

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

Evaluation of the NIMD Guatemala Programme, 2011 - 2014

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Final Report



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Executive summary

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) commissioned an independent evaluation of three country programmes to assess the extent to which NIMD achieves results. The focus of the evaluation was on its three main areas of intervention and one cross-cutting theme:

- multiparty dialogue;
- legitimate political parties;
- interaction between civil society and political society; and
- integration of gender and diversity across its work.

This country report examines the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NIMD Guatemala country programme in 2011–2014, including the extent to which the NIMD *Multi-Annual Plan, 2012–2015* (MAP) and the accompanying institutional reforms increased its effectiveness.

Country context

Guatemala has one of the highest poverty rates in Latin America and extremely high levels of inequality. After a brutal civil war that lasted more than 30 years, democratization began in 1985, with the election of Guatemala's first civilian government and a new constitution. However, since the 1990s, the political party system has become highly fluid and volatile, with parties created at election time simply to access elected office. *Caudillos* (funders) are more influential than party officials. Political parties sustain the prevailing unequal and corrupt socio-economic system rather than challenging it. There are low levels of representation of women, youth and indigenous peoples.

In April 2015, the country entered a period of political instability. The prosecution of high-level officials led to regular popular protests against corruption and the resignation of the Vice President in May and the President in September. Both are currently in jail facing trial on corruption charges. A first round of presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections was held on 6 September 2015.

Country programme

The NIMD programme in Guatemala began in 2002. *Instituto Holandés para la Democracia Multipartidaria* has 10 staff members. Its budget was on average around €500,000 a year in 2012–2015. Its main programmes are:

- A Multiparty Platform: the Permanent Forum of Political Parties (*Foro*), which brings together all political parties in thematic commissions and for capacity building.
- Assistance to Congress and political parties, including activities to influence key legislation and support access by Congress to technical expertise. Support to parties on policy and strategic planning was limited in the period 2011–2015.



- Political and civil society interaction through the *Escuela de Formación para la Democracia* (Democracy School), which broadened political education and training beyond politicians and their staff to include civil society across the country.

Main findings

Instituto Holandés is a valued long-term partner with a clear niche in the political assistance field. Its most important asset is its overall reputation as a neutral facilitator and political adviser; a supporter of political parties rather than operating in its own interests. It is appreciated by all its stakeholders, but particularly valued by small parties and other social actors. The more stakeholders were removed from the heart of political power, the more they appreciated the Institute. Its consistency of support for over a decade, responsiveness and ability to resolve practical problems were also highly valued. During the evaluation period it achieved some limited results in an increasingly difficult context.

Significant resource and management challenges undermined the Institute's efficiency and effectiveness during the evaluation period. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) reduced core funding for the Institute, while giving it new regional responsibilities. There were four Institute Directors between 2011 and 2015, each one bringing a change in management style and programme priorities. The Institute's reputation and political networking skills are fragile, based on individuals rather than being institutionalized. This probably contributed to its reduced profile, especially after 2012, with political leaders and influential people in the political parties or in Congress.

Instituto Holandés has important political capital and a clear niche in Guatemala, at a time when the political system is under pressure and new opportunities for reform may arise. With refreshed strategies and more stable management, it has the potential to become more effective and deliver more sustainable results. It would benefit from taking a more strategic approach and operating less at the project/activities level. Staff understand the true nature and role of political parties in Guatemala but this does not always translate into operations. Political parties and Congress are treated as intermediaries between citizens' demands and the state institutions, whose capacities should be improved through financial and technical assistance, even when the evidence shows that this is not the case.

The Institute was able to adapt its strategy to the changing political context. A move towards greater collaboration with civil society and local level partners was highly appropriate. Support to Congress, where power is held between elections, was also relevant in an attempt to influence political party system reform. Support to women's groups, indigenous leaders and, to a less visible extent, youth was also relevant given the importance of tackling political exclusion. The Institute maintains an influential resource, the Analysts' Group, which could be even better utilized. However, the speed at which the Institute is able to adapt in response to change is an area that could be improved. It does not yet appear to have fully responded to the April 2015 crisis.

Intervention area findings

The Institute is best known for the multiparty platform it supports, Foro, but, apart from the strong network of women politicians who collaborate on a shared agenda across political party boundaries, it is no longer influential or effective in its current form. The large



governing parties have stopped actively participating. Hardly any of the proposals that came out of *Foro* were adopted by either Congress or the political parties. One important exception was the Security Law. The thematic commissions and capacity building work for which *Foro* is now best known are mostly of a technical nature and have become bureaucratized. Nonetheless, the Institute seems to have made a contribution to changing the political culture. Politicians would welcome a new multiparty space in the current political crisis. The Institute undertook a fundamental review of its approach in 2015 and is planning to end its assistance to *Foro*.

Technical work with Congress and political parties achieved limited visible or sustainable results in the deteriorating political environment. Legislation supported by the Institute was not passed, even though it provided high quality technical assistance. A programme funded by a Swedish agency helped shift the Institute's approach at a time of worsening political crisis and public distrust of politics, supporting citizens' and social movements' engagement with Congress. For example, the Transparency Commission the Institute assisted helped hold elected local officials to account. The Institute provided little policy development or strategic planning assistance to parties, which seems appropriate in the current political climate. The main exception was the valued support provided to the only indigenous people's political party, *Winaq*. The Institute will need to maintain a presence and develop its influence in Congress in order to affect political change, but a strategy refresh is clearly required, building on its new participatory democracy approach.

The Democracy School has significant potential. It supported 92 events throughout the country involving over 1900 participants, a majority of them youth and women. Participants were usually very positive about the individual benefits and the courses are in high demand. There is room to improve the strategic orientation and practical operations of the Democracy School, moving away from information-sharing to influencing behaviour and supporting collective action. If its participants are appropriately selected and provided with ongoing support, they could have an effect on long-term political change.

The Institute has a long-standing commitment to addressing gender and diversity issues and has achieved some important results such as with the Women's Commission and Winaq. Gender, indigenous and, to a lesser visible degree, youth issues are included in its programmes. It could be more effective by systematically incorporating these objectives at the highest levels, beyond the current limited mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue in some projects.

Main findings on the *Multi-Annual Plan, 2012–2015* and accompanying HQ institutional reforms

The main influence of the 2012–2015 MAP was the greater investment in political and civil society relations, through the Democracy School and a new programme on environmental security. There was no evidence of a shift in the priorities of the multiparty platform. The portfolio continued its Congress interventions, but there was less direct assistance to political parties. The Institute also appears to have influenced NIMD's overall strategic direction. The then Director, together with the African offices, is reported to have made a strong case for democracy schools to include work with civil society. The 2014 HQ Theory of Change does not seem to have particularly influenced the office, but it has the potential to help organize its future work in a more strategic way.



HQ changes in 2011 linked to new Dutch MFA priorities, including the new regional focus of the office and the need for country programme fundraising, created difficulties. NIMD HQ appears to have a long-term commitment but also a relatively hands-off approach to the Guatemala Office. The HQ staffing changes and restructuring in 2011 do not appear to have significantly affected the NIMD Guatemala programme, but more support could make a significant contribution to helping the Institute regain its influence.

Main recommendations

Recommendations on improving NIMD efficiency and effectiveness

The newly appointed Institute Director and a new 2016–2020 MAP process create important opportunities to refresh NIMD's approach in Guatemala and improve its effectiveness. The following recommendations are provided in order to assist the office in making this transition.

Relevance and responsiveness can be improved:

- Extend the Institute's political networks in Guatemala and with the diplomatic community, re-establishing peer-to-peer relationships with politicians.
- Seize opportunities to generate debate and concrete proposals for political reform, for example, for popular consultation, the national pact or the constitutional assembly.
- The Analysts' Group could become more transparent. It could share its analysis so it can be challenged from other points of view and benefit more stakeholders.
- The membership of the Analysts' Group could be broadened, with more participation from outside Guatemala City and by young researchers.
- The mandate of the Analysts' Group could be reviewed, given its active role in a number of NIMD projects. This would maintain a separation between independent advice and strategic management.

A number of steps could be taken to improve strategy and management:

- Change the office from a project-based to a strategic and results-oriented organization. A single plan or report bringing together all its objectives and resources could help improve coherence and strategic focus.
- Improve human resources management, including recruitment and conflicts of interest procedures.
- Develop an empowering organizational culture, where communication is improved, staff members are clear on their roles and their contributions are valued.
- Separate delivery and advice/design/evaluation, especially by consultants.
- Review the office's core role—as funder or in direct delivery—to help reduce the number of external partnerships, releasing staff time for core issues.
- Be cautious about fundraising for projects that may not be related to NIMD's core mandate. A smaller, focused portfolio could be more efficient and effective.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation systems and the learning culture to include more realistic objectives, fewer quantitative and activity indicators and more qualitative and outcome level indicators, including measures of changes in behaviour or values.



Recommendations on intervention areas

A more strategic approach could be adopted towards the intervention areas:

- Develop a fresh overall strategy including, for each intervention area, taking explicit account of the true nature of political parties and the opportunities created by the crisis and popular mobilization against corruption in politics.
- Close the *Foro* as it is currently set up, and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on support for a more flexible space for high-level political dialogue, which is needed in the current political crisis.
- Strengthen institutional (and not just personal) links to Congress for political networking, but review the focus on technical and material assistance and consider how to influence political party system reform.
- Review the Democracy School so it can effectively support organizational (and not just individual) development, behaviour change and collective action.

Recommendations on gender/diversity

- Build the team's expertise on gender, youth and indigenous issues.
- Assign responsibility for each cross-cutting issue.
- Explicitly integrate these into the next round of plans and monitoring and evaluation.
- Invest in understanding the parallel political systems used by indigenous peoples at the local level.

Recommendations to further strengthen NIMD internal reforms

NIMD HQ should support its Guatemala office through this change process:

- Both HQ and Guatemala management systems and procedures should be reviewed to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, with targeted improvements initiated and followed through.
- HQ could provide management support to the Institute, in particular on human resources, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation to help position it for the future.

NIMD HQ could provide more access to learning and knowledge in order to inform the content of programmes on:

- International or South-South expertise sharing to respond to the current crisis.
- How to target a cadre of potentially active citizens and reform-minded politicians, and effect concrete results through NIMD Democracy Schools.
- How to make use of traditional and social media to influence the political culture, including the media regulation required for a democratic political system.



Acronyms

CICIG	Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala
CSO	Civil Society Organization
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Netherlands)
MAP	NIMD Multi-annual Plan
MOLOJ	<i>Asociación Política de Mujeres Mayas</i>
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PARLAD	<i>Profundización de la Democracia Participativa</i>
PDDSA	<i>Programa de Diálogo Democrático Para la Seguridad Ambiental</i>
SGs	Secretaries General
UPAT	<i>Unidad permanente de análisis técnico</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



1. Introduction

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) commissioned an independent evaluation of three country programmes to assess the extent to which NIMD is achieving results. The focus of the evaluation was its three main areas of intervention and one cross-cutting theme:

- multiparty dialogue;
- legitimate political parties;
- interaction between civil society and political society; and
- integration of gender and diversity across its work.

This country report examines the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NIMD Guatemala country programme in 2011–2014, including the extent to which the *NIMD Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* and the accompanying institutional reforms increased the programme's effectiveness. The two other case studies, Mali and Georgia, are available separately. This final country report incorporates feedback from the NIMD country team and the internal steering committee, as well as from an external peer reviewer and the external steering committee. A synthesis evaluation report, which brings together the findings and recommendations that emerged from all three country case studies and the inception report, is available separately.

This evaluation of the NIMD programme in Guatemala, or *Instituto Holandés* as it is better known, was undertaken by Laure-Hélène Piron and Karin Slowing. The methodology included a review of NIMD programme and project documents and a wider literature review of political developments in Guatemala (see section 8), as well as interviews with a wide range of stakeholders in order to triangulate findings. The mission agenda is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Over 70 people were interviewed in semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which took place in the capital and in Quetzaltenango. The interviewees included NIMD staff in The Hague and Guatemala, and senior representatives of direct beneficiaries of NIMD activities, such as political parties, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and government agencies, as well as partner organizations and local consultants who deliver NIMD projects, peer organizations, independent commentators and donor organizations.

Given the nature of NIMD's internal monitoring and evaluation system, this evaluation relies on triangulated qualitative assessments rather than quantitative indicators, as the latter were not used consistently or tracked over time by NIMD. The evaluation mostly examines the results achieved by activities in relation to outputs and tries to draw conclusions on their contribution to outcomes.

The country mission took place on 28 July–10 August 2015 during a significant political crisis triggered by corruption scandals and in the midst of presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections. The team was nonetheless able to meet senior leaders of all the main political parties. Preliminary findings were presented to the NIMD Guatemala Office at a debriefing on 8 August. The evaluation team would like to thank the office for all the support and constructive engagement during the mission.



2. Background

2.1 Country context

Guatemala has one of the highest levels of poverty in Latin America: 51 per cent of the population was living in poverty in 2011. Despite the fact that it has the largest economy in Central America, which has performed relatively well in terms of growth since the 2009 financial crisis (World Bank, 2015), it is ranked 125th of 187 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index. Guatemala also suffers from high levels of crime and violence, undocumented international migration and drug trafficking due to its strategic proximity to the United States (UNDP, 2012).

Women face severe gender discrimination. Guatemala is a very young country: more than half the population is under 25 years of age. Guatemala is a highly diverse country and has extremely high levels of inequality. Of its 16 million inhabitants, 40 per cent are from indigenous communities. They are more than twice as likely to be poor than the non-indigenous population (Cabrera et al., 2015). There are 22 different ethnic groups scattered throughout the country, most of which are descendants of the original inhabitants of the territory, the Maya Civilization. Structural racism and discrimination mean that indigenous people are among the most excluded in the country in terms of living conditions, opportunities, access to services and political rights. Indigenous women, especially if they live in rural areas, are the most discriminated against of all.

2.2 Political context

After a brutal civil war that lasted more than 30 years, a process of democratization began in 1985 with a new constitution and the election of the country's first civilian government. Peace Accords were signed in 1996. These were monitored by a UN mission, which left in 2004. There have been seven democratically elected governments since 1985.

However, despite democratization and the Peace Accords, the political system continues to be captured by the country's elites, which have been either unable or unwilling to effectively combat poverty, racism and inequality. The political parties do not represent the social and economic interests of all citizens. They emerge mainly to satisfy the needs of a national or local *caudillo*, and serve only as a vehicle to gain elected office. Most parties lack a specific ideology. There is no internal democracy and their sources of funding are obscure, as was recently documented by the UN International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG, 2015). The use of mass communication, exchange of votes for material goods during political campaigns, concentration of resources in the hands of a few people and a political debate emptied of all content have undermined the democratization process.

A key feature is the 'fluidity' of the political system: the constant churn of political parties from one electoral period to the next. While there were four big political parties between 1984 and 1990, there have been more than 50 political parties in the past 30 years—and around 35 have already disappeared. Each party lasts on average for only 1.6 electoral events (Novales, 2014:1). Once an election is over, political activity ceases within the party. The victors focus all their efforts on Congress, the Executive Branch or in the municipalities. *Caciques* or 'leaders', as well as those elected individuals and their funders, are more influential than the parties' National Executive Committees, and can move from one



‘franchise’ party to another without any serious consequences. Stability and continuity are not provided by political parties, but by powerful individual politicians and their funders (Mack, 2006).

Table 1. Political Parties in Guatemala, 1985–2011

	1985	1990	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
Political parties registered with the Electoral Tribunal	13	18	29	16	22	21	28
Parties participating in general elections	13	18	26	15	17	16	18
Parties participating on an individual basis	5	10	16	9	10	14	11
Parties in electoral coalitions	7	4	7	4	3	0	7
Parties participating only in Congress/municipal elections	1	4	3	2	4	2	3

Source: ASIES (2011:26) taken from CICIG (2015:22)

Other characteristics distinguish the Guatemalan political party system:

- electoral volatility;
- high prevalence of crossing the floor: in recent government terms, around 40 per cent of members of Congress either changed party or started their own party;
- an electoral offer essentially skewed to the right in ideological terms, mostly as a consequence of the banning of left wing political parties during the civil war;
- national parties with a centre-periphery approach to political activity, stretching from Guatemala City to the rest of the country;
- influential non-disclosed powers behind political parties, in particular, the private sector as well as organized criminal networks; and
- a tendency for political parties to sustain the prevailing unequal and corrupt socio-economic system rather than challenge it, as well as low levels of representation of women, youth and indigenous people, especially at the national level.

The balance of power between the president and Congress has shifted in the past ten years to provide greater checks and balances. After the 2011 election, the president’s party did not have a majority in Congress but had to govern through alliances and complex negotiations. Few laws were passed.

Guatemala is currently facing its worst political crisis since democratization began. On 15 April 2015, CICIG and the Office of the Attorney General revealed corruption involving Vice President Roxana Baldetti Elias’s Private Secretary. This catalysed unprecedented public demonstrations against corruption all over the country. The vice president was forced to resign on 8 May. CICIG and the Office of the Attorney General continued to uncover cases of corruption implicating members of Congress, judges, business leaders, former military personnel and other prominent establishment figures. Days before the September elections, President Otto Pérez Molina had to resign and was arrested on the same corruption charges as his vice president. Although the institutional mechanisms worked relatively well, and a new president and new vice president were appointed by Congress, political stability has not returned.



The crucial role of political parties in undermining Guatemala's social, economic and political development, despite the optimism generated by democratization and the Peace Accords, as well as the opportunities created by the new popular mobilization against political corruption, set the scene for the evaluation of the NIMD programme.

2.3 International assistance context

The donor environment has changed radically since the NIMD Guatemala programme began, most notably involving a reduction in international assistance. The 2003 evaluation describes a 'saturated market' for political party and political system strengthening, as Guatemala received more political party assistance than any other Latin American country (2003: 44). By 2015, the main donors to political parties and parliamentary assistance were the United States and Sweden. The Netherlands Embassy in Guatemala has closed, and now operates regionally from Costa Rica. With the exception of the US National Democratic Institute, few other international organizations are active in this field.

2.4 NIMD country programme overview

The NIMD Guatemala programme and local office were established in 2002 as the *Instituto Holandés para la Democracia Multipartidaria*. Early results included: setting up the first multiparty platform in Latin America; supporting a Shared National Agenda based on the 1996 Peace Accords and adopted by all political parties; and political party strengthening activities, initially in partnership with UNDP and the Organization of American States (OAS). By 2006, its objectives had broadened to include activities to: strengthen Congress and support law reform; strengthen local civil society groups' interaction with party representatives outside the capital; and promote the creation of an Economic and Social Council.

The Institute went through significant changes during the evaluation period. It had four Directors between 2011 and 2015, including the programme manager for a six-month interim period. It also took on new regional responsibilities while, at the same time, its overall budget was reduced from €621,473 in 2011 to €526,795 in 2014. Fundraising efforts were made to make up for the reduction in core funding from the Dutch MFA, which fell from €521,000 in 2012 to €295,00 in 2015 (NIMD Annual Reports).

The Institute developed a theory of change for the period 2010–2012, with the objective of deepening representative democracy in Guatemala by strengthening the political system and the representative and intermediation role of political parties. It continued similar activities: support for the multiparty platform; a technical capacity and legislative agenda for Congress; training for political leaders and on local level political agendas; and establishing an Economic and Social Council. Highly ambitious goals were set for 2010, 2011 and 2012, mostly at the activity level, without capturing any intermediate outcomes.

The 2012–2015 NIMD MAP set out NIMD's global vision (for democratic societies), impact (a well-functioning democratic multiparty political system) and three outcomes which guide the Institute's main interventions and are thus the focus of this evaluation:

- A Multiparty Platform (Permanent Forum of Political Parties, *Foro*);
- Political party assistance, mainly through *Foro* and the democracy education programmes – but also in Congress; and



- Political and civil society interaction, through a Democracy School (*Escuela de Formación para la Democracia*).

This evaluation also examines the integration of women, youth and indigenous peoples into the Institute's programme. These groups have been an ongoing consideration since the start of the programme, as noted in both the 2003 and the 2009 evaluations (Samandu and Vranckx, 2009: 33), but were not an explicit cross-cutting or targeted objective in the overall strategy and planning documents in 2011–2015.

The evaluation did not focus on the new regional responsibilities of the office or on a new NIMD-CORDAID regional programme on environmental security funded by the Dutch MFA's Reconstruction Programme (*Programa de Diálogo Democrático Para la Seguridad Ambiental*, PDDSA). The PDDSA was crucial in providing funding to maintain the office, contributing an increasing share of its budget (40 per cent by 2014). However, a mid-term evaluation has recently been completed. Support for the Economic and Social Council ended in 2012 once it became a publicly funded body. It is not included in the evaluation as it was not core to NIMD's mandate.

In addition to the PDDSA, the Institute was able to obtain crucial funding from Sida during the period, through *Profundización de la Democracia Participativa* (PARLAD) in a consortium with three other organizations, reviving a 2004–2009 collaboration also funded by Sida. The Institute was not successful in its other fundraising activities in a context of reduced international aid for Guatemala, especially for political assistance.



3. Impacts

3.1 Multiparty Platform (Foro permanente de partidos políticos)

3.1.1 What is the programme logic?

The Permanent Forum of Political Parties (Foro permanente de partidos políticos, *Foro*) was established in 2002 with the assistance of NIMD in partnership with UNDP. It contributed to the 2003 Shared National Agenda (*Agenda Nacional Compartida*), which provided the content and the path through which all political parties could devise their plans and legislative agendas to implement the 1996 Peace Accords.

The Shared Agenda remains the most significant and best remembered product of *Foro*. Since then, *Foro* has been recognized as the only dedicated space for dialogue, capacity building and exchange between members of all the political parties in Guatemala, and it is solely supported by the Institute.

The 2012–2015 MAP specifies two multiparty dialogue outputs meant to deliver a functioning multiparty dialogue, with trust and consensus among parties as the outcome:

- ‘Inter-party dialogue on issues of shared concern facilitated’, combined with
- ‘Organizational capacity of multiparty dialogue platform strengthened’

The assumption behind the intervention is that Guatemalan political parties require a neutral space in which to come together, combined with institutional strengthening and capacity building for its members, to eventually enable them to represent, aggregate and mediate social interests and shape political decisions.

The Institute’s principle of neutrality has been essential to facilitating *Foro*, which offers such a space for dialogue where political parties can come together on an equal basis and in a less polarized environment than in Congress. The Institute funds a permanent meeting space, work planning, meeting facilitation, logistics and secretarial support. It assists 10–12 thematic commissions each year on issues as diverse as women, youth, indigenous people, health, education, security and justice, rural development, the environment, political state reform, public expenditure and fiscal policy, as well as a Coordination Commission. Commissions analyse and propose policy positions, which are then put forward for agreement in *Foro* and onward transmission to political parties and to Congress.

Foro also offers technical inputs and consultation with civil society, and provides training opportunities. However it is now mostly known for its capacity building role.

3.1.2 What evidence is available of change?

The Institute team has been able to work at the output level, facilitating multiparty dialogue and trying to reform *Foro* to make it more effective. For example, the Institute piloted a NIMD-wide planning, monitoring and evaluation project to help commissions plan their work better. The Institute’s leadership reached out in different ways to senior political party officials to engage with the Institute and review how they operate.



However, it is difficult to see the contribution made by *Foro's* activities towards a functioning dialogue able to deal with the most difficult political issues facing Guatemala, or it leading to more sustainable trust and consensus among parties. The intervention was undermined by the significant disconnect between political parties' theoretical role in a multiparty democracy and where power lies within (and outside) Guatemalan parties. The flaw in the *Foro* design meant that it could not influence real politics and power relations, and was instead undermined by them. Some of the biggest challenges were:

- *Foro* ceased to be influential with political parties. The space was cherished by politicians for exchanging views, interacting with their peers and discussing the issues that concerned them most regarding either the parties themselves or development issues. However, the Secretaries General (SGs) of the political parties lost interest. Its Coordinating Commission has scant convening power and the rotating *Foro* Presidency does not help continuity. Few *Foro* agreements were taken up by political parties. Political parties operate as franchises of particular powerful interests. The efforts made by the technical cadres and mid-level politicians who mainly attended *Foro* were of limited interest to party *caudillos*. The main exception was the creation of a strong network of women politicians who collaborate on a shared agenda across political party boundaries (*Foro*, 2011).
- *Foro* has had the virtue of being an open space for all political parties, no matter what size or political orientation, with a single set of shared rules. *Foro* was especially welcome to the small political parties. However, this very virtue was the reason why the large, governing parties lost interest. It made no sense to them why small and large parties should be treated equally so, despite the Institute's best efforts, they stopped participating.
- *Foro* appears to duplicate the work of Congress. A number of interviewees valued the consensus-oriented *Foro* space, with access to independent expertise and secretarial support. Others contended that Congress viewed *Foro* as a competitor. Hardly any proposal that came out of *Foro* was adopted either by Congress or by the parties. One important exception was the *Ley Marco de Seguridad*, where the *Foro* played a key role in preserving an integrated approach to security and justice against positions intended to skew the law towards punitive measures. However, the lack of response to *Foro* proposals is partly due to the fact that the political faction leaders in Congress (*Jefes de bancadas*) do not necessarily answer to their SGs, who are the *Foro* partners.
- The commissions and capacity building work for which *Foro* is now best known are mostly of a technical nature and have become bureaucratized. *Foro* has ceased to be a place for facilitated political dialogue. For example, *Foro* was not able to respond to the opportunities created by the April 2015 political crisis. The Coordination Commission invited party representatives to agree a joint response but the SGs, mainly from the big parties, declined to sign or publicize it.

Almost all the stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team acknowledged that *Foro* had stopped being valuable a long time ago. Only a handful argued the current platform should carry on. Instead, almost everyone made a case for another space in which to talk and reach consensus with other parties.



As political parties come under even more public pressure from citizens, civil society and the judiciary to cease corrupt activities and contribute to a functioning political party system, this creates a new opportunity for the Institute. In 2015 the Institute was able to fundamentally review its approach as part of its preparations for a new MAP. It is planning to end its assistance to *Foro* and considering how it can best support another space for political party dialogue, learning the lessons to date. An important issue will be how to take account of the powerful actors beyond the traditional political party counterparts, such as political party funders and *caudillos*, who influence real political dialogue.

3.1.3 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

The objectives and indicators for *Foro* in the Guatemala Annual Operational Plans make no specific references to gender or diversity. The main way in which these issues have been integrated is through specific thematic commissions. The achievements of the Women's Commission are particularly significant and are reviewed in section 3.4.2.

3.2 Congress and political parties

3.2.1 What is the programme logic?

In addition to its long-standing work with political parties, including some early direct political party assistance, *Instituto Holandés* started working with Congress in 2006. This does not appear to be a common feature of NIMD country programmes.

- The 2010-12 Institute objective was to strengthen Congress as a political institution through the provision of technical assistance and training for members of Congress and their technical staff, and by promoting consensus on key legislation related to the institutional strengthening of Congress.
- In the 2012–2015 MAP, work with Congress falls under the political parties output, which was meant to focus on strengthening their core policy capacity so they can translate social and local concerns into policy proposals and facilitate relations with other democratic actors, thereby contributing to more legitimate parties (outcome). In the Guatemala programme, the policy seeking capacities of political parties were to be improved through activities in Congress, as well as through *Foro* and Democracy School activities—two other intervention areas.

The strategy to work in Congress, not just with political parties, makes sense in the Guatemala context. Improved checks and balances within the presidential system made Congress a strategic partner, the place where political parties exercise their power between elections. The assumption was that new strategic legislation in Congress would lead to a better functioning political party system. As is shown below, however, activities were much broader, not limited to political parties in Congress or to strategic legislation to further political party system reform, but focused on the strengthening of Congress itself.

The Institute's strategy seemed to change around 2014, during the course of the 2012–2015 MAP. There was:

- *A move towards a citizen-centred approach to Congress assistance.* The 2014 PARLAD programme focused on participatory democracy, and supported discussions between members of Congress and civil society, for example on the Civil Service



Law. Women, indigenous peoples and youth became explicit cross-cutting issues. This was consistent with the MAP's focus on political-civil society interactions.

- *The reintroduction of direct party assistance.* The 2014 annual plan emphasizes the development of capacity building plans for at least 30 per cent of political parties. The 2015 milestones emphasized capacity building targets and strengthening capacity building offices inside the political parties' structures. This approach (capacity building) does not seem to have been consistent with the MAP, which emphasizes policy capacity, or with the findings of the NIMD Direct Party Assistance Evaluation, which notes that direct support to parties does not appear to be an effective way of bringing about structural changes within parties or the wider political system (Schakel and Svåsand, 2014).

The *Institute* set out an optimistic outlook in its 2011 annual plan, prioritizing issues on the legislative agenda. These included laws on security, which were regarded by CICIG as imperative in order to reduce impunity in the country; fiscal reform; the financing of parties and of the political party system; as well as rules for the functioning of Congress and civil service legislation. The Institute planned to take advantage of experienced members of Congress and a strong official party leadership in Congress (*bancada*) to push a critical legislative agenda. However, over time, the conditions for working with Congress became more adverse. In the midst of the 2015 political crisis, very little political work could be supported by the Institute.

3.2.3 What evidence is available of change?

The following activities and objectives were pursued during the evaluation period:

- Party support in Congress for much needed changes in strategic laws on the electoral and political parties systems, the Organic Law of the Legislative Branch and the Civil Service. The Institute provided technical assistance to the development of legislative products, ranging from internal staff to temporary high-level consultants; facilitated consensus-seeking activities with CSOs, through a round table on Civil Service law; and undertook advocacy to promote that legislative agenda by the Institute's senior political adviser with the Congress leadership and party factions.
- Funding from the Congressional budget was intended to support *Foro's* running costs and foster the capacity building initiatives of members of political parties. On two occasions, Congress was about to approve funding for *Foro*, but each time the decision was suspended at the last minute due to a lack of senior political support inside Congress. The Institute invested a great deal of effort: technical assistance to define the sources of funding in the budget and to develop the reforms to the Congress Organic Law to institutionalize that effort; and advocacy to promote changes to the Congress Organic Law and the definition of the pathway for approval.
- The quality of legislative products of targeted Congress Commissions was to be enhanced as a result of better technical work and the involvement of civil society. This covered a large number of themes and inputs, such as the Commission on Agriculture and CSOs involved in agriculture, the sustainable use of natural resources and food security; the Human Rights Commission; the legislative agenda on transparency and the establishment of Citizens' Transparency Commissions in



seven departments; and provision of technical advice to Congress Commissions by final year students undertaking their final practice in the *Unidad permanente de análisis técnico* (UPAT), the technical office supporting members of Congress with the development of legislative initiatives.

The evidence shows that these objectives were achieved to only an extremely limited degree. There has been very little success in passing key legislation. The Institute did not succeed in obtaining Congressional funds for *Foro*. The impact of its direct assistance to political parties, such as the preparation of government plans, under the other programmes (*Foro* and the Democracy School) could not be assessed due to a lack of data. There were a few successes:

- The policy of actively involving more stakeholders, including social movements and citizens, in all the processes that the Institute is supporting in Congress.
- Winaq valued the Institute's support. Although this was the only apparent bilateral party assistance during the period under review, it was in line with the Institute's objectives to support political parties' commitment to ethnic and gender equity and strategic thinking.
- Early successes in the Citizens' Transparency Commissions, such as the arrest of the Antigua mayor on corruption charges. The Institute supported the head of the Congress Transparency Commission and his party's only representative in Congress, in establishing these commissions and facilitating meetings.
- Technical assistance provided by the Institute, through its in-house technical staff or hired consultants, is much welcomed in the Congress. This has contributed to the Institute's good reputation with politicians.

In addition to the more difficult political environment, some of the barriers to achieving results were:

- Bringing together members of Congress and civil society actors to discuss law initiatives is highly relevant to the changes the Institute wants to promote. However, the scale and type of the interventions in Congress might be insufficient to change permanently the way in which law initiatives are formulated, discussed and approved.
- Most activities are carried out on demand rather than as a result of strategic thinking and the mobilization of an active institutional agenda. The list of activities and themes is very large, and could lead to diffused efforts.
- Apart from support to Winaq, there was little sustained evidence of the integration of indigenous issues, gender or youth into the work with Congress.

Overall, the Institute's activities under this output had few concrete results. It faced an increasingly difficult environment. PARLAD is now supporting the entrance of new actors in law initiatives, which seems an appropriate shift in approach, enabling citizens to demand an improved political party system and better policies.



Looking forward, the theory of change and the strategy for this programme, as well as the MAP's political parties and party system output, would all benefit from greater clarity. The link between objectives, activities, influence and the contribution the Institute could make to achieve more legitimate parties as an outcome was inadequate.

- The Institute does not seem to have responded to the MAP priority to provide greater emphasis on policy development and strategic planning skills for parties. This may be appropriate as large political parties can afford consultants to develop political plans, political parties do not last long in Guatemala and policy development is rarely their priority. Yet, the Institute re-emphasized direct capacity building assistance, which was not in line with the MAP. There is no evidence that it focused on improved interest representation to develop more legitimate parties.
- There is a big gap in the theory of change between support to enhance the capacity of Congress and to legislative reform and the outcome level of more legitimate political parties. The evidence is that legitimacy is at an all-time low in the current political crisis. The Institute has good networks and access to political leaders in Congress, but it lacks the mandate and influence to intervene beyond providing technical assistance and advocacy. It dispersed its efforts over many activities.

3.2.4 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

The Congress-related objectives and indicators in the Institute's Annual Operational Plans make no specific reference to gender or diversity, but there is greater attention on gender and diversity under PARLAD. Support to Winaq, the only explicitly indigenous political party, with the definition of its policies on gender, diversity and internal equity was the most significant activity. This is explored in more detail in section 3.4.3.

3.3 Civil society and political society interaction

3.3.1 What is the programme logic?

The Democracy School is the third main strategic area of NIMD's intervention in Guatemala. It delivers the changes required in the 2012–2015 MAP to improve engagement and the interaction between political and civil society. Its objective is to contribute to the construction of full citizenship in order to strengthen and consolidate democracy and the rule of law in Guatemala.

The assumption is that political parties need to include civil society as part of their interest aggregation and articulation function, and civil society needs parties in order to get their concerns and interests across, to deliver fruitful interaction between political and civil society and a democratic culture (outcome).

The Democracy School started as a pilot project in 2012 under the Institute's second Director, who drew on his prior expertise in political education as a former director of the *Escuela de Gobierno*. The Democracy School built on earlier Institute activities:

- The training in Congress for politicians and their advisers; and
- The Citizens' Action Committees project, which brought together civil society and political society at the local level but ended due to its lack of sustainability.



The Democracy School supports training and other events across the other Institute programmes, which makes it hard to identify a single theory of change. It undertakes a range of meetings with a mix of participants from political parties and civil society at the national and local levels. Most significantly, it runs formal courses in the capital and in nine departments for:

- Members of political parties (with *Foro*);
- Congress (elected members, their political advisers and Congress technical staff);
- Journalists and Congress communication staff;
- Civil society activists, for example, on gender and indigenous issues, trade unions, cooperatives and the private sector;
- Local politicians, local government officials and CSOs, especially on environmental issues as the basis to enable joint action under the PDDSA.

Training for politicians and Congressional staff is meant to contribute to the outputs reviewed in the sections above (multiparty dialogue and political parties' policy capacity). Training for civil society, and joint events between civil society and political actors, are assumed to contribute to the development of a better informed civil society, able to engage with politicians, as well as to the development of political parties with deeper social roots, able to develop policy positions on significant societal issues. However, in practice, the approach appears to be focused on the actor level, and does not target organizations, ongoing collective action or change in the political system.

The Democracy School provides non-formal civic and political education in separate courses, with sessions held over several months. It aims to develop democratic values, culture and practices through training, reflection and analysis. The curriculum was developed with the Universities of San Carlos (public), Landivar (private) and Mesoamerica (private). The National Reality Course contributes five academic credits convertible at San Carlos University. Courses are delivered in partnership with different organizations, depending on the location and topic covered. For example:

- National Reality (with Congress, LEGIS and trade unions)
- National Reality with gender and ethnicity focus (with NGOs)
- Parliamentary reporting for journalists (with the Congress communication unit)
- Politics and environmental security (with ASEPRODI)
- Public Policy (with the Government's Planning Secretariat)
- Regional integration and development (with Fundación Esquipulas)
- Training for political parties' *fiscales* who verify the vote counting process at the local voting sites (with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal).

3.3.3 What evidence is available of change and coherence?

The Democracy School has become a valued service, known by almost all those interviewed by the evaluation team, demonstrating its wide reach among the Institute's stakeholders. The evaluation team was not provided with details of participants' or trainers' course feedback to review, but held focus group discussions with some students in Quetzaltenango and Guatemala City. The separate effects on different categories of students (from among political parties, journalists, and so on) could not be assessed. A review of the Democracy School by its former academic director concluded that it had supported 92 events with over 1900 participants since 2012, a majority of whom were youth and women (Burion Gomez,



2015). Institute planning and reporting systems do not indicate whether this was an over- or under-achievement against the target. It is also not possible to assess the impact of the courses and events at the outcome level, towards developing a democratic culture, as the Institute does not track how participants use their new knowledge and skills. One participant commented that the course had been interesting, but it was hard to put what was learned into practice.

Course participants interviewed by the evaluation team were usually very positive about the individual benefits. They appreciated the opportunity to learn from high-level experts and the printed materials they could keep. This was particularly the case for events held outside the capital, where there are few such opportunities. Course presenters also valued taking part, saying it had helped them organize their thinking and travel throughout the country. The mix of participants generated interesting conversations and sometimes new alliances, for example between political advisers from different parties in Congress who could meet for the first time in an informal setting. Some external commentators commended the Institute on moving beyond its traditional focus on political parties, noting that ‘democracy had to start with society, not political parties’. The Institute staff who provided practical support to the course were also appreciated.

However, the Democracy School turned out to be less of a coordinated school, but comes across as a series of disconnected events. The academic director left in 2013. The new project coordinator was also the overall regional programme manager, as well as interim Director for a period. This seems to have resulted in a loss of strategic overview and coordination. For example, participants seemed to be self-selecting rather than targeted, and events seemed to have been demand-driven by other Institute projects. The focus groups suggested other areas for improvements, such as on the timing of events to suit professional constraints, logistics and content (accuracy on indigenous issues), and wanted a more participative style. There is therefore room to improve the operations of the Democracy School.

Looking ahead, the fundamental issue will be to adopt a strategic approach to the Democracy School to make the most of its significant potential. This would include moving away from information sharing to shaping political action, and therefore being clearer about the target audience and how it will use the learning acquired during the course. Local level courses were meant to generate local level dialogue and local solutions, but it is not clear whether or how resources were provided to support these follow-up activities, including sharing knowledge with others in their own organizations which did not seem to happen consistently, and generally influencing behaviour change and collective action.

The Institute indicated that the courses were in high demand, presumably because of a lack of similar free professional or informal education by other organizations. The Institute should prioritize where it wishes to have an impact, and avoid filling the gaps created by poor government or university training, for example on environmental issues or journalism. It could take into account other donor funded civic education activities, such as DEMOS, and establish more strategic partnerships, for instance, with the Electoral Tribunal on civic education. To move to a more sustainable model, it could even start charging those who can afford to pay. These changes should result in less staff-intensive approaches, releasing Institute resources for political influencing rather than delivering training.



3.3.4 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

Gender, youth and indigenous issues are explicit results areas and have been well integrated into the Democracy School programme. Youth and women constituted the majority of participants (Burion Gomez, 2015). There has been a concerted effort to reach participants outside the capital, including a trial of Internet-based tools. A number of courses were specially designed with the three themes in mind, and in partnership with relevant civil society organizations. Trainers interviewed by the evaluation team included high profile women, and leaders and professionals from indigenous backgrounds.

3.4. Gender and diversity

3.4.1 How have gender and diversity been incorporated into the country strategy?

Gender and diversity have been clearly included as explicit cross-cutting issues in some projects, such as PARLAD and the Democracy School. They are not, however, systematically incorporated into the main Institute strategy and planning documents at the highest levels. There does not appear to be an office lead or expertise on these issues, and it is not systematically reported on through monitoring and evaluation in order to track progress and revise strategy accordingly.

Gender and diversity issues have been addressed since the start of the NIMD presence in Guatemala, but previous evaluations also noted how much more the Institute could deliver by taking a strategic approach. For example, the 2003 evaluation had noted that: ‘Almost all the international actors working with the political parties are trying to increase participation of women, youth, and indigenous people’ and as a result recommended that ‘NIMD could choose one of these areas, such as women or youth, as a main focus and concentrate on it fully, making it NIMD’s area of specialization’ (2003: 45).

3.4.2 How has gender been incorporated into activities?

Gender bias is a key factor preventing women’s participation in politics. There are currently only 17 women in Congress out of 158 seats, only two of whom are from the indigenous population. Only three elected mayors are women. There were only two women among the 14 candidates competing in the 2015 presidential elections. Although Guatemala elected its first woman as Vice President in 2014, scandals surrounding corruption and inappropriate behaviour led to her resignation in May 2014, under pressure from the population and the US Embassy.

In contrast, it is women who are the most active citizens at the local level, participating in grass-roots organizations, in the Development Council System and in local committees working to improve living conditions in the villages. Their voices, however, are still hardly represented in decision-making.

The Institute has had significant successes on gender, and a more consistent focus than on indigenous or youth issues. Two case studies are discussed below:

- The *Foro Women’s Commission*, and its reported impact on creating alliances between women across political parties.
- The funding activities of women’s social and political organizations, such as MOLOJ or Convergencia, which made use of NIMD support to deliver their objectives.



The Women's Commission is one of the most active and long-standing *Foro* commissions. All the *Foro* members interviewed and even the political parties considered it to be one of the most effective commissions. Women from different political parties have been able to put aside ideological differences to build initiatives that could benefit their parties and Congress. The Women's Commission introduced a gender approach within *Foro*, stressing the importance of gender equity in political parties. Its members worked together to promote the active participation of women in politics and capacity building for women interested in running for local elections. Women of all parties participated as trainers for other women (Foro, 2011).

MOLOJ is a political association of young indigenous women from the different ethnic groups in Guatemala. They come together to foster the participation of indigenous women, mainly from rural areas, in politics. Democracy School courses have enabled MOLOJ and other women's organizations to deliver capacity building activities to their members and to women in the communities. This has resulted in a new generation of young, female, indigenous potential leaders who are a promising seed for the future. The current MOLOJ Director described how she had first benefited from Institute assistance 10 years before, and had been able to rise through the ranks of her organization.

Combining formal training with more informal approaches, as well as a twin-track approach to participation in formal, male-dominated political organizations together with support for women's autonomous organizations is consistent with recent research findings on how to support women's political leadership (Domingo et al., 2015). A focus solely on women's participation in political parties or training would be less effective.

3.4.2 How has ethnicity been incorporated?

Indigenous peoples are poorly represented throughout the formal political system and are generally victims of political clientelism. Political parties prey on their precarious living conditions and exchange votes for basic goods such as food, household appliances or construction materials. Very few indigenous people have held key positions in governments or been elected to Congress. No president elected has come from an indigenous group.

Indigenous peoples participate politically at the local level, where they can be elected mayor, or in parallel local traditional systems such as: *Cofradías*, a mixture between authority and religion; *Alcaldías indígenas*, which can be traced back to colonial times; and the more recently established *Parlamentos* organized by ethnic groups. There is little information available on how these forms of political organization interact with the dominant formal political system. This could be a useful topic for investigation for the Institute, when developing its strategy on this topic.

The Institute seems to be committed to the integration of indigenous issues into its work but has not yet been able to develop a clear strategy or demonstrate the results it is achieving. The evaluation team only identified a few concrete results with regard to indigenous people's leadership. Each was a powerful story that could have been better documented and scaled up, such as training for individual indigenous leaders at the local level, who were able to use their learning to participate in local development committees and demand their rights.



Winaq represents an interesting case of NIMD's role in providing technical support to an emergent party set up by one of the most disadvantaged and politically excluded groups. Indigenous people usually participate in politics via the traditional political parties. Winaq is a new party which first participated in elections in 2011. It is the only political party that can be regarded as an indigenous people's party. Indigenous people make up the majority of the membership, and its ideology includes cultural and ethnic imprints that make it unique. Winaq's SG is a well-known K'ekch'í lawyer and the party's sole representative in Congress.

The Institute supported some workshops with Winaq members, which enabled the party to define the content of its ideological platform in a more participative manner. With NIMD assistance, Winaq's SG, in his role as President of the Congress Transparency Commission, established Citizens' Transparency Commissions in seven departments. One of them, in Antigua Guatemala, was responsible for highlighting corruption in the municipality, and the mayor is now in jail. These are concrete results that Winaq would have been unlikely to achieve without Institute assistance.

3.4.4 How have youth been incorporated?

Young people are underrepresented in politics, but their participation is vital in order to renew the Guatemalan political elite (UNDP, 2012). More young people have become involved in politics and in political parties since the signing of the Peace Accords.

The evaluation team was not able to identify significant results regarding youth beyond the high participation rates in the Democracy School, although relevant activities under PARLAD were mentioned. Looking ahead, the Institute has an opportunity to work with youth organizations, politicians and researchers to help rejuvenate the political elite.



4. Relevance

4.1 Is NIMD a flexible organization that responds to local context?

Instituto Holandés has been present in Guatemala for over 12 years. It helped political actors reframe the 1996 Peace Accords as the 2003 Shared National Agenda, which at the time was a significant achievement.

Over time, the environment has become increasingly unfavourable for political party assistance—as the current political crisis demonstrates. The Institute’s change of strategy around 2012, with a move towards even greater collaboration with civil society and local level partners, was appropriate. This was more of an evolution than a break with the past, with new initiatives building on past experience. The most relevant new initiatives were the Democracy School, which trains not just politicians but also civil society actors across nine departments, the PARLAD coalition to give citizens access to Congress and the PDDSA political-civil society partnership around environmental issues. Continued support for women’s groups, indigenous leaders and, to a less visible extent, youth, were also relevant given the importance of tackling political exclusion and broadening Guatemala’s political settlement.

However, the speed at which the Institute is able to adapt is an area that could be improved. For example, the difficulties encountered in *Foro* were noted in the 2009 evaluation, but it took six years from the preparation of the agreement between the Institute and *Foro* to its ratification by the Secretaries General of the political parties in 2013. Some external commentators and senior politicians interviewed by the evaluation team noted that the decline in *Foro* started as early as 2006. Efforts to revise *Foro* during 2011 (the Tikal Agreement) and in 2015 (pre-elections), which required the involvement of SGs, assumed that these SGs had a genuine interest in *Foro*, which was not necessarily the case.

The Institute could reflect on why it took such a long time to take the decision to end support. It may be that it was particularly attached to *Foro* as its first achievement and best known ‘product’. Or it could be that it was so focused on delivering day-to-day activities, servicing the various *Foro* events, that it was unable to see the bigger picture and put into practice what staff knew, that *Foro* was no longer where the big political players came to participate in dialogue. The lesson to focus on specific dialogue, rather than creating a permanent structure, has now been learned by the office.

The Institute knows that it is working in a rapidly changing political environment, but does not always demonstrate this in its strategy. For example, it invested significant technical capacity in trying to reform the Congress Organic Law, which would have included allocating public funding for *Foro*, but the annual change of Congress presidents prevented this. Some parts of the portfolio are more predictable and more independent of politics, such as the Democracy School, due to its strong emphasis on working with civil society and technical staff. Results would be easier to deliver and monitor if systems were put in place to track the level of risk and adjust tactics as required.

The Institute does not yet appear to have fully responded to the April 2015 crisis. It reflected on the crisis with its external partners and facilitated round tables around key laws in Congress under PARLAD (leading on the Civil Service Law). The evaluation team could not



identify a change of strategy or a significant adaptation in its programmes. Rather, the office was wary of being associated with politicians with whom it had been collaborating currently going through impeachment procedures. Leadership changes probably undermined the provision of a timely strategic direction for the Institute's programme. Looking ahead, it could seize opportunities to generate debate and concrete proposals, for example, for the popular consultation, the national pact or the constitutional assembly.

Overall, the Institute appears to be responding to complex scenarios or unexpected events by focusing on the activity level and allowing the programme to take its course, as if it were the result of a 'natural' programmatic evolution. A more relevant response, which would also be more realistic, would entail being able to change tactics as often as necessary without losing sight of the strategic objectives. These objectives should also be more realistic.

4.2 What tools does NIMD use to respond to context?

The Institute has a unique instrument for maintaining up-to-date analysis of the political context. It has retained a group of senior political analysts, which it inherited from the earlier UNDP-OAS programmes. These experts, including some with senior political experience in the Christian Democrat Party, opened doors when the Institute was first established, and have maintained access to senior political leaders. They are highly influential among the political elite and the international community.

The Analysts' Group meets on a monthly basis and provides strategic advice, through analyses of the conjuncture and scenario planning. Its products are not published: the discussions themselves are of the most value. Some members argued that closed, informal discussions are needed to generate trust. The evaluation team was not able to trace any influence of their political analyses on the Institute's strategy and programmes, although the various directors valued the space and political advice provided.

Participants themselves thought there could be some improvement, including a new methodology, more direction and greater facilitation, as well as greater diversity, such as more participants from outside Guatemala City. The evaluation team would endorse making the group more transparent, with wider representation, including sharing its analyses so they can be challenged from other points of view and benefit more stakeholders. Previous efforts to broaden the group, for example, by the inclusion of a prominent Mayan female anthropologist, were unsuccessful, so a new approach will be needed.

Some members of the Analysts' Group also became members of a separate Advisory Board. However, the latter ceased to be active in 2011 and, because of the overlap in membership, the two groups were merged. This was against the advice of the 2003 evaluation:

The role and composition of the Advisory Board to the programme also needs some rethinking and readjusting. The current group of ten outstanding advisors have played a key role in the launch of the multiparty dialogue programme, and have been very committed to support the country representative. However, since the majority of its members are in fact 'stakeholders' of NIMD projects, it cannot be expected that they are at all times a source of independent advice. It is recommended to split up the 'coordination role' of the Advisory Board (which is indeed a key role) and the 'advisory role' by a group of independent experts. This new group can provide important input in the future strategy of the programme, which, according to many resource persons interviewed, will require more focus and coherence.



Without necessarily recommending the establishment of a new Advisory Board, the evaluation team recommends reviewing once again the mandate and membership of the Analysts' Group, given its active role in a number of projects. This would avoid potential conflicts of interest over implementation, and maintain a separation between independent advice and strategic management.

4.3 Is NIMD's political party assistance niche relevant?

Instituto Holandés is one of very few organizations still working with political parties in Guatemala. It is regarded by almost every stakeholder in this field as a good and valuable partner. Its most important asset is its overall reputation as a neutral facilitator and political adviser. Its neutrality and impartiality are fundamental to its effectiveness and its value added as a provider of multiparty assistance, as opposed to party-to-party assistance.

The challenge for the Institute is to turn this good reputation into the delivery of more visible and relevant change that in time will contribute to deeper democracy. This may require a new reflection on some of the partnerships and approaches used to date, and their relevance in the current political system. While staff members are aware of the true nature of political parties, this does not appear to translate into a strategic approach to programmes, projects and activities. Parties and Congress are treated as if they were the intermediaries between citizens' demands and state institutions, whose capacities can be improved through the provision of financial and technical assistance, even though the evidence shows that this is not the case.

The Institute has already moved beyond a focus on political party assistance, whether multiparty or bilateral. It has innovated in two ways:

- Support to Congress is not a traditional feature of NIMD country programmes, but in Guatemala it is an appropriate place to seek to influence the reform of the political system as a whole, rather than parties. This positions the Institute well to influence the future evolution of the current political crisis.
- The more stakeholders were removed from the heart of political power, the more they appreciated the Institute—from indigenous civil society leaders to women's political organizations in both Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango. This demonstrates a potential niche—the role it can play in creating a genuinely inclusive democracy with a range of ideological and programmatic political options for citizens. This is important in a context where the political spectrum is narrow and patronage systems undermine representation of the social and economic interests of the most vulnerable groups by political parties.

4.4 Is NIMD a learning organization?

It is not immediately evident how the Institute learns from its own experiences. Not all the recommendations made by previous evaluations, for instance, were fully taken on board. For example, despite the fact that the 2009 evaluation found evidence of declining interest in *Foro* on the part of the governing party, and that the political-civil society work in the interior was having little impact and was not sustainable (Samandu and Vranckx, 2009: 39), in the main these activities continued.



Interviews with Institute staff identified only a few internal learning experiences, such as exchanges with Indonesia and Georgia when developing the Democracy School. It will be important to more fully understand the constraints in order to position the Institute to become a learning and responsive organization. These may be attributed to issues of leadership, poor monitoring and evaluation systems or other organizational factors (see below).



5. Effectiveness and efficiency

This section reviews the key factors behind the Institute's efficiency and effectiveness, including the significant constraints it faces. It covers the coherence of its strategy and portfolio, its value added and the different instruments at its disposal, as well as organizational issues of leadership, staffing, culture and its systems such as planning, financial management, monitoring and evaluation and links to HQ.

5.1 Is the country programme strategic and coherent?

Instituto Holandés had several strategic and operational frameworks during 2011–2015. Its 2010–2012 theory of change aimed to deepen representative democracy through the institutional strengthening of the political system and the representative and intermediating functions of political parties. However, its expected results were a mix of activities and long-term goals that appeared unrealistic within a three-year period:

- Reform of the politico-administrative system.
- Capacity building for political organizations.
- Political parties intermediation and representation.

There does not appear to be an *Instituto Holandés* multi-annual plan for 2012–2015, setting out high-level impacts and outcomes for the period that can be monitored. The 2011 NIMD HQ regional context analysis identified interventions in line with the three MAP objectives and some regional priorities, such as security, border regions and youth (NIMD, 2011d), but it did not appear to be known about or used by the country office. Instead, the Institute is organized and managed on the basis of its various programmes, and reporting is done on the basis of the various funding sources that cut across them (the Dutch MFA PPII, the Dutch Ministry Reconstruction Project and Sida PARLAD). Annual operational plans set out the details of institutional partners and project activities under five components (*Foro*, Congress, Office, PDDSA and Democracy School), each with their own high-level objectives and some with an overall indicator. The remainder of the annual plans include quantitative targets and planned activities.

In 2012, the portfolio evolved to include an explicit reference to political and civil society relations, in line with the MAP, supported by the Democracy School and later by PDDSA activities. Rather than the MAP influencing the Guatemala portfolio, it seems that the Guatemala Office also influenced NIMD's overall strategic direction. In the post-Arab Spring context, the new Director, together with African offices, is reported to have made a strong case for democracy schools to include work with civil society. The Guatemala portfolio also retained the intervention with Congress, with less targeting of political parties than seems to be expected in the overall MAP. These changes in strategy, and contextualization of the MAP to Guatemala, demonstrate that the Institute is able to evolve and adapt.

The 2014 HQ Theory of Change does not seem to have particularly influenced the office, but it has the potential to help organize its future work in a more strategic way. It was used in the Central America planning session for the 2016–2020 MAP.

However, the lack of a common understanding of an overall purpose and of how the different programmes, projects and activities contribute to it undermines the Institute's



effectiveness. At present, each project coordinator has a slightly different vision of what the Institute is trying to achieve, from implementing the current constitution, to greater political inclusion or a better environmental policy.

The Institute's portfolio appears coherent, with different financial sources (Dutch and Swedish) supporting the same core programmes around *Foro*, Congress and the Democracy School.

Political parties are stakeholders in most of these activities with few bilateral party support activities. In theory, *Foro* products, such as the thematic commission reports and the 'non-aggression' election pact, should influence parties' institutional development, their policy positions and their behaviour in Congress and at election time. However, the disconnect between parties as formal organizations and the real source of political power means that *Foro* has limited influence on other issues.

The new political society-civil society outcome in the 2012–2015 MAP has become central. As noted above, it is a necessary strategy to achieve political change in Guatemala. PARLAD funding has strengthened this approach across *Foro* and Congress activities. The Democracy School has been used as a tool to support other objectives, including *Foro* meetings, training for members of Congress and environmental security lobbying. However, this plurality of uses could undermine their internal coherence, if for instance the Democracy School becomes an umbrella for training activities and events rather than being focused on a clear constituency for change it can assist through targeted support.

The Institute's imperative to fundraise increased when it became a regional NIMD office after 2011. This may have had the effect of diluting portfolio coherence. A new programme addresses environmental security, with a focus on water management, mining and local conflicts (PDDSA). The thematic entry point was an interesting innovation, but the evaluation team could not identify how it contributes to the overall objectives of the Institute.

5.2 What is the country programme's niche and comparative advantage?

Instituto Holandés is valued by its stakeholders, which outlined how it operates under many of NIMD's core principles. It is considered to be a niche organization with a local identity that provides good political access, but also to have a degree of independence through its international backing.

- The majority of interviewees confirmed that the Institute was seen as a neutral and impartial partner. Only a few political party members expressed concern that it appeared to draw on experts from the same political orientation and did not offer a sufficient diversity of views. However, it should be borne in mind that the Guatemalan political system is skewed to the right, and issues of equity, social justice and human rights are still seen as 'suspiciously left wing'.
- It is most appreciated by the smaller parties and its less powerful stakeholders, but larger parties also appreciated the role it could play.
- Its consistency of support since 2002 was particularly valued, whereas most other political assistance organizations have left, demonstrating its long-term commitment to Guatemala. This is a source of trust.



- It is seen as responsive to beneficiaries' requests, rather than imposing its own vision. For example, it responded to the request by Partido Patriota for technical support to carry out its own induction programme for candidates in municipal councils in preparation for the 2011 elections (it is now the current governing party).
- It was able to solve practical problems by providing financial and technical assistance, such as funding events for Winaq, analysis to back up Congress discussions, or computers for UPAT comparative law research, and so on.
- It is seen as a supporter of political actors and not an activist NGO, in a context where NGOs are perceived as confrontational and not to be collaborating with politicians.

These strengths are at risk, however, as the Institute's visibility and influence have been affected by its frequent changes of leadership during the period under review.

- The reliance on its Director and one senior political adviser for political networking means that its reputation is based on individuals rather than institutionalized skills. These networking skills and personal relationships with political actors were diminished to a certain extent as the Institute focused on broadening partnerships with civil society.
- The number of partnerships and activities means that NIMD support is not targeted on the most critical entry points towards inclusive, multiparty democracy. For example, there seems to be little selection for places on the Democracy School courses; support staff were as welcome as influential advisers to Members of Congress, who complained about this.
- The Institute has also had a low profile because it is involved in a narrow field (political parties). Several partners and external commentators thought it could be more visible at a higher level, rather than focusing on its current activities.

It has been able to build good relationships with other organizations through a number of partnerships. In contrast with other international organizations in the field, it is not seen as a political player operating for its own interests.

- The Analysts' Group enables the Institute to stay in touch with senior peers in other similar organizations.
- It has good collaboration with many research institutions and political science departments, such as San Carlos University or Rafael Landívar.
- PARLAD provides a formal coordination structure between the Institute and the three organizations funded by Sida, including the National Democratic Institute whose Director is in the Analysts' Group. Thus far this has mostly meant an equal division of resources and responsibilities but has not led to significant strategic collaboration. PARLAD senior managers are aware of the need to move towards this, however, especially in view of the opportunities for political reform.
- The Institute has been able to differentiate itself from NDI, the organization with the most similar mandate, in several ways. It has remained more specialized, and does not work on such a broad range of issues (election transparency and monitoring).



The fact that it is European, as opposed to US, funded has positively affected NIMD's reputation, given the complexity of Central American geopolitics. At the same time, however, this may give NIMD less diplomatic support, given the closure of the Dutch Embassy and the move to a regional programme.

- *Fundación Esquipulas* was also highly regarded by stakeholders. It benefits from high-level political access. As NIMD moves to regional programmes in Central America, the Foundation, with its regional integration mandate, would seem to be a natural partner, and NIMD is already working with it.
- German political foundations, such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which was behind the rise of the now defunct Christian Democrat Party, were once very important but have reduced their activities.
- Private sector organizations fund a School of Government and technical assistance to Congress. They declined to be interviewed but are clearly essential players with which the Institute does not seem to have relationships.

5.3 What are the most effective and efficient approaches to delivering its objectives?

The paucity of actual results makes it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness of interventions during the period, or compare the value of, for instance, training courses versus technical advice to Congress and political parties. Among the general findings on the different tools and instruments used are:

- The Institute seems to have provided little technical assistance to political parties' strategic planning and policy development so it is not possible to draw conclusions. It has funded one-off events, for example with Winaq, but does not seem to have measured the effect on its organizational development.
- The Institute relies heavily on training to build individual capacity in political and civil society through the Democracy School. This is no longer considered an effective way of building individual or organizational capacity and there is little evidence that it can contribute to institutional change on its own. Targeting a cadre of potentially active citizens and reform-minded politicians, and providing concrete opportunities for them to work together, is more likely to be effective.
- The Institute appears to have relied very little on international or South-South expertise sharing in the programmes reviewed in this evaluation. It is a strength to have a local office and local experts. Previous evaluations found little evidence of benefits from country visits or exchanges with European politicians. However, at a time when citizens are demanding change and politicians are looking for creative options to reform the political system, the targeted use of access to international or regional experience as part of a change strategy could be valuable. NIMD HQ could support the office in this regard.
- The cases of MOLOJ and the indigenous people's representative in the development council system show that it is the more politically excluded populations that take the most advantage of the opportunities the Institute offers. Ongoing support for



women and indigenous organizations, rather than one-off events or training, would seem to have delivered longer lasting results.

- The Institute has made very little use of traditional and social media to influence political culture, for a better informed public on party policies, or greater political participation and youth engagement in political parties. It provides some training for those reporting on Congress but does not seem to have explored how media influence citizens and their political culture, and what kind of media regulation is needed in a democratic political system, in a context where one of the leading presidential candidates is reported to control several media companies.

5.4 Does the country programme have sufficient organizational capacity to deliver its objectives?

The Institute's organizational capacity can be assessed in terms of its mandate, leadership, staffing, culture, systems and relationship to HQ. Financial management, and monitoring and evaluation are addressed below. The evaluation team found that significant efficiency and effectiveness gains would be possible through improved management of limited and shrinking resources.

Effectiveness was affected by some significant changes during the period. First, as a result of changes in Dutch government priorities, the Institute became a regional office from 2012 with responsibility for El Salvador and Honduras. This meant that resources were spread more thinly, and Guatemala management had to spend an important amount of time establishing new offices and coordinating their reporting.

The Executive Director changed in mid-2011, late 2014 and again in mid-2015. Changes in leadership each time meant a change in management style and programmatic priorities. The second Director left in October 2014 and the programme manager served as interim Director until May 2015 when a third Director was appointed. The interim Director retained his other regional and Guatemala management duties as well as Democracy School project responsibilities. This long interim process, with no additional management staff, affected visibility and strategic direction, although projects continued.

As noted above, the Institute appears to have few senior political experts as employees and instead relies on a network of senior associates for political influencing. Staff members appear to be busy managing projects and delivering activities, leaving little time for strategic thinking and networking. No one appears to have particular expertise, or responsibility, for cross-cutting gender, youth and indigenous issues. During the period, the management culture was reported to have been hierarchical and at times tense, with few opportunities for office-wide discussions and contributions. The new Director will have an opportunity to develop a new, empowering organizational culture, where communication is improved, staff are clear on their roles and their contributions are valued. She could also address some concerns about past practices identified by the evaluation team.

- There is scope to improve human resources management, including some serious problems with the recruitment system and potential conflicts of interest.
- There is a lack of separation between the delivery and design/evaluation roles of consultants. The evaluation team saw several examples of consultants involved in



activities but also in their design and/or review. This applies to members of the Analysts' Group, who often both advise on Institute strategy and deliver projects.

Overall, the Institute office has been managed using a project-based as opposed to a strategic and results-oriented approach. The overlaps between projects and funding sources require a lot of activity-level coordination. The Institute also plays a number of different roles. It is the direct implementer of some activities, for example, institute staff manage and support the *Foro* office and work plan, but it contracts out most of the Democracy School training to different individuals. It also has a number of funding agreements with civil society organizations or local government, such as *mancomunidad* in Quetzaltenango. Reviewing its strategic focus and core role could help reduce the number of external partnerships, releasing staff time for core issues.

5.5 Does the country programme have sufficient and flexible financial resources to deliver its objectives?

Instituto Holandés has relied on very few sources of funding. It was almost entirely dependent on the Dutch MFA (for 90–100 per cent of its budget) in 2012–2014. This funding came from two streams: Political Parties Second Phase (PPII) in 2012–2015; and the Reconstruction Fund partnership with CORDAID, which funds PPDSA in 2012–2016. The latter has covered a growing share of the budget (25 per cent in 2013 and 39 per cent in 2014).

As a result, the Institute has been fundraising in Guatemala, raising €1m over four years from the Swedish Embassy through PARLAD. This Sida funding was less than 5 per cent of the Institute's budget in 2014 but will become more important over time.

Table 2. *Instituto Holandés* budget 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	€621,4739	€565,000	€508,000	€526,700	€489,000 (excluding Reconstruction)
PPII	No data	€521,000	€380,000	€295,656	€295,000
Reconstruction			€125,000	€207,200	No data
PARLAD				€25,000	€194,000

Source: NIMD Annual Plans and Reports (2011-2015)

In addition to its limited funding base, other challenges include:

- In theory, long term, predictable Dutch Ministry funding gives the Institute a comparative advantage. In practice, it does not appear to have provided full financial stability, with a significant PPII reduction in most years, and a 10 per cent real terms cut in 2015 due to the fall of the euro.
- While fundraising can lead to strategic partnerships which can strengthen its approach, such as the focus on participative democracy in PARLAD, this can also cause distractions not only in staff time spent on fundraising, but also if projects are insufficiently directed to its core mandate. A smaller, focused NIMD portfolio could be more efficient and effective.



- The combination of core HQ funding and flexible Sida funding means that the office appears able to allocate different funding sources to different projects. While this helps with flexibility, and potentially with responsiveness, it also undermines results-based management, as the strategy-plan-results-resources link is broken. For example, the office does not appear to produce a single plan or report that brings together all of its objectives and resources.
- The office has had to adapt to different funders' systems and rules; for example, different ceilings for competitive tendering, and UNOPS management of Sida funds on a reimbursable basis as opposed to being paid in advance. Three-monthly requests for funds from NIMD HQ and Sida/UNOPS as well as bi-annual financial reports to HQ would appear burdensome.

5.6 Does the country programme have good monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor and adjust its objectives?

The 2003 and 2009 evaluations both highlighted the importance of adopting a more strategic approach, and an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system. The Institute is aware of HQ efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation, and learning. It piloted the NIMD HQ Theory of Change approach in its 2010–2012 plan and in the activities of *Foro*, but the Institute is still in the process of developing a stronger monitoring and evaluation and learning culture.

The Institute developed its own reporting format in the absence of HQ guidelines, including for its regional responsibilities. The process seems cumbersome, although it has moved from three to two reports per year—the first report is prepared between June and August and the annual report between January and February each year. There also appears to be a potential disconnect between the NIMD overall annual planning process, which starts in October in order to respond to the MFA timeline, with implementation beginning in January each year, and NIMD's reporting/monitoring and evaluation cycle, which includes finalized annual reports and plans at the start of the following year. This means annual planning may not always be based on annual monitoring and annual reports.

The Institute's system is based on activity reporting, starting with the implementers who report to their project coordinator, who then summarizes the project's results for the office programme manager, who then compiles the regional report (integrating Guatemala and with Honduras and El Salvador), which is then submitted to the Institute Director and eventually to the NIMD HQ programme manager. This long chain makes it hard to identify actual results against overall outcomes, let alone any impact level results. For example, since 2013 each *Foro* thematic commission has been writing its own report, which feeds into the NIMD overall report, creating an enormous amount of written material for very little substantive progress. There are few qualitative targets and indicators, required to measure changes in behaviour or values such as trust, and almost no outcomes or impact level targets or indicators. The system would therefore seem to provide insufficient information for strategic decision-making.



5.7 What is the overall relationship with NIMD Headquarters?

NIMD HQ has made a long-term commitment to Guatemala, with significant staffing continuity. The HQ programme manager has a long track record: she was initially appointed in 2003 as policy officer for Latin America and also worked in the Guatemala office for a number of years. In 2008–2011 she was a senior programme manager responsible for the Latin America regional media and politics programme. The NIMD HQ Director of Programme has also worked on Latin America for a long time. As a result, they know the context and the programme well, and are also known by Guatemalan stakeholders. This means that the HQ staff changes and restructuring in 2011 do not appear to have significantly affected the Institute. Looking ahead, the further expansion of NIMD regional work means the HQ programme manager is likely to be less available to support the office and travel to Guatemala.

The relationship is hands-off, with the HQ Programme Manager helping at key moments, such as in fundraising and appointing the Director. Because of the general way in which the NIMD HQ relates to its country programmes, and because its own core systems are still under development, HQ seems to have had limited opportunities to help the Institute address some of the considerable organizational challenges it faced during the evaluation period. For example, there appear to be a number of disconnects between HQ and Guatemala systems and procedures, and some gaps in guidance. HQ sends the overall framework, agreed budget and reporting tools to the country office, and there are two (previously three) annual review points meetings. The divergence in strategy between the second Guatemala Director and HQ, and different reporting frameworks (in Spanish for the office and English for the HQ annual plans and reports, the latter with milestone progress indicators that are difficult to relate to the detailed Guatemala Operational Plans) indicate that coherence and support could be enhanced. Potential issues with human resources and consultant contracting are noted above and would benefit from HQ support and greater consistency.

5.8 Is the country programme efficient in its use of resources?

There is insufficient quantitative data to assess the relationship between inputs and outputs (efficiency). Looking at the NIMD Annual Reports, the Institute seems to have faced significant challenges in delivering its planned progress milestones. Overall, in 2012–2014 it was on track with 14 milestones, only completed 3 while 11 needed attention. In sum, the evaluation team was able to document many activities but proportionately fewer results.



6. Sustainability of NIMD country interventions

This section examines the sustainability of each of *Instituto Holandés* interventions from three perspectives: political sustainability, the interest in carrying on with or without NIMD; technical capacity, the ability to continue actions without NIMD technical support; and financial sustainability, the will or opportunity to substitute international funding for local from either public or private sector sources.

6.1 How sustainable is the multiparty platform?

Foro, understood as an institutionalized space for general and ongoing multiparty dialogue, has not proved to be sustainable either technically or financially. The nature of political parties in Guatemala (franchise parties, *caudillo*-dependent) has prevented *Foro* from becoming the space where political views can find common ground before entering Congress or other political arenas. It became a technical space that Congress and political parties did not value enough to fund from their own resources. The Institute was heavily involved in seeking Congress funding for *Foro* to put it on an independent footing, but could not overcome the lack of political interest in it. A few external commentators thought the Institute had been seeking funding for itself because Dutch MFA funding was being cut. *Foro* has now agreed it should look for its own resources. The evaluation team agrees with the Institute's decision to end support.

Nonetheless, the Institute seems to have made a contribution to changing political culture in Guatemala. Dialogue with other parties is seen as important by the parties themselves and by other actors, quite contrary to the norm before the Peace Accords. Everyone interviewed by the evaluation team stressed that space for political dialogue was needed, especially in the current context. It did not need to take the form of a permanent and bureaucratic structure, however, but should be a 'neutral' space they can trust to speak freely among themselves and with other actors—with 'no microphones, no cell phones, no videos', according to one member of Congress.

The Institute is also regarded as the organization best positioned to continue promoting such as space. It could move to a political 'facilitation' role, rather than funding a permanent physical entity with a heavy work plan, and move *Foro*'s capacity building functions to the Democracy School.

6.2 How sustainable are the political party and parliamentary assistance?

This is perhaps the least sustainable area of the programme. Political parties and politicians in Congress consider the Institute 'good', 'neutral', 'unconditional' and a 'good friend of politicians in times when no one else thinks highly of them'. However, 'good' in this context could merely mean 'useful'—although not indispensable—and politicians have the resources to deliver what is really in their interests.

Political sustainability has weakened as political networking skills have become more limited in the office. Politicians expect the new Director to relate to them in a peer-to-peer way, regaining space and credibility in that difficult environment. If that does not happen, especially during the political crisis, the *Instituto* will risk remaining a minor player in the game. It could use PARLAD, Swedish and other diplomatic access to gain even more visibility.



Technical and financial sustainability is problematic if Congress perceives that the Institute will keep subsidizing its access to technical expertise that few members of Congress really value. This requires a change of approach, where the Institute stops providing top-class consultants to advise members of Congress or stops buying the products of the little known UPAT. Based on its understanding of politicians' incentives and when they might come to value technical advice, the Institute could over a period start to institutionalize UPAT and its advice to Congress commissions using Congress resources, rather than subsidizing it.

These findings also apply to technical assistance to political parties. Policy-based programmes and technical expertise among party memberships are not critical to *caudillo* survival. Such investment is not durable. The likelihood that a political party will disappear after an election is very high, as the average duration of a party is 1.6 elections. Parties obtain public funding for each vote they gain. This has to be used in capacity building, so it is a source of sustainability.

The Institute clearly needs to maintain a presence in Congress to remain in the decision-making loop, exert some influence and develop supportive relationships with all political parties in order to shape the party system. A refreshed strategy must be urgently devised, with realistic objectives and indicators to assess whether progress is moving in the right direction and decide how to reallocate funds and target staff efforts.

6.3 How sustainable are civil society-political society interventions?

The Democracy School is not yet a sustainable initiative but it has the potential to become one. Due to the way politics operates, simply training party cadres is not an effective way of building parties or developing their policies. However, creating an active and politically conscious citizenship could influence the future political culture. There, the Democracy School has significant potential for social appropriation and political sustainability.

The Democracy School should better target its audience, for example, in Congress, focusing on the advisers to members of Congress and other technical staff involved in legislative work. It could target individuals known to be involved in political parties, Congress and other politically salient organizations. Previous Institute efforts to create a stand-alone training institution for political parties do not appear to have been successful (Blokzil et al., 2009), and it is not recommended that this should be tried given the current state of the party system.

The greatest opportunity for technical sustainability is to foster alliances with national institutions and set up joint ventures so these can take over the process. For example, the Supreme Electoral Court has a mandate to foster civic education but few resources to carry it out. The alliance with the School of Political Science at San Carlos University seems promising. The Institute could tap into a wider pool of expertise to rejuvenate and enhance the already good quality of its trainers, introducing new thinking and diversity to the capacity building process.

Financial sustainability is unlikely, but the good feedback from its students and the strategic role they could play should make it a worthwhile donor-funded investment. It would be possible to envisage a plan to progressively hand over responsibility to local organizations, such as a combination of the Electoral Institute, universities and civil society organizations.



Some individuals could pay for their courses or contribute to at least partially fund the Democracy School's expenses. International joint ventures to fund a scholarship scheme could be explored for more disadvantaged groups.

The Democracy School as currently delivered by NIMD could improve the sustainability of its impact through additional support for course participants to apply their learning in their organizations, generate collective action on pressing political problems and influence the political system towards greater inclusion and representation. Although the Institute on its own is a small organization, by working with others and in strategic ways it could have wider impacts. This too requires a new strategy, better designed to target participants and initiatives, ongoing support, and with monitoring and evaluation to track them overtime and reallocate support where it is having the most impact.

6.4 How sustainable are efforts to integrate gender and diversity?

The Institute clearly cares about gender and diversity but has not adopted a strategic approach that could be assessed for its sustainability. Affirmative action principles are indispensable in the Guatemalan context, in order to foster women's, indigenous people's and youth participation in politics. This means that Institute support could be needed for an extremely long time. A strategy to address the main barriers to political participation or target a few critical organizations and reform processes could be more sustainable.

6.5 How sustainable is the country programme overall?

Instituto Holandés has important political capital and a clear niche in Guatemala at a time when the political system is under pressure and new opportunities for reform may arise. With refreshed strategies and more stable management, it has the potential to become more effective and deliver more sustainable results. An abrupt end to its current funding would undermine this potential.



7. Main findings and recommendations

7.1 Main findings

7.1.1 Overall country programme findings

Instituto Holandés is a valued partner with a clear niche in the political assistance field at a time of political instability and potential change. In particular:

- It is regarded by almost every stakeholder as a good and valuable partner. Its most important asset is its overall reputation as a neutral facilitator and political adviser to increase trust between different political actors.
- This is particularly valued by small parties and other social actors. The more stakeholders were removed from the heart of political power, the more they appreciated the Institute.
- Its consistency of support since 2002, when most other political assistance organizations have left, demonstrates its long-term commitment.
- It is responsive to beneficiaries' requests rather than imposing its own vision.
- In contrast with other international organizations in the field, it is not seen as a political player operating in its own interests.
- It has recognized ability to solve practical problems using financial and technical assistance.
- It is a supporter of political actors and not an activist NGO.

However, resource and management challenges have undermined its efficiency and effectiveness:

- It became a regional office in 2012. Resources were spread more thinly, and Institute management had to spend time on regional issues.
- A cut in Dutch MFA funding reduced core financial resources, leading the office to undertake more fundraising.
- Four changes in leadership between 2011 and 2015 meant frequent changes in management style and programmatic priorities.
- The Institute's reputation and political networking skills are fragile, based on individuals rather than being institutionalized.
- This probably also contributed to a reduced profile, especially after 2012, with political leaders and influential people inside political parties or in Congress.
- During the period, the management culture was reported to have been hierarchical and at times tense, with few opportunities for office-wide discussions and contributions.

A more strategic approach would significantly improve performance:

- The Institute at present lacks a strategic approach and shared purpose.
- It operates at the project/activities level. Annual plans do not provide a strategic and long-term guide to where results can be expected. Its monitoring and evaluation provides insufficient information for strategic decision-making.
- Staff understanding of the true nature and role of political parties in Guatemala does not appear to translate into a strategic approach to projects and activities.



Even when the evidence shows that this is not the case, parties and Congress are treated as intermediaries between citizens' demands and the state institutions, whose capacities should be improved through financial and technical assistance.

- As part of the 2016–2020 MAP process, the Institute could draw lessons from its experience to date, apply staff understanding of deep politics to refresh its strategies and design more effective interventions.

Relevance and responsiveness can be improved in an unstable political context:

- A sole focus on political parties is of limited relevance in Guatemala's highly fluid and volatile political party system, where parties are created at election time to access elected office, and *caudillos* and funders are more influential than party officials.
- The Institute's change of strategy, with a move towards greater collaboration with civil society and local level partners, was therefore highly appropriate.
- Support to Congress, where power is held in between elections, was also relevant to try to influence political party system reform.
- Support to women's groups, indigenous leaders and, to a less visible extent, youth was also relevant given the importance of tackling political exclusion.
- However, the speed at which the Institute is able to adapt in response to change is an area that could be improved.
- It has maintained a unique and influential resource, the Analysts' Group, which could be even better utilized.

7.1.2 To what extent did NIMD achieve its multiparty dialogue results?

The multiparty platform has ceased to be relevant and effective in its current form.

- The Institute is the only funder of the multiparty platform it helped to create back in 2002, the Permanent Forum of Political Parties. However, *Foro* ceased to be relevant as a multiparty space during the period as it lost its influence within political parties and in Congress. It contributed little to NIMD's overall outcome of greater political trust and consensus. Senior politicians and those who actually control political parties (*caudillos* or funders) simply use other spaces for political dialogue.
- Although not financially or technically sustainable in its current form, a multiparty space was a politically sustainable innovation. Politicians would welcome a new multiparty space during the current political crisis. The Institute was able to influence the political culture over time in this dimension.

7.1.3 To what extent did NIMD achieve its political party/parliamentary assistance results?

Technical work with Congress and political parties achieved limited visible or sustainable results in the deteriorating political environment, but a new citizens-oriented approach looks more promising, especially in the current context:

- The Institute has been providing bilateral party assistance since 2002 and technical assistance to Congress since 2006, as the place where parties most exercise their political power outside of elections. A Swedish funded participatory democracy programme helped shift its approach to Congress at a time of worsening political crisis and public distrust of politics, supporting citizens' and social movements' engagement with Congress. The legislation it supported was not passed, however,



even though it invested in high quality technical assistance. Its support to the Transparency Commission, however, did help hold local elected officials to account.

- NIMD provided little policy development and strategic planning assistance for parties, which seems appropriate in the current political system. The main exception was the valued support provided to *Winaq*. There is no evidence that the Institute contributed to the NIMD outcome objective of more legitimate political parties. Legitimacy is at an all-time low in the current political crisis.
- This area of intervention was the least sustainable from a financial, technical and political point of view. Its assistance is appreciated, but not always clearly indispensable. The Institute will need to maintain a presence and develop influence in Congress in order to affect political change, but a strategy refresh is clearly needed building on its new participatory democracy approach.

7.1.4 To what extent did NIMD achieve its civil-political interaction results?

The Democracy School has significant potential, especially if its participants are properly selected and provided with ongoing support to affect longer term political change:

- The Institute broadened its political education training (originally limited to *Foro* and Congress) in 2012 by creating a new Democracy School. It has supported 92 events with over 1900 participants, a majority of whom were youth and women. Participants were usually very positive about the individual benefits and the courses are in high demand.
- There is room to improve the strategic orientation and practical operations of the Democracy School, moving from information sharing to influencing behaviour and supporting collective action. At present, the Democracy School comes across as a series of disconnected events and it was hard to trace the effects on the NIMD outcome on political-civil society collaboration, let alone democratic culture.
- The Democracy School has great potential to be politically and technically sustainable. Responsibilities could progressively be handed over to local organizations. It will remain financially dependent on international assistance, in particular to foster the women's, indigenous people's and youth political participation essential to develop more inclusive politics, but would make an attractive and worthwhile donor investment with a refreshed strategy.

7.1.5 To what extent did NIMD achieve its gender and diversity goals?

Gender, indigenous people's and to a lesser degree youth issues are included in the programme, but not systematically. These have provided some of the best results:

The Institute has a long-standing commitment to gender and diversity, and has achieved some important results. However, it could be more effective by systematically incorporating these objectives at the highest levels and strengthening their limited mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue in some projects. Gender was better addressed than indigenous issues. Important results with regard to gender include *Foro's* Women's Commission and some women's organizations the Institute has been able to support over a long period. Bilateral support to *Winaq* and to local level indigenous leaders was highly valued by them. There is scant evidence of results regarding working with youth leaders or their organizations.



7.1.6 What was the influence of the *Multi-Annual Plan, 2012–2015* and the accompanying HQ institutional reforms?

HQ changes during the period, including the new regional focus of the office and the need for country programme fundraising, created difficulties. NIMD HQ appears to have a long-term commitment, but also a relatively hands-off approach to the Guatemala Office. It could offer more support at this difficult time.

- The main influence of the 2012–2015 MAP was the greater investment in political and civil society relations through the Democracy School and a new programme on environmental security. There was no evidence of change in the multiparty platform. The portfolio retained Congress interventions, with less direct assistance to political parties than apparently expected by HQ, which was appropriate in the Guatemalan context.
- The Institute also appeared to have influenced NIMD's overall strategic direction. The then Director, together with African offices, is reported to have made a strong case for democracy schools to include work with civil society.
- The 2014 HQ Theory of Change does not seem to have particularly influenced the office, but it has the potential to help organize its future work in a more strategic way.
- NIMD HQ appears to have a long-term commitment, but also a relatively hands-off approach to the Guatemala Office. HQ staffing changes and restructuring in 2011 do not appear to have significantly affected the NIMD Guatemala programme but more support, in terms of systems, procedures and learning, could make a significant contribution to helping the Institute regain its influence.

7.2 Main recommendations

Recommendations on improving NIMD efficiency and effectiveness

Instituto Holandés has important political capital and a clear niche in Guatemala at a time when the political system is under pressure and new opportunities for reform may arise. With refreshed strategies and more stable management, it has the potential to become more effective and deliver more sustainable results. An abrupt end to its current funding would undermine this potential.

The newly appointed Institute Director and new 2016–2020 MAP process create important opportunities to refresh NIMD's approach and improve its effectiveness. The following recommendations are provided in order to assist the office in making this transition.

Relevance and responsiveness can be improved. To achieve this NIMD should:

- Extend the Institute's political networks in Guatemala and with the diplomatic community, re-establishing peer-to-peer relationships with politicians.
- Seize opportunities to generate debate and concrete proposals for political reform, for example, the popular consultation, national pact or constitutional assembly.
- Make the Analysts' Group more transparent. It should share its analysis so it can be challenged from other points of view and benefit more stakeholders.



- Broaden membership of the Analysts' Group, with more participants from outside Guatemala City and more young researchers.
- The mandate of the Analysts' Group could be reviewed, given its active role in a number of NIMD projects. This would maintain a separation between independent advice and strategic management.

A number of steps could be taken to improve strategy and management, for example:

- Move the office from a project-based to a strategic and results-oriented organization. A single plan or report bringing together all its objectives and resources could help improve coherence and strategic focus.
- Improve human resources management, including recruitment and conflicts of interest procedures.
- Develop an empowering organizational culture, where communication is improved, and staff are clear about their roles and their contributions are valued.
- Separate delivery and advice/design/evaluation, especially by consultants.
- Review the office's core role (as funder or direct deliverer) to help reduce the number of external partnerships, releasing staff time for core issues.
- Be cautious about fundraising for projects that may not be related to NIMD's core mandate. A smaller, focused portfolio could be more efficient and effective.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation system and learning culture to enhance effectiveness and strategic management, including more realistic objectives, fewer quantitative and activities indicators, and more qualitative and outcome level indicators, including measuring changes in behaviour or values.

7.2.1 Recommendations on intervention areas

A more strategic approach could be adopted to the intervention areas. To achieve this NIMD should:

- Develop a fresh overall strategy, including for each intervention area, taking explicitly into account the true nature of parties and the opportunities created by the crisis and popular mobilization against corruption in politics.
- Close *Foro* as it is currently constituted, and consult with a wide range of stakeholders to support a more flexible space for high-level political dialogue, which is needed in the current political crisis.
- Strengthen institutional (and not just personal) links to Congress for political networking but review the focus on technical and material assistance, and consider how to influence political party system reform.
- Review the Democracy School so it can effectively support organizational (and not just individual) development, behaviour change and collective action.

7.2.2 Recommendations on gender/diversity

- Build the team's expertise on gender, youth and indigenous issues.
- Assign responsibility for these cross-cutting issues.
- Explicitly integrate them in the next round of plans and monitoring and evaluation so they can be given greater attention and followed through more consistently.
- Invest in understanding the parallel political systems used by indigenous peoples at the local level.



7.2.3 Recommendations to further strengthen NIMD internal reforms

NIMD HQ should support its Guatemala office through this change process. For example:

- HQ and Guatemala management systems and procedures should be reviewed to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and targeted improvements initiated and followed through.
- HQ should provide management support to the Institute, such as with human resources, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation to help position it for the future.

NIMD HQ could also provide more access to learning and knowledge to inform the content of programmes. This could include:

- International or South-South expertise sharing to respond to the current crisis.
- How to target a cadre of potentially active citizens and reform-minded politicians and achieve concrete results through NIMD Democracy Schools lessons.
- How to make use of traditional and social media to influence the political culture, including the media regulation needed for a democratic political system.



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Appendix A Programme Agenda

Fecha	Hora	Actividad	Institución	
Lunes 27 / Julio		Llegada a Guatemala L.H. Piron Karin Slowing		
Martes 28 / Julio	9:00 a 10:00	Ligia Blanco NIMD Directora	NIMD	
	10:00 a 12:00	Reunión Consultores NIMD	NIMD	
	12:30	Martin Arevalo	Oficial de Programas, UNOPS	Cofinanciadores
	15:30	Carlos Sarti	Director Ejecutivo, Fundación Propaz	Grupo de analistas / consultor
	17:00	Renzo Rosal	Ex Director Incidencia Pública Universidad Rafael Landivar	Consultor / Escuela
Miércoles 29 / Julio	09:00	Byron Morales	Director, INTRAPAZ - Universidad Rafael Landivar	Ejecutor
	11:00	Olinda Salguero	Fundación Esquipulas	Ejecutor
	12:30	María María Machicado	Representante de País, ONU MUJERES	Ejecutor
	14:30	Alvaro Pop	Director, Fundador Naleb'	Ejecutor
	16:00	Victor Valverth	Director LEGIS y Ex Director IEL	Ejecutor / Socio PARLAD
Jueves 30 / Julio	7:30	Eduardo Gómez	Persona independiente	
	09:00	Luis Eduardo López	Director, Unidad Permanente UPAT, Congreso	Beneficiario
	10:00	Luis Fernando Bolaños Barillas	Director, Comunicación Social, Congreso	Beneficiario
	11:00	Eduardo Nuñez	Director, NDI	Socio PARLAD / Instituciones /Organizaciones Similares al NIMD/Grupo de analistas
	14:30	Hans Magnusson	Encargado de Negocios, a.i., Embajada de Suecia	Cofinanciador
	16:00	Reunión Grupal Carmen López, Cleotilde Vásquez, Alicia López	Convergencia de Mujeres, SEPREM, MOLOJ	Beneficiarias Genero



	19:00	Reunión cena Edgar Pereira, Frank LaRue	DEMOS	Socio organización sociedad civil	
Viernes 31 / Julio	09:00	Carmen Aida Ibarra	Movimiento Pro Justicia	ONG no beneficiaria	
	11:00	Sandino Asturias	CEG	Socio PARLAD	
	15:00	Reunión Grupal, Julio Cesar Loarca, Yolanda Sains, Maritza Reyes	Comisión Coordinadora de Foro Permanente de Partidos Políticos (CREO, FCN, GANA)	Beneficiarios	
Domingo 2/Agosto	09:00	Salida a Quetzaltenango			
		Ricardo Cajas	Partido Winaq	Beneficiario	
Lunes 3/Agosto	10:00	Gerente Luis Eduardo Ochoa, Presidente Miguel Gómez, Ing. Carlos Barrios	Mancomunidad de Municipios Metropoli de los Altos / SEGEPLAN	Ejecutores	
	11:30	Reunión con Participantes en los Diplomados del PDDSA	Participaron Alcaldes, organizaciones Gubernamentales, Instituciones, Sociedad Civil	Diplomado Política y Seguridad Ambiental 2014 y 2015/ Encuentro-Diálogo Político 2015	
	15:00	Fredy Colop	Representante Titular Asamblea de Representantes de Pueblos Indígenas	Beneficiario	
	16:30				Diplomado de Realidad Nacional / se realizó en la Universidad Mesoamericana del 5 de octubre al 9 de noviembre 2012
		José Inocente García	Directivo Academia de Lenguas Mayas, comunidad Lingüística K		
		Diana Guisela Gonon Tojil / Mirta Cedema García	Encuentro por Guatemala		Diplomado de Realidad Nacional y Ambiental se realizó en COFA del 10 al 12 Octubre de 2013
Guadalupe Uluan / Zoila Guadalupe Cardenas		MARN			
Martes 4 / Agosto	09:00	Regreso a Guatemala			
	14:30 a 17:00	Reunión consultores NIMD			
	17:00	Reunión vía Skype Ing Álvaro Díaz	Ex Director NIMD		
Miércoles 5 / Agosto	09:00	Catalina Soberanis	Asesora /Cordinadora Unidad de Analisis PNUD	Grupo de analistas / consultora	
	10:00	Diputada Paula Rodríguez de Castellanos	PARLACEN Partido Patriota	Beneficiaria	



	11:00	Raquel Zelaya	Presidenta de ASIES	Instituciones /Organizaciones Similares al NIMD
	13:30	Reunión Comisión Coordinadora	Foro Permanente de Partidos Políticos	Beneficiarios
	14:30	Otto Zeissig	Partido TODOS	Beneficiario
	16:00	Juan Callejas	Partido LIDER	Beneficiario
Jueves 6 / Agosto	09:00	Amilcar Pop	Partido Winaq	Beneficiario
	11:15	Mario Taracena	Partido UNE	Beneficiario
	12:00	Wolfgang Ochaeta	NIMD Oficial de proyectos	
	14:30	Roberto Alejos (Secretario General) Paul Briere (Diputado)	Partido Todos	Beneficiario
	19:00	Cena Doris Cruz	Ex Directora del NIMD	
	09:30	Recorrido Congreso de la República	Rolando Cabrera	
Viernes 7 / Agosto	11:30	Reunión con Participantes Diplomados / Congreso	Asesor politico UNRG y Congreso comunicacion oficial	Participantes Diplomados
	13:00	Reunión - Almuerzo Sergio Duarte	Asoseprodi	Socio PDDSA
	14:30	Magistrada Mijangos	Tribunal Supremo Electoral	
	15:30	Gustavo Porras	Consejo Economico Social	Grupo de analistas / consultor
Sábado 8 / Agosto	14:30 a 16:00	Diebrifing Ligia Blanco NIMD Directora	NIMD	
	16:00 a 17:00	Diebrifing Consultores NIMD	NIMD	