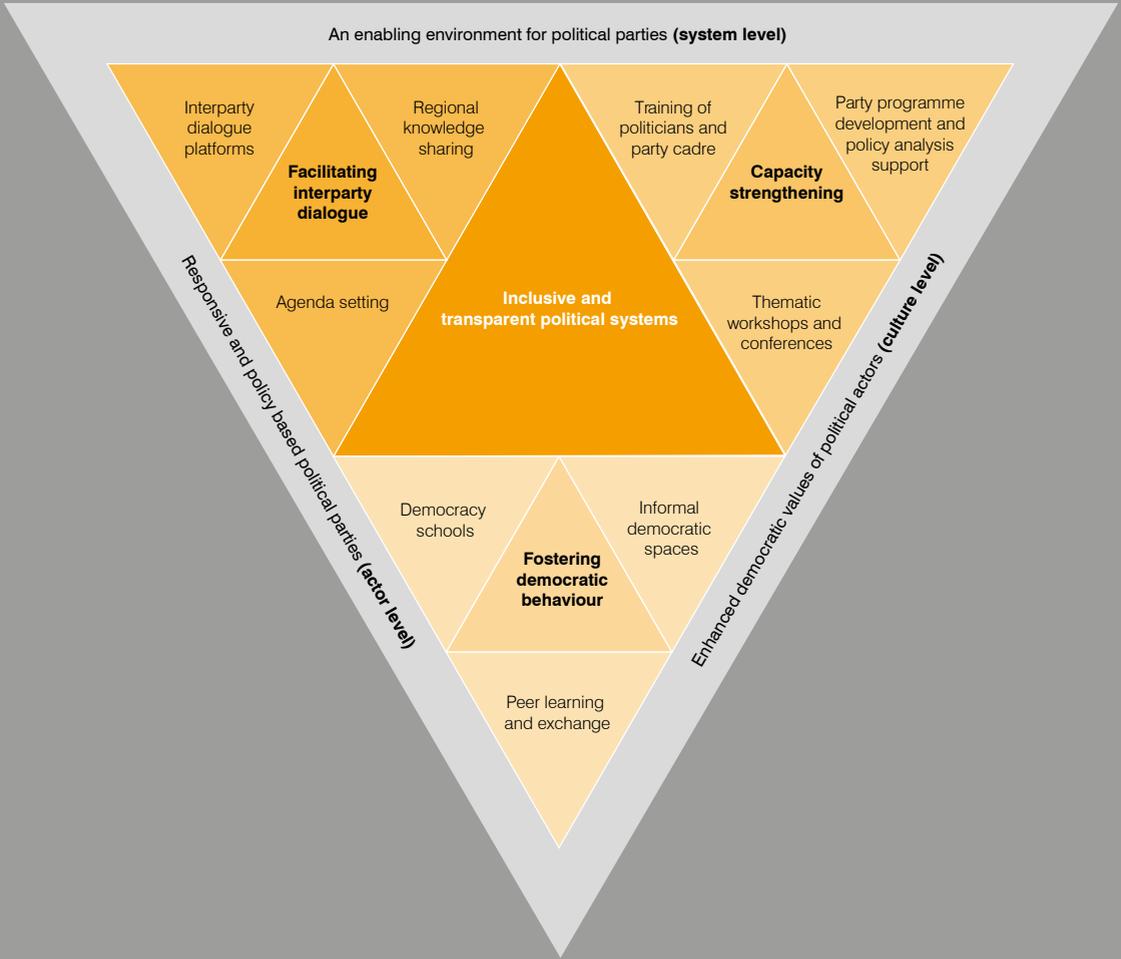
STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAMMATIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

NIMD assists political parties to become responsive and accountable players. Special attention is given to parties that represent marginalized groups. We also work with other stakeholders like election and parliamentary commissions, media and civil society organizations. They also play an important role in the democratization process of the country.

POLITICAL CULTURE LEVEL:

IMPROVING THE DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR OF POLITICAL ACTORS

A democracy needs democrats. So you have to make sure that politicians and other political actors know and believe in democratic values. We pay attention to this dimension by promoting tolerance, human rights, diversity and mutual respect. We want political parties to work together, to respect each other and give each other space.



INSTRUMENTS

NIMD has developed a unique set of instruments to work with. However, there is never a standard solution to a problem. In every country the political system, situation, culture and actors differ. And, in spite of the worldwide advancement of democracy, in a number of countries political processes remain weak and hampered by anti-democratic tendencies. This is particularly the case in so-called fragile and conflict affected settings.

Therefore, NIMD always develops context specific and tailor made approaches. In our approach we look for impact on all three levels.

The following instruments are characteristic for our approach:

1. Facilitating interparty dialogue
2. Capacity strengthening of political parties
3. Fostering democratic behaviour

Furthermore, we encourage peer to peer learning and organize exchange activities.

INTERPARTY DIALOGUE

Democracy starts with dialogue. We facilitate safe and informal spaces where the dialogue can start. Here, politicians of all political denominations can get to know each other and overcome barriers. Once they experience a basic level of confidence, we assist them to formulate a joint national agenda. These dialogue platforms can be formal or informal.



15

**interparty dialogue
platforms established**

200

political parties
supported by NIMD

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

We encourage parties to execute strategic planning and policy analysis. This enables them to develop political programmes and to communicate effectively with the voters. We also assist parties to strengthen and diversify their organization.

DEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOUR

Democratic knowledge, skills and values are essential when working towards democracy. To support political education we set up democracy schools and incubators.

The most important issues we address at these schools and at other educational activities are equality, social justice, human rights, ethics in politics, and democratic and leadership skills. Together with various (local) teachers, the participants practice democratic skills and behaviours. They learn, for example, how to foster diversity. In addition, they learn how to speak, listen and debate with mutual respect and how to keep the focus on the programmatic content.

3000

democracy school
alumni worldwide

30

**regional peer exchanges
facilitated by NIMD**

PEER EXCHANGES

Political parties can learn a lot from parties in other countries and regions. In addition to the instruments described, NIMD also invests in peer to peer learning. As an impartial broker we bring political parties of different countries in touch with each other.

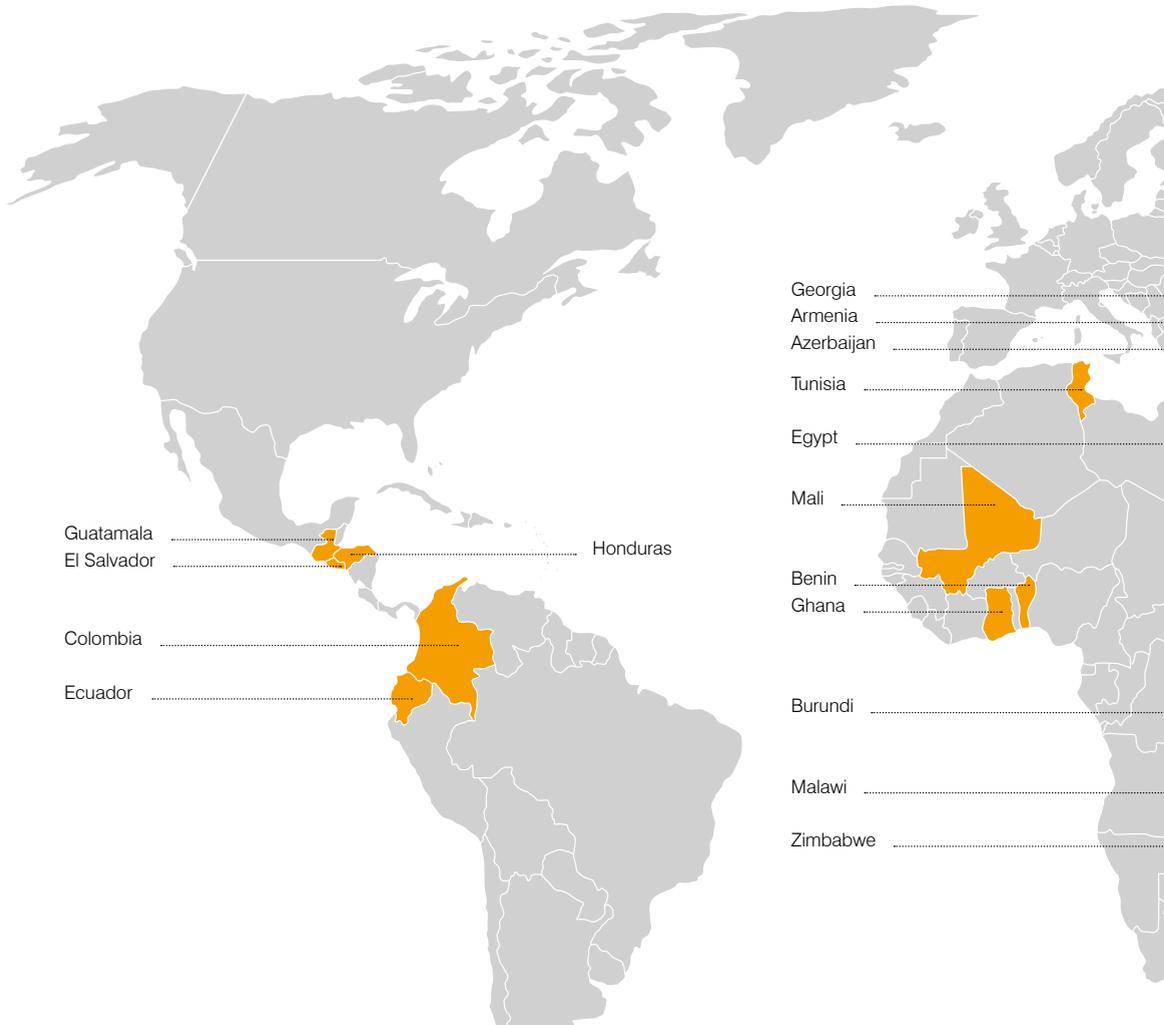
Exchange visits are possible throughout different stages of the NIMD programme. During the exchanges the politicians share knowledge, experiences and instruments, and discuss issues of national and regional interest.





WHERE WE WORK

Based in the Netherlands, NIMD works in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe.



NIMD COUNTRY OFFICES

Benin (joint AWEPA-NIMD Country Coordinator)

Colombia

Ecuador

El Salvador

Guatemala

Honduras



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Burundi

Burundi Leadership Training Programme

Egypt

Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute

Ghana

Institute of Economic Affairs

Indonesia

Komunitas Indonesia untuk Demokrasi

Kenya

Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya

Malawi

Centre for Multiparty Democracy Malawi

Mali

Centre Malien pour le Dialogue
Interpartis et la Démocratie

Tunisia

Centre Études Méditerranéennes
Internationales

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Institute

South Sudan
Uganda
Kenya

Myanmar

Indonesia

Mozambique

Mozambique

Myanmar (joint office with DEMO Finland)

South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan)

South Sudan (managed from NIMD headquarters)

Uganda

HOW WE WORK

Every country has a unique and complex history, culture and political heritage. Therefore a detailed understanding of local contexts is the basis on which we design our programmes.

LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

OR COUNTRY OFFICES

NIMD works with local partner organizations or country offices. They have knowledge of the people and the political culture of the country and are perceived as trustworthy by the politicians. This allows them to advise and bring politicians together.

Over the years, we have built strong relations with our partners. They are pivotal in our network, linking NIMD's worldwide expertise and resources to local activities as well as creating impact on the ground.







MORE INFORMATION

Building inclusive and transparent democracies is one of the major challenges of the coming decade. With more than 15 years of experience and programmes in over 20 countries, NIMD is at the forefront of democracy assistance. With our knowledge, experience and international network we take up the challenge of strengthening political parties and bringing them together, enabling them to function effectively within the political system of their country.

NIMD has been able to invest in long term programmes and maintain long-lasting relationships with its partners thanks to the continuing support of donors such as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, the Open Society Foundation, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For more information you can contact us at NIMD headquarters.

www.nimd.org

info@nimd.org

DEMOCRACY STARTS WITH DIALOGUE.

