

## Evaluation of the NIMD Mali 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 evaluation focused on NIMD's three main areas of intervention and on a single cross-cutting theme:

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

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

## Country context summary

Mali is one of the world's poorest countries. The United Nations Human Development Index placed it 176 out of 187 countries in 2013. The country achieved independence from France in 1960. A movement for democracy toppled the long-standing authoritarian regime in 1991, beginning a process of democratization and the adoption of a new constitution that enshrined multiparty democracy. There was a peaceful transfer of power after presidential elections in 2002. A rebellion involving ethnic minorities in the north of the country created instability, however, and there was a military coup in March 2012 during which the elected president was forced to resign. The military coup coincided with a substantial deterioration in the political and security situation, and much of the north fell into the hands of a rebel alliance between separatist Azawad forces and jihadists. A negotiated transition to democracy followed the coup, and legislative and presidential elections were held in 2013.

## Country programme summary

### *i. NIMD's delivery partner in Mali*

NIMD programmes in Mali are delivered through the Centre Malien pour le Dialogue Inter Partis et la Démocratie (CMDID). CMDID was registered as a local non-governmental organization in Mali in March 2008, although NIMD had been delivering support to Malian political parties through a similar project since 2003. All Malian political parties are entitled to apply for membership of CMDID. Any party with members elected to the National Assembly of Mali is entitled to have a member on the Council of Administration. Those parties without representation in parliament share four positions on the Council. CMDID is managed by a staff team led by an Executive Director, who is accountable to the Council of Administration. The Council elects a three-member Bureau, which provides direction to the Executive Director and staff on a day-to-day basis. NIMD's role as the primary partner and supporter of CMDID is entrenched in CMDID's bylaws

### *ii. Activities*

CMDID is a multiparty platform that carries out a number of interconnected initiatives designed to strengthen the functioning and interactions of political parties in Mali with a view to fostering dialogue and enabling peaceful and constructive democratic decision-making. Activities are grouped into four main areas of work: multiparty dialogue; legitimate political parties; interaction between



civil society and political society; and the integration of gender and diversity across all areas of work. Details are provided in the body of the evaluation.

### Summary of main findings

- CMDID has achieved widespread recognition and respect among political parties
- It has proven capacity to mobilize political parties in joint activities, workshops, training events, and so on
- It has a strong reputation for being politically neutral and enjoys the confidence of political actors
- Respondents from among the development community and civil society partners provided positive assessments of NIMD/CMDID

#### *Multiparty dialogue*

- CMDID is widely acknowledged to have played a key role in facilitating inter-party dialogue after the 2012 coup
- It also played a central role in the development of the Political Parties' Code of Conduct Agreement in 2013
- CMDID played a central role in facilitating the adoption of measures to strengthen and formalize the role of the political opposition in Mali

#### *Political party strengthening*

- This aspect of CMDID's planned activities has been suspended since 2012 because of the political crisis and the elections either held or planned in each subsequent programme year

#### *Gender and diversity*

- A regional network of committees of women political activists from across the political spectrum has maintained consistent pressure for political parties to select women as candidates in elections
- An association of young political activists has been established, with regional antennae. It is implementing capacity building activities for youth and lobbying for youth to play a larger role in political parties

### Summary of main recommendations

The overall outcomes of the NIMD/CMDID partnership are impressive. These outcomes would, however, benefit from closer engagement with NIMD, and its more regular physical presence in Mali, as well as more regular leverage of NIMD's international capacity network in support of the delivery of activities and mutual learning in order to:

- Expand the application of NIMD's learning from its international projects, particularly on cutting edge engagement in political party strengthening
- Provide more opportunities for exchanges and sharing with other countries undergoing democratic development/transition



- Launch a shared reflection between CMDID and NIMD on how to address deeper issues linked to political relevance and accountability, which may hamper democratic institutionalization
- Consider how to foster dialogue on issues that are sensitive but also critical to democratic stabilization, such as the need to democratize political parties, the need to engage youth in democratic politics, and so on
- Work with CMDID to pilot innovative methodologies for carrying out its work, for example in building public and civil society engagement with the televised debates
- Provide intensive support to CMDID/NIMD resource mobilization for activities in Mali

### *Political party strengthening*

CMDID should provide capacity building opportunities to political parties collectively rather than individually.

### *Gender and diversity*

That strong conservative voices are using religious arguments against greater gender equality and diversity warrants reflection. CMDID could foster discussion on the relationship between religion and politics in Mali.



## Acronyms

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AFISMA  | African-led International Support Mission in Mali  |
| BART    | Baseline and Review Toolkit  |
| CMDID   | Centre Malien pour le Dialogue Interpartis et la Démocratie (Malian Centre for Inter-party Dialogue and Democracy) |
| DPA     | Direct Party Assistance  |
| EU      | European Union   |
| MINUSMA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali   |
| NDI     | National Democratic Institute  |
| NIMD    | Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy   |
| PME     | Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme   |
| RNE     | Royal Norwegian Embassy (Mali)   |

## 1. Introduction

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 evaluation focused on the Institute's three main areas of intervention:

- multiparty dialogue;
- legitimate political parties;
- interaction between civil society and political society; and on a single cross-cutting theme,
- the integration of gender and diversity across its work.

This country report examines the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NIMD Mali country programme in 2011–2014, including the extent to which the *NIMD Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* and accompanying institutional reforms increased effectiveness. The two other case studies (Georgia and Guatemala) 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.

The Mali country evaluation involved three main stages of data collection and analysis. Before the mission, the evaluators were provided with data related to NIMD's work in Mali, such as annual plans, annual reports, activity reports and data on the national partner, CMDID. During the mission, an intensive programme of interviews was organized (see section 9).<sup>1</sup> After the mission, a number of questions of clarification were raised with NIMD staff, to which comprehensive responses were received.

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<sup>1</sup> The mission was based in Bamako. For reasons of security, and because the mission took place during Ramadan, it was decided not to travel outside Bamako.



## 2. Background

### 2.1 Country context

According to the *United Nations World Human Development Report, 2014*, Mali is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked 176 out of 187 countries. Approximately two-thirds of the population live in poverty, and poverty particularly affects women. The population of Mali is approximately 16 million. The population is increasing by around 3.6 per cent per year and about half the population is under the age of 15 (RGPH, 2009).

The country has a number of sociocultural customs that entrench gender inequality and hamper the full and equal participation of women and girls in society. Of these, the most notable are female genital mutilation, early marriage and polygamy. There has been some progress in recent years in terms of schooling, and the country has ratified most of the international treaties on the rights of women and children. However, dominant patriarchal social norms continue to hamper women's access to economic and other resources, schooling and political power. Efforts in recent years to reform the family and personal status code to provide for greater equality, as well as enhanced rights and opportunities for women have encountered resistance. Only modest reforms have been adopted.<sup>2</sup> Approximately one in six urban households and one in ten rural households are woman-headed households. Such households are typically extremely vulnerable to poverty and other features of social and economic exclusion.

### 2.2 Conflict context

Mali has faced recurrent threats to national unity as a result of rebellions in the northern regions of the country, in particular Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. These rebellions have, to a greater or lesser extent, involved representatives of Mali's Touareg, Arab and Peul/Fula ethnic communities. The 2012 rebellion involved a unilateral and internationally non-recognized declaration of independence by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad in April of that year. The most recent rebellion involved jihadist forces, including foreign fighters. At its peak, the rebel alliance controlled over half the territory of Mali, including much of the three northern regions as well as some zones in surrounding regions.

The Malian government proved unable to restore its authority in the rebel-held areas and requested international assistance. At the request of the interim government of Mali, the United Nations Security Council approved resolution 2085 on 20 December 2012.<sup>3</sup> It confirmed the territorial unity of Mali and authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to secure the country's territorial integrity and combat separatist and jihadist forces in the north of the country. France, the former colonial power, launched another military intervention, Operation Serval, in support of resolution 2085 in January 2013. This was integrated into the multi-country Operation Barkhane in 2014, which is charged with combatting jihadist terrorism in the Sahel region. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was established in 2013 with a broad mandate to support security and stabilization in the wake of the conflict in northern Mali.

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<sup>2</sup> RFI, Mali : moins de droits pour les femmes dans le nouveau code de la famille, 5 Dec. 2011, <<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20111205-mali-moins-droits-femmes-le-nouveau-code-famille-ATT>>.

<sup>3</sup> UN Security Council resolution 2085, 20 Dec. 2012, <[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2085%20%282012%29](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2085%20%282012%29)>.





A peace process was launched in Algiers in 2014 between the government of Mali and non-jihadist rebels. The Algiers Process resulted in the signing of a ceasefire agreement and draft peace accord by the government of Mali and the Coordination of Movements for Azawad in 2015. The 'Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali' provides a foundation for the re-establishment of the constitutional order throughout northern Mali as well as the implementation of reforms and decentralization, which it is hoped will provide long-term opportunities to build a responsive state and bring an end to the cycles of rebellion.

### 2.3 Political context

The conflict in northern Mali both highlighted and exacerbated the weaknesses in the institutionalization of effective democratic governance in Mali. In common with many former colonies, Mali has endured cycles of authoritarian rule and unconstitutional seizures of power as well as periodic democratic openings since independence. A comprehensive democratization process was undertaken after the overthrow of the country's long-time dictator, Moussa Traoré, in 1991. This began with an inclusive National Conference that resulted in the adoption in 1992 of a new constitution, which contained guarantees on human rights and multiparty democracy. The constitution established a semi-presidential system in which an elected president with relatively wide-ranging powers names a prime minister who selects a government that must maintain the confidence of the country's elected parliament, the National Assembly.

Between 1992 and 2012 Mali organized regular multiparty elections and there was a peaceful, constitutional transfer of power in 2002 from President Alpha Oumar Konaré to President Amadou Toumani Touré. During this time, Mali was often cited as a success story for democratization in West Africa. The achievements of this period should not be underestimated, and the relatively long period of constitutional rule created a history of and norms for democratic politics that provided a bulwark against the re-institutionalization of a non-democratic order. At the same time, however, the apparent success of the democratic transition after 1991 belied a number of important weaknesses. Primary among these were:

- A proliferation of political parties, typically organized around small leadership groups or even individuals, with limited clear policy distinctions between many of them;
- An unwillingness by most political parties to assume an opposition role and a tendency for parties to rally around the president, limiting accountability and thus the effectiveness of the National Assembly;
- Relatively low levels of citizen political participation in elections or political parties;
- Limited engagement by women and youth in the political process;
- The failure of the political system to address long-standing political and economic demands from minorities in the country's north;
- Continuing high levels of poverty and the absence of an identifiable 'democratic dividend';
- Low levels of government service delivery hampered by endemic corruption;
- Ineffective articulation between 'political' and 'civil' society, with both competition among and the politicization of civil society;
- The emergence of fundamentalist religious activism as a challenge to a political system widely viewed as 'failing to deliver'.



A combination of a growing sense of citizen alienation from the political system, the inability of the government to halt the rebellion in the north, and dissatisfaction among many members of the armed forces about the conditions in which they were expected to combat the northern insurgency resulted in a military uprising that quickly escalated into a full-scale coup d'état and seizure of power by a group of junior officers on 21 March 2012. The initial response to the coup by Malian political parties and their leaders varied. Some openly opposed the coup, while others were more ambivalent and some supported it. As discussed below, the NIMD-supported Centre Malien pour le Dialogue Inter Partis et la Démocratie (CMDID) organized the earliest post-coup consultation between political parties in order to explore the possibilities for a common position.

The coup leaders were unprepared for power in the midst of the northern rebellion, and disorganization among the Malian authorities led to a rapid worsening of the military situation in the north. The deteriorating position of government forces, along with strong condemnation of the coup from Mali's international allies, acted as an impetus for a return to civilian rule and the holding of new elections. An uneasy power transfer to an interim civilian government took place after President Touré resigned, while the coup leaders continued to exercise significant power through their control of most of the armed forces. A number of people, including forces loyal to the former president, were murdered during the second half of 2012.<sup>4</sup>

Free elections organized in the summer of 2013 resulted in a decisive victory in the presidential election for the former prime minister and National Assembly president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. Keïta's platform emphasized the fight against corruption, increased government efficiency and a speedy resolution to the crisis in the north of the country. In legislative elections held in November 2013, parties supporting Keïta won a clear majority. For the first time in Malian political history, however, a significant opposition grouping has formed in the National Assembly, engaging in the traditional roles of a political opposition in a democracy of holding the government to account and proposing policy and governance alternatives.

Since 2013, progress has been slow in addressing the key priorities of resolving the crisis in the north through the implementation of an effective peace accord, addressing corruption, relaunching the economy and moving ahead with decentralization through the organization of local elections, which were postponed in 2014. A government offensive to retake the northern town of Kidal from Azawad separatists was unsuccessful and government forces were obliged to withdraw. There is a sense that both the government and Mali are drifting somewhat. In the context of continuing threats to national unity, the growing political influence of Islamism in a country with a strong secularist tradition, and continuing lack of opportunities for youth, women and other excluded groups, it will be important to make rapid progress towards deepening democracy and making it more responsive. In this context, NIMD's goal areas of enhanced multiparty dialogue, strengthening political parties and enhanced interaction between political parties and—broadly defined—civil society respond to the key needs for democratic transition and consolidation.

#### **2.4 International assistance context**

Mali is a major recipient of donor support. The vast majority of this support, however, is provided to assist in restoring security in the context of the northern rebellion, or as humanitarian aid. Comparatively few resources are allocated to democratic strengthening. There was universal

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<sup>4</sup> BBC, 'Mali investigators find mass grave in search for soldiers', 4 Dec. 2013, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25212548>>.



acknowledgement among donors to democracy strengthening that given the importance of a successful democratic transition, technical and institution-building support should be provided to Mali by international actors, and that the need for support is sufficiently great that duplication of democracy support would be unlikely.

The most important actors in terms of their financial commitment to democracy support are the United States and the European Union (EU). The United States funds a number of initiatives to support election processes, strengthen civil society and support the development of effective political institutions including political parties. The EU provides significant funds to assist in areas such as decentralization, elections, public sector reform and the justice sector. Germany provides support through its political foundation (stiftung) system. Other like-minded donors, such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, are active in supporting democratic strengthening and women’s political empowerment. Several agencies of the United Nations have projects that support democratic strengthening, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women. These other donors and the organizations they support were familiar with and supportive of the work of CMDID/NIMD. In most cases, CMDID works closely to coordinate implementation with other organizations providing democratic governance support; for example, in the areas of gender with UN Women, and on election capacity development with the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA). CMDID has developed funding partnerships with UN Women and UNDP, and is actively seeking support from donors to expand its work in synergistic areas. Nonetheless, NIMD remains by far the largest financial supporter of CMDID’s work (see Table 1).

**Table 1 NIMD financial contribution to the work of CMDID (in €)**

|   | 2010    | 2011    | 2012    | 2013    | 2014    |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Mali</b>                                 |         |         |         |         |         |
| Total staff on payroll (paid by NIMD grant) | 6       | 6       | 6       | 7       | 7       |
| Total NIMD budget                           | 539,422 | 469,739 | 349,656 | 387,743 | 336,107 |
| Non MFA donors total                        | 65,105  | 162,866 | 57,101  | 167,600 | 69,496  |
| Total NIMD and other donors                 | 604,527 | 632,605 | 406,757 | 555,343 | 405,603 |
| MFA share of total budget                   | 89%     | 74%     | 86%     | 69%     | 83%     |

Sources: Total budget from NIMD Annual Reports; other data provided by NIMD.

## 2.5 NIMD country programme overview

NIMD has been active in supporting political party strengthening in Mali since 2003. Project-based support eventually led to the development of CMDID, which was registered as a foundation under Malian law in April 2008. NIMD’s work in Mali is essentially carried out through CMDID.

CMDID is governed by an Administrative Council made up of representatives appointed by Malian political parties. On a day-to-day basis, the work of the Administrative Council is delegated to a three-person Bureau on which government, opposition, and smaller parties are represented. CMDID is run by a small team: an executive director, two programme managers (focused on the areas of women and youth) and a small administrative unit. From time to time, expert national consultants are hired to carry out specific tasks, such as the development of reports and guides on specialist subject areas, including the development of guides on women and political leadership.

The CMDID budget remained relatively stable in the period 2011–2015. Its overall budget was around €450,000 to €550,000, and the funding received through NIMD from the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) was between €300,000 and €400,000. One-off grants were received from other donors during the evaluation period, but these were usually quite small and



CMDID has not been successful at diversifying its revenue stream in a sustainable manner. CMDID's future would be in jeopardy if NIMD support were to cease or be substantially reduced. There is a long-standing initiative to persuade the Malian state to recognize CMDID as a 'public utility' eligible for funding and/or tax advantages (see below).

NIMD developed a Context Analysis in 2011,<sup>5</sup> which states that 'Mali is regarded as one of the main success stories of democratic transitions in Africa and a beacon of relative stability in a region troubled by conflict', while also noting that '[t]he biggest challenges to stability and unity have been the risk of a resurgence of the Touareg rebellion of the 1990s, and the current drugs and arms smuggling networks'. Unfortunately, the risks identified in the analysis were realized and multiplied by the emergence of international jihadist influence, and the unanticipated fragility of the Malian state. It was only after the 2012 crisis that the international community paid concerted attention to the illusory solidity of the building blocks for democracy that had been put in place since the advent of multiparty democracy in 1991.

The 2011 context analysis correctly identifies that: 'Mali's political system is thus characterized by weak checks-and-balances at the horizontal accountability level, whereas low levels of political participation (especially of women and youths), money politics and patronage still challenge vertical accountability relations'. The analysis noted the reversal in the optimal relationship between the political system and the citizen in a democracy, in which political leaders aim to gain the support of citizens by demonstrating their ability to deliver programmes that meet the needs and wishes of the citizens. Conversely, in Mali—as in many other developing countries with poorly institutionalized political systems—the citizen tends to be a subject of the political system, trading support in anticipation of patronage benefits.

In order to strengthen accountability to the citizen in the political system, NIMD's priorities in its *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* included: 'increasing popular trust in political parties and raising political participation' as 'the principal objectives of the programme'. Based on this analysis, NIMD has supported CMDID in implementing the following capacity development strategies:

1. Multiparty dialogue;
2. Political party (programmatic and policy) capacity strengthening;
3. Strengthening relations between civil society and political parties; and
4. Cross-cutting work on inclusivity, in particular expanding the political space available to women and youth.

These areas of work remained essentially the same through the period 2011–2015. However, in the wake of the rebellion in the north of the country and the seizure of power by the military in 2012, NIMD and CMDID agreed to deepen and refine these strategies for 2013 in order to support a resolution of the crisis:

The NIMD programme implemented through CMDID will continue to act as a neutral dialogue platform, but it will be expanded to accommodate all party alliances now recognized, broadening to include for instance citizen groups from the north, trade unions and religious organizations. The key themes for the dialogue will be the roadmap to new elections and the broader issue of democratic transition, and the approach to the multiple security crises: humanitarian, economic, the occupation in the north, and its liberation (through negotiation and military force).

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<sup>5</sup> NIMD, Mali Context Analysis, 2011.



The *NIMD Multi-annual Plan, 2012 to 2015* (NIMD, 2011b) contains a number of indicators that would be applicable at the national level in its 'Intervention Logic' (Appendix 2). These include improvements in scores on indices such as the Bertelsmann Index, Freedom House Index and EIU Democracy Index.

The evaluator did not note any attempt to use these types of global indicators to measure the success of the Mali programming. In truth, using these measurements to assess programme effectiveness would have resulted in a disappointing assessment. Mali clearly regressed in terms of its democratic governance between 2012 and 2015, given the non-constitutional seizure of power in 2012 and the lengthy process of re-establishing a democratic order and addressing the root causes of the conflict in the north of the country. A relatively small programme such as that delivered by CMDID and funded by NIMD would not typically have a measurable impact on overall democracy scores and any evidence of such an apparent link would almost certainly be fortuitous or, in this case, unfortunate. It is important that monitoring indicators are linked to outcomes that are possible to attribute to the programming.

## **2.6 Summary of portfolio activities and implementers over the period**

CMDID is the privileged partner of NIMD in Mali. Effectively, NIMD activities are carried out by CMDID through an annual work plan agreed between NIMD and CMDID. NIMD has not carried out any activities separately from CMDID, although it is possible it will do so in the future, especially in relation to nurturing dialogue on the crisis in northern Mali.

CMDID's activities are focused on the areas of fostering dialogue through a multiparty platform, assistance to legitimate political parties and supporting greater inclusivity in the political system, particularly by supporting greater and more equitable engagement of women and youth. Details of the activities conducted in the period 2011–2015 are discussed below.



### 3. NIMD country programme impacts

Programme impacts were assessed in a pre-mission review of NIMD and CMDID documents provided to the evaluators, through the collection and analysis of interview data collected from key informants during the mission under the Chatham House rule,<sup>6</sup> and through a further review and processing of the documents received during the mission. For the mission agenda and details of the people met during the preparation of this report see Appendix A.

#### 3.1 Multiparty dialogue

##### 3.1.1 What is the programme logic?

The programme logic underpinning the multiparty dialogue programme in Mali is broadly similar to that reflected in NIMD's overall approach: 'Setting up and managing multiparty dialogue platforms under local ownership is our main instrument for change. NIMD and its partners also provide capacity strengthening, democracy education and peer-to-peer learning for political parties'.<sup>7</sup>

The *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* (NIMD, 2011b) states that the 'core of the programme is formed by the regular inter-party dialogue session in the CMDID board, on which basis the activities and outputs are planned. Increasingly this platform is seen as the preeminent body to discuss all matters related to parties'. The Plan also states that cooperation with parliament will form a larger part of the approach in the period 2012–2015.

The crisis in 2012 led to a somewhat restated programme logic in the 2013 NIMD annual plan, placing an additional emphasis on engagement with wider stakeholders including, for instance, 'citizen groups from the north, trade unions and religious organizations'.

At the beginning of the 2012–2015 plan period, the changes expected as a result of the NIMD/CMDID programme were focused primarily on consolidation of the democratic system that had been developing since the end of authoritarian rule in 1991. Subsequent to the shock of 2012, following the coup and in the light of the continuing rebellion in the north, the changes expected from the multiparty dialogue programme were focused more urgently on building agreement on the processes required for a new democratic transition, and on finding ways to broaden the engagement of political parties with the relevant civil society actors.

##### 3.1.2 What is the available evidence of change?

The multiparty platform established by CMDID with the technical and financial support of NIMD has achieved impressive results. Almost all political parties are engaged within the CMDID platform, and the platform is managed consensually through an Administrative Council and a Bureau that have representation from across the political spectrum.

The breadth of activities conducted by the CMDID platform is quite noteworthy, with a focus on those that are relevant to the current situation. Most notably, the multiparty platform was used as the initial forum for discussing democratic transition immediately after the coup d'état in 2012. This allowed forces either opposed to or sympathetic towards the coup to establish a dialogue and

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<sup>6</sup> On the Chatham House Rule see <<http://www.chathamhouse.org/about/chatham-house-rule>>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://nimd.org/our-approach/>



present their perspectives. The forum, held on 31 March 2012, only ten days after the coup, underlines the great benefit of a pre-existing dialogue platform. In the uncertain and conflictual context of a rupture in the democratic system, it is highly questionable whether an inclusive dialogue could have been organized at such short notice if a pre-existing platform had not existed.

This potential to urgently engage with key political party actors at a time of crisis was of exceptional importance and, in the view of the evaluators, provides evidence of an invaluable and irreplaceable contribution by the NIMD programme to the peaceful resolution of the serious crisis that existed at that time. The initial dialogue was not continued—partly it seems because of the wide differences revealed at the 31 March 2012 meeting. However, the fact that the main different perspectives and concerns could be aired peacefully in a multiparty environment so soon after the coup modelled an appropriate approach to airing and addressing conflict. In this context, the NIMD process demonstrated that a peaceful and democratic process does not require an outcome of consensus but rather the willingness of all actors to acknowledge the right of the other to express themselves and to be heard within a non-violent forum, a phenomenon that has been described as ‘agonistic democracy’ (Mouffe, 2005).

Other topics and issues important to democratic consolidation and stabilization in Mali have been addressed in the multiparty platform. For example, CMDID is currently collaborating with MINUSMA to explain and discuss the peace agreement for the northern conflict. These discussions, which have involved all the major political parties in Mali and many of the smaller ones, are important in building understanding and acceptance of the principles underpinning the agreement, and also in permitting political actors to express their concerns and reservations as part of a constructive dialogue.

In 2013 and 2014, CMDID launched a dialogue and consultations on the roles, responsibilities and privileges of the official opposition in Mali. NIMD organized an international exchange and ‘mini-conference’ in Dakar, Senegal, in May 2014, where three NIMD programme countries (Mali, Burundi and Benin) debated this question, shared experience and identified best practices. This dialogue and lobbying by the political parties facilitated the adoption of a new law in Mali on the status of the opposition and of the Leader of the Opposition. This institutionalization of the opposition role formally recognizes the value of an opposition in a democratic system, and also confers prestige on the position of the opposition leader. These reforms reduce the sense in which democratic politics are viewed as a winner-takes-all game and thus discourages exit through boycotts or attempts to enlist the support of the military in order to seize power. This is again a highly pertinent role in a country such as Mali, with its history of undemocratic seizures of power.

The multiparty platform has supported dialogue and mutual learning around other key issues, including a number of aspects of elections. Of particular importance was the work of CMDID in the development of a code of conduct for political parties for the elections of 2013. The elections took place in a largely peaceful environment and while it is not possible to directly demonstrate the impact of CMDID’s activities by positing a counterfactual, it is clear that CMDID’s presence and activities fostered the peaceful resolution of differences during the election campaign. The CMDID multiparty platform was very active in the preparations for and run-up to the 2013 elections. There were a large number of different activities, with a major emphasis on promoting dialogue and the peaceful resolution of differences during the election campaign, as well as on training political party election observers. A particularly positive feature of CMDID’s work involved carrying out activities in regional centres outside Bamako, which is important given the size of Mali and the difficulty, and expense incurred by party activists, attending training events in Bamako. At the same time, the difficult security situation in the north prevented CMDID from carrying out activities in the three





northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. Activities in Kidal remain impossible, although CMDID has encouraged political party representatives who either have been displaced or are able to travel from the affected regions to participate in training held in other centres, such as Mopti or Bamako.

CMDID jointly organizes South-South exchanges on party strengthening with NIMD as part of NIMD's Africa Regional Programme. These include the 2014 exchange and conference on the role of the opposition discussed above and the 2011 visit to Bamako by Mozambican political leaders to explore and exchange ideas on the process of constitutional reform. Other aspects of the multiparty platform's activities are included in the discussion below of CMDID/NIMD's work on gender equality and on youth political participation.

The vast majority of political parties in Mali are involved in the CMDID platform and the activities organized by CMDID. Some interviewees suggested that the biggest political party, the Rally for Mali, was less engaged and committed, but this could be considered normal given that the party is in power and has a less pressing need for 'dialogue' than other political parties.

The bigger question for the platform is the fact that it is becoming increasingly clear that important segments of Malian society are not being engaged by the traditional political parties. This is reflected not only by the northern insurgency, which is manifested in armed groups and the often nebulous 'political wings' that surround them, but also in the tendency to disengage among citizens more generally, which is reflected in low turnouts in elections, the focus of many youth on leaving Mali for better economic opportunities elsewhere and the rise of political Islam through Islamic associations and sometimes radical preachers. Although there are numerous NGOs active in Mali, few if any of these have a mass base.

While overtly religious political parties are forbidden under the Malian Constitution, most interviewees noted the growth in organized religious-inspired interventions in the political debate, particularly on matters such as the role of women and the family. Religious associations were widely seen as providing important but somewhat hidden organizational capacities and networks to favoured candidates, and several respondents cited examples of where they felt political leaders have compromised the secular nature of the state in order to garner support from socially conservative religious groups. While most actors felt there was no imminent danger of the emergence within non-northern Malian society of jihadist forces modelled on organizations such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Islamic State in the Arab region, radicalization is a danger in Mali as elsewhere, and the dependence of political parties in Mali on non-secular groupings is an issue that should be addressed, preferably within the multiparty platform.

As noted above, there is significant evidence that dialogue activities have enabled trust-building at critical periods, most notably immediately after the 2012 coup. Perhaps more fundamentally, the existence of the platform is seen as a taken-for-granted phenomenon in the Malian political context, and appears to be universally and greatly appreciated. The staff of CMDID has done an exceptional job in maintaining its reputation for political neutrality, thereby ensuring the almost universal participation of the different political parties in the platform and its activities.

A larger and cross-cutting issue in this evaluation is the extent to which political parties, and indeed the political system as a whole in Mali, reflect the aspirations of Malian citizens. To a large extent, the political choices in an extremely poor country with few indigenous revenue streams and a great dependence on external donors are highly constrained, and it will not be a simple task to restore credibility to the political process in such a situation. It is important for NIMD and CMDID to





maintain a continuing dialogue with programme donors and potential donors so that there is a common understanding of the programme's logic, constraints and risks.

The support that CMDID through its alliance with NIMD has provided and continues to provide to foster interparty dialogue is valuable and has proved demonstrably effective in times of crisis. It will be important for NIMD in conjunction with CMDID to find ways to work with political parties to encourage greater inclusivity in political processes by incorporating actors from the wider population beyond the relatively narrow circle of political party activists.

## 3.2 Legitimate political parties

### 3.2.1 What is the programme logic?

In its theory of change, NIMD emphasizes the importance of strong political parties to democracy, and specifically emphasizes as an intervention priority the objective of improving the 'policy seeking capacity of political parties' (NIMD, 2011b). The programme logic is that parties are unique in democratic systems in aggregating and articulating a range of policies as a means to both reflect the aspirations of citizens and mobilize citizens in support of a party whose aggregation of policies reflects the wishes and interests of its constituency of members and supporters.

In its 2014 Annual Report, NIMD notes that, in many countries where it is active, 'political parties are based around the personality of the leader rather than having a long-term identity based on policies. Many parties see winning the election as the main goal. In addition, they are often poorly organized and lack the skills and experience to fulfil their role'. One of the core objectives of NIMD, therefore, is to support the professionalization of political parties: in terms of their capacity to develop clear programmatic positions, and thus clarify democratic politics; in their organizational capacities, and thus their ability to reach out to citizens; in their strategic planning capacities; and in their knowledge and understanding of the rules of democratic engagement, including the operation and oversight of democratic elections. Blech and Michelitch (2015) argue that the inability of the state to respond to the ordinary daily needs of citizens is a significant contributory factor to the loss of citizens' faith in the democratic process, again underpinning NIMD's programme logic regarding the importance of political parties having the capacity to aggregate and represent the needs and wishes of citizens in their programmes.

The interventions of NIMD/CMDID in this area are carried out in two different ways: first, by directly supporting capacity development among political parties in order to strengthen a specific party's abilities in the fields of policymaking and its capacity to engage in dialogue with citizens; and, second, by providing learning opportunities for parties collectively to address the challenges in building an effective party system in an entrenched democracy.

This latter challenge has revealed itself to be particularly problematic in Malian democracy where despite the existence of political parties, power has tended to concentrate in a powerful but 'apoliticized' presidency that has often marginalized even the putative ruling party. Indeed, 'non-partisan' prime ministers have been predominant since 1991, a trend that has deepened since 2004 to become the norm. Retrospectively, it is obvious that the dangers of this tendency were underestimated. Political parties have often developed clientelist relationships with executive power with the objective of securing benefits from supporting the president, rather than served constituents by holding the government to account.



CMDID has been in a better position to deliver support to political party strengthening as a collective endeavour. Here, given the importance of elections in the democratic transition period, the emphasis has been on working with parties on elections-related strengthening, and particularly on the training of party election observers. Nonetheless, the party strengthening component of the project represents only a very small proportion of CMDID's NIMD financing (€14,000 of the €336,000 in 2014). At the same time, however, many of the activities classified in CMDID's accounts as belonging to interparty dialogue entail or incorporate capacity building elements, so the line between the two areas is not particularly clear.

The relative weakness of Malian political parties has been widely identified as one of the factors in the weak institutionalization of the democratic system in the country, the relatively limited levels of citizen engagement and the breakdown of democracy in 2012 (van Vliet, 2014). The objective is therefore to institutionalize political parties so that they are more able to reflect citizens' perspectives and resist the tendency to be incorporated into clientelist relationships with the executive. Stronger and more capable political parties would be more reflective of citizens' needs and expectations and could thus help to build citizen engagement with and support for democracy. Specifically, NIMD hoped in its *Multi-annual Plan* to 'improve basic secretariat functions of parties, to train party cadres and improve policy orientation of manifestos' (NIMD, 2011b: 34).

In the unstable context of Malian politics in the wake of the northern rebellion and the 2012 coup, it would not be realistic for CMDID to establish 'milestones' in terms of outcomes for political party strengthening. Furthermore, the relatively small component of NIMD's financing that is allocated to this area provides a genuine constraint or limit on what can be accomplished.

Given the limited resources allocated to this area, it would not be reasonable to anticipate a measurable impact on political party legitimacy. Providing direct support to political parties may not be the most effective means of enhancing political party capacity and thus legitimacy. Furthermore, such support could be seen as potentially skewing national processes. For example, given that many Malian citizens express concern that political parties are not relevant or representative of their interests, it may be that there is a popular will to rejuvenate the political sphere through the creation of new political parties. By helping existing parties to institutionalize themselves, a natural process of renewal through the creation of new parties and alliances could be hampered.

### 3.2.3 What is the available evidence of change?

Direct bilateral support had been planned, focused on the five largest political parties in Mali, alongside collective training and support for the smaller parties. However, NIMD/CMDID decided not to implement bilateral support to parties in election years. In the crisis conditions in Mali in 2012–2015, elections were planned for each year. (Legislative and presidential elections were planned for 2012 but postponed until 2013 as a result of the coup d'état, and local elections were planned for 2014 but postponed until 2015.) Thus, during the evaluation period, direct political support was only provided in 2011.

Representatives of those parties which had received support reported very positively on the impact. Several had taken advantage of the support provided to develop strategic plans for their organizations. One party had made use of resources to hire an administrator to better organize the party, not least by ensuring that membership lists were updated. This is often not the case in Mali, where most parties have little idea of their active membership and support base. Several of the party representatives encountered expressed a strong desire to restart the direct party support even during election years.



Although the direct party support undoubtedly helped the parties concerned, particularly in terms of organization, there was little evidence that the parties had changed their practices and become more focused on policy. Although some political parties associated with the left had established policy positions, this would probably have been the case regardless of whether they had received support. There was also little evidence that parties' ability to engage with citizens had improved. While turnout in the presidential election of 2013 was strong, the more party-focused legislative elections and subsequent by-elections often had disappointing turnouts and suggested a considerable degree of public apathy towards the activities of political parties.

One area in which targeted support to political parties showed promise was in the work with parliamentarians and parliamentary groups. Because parliamentary groups are well-defined and have a specific role in parliament and the democratic system, support to enable them to become more organized, conduct research, and produce effective policy and legislative critiques can be an effective strategic intervention that achieves clear results that are visible and measurable in strengthening policy discussion.

The support provided in 2011 to the larger parties was well-received, but could not be continued after 2012 because of the coup d'état and the planned elections. In terms of the collective support to parties, the focus on parliamentary groups had positive outcomes. The political opposition in parliament is widely viewed as more effective than has typically been the case since 1991, and this may be attributable in part to the parliamentary group strengthening support.

It would be helpful in future to consider how parties could be supported collectively to address the many concerns of Malian citizens regarding the provision of basic services. As Blech and Michelitch (2015) note on the basis of interview data, even after the outbreak of hostilities in the north and the coup, the provision of basic services remained by far the issue of greatest concern, even for rural Malians living on the edge of the conflict zone.

### 3.3 Political-civil society interaction

#### 3.3.1 What is the programme logic?

NIMD makes support to interaction between political and civil society one of its key goals. In their inception report for the 2015 evaluation project, however, Rocha Menocal et al. (2015: 20) note that: 'Ironically, NIMD has consistently tried to remove an objective related to linkages with civil society from its multi-annual plans. This has been rooted in intense soul-searching about what NIMD's niche and very identity should be. There has been robust internal debate about whether engaging with stakeholders other than political parties is within NIMD's core mandate'. The authors suggest that this third component of NIMD's core mandate has been maintained largely at the insistence of the Dutch MFA, which is by far the largest donor to NIMD. At the same time, Rocha Menocal et al. note that NIMD has achieved important results in this area, although the examples cited in the report are largely from 'Democracy Schools' which are not part of NIMD/CMDID's activities in Mali.

There has been an evolution within NIMD at the headquarters level in its vision for engagement in political-civil society interaction, resulting in a shift away from a focus on simply strengthening the ties between the two types of social institution or, as noted in the *Multi-annual Plan* (NIMD, 2011b: 17), 'improving the link between civil and political society by facilitating dialogue to enhance understanding of each role in the deepening of democracy'. The new Multi-annual Plan for 2016–



2020, which is not directly applicable to this evaluation as it is yet to be implemented, contains a more dialectical and mainstream representation of the objective of political-civil society interaction: 'At all three levels [system, political party or actor and political culture or individual], strategic links and interactions with relevant stakeholders in society need to be established to ensure that citizens are more involved in politics and the support base for the political and policy reform agenda is further strengthened' (NIMD, 2015b, cited in Rocha Menocal et al., 2015: 20).

In the 2014 Annual Plan, NIMD aims to mainstream civil society engagement within the core programming areas of inter-party dialogue and party strengthening: 'The dialogue process and direct party support and analysis include action and follow-up in order to better link parties to society and improve cooperation with civic actors'. In line with this perspective, the activities listed under this heading in the CMDID Annual Reports for the years 2011 to 2014 are mainly activities organized by CMDID and in which civil society organizations have participated, activities that involve broad popular mobilization, such as a concert to encourage citizens to vote in the 2013 election, and the creation of communal 'dialogue spaces' in various towns at which citizens and civil society are able to meet with figures from political parties.

NIMD's 2015 Annual Plan indicates an intention to deepen the organization's work in this area in order to respond to the widely noted sense of citizen alienation from political parties and the political process. Two main types of activity are envisaged in order to implement this objective: regional meetings to bring together civic activists and political leaders; and the organization of events at which political parties can present, explain and defend their party platforms. These activities are works in progress and the evaluators did not have an opportunity to assess them.

### 3.3.3 What evidence is there of change and coherence?

There was significant reticence on the part of many of the interviewees associated with political parties to acknowledge a legitimate role for civil society. Numerous examples were provided of civil society organizations effectively engaging in politics. There was clearly a degree of competition for legitimacy between the political actors and those from civil society.

The plans that have been developed for 2015 aim to address this issue of the isolation of political society from civil society, and provide a solid foundation on which to develop and improve engagement between them. In order to fully achieve these objectives, however, it will be necessary to move beyond organized 'NGO' civil society to interact with grassroots civil organizations and community leaders, as well as local informal networks and, potentially, religious organizations.

To be effective in the relatively difficult environment of Mali, where both organized political parties and organized Western-style civil society are quite weak, it will in the view of the evaluators be necessary to develop new approaches. One idea would be to focus on the everyday concerns of citizens, such as employment, food security, personal security, and so on, with the aim of building a common understanding among political leaders, community leaders and organized civil society of the challenges faced by Malian citizens, and exploring the different roles that each 'estate' might have in understanding and addressing concrete concerns. Such an approach will apparently be part of the new Strategic Partnership proposal for Mali. This process would require effective moderation, and would need to be planned strategically with engagement with best practices in civic engagement from other countries, such as Brazil where political and civil society have many years of experience interacting in the policy process (Pateman, 2010; Wampler, 2007). The engagement of citizens in genuine participation in policy processes remains quite limited in Mali, and a genuine engagement with broader civil society (rather than simply leaders of NGOs who may often be drawn



from the same circles as the political class) will require the long-term intensive involvement of NIMD in identifying and mobilizing the necessary expert resources, and of CMDID in working with political parties to build support for such an approach.

The reticence of CMDID, political parties and of some NIMD personnel about the civil society engagement trope is understandable. If carried out superficially, such an initiative will simply entail bringing people from the same circles around the table with little likelihood of tangible results. At the same time, citizen alienation from the political process and from political parties is real, and this needs to be addressed if democracy is to be sustainable in Mali in the longer term.

### 3.3.4 Sponsoring public debates

One area of work by CMDID that does not appear to fit directly into NIMD's typical framework is that of sponsoring public debates that are broadcast on national television and radio. Between two and ten of these took place each year throughout the evaluation period, the highest number during election year in 2013. These appear to be a popular and well-organized aspect of CMDID's programming and receive significant funding from NIMD. The debates are reflected extensively in CMDID Annual Reports and in the *Synthèses d'Activités* produced annually by CMDID, but they do not appear in the narrative on the Mali pages of NIMD's annual work plans for 2013 to 2015. It would be important to clarify where in NIMD's approach the public debates are located. It may also be helpful to explore with CMDID what opportunities exist for applying innovative public education approaches to bringing political debate to the citizen. It might be possible to hold debates outside Bamako, broadcast on local radio. This is an area where numerous innovative approaches have been used internationally and where political communications experts from The Netherlands and other institutionalized democracies could be enlisted to offer workshops with CMDID members in order to develop a public interaction plan that builds on the television debates.

## 3.4 Gender and diversity

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

NIMD and CMDID aim to address questions of gender and diversity both transversally through the incorporation of gender and diversity into all of the activities of the organizations, and through specific activities aimed at facilitating greater participation by disadvantaged groups, specifically women and youth.

CMDID is somewhat hampered in its ability to address representativeness, given that it is an organization of political parties that are in the great majority of cases dominated by older men. There are perceived to be few opportunities in politics for either women or youth, and significant resistance to confronting the systematic exclusion that occurs within parties and the broader political system. To some extent, the absence of equality and diversity reflects trends within Malian society more generally, although even many countries in the global North have until recently had political systems that were equally dominated by older men. Many established democracies have yet to elect a woman head of state or government, a glass ceiling that Mali breached in 2011 with the nomination of Prime Minister Cissé Mariam Kaïdama Sidibé, before her government was deposed in the 2012 military coup.

CMDID staff members consistently promote women's participation in events organized by CMDID, and require women to be represented in party delegations to activities. Furthermore, CMDID has a



dedicated programme expert who focuses on women's issues and another who focuses on political participation by youth.

In practice, while gender and diversity issues can be addressed by ensuring representation in CMDID activities and that these issues are discussed during and put on the agendas of different activities, it will be difficult to break out of the cycle of underrepresentation and marginalization unless work is carried out to empower women and youth both within parties and to become involved in parties, and to raise the awareness among male politicians of the importance of equality and inclusivity.

In many countries, diversity, particularly in terms of gender, is ensured through quotas. A quota law has been laid before the National Assembly but has not come up for debate, despite the declared support of the President of the Republic. CMDID is limited in its ability to campaign for the quota law because it is an organization of political parties, and there is considerable opposition within political parties to the introduction of a legislated quota.

As a result, much of CMDID's activity on both women's political engagement and that of youth, its other diversity focus area, is carried out through specific activities with the objective of engaging and empowering women and youth, thereby enabling them to become more assertive and effective within the political system. The work of CMDID has been carried out in close collaboration with other organizations, including UN Women. CMDID has received funding from UN Women to carry out specific activities. Although many of CMDID's specific activities in the areas of gender and diversity are not directly funded by NIMD, in practice these accomplishments can be seen as having been leveraged through NIMD's organizational underpinning.

### 3.4.2 How has gender been incorporated into activities and with what results?

CMDID developed a gender action plan in 2007 and mobilized resources from partners such as UN Women, the EU and Norwegian Church Aid in order to implement an impressive array of activities during the evaluation period. These activities included studies on the barriers facing women to effective participation in Malian political life, the creation of regional women's committees committed to promoting greater involvement of women in political life, a series of awareness-raising seminars that engaged women political and social leaders, and training sessions to encourage parties to place women in high positions on party candidate lists. Full details of the activities carried out in this area are provided in the annual CMDID syntheses (CMDID, 2012c; 2013b; and 2014b). Much of the gender-related work was built on research and planning activities carried out in 2011 and 2012, including a detailed study conducted in 2011 of the need and strategies to ensure that women activists are able to play an equal role in Malian political life (CMDID, 2012a).

Mali has a low level of participation by women in politics. Under 10 per cent of parliamentarians are women, placing the country 108th out of 140 in the world, below all of its neighbours and far below Senegal where more than 40 per cent of parliamentarians are women. Mali's low level of women's political participation is combined with a high prevalence of abusive treatment of women within society, including female genital mutilation rates of over 90 per cent, one of the highest in the world.<sup>8</sup> Early marriage is also extremely common: 25 per cent of women are married by the age of 15 and two-thirds by the age of 18, This rises to 40 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively, in some regions of the country.<sup>9</sup> There is extensive international evidence that greater engagement by

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<sup>8</sup> On Female Genital Mutilation in Mali see <[http://www.28toomany.org/media/uploads/mali\\_final.pdf](http://www.28toomany.org/media/uploads/mali_final.pdf)>.

<sup>9</sup> Briefing on child marriage by the Population Council, New York, USA, Aug. 2004, <<http://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/briefingsheets/MALI.pdf>>.





women in political life and social leadership roles encourages action on structural violence against women.

CMDID has developed an ambitious action plan of activities that it would like to carry out to continue to promote women's political participation. Implementing these activities will require additional resource mobilization. This would be an important area for NIMD to work on with CMDID in focusing its planned activities and developing a targeted resource mobilization approach.

### 3.4.3 How have youth been incorporated into activities and with what results?

In common with many countries in the first generation after democratization, youth find it difficult to break into political parties in Mali. There is very little turnover in the leadership of political parties. In combination with traditional deference for elders, this leads many youth to exit democratic political life. This is not only a waste of their talents, but also undermines the legitimacy of the political system. Youth disengagement is often connected with a desire to leave Mali, often involving a difficult and dangerous migration to North Africa and Europe. There is also the potential for dangerous radicalization. It is important for these various reasons, therefore, that youth are empowered to take their place within democratic political life, and specifically within Malian political parties.

CMDID has focused its activities in support of youth political engagement on supporting the creation and development of an association for youth engaged in political parties. The association has an enthusiastic leadership and is expanding its activities at the regional level. It has hosted a number of activities, including discussions on the political situation in the north and its impact on youth, as well as the impact of unemployment on youth and prospects for the future. Specific activities have also been organized with youth on cross-cutting challenges for parties and for democracy in Mali more generally, such as the need for parties to have a credible ideological stances; and for free, peaceful and inclusive elections, and so on. It would be useful to provide support to CMDID and the fledgling association of politically active youth.

### 3.4.4 How has ethnicity been incorporated into activities and with what results?

Ethnicity is a relatively sensitive subject in Mali, especially in the context of the recurring rebellions in the north of the country, which are associated with Touareg, Arab and other minorities. Even beyond the northern conflict there is occasional friction that has taken on an ethnic dimension, for example, between crop farmers and pastoralists.

CMDID did not directly address these issues during the evaluation period, although it does engage with and involve legitimate political parties, which include representation of all ethnic groups. NIMD has noted the need to work specifically on dialogue with and engaging disaffected northern populations, and it is planning to establish a complementary and parallel modality to foster dialogue with northern actors.



## 4. Relevance

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

Mali is encountering a number of serious governance challenges in addition to the obstacles to effective democratization created by the country's extreme poverty, large size and diversity. NIMD has shown a good understanding of these challenges and the NIMD officer responsible for Mali clearly has an enhanced appreciation of the situation in the country and an ability to work closely with both the national staff of CMDID and the country's political actors. CMDID is a well-managed organization and its executive director has a good appreciation of the perspectives of NIMD as well as the context in which NIMD-inspired programmes need to be put in place.

The NIMD model has considerable pertinence for Mali, given the need to foster dialogue in order to limit both the danger of ruptures within the political system, and the external threats to the political system in the country. At the same time, the multi-platform model has certain weaknesses when faced with a situation such as that in Mali, where a significant proportion of key community leaders in the north of the country have abandoned the democratic political process to take up arms against the government. In these circumstances an organization that is owned by the mainstream political parties may find it difficult to open up discussion on questions that may be perceived as threatening the integrity of the state.

Conversely, both CMDID and the NIMD model demonstrated their great value during the 2012 crisis and coup d'état, when the organization acted quickly and flexibly as a platform for the first round of inter-party discussions in order to develop a transition plan for a return to constitutional governance. The importance of the contribution that CMDID made at that time, and on a longer term basis, as a respected and neutral platform for addressing political differences cannot be overestimated. It is quite rare in democratic governance practice to see an international development intervention provide a platform for beginning to find a resolution to a deep political crisis. This aspect of NIMD's approach to fostering dialogue implemented through CMDID's multiparty platform has been useful in other important political debates, such as those on the role of the opposition, decentralization and the peace agreement. Even though political actors often disagree with each other, they respect the neutrality of the CMDID platform. The engagement of NIMD as a support to CMDID is also respected as providing a guarantee of external neutrality, especially given that the Netherlands is not perceived as having a narrow strategic interest in Mali.

CMDID has carried out a number of important activities to promote gender equality and youth participation in the political system in Mali. The organization has identified priority areas for fostering women's political engagement. The multiparty platform is less well-suited to a campaigning role for women's political inclusion, and the approach has had to be quite 'soft', depending on gentle persuasion and the provision of examples rather direct campaigning, for example, for quotas.

One tension in the NIMD approach is between national ownership—reflected in the establishment of CMDID as an entirely independent legal entity—and the 'NIMD model' of work, which has commonalities across many countries. It may be that the model is better adapted to some environments than to others, and NIMD has recognized this in tailoring its programming support in different countries, including Mali. In the case of the multiparty platform in Mali, the model has proved extremely useful in fostering relatively transparent and inclusive dialogue. In many similar environments without such a platform, there is a tendency either for backroom deals to be done or





for dialogue to be replaced by boycotts, walk outs and even violence. In this regard, the multiparty platform model works in Mali and may be pertinent in a wide variety of environments. Direct party assistance has had fewer opportunities to demonstrate its effectiveness, given that it has been effectively suspended for the past four years due to elections and political crises.

One area in which the model may require enrichment is its almost exclusive focus on political parties. In Mali there is something of a paradox in that political parties are widely perceived as somewhat ineffective vehicles for popular representation, while working directly through a political party platform to strengthen such parties might limit the scope for proposing radical reform of the way in which the parties operate. As a rule, institutions are unwilling to reform themselves, and Malian political parties may be no exception to this rule. CMDID has begun a discussion on how its institutional framework might be reformed to facilitate programming that is more challenging to the current political party status quo in the country.

NIMD has also noted this difficulty and is planning to establish a complementary modality to foster dialogue with northern actors. This initiative, which will operate in parallel with CMDID, is at an early stage of development, however, and the evaluators did not have sufficient detail to make an assessment of its likely appropriateness or effectiveness.

#### 4.2 Is NIMD's political party assistance niche relevant?

NIMD is one of a small number of organizations internationally that work specifically with political parties. In line with the *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015*, the model implemented by NIMD in Mali combines the establishment of a dialogue platform with direct support to political parties, and a smaller aspect of support to political party-civil society interaction. While gender and youth engagement are addressed to some extent transversally within the programme, specific activities that target these underrepresented groups have been found to be the most effective way to address diversity in a rather conservative environment.

The strength of the NIMD model in Mali is its genuine commitment to national ownership in practice, while its weakness is that working through one group of actors—political parties—places a real limitation on the types of issues that can be addressed. In a crisis situation this can mean that some pressing issues that threaten to destroy the polity may be 'taboo'. This is to some extent the case in Mali, where CMDID has had difficulty addressing thorny issues such as quotas for women politicians, the need to find ways to keep communication open with a wide range of actors in the north, and growing religious influence in Malian politics and its appropriateness within a secular state regime.

Given the particularly severe crisis of political representation in Mali, it would be helpful for NIMD to work more closely with CMDID to identify potential strategies for improving representation. This might entail involving a broader range of actors than just political parties, without falling into the trap of confusing broader society with the relatively narrow circle of organized, and often internationally funded, NGOs. Inclusive dialogue would need to go much deeper into Malian society.

As noted above, the NIMD programme manager has a strong understanding of the challenges in Mali and is willing, within the NIMD model, to explore different alternatives in order to encourage discussion on broader reforms to political practices to help foster a more solid foundation for democratic practice. For NIMD to be able to contribute its expertise, it would be useful for programme staff to be more closely engaged through a more regular and longer-term presence. This would be useful not only in helping to share some of NIMD's international programmatic best



practice experience with CMDID staff and key figures from Malian political parties, but also in building stronger ties with international partners such as embassies and international cooperation offices in Bamako. The more regular presence of the NIMD partner may well also assist with resource mobilization.

Resource mobilization is something of an issue for CMDID. The CMDID leadership provided several examples of where donors provided funding to organizations with much less presence and experience than CMDID, apparently preferring to support organizations that are explicitly 'international' rather than CMDID as a national organization. This is frustrating as frequently these newly funded international organizations then call on CMDID's networks and technical knowledge in order to launch their own activities. Although this preference for 'international' delivery partners runs contrary to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, it is necessary for NIMD to take it into account and work closely and directly to build relationships with international donors that have a more regular physical presence in the country.

### 4.3 Is NIMD a learning organization?

The fledgling efforts by NIMD to identify ways in which to foster engagement among a broader range of actors in northern Mali demonstrate the willingness of the country team to consider new alternatives for intervention. Similarly, NIMD has taken into account the comments made in previous evaluations. For example, the IOB evaluation (MFA, 2010) questioned the effectiveness of the work by CMDID/NIMD to engage with civil society and political actors, particularly after the military coup in 2012 revealed the weakness of the political party system in Mali. A greater emphasis has since been placed on broadening engagement and dialogue between parties and other societal actors, although, as the IOB evaluation noted in 2010, progress has been quite slow in finding ways to effectively assist Malian political parties to engage with broader democratic actors.

Schakel and Svåsand (2014) made a number of recommendations on direct party assistance (DPA). These recommendations were quite wide-ranging, and often conditional on the circumstances in specific countries, for example, on preferences for providing support to single parties or to coalitions. It has been quite difficult for CMDID/NIMD to act on the DPA recommendations because DPA has been suspended for several years to avoid the risk of being perceived as interfering in the electoral processes. However, it appears that, if DPA is resumed in Mali, there is a preference for working with coalitions rather than individual parties, and this would certainly be indicated given the fragmentation of parties and the importance of establishing stable and coherent political blocs.

In terms of NIMD's approach in relation to recent theory and research, the organization places a considerable emphasis on its theory of change. As Carothers (2006) notes, work with political parties is one of the most neglected but also one of the most difficult aspects of democracy support. Carothers argues that support to parties should not be overly ambitious and should set modest goals. This is certainly relevant in Mali where the challenges for political parties are closely intertwined with other structural challenges, most notably the country's extreme poverty which creates threats to successful democratization (Collier, 2009). There are some early signs of positive developments in Mali, not least the presence of a relatively stable and more effective opposition in parliament, suggesting the possibility of debate around policies rather than clientelist party strategies. In this regard, NIMD's approach is consistent with recent thinking about the importance of coherent policy alternatives to successful democratization (Power and Shoot, 2012).



## 5. Effectiveness and efficiency

### 5.1 Is the country programme strategic and coherent?

As is noted above, NIMD has a clear direction in terms of its approach. Indeed, the organization is unusually self-reflective, engaging in regular internal and external evaluations and also regularly developing and refining its theory of change. The activities carried out by NIMD/CMDID in Mali are clearly consistent with the *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015*. They are reflected in the annual plans for the programme activities in Mali and in the activities carried out.

The 2014 draft Theory of Change reiterates and clarifies NIMD's approach. It emphasizes four objectives and proposes specific strategies to achieve these objectives:

- Facilitate inter-party dialogue and cooperation
- Build party capacity on political programming
- Foster democratic capital and behaviour
- Share knowledge and link programme experiences

In Mali, the first and second approaches have been attempted most assiduously. As discussed elsewhere in the evaluation, the activities to foster inter-party dialogue and cooperation have been implemented successfully, and have provided a significant resource in the democratization process. Party capacity building on political programming has been less successful, although individual CMDID staff members have notable informal experience of sharing and learning through political leaders' sharing of experiences at CMDID workshops, and so on. Although there is some suggestion of a crystallization of political blocs, these blocs do not necessarily reflect clear political positions, except for the obviously leftist forces which have always presented largely consistent programmes.

It might be the case that, for a country such as Mali, there are structural barriers that impede the development of a programmatic basis for politics. These would include, for example, the relative lack of room for policy manoeuvre and thus the temptation for parties to resort to unrealistic populist commitments in order to secure votes. The cycle of promises in these circumstances is antithetical to democratic consolidation.

CMDID has not attempted to implement Democracy Schools, which is the core intervention applied by NIMD in order to 'foster democratic capital and behaviour'. While the situation in Mali is fluid and focused on short-term issues and solutions, and thus not propitious for a longer term Democracy Schools approach, a proposal has been developed to establish a smaller scale version of a Democracy School to support the development of women political actors. This would be an excellent initiative if resources can be found to support it. Long-term confidence- and capacity-building initiatives are needed in order to support a more equitable role for women in Malian political life.

As noted above, NIMD in conjunction with CMDID have been responsive to the existing political situation and have tailored their programmes and priorities accordingly. At present, for example, there is a major focus on decentralization, and discussion of the Peace Accord and its implementation. NIMD is also suggesting innovative action to support dialogue with northern political actors. The exact approach to be used, however, has not been decided.



CMDID programmes in Mali are largely built around fostering dialogue. Many of the activities on specific subjects such as women in politics and youth engagement are also constructed around inclusive cross-party discussion. As noted above, CMDID and NIMD face a significant challenge in engaging political and civil society. It has been suggested that this can best be carried out through focused engagement, for example on women and youth political empowerment, as well as by addressing concrete policy challenges that affect a broad range of citizens rather than issues that mainly concern the ‘political class’.

## **5.2 What is the country programme’s niche and its comparative advantage?**

NIMD’s model is unique in Mali. There are a number of other democratic development actors, but none built on the model of creating a national organization to implement a range of programmes. Furthermore, CMDID focuses specifically on political parties whereas most if not all the other democratic development organizations have a broader focus

The NIMD/CMDID model has clear advantages. Only a nationally owned and inclusive organization could have fostered the dialogue platform that played a key role in discussing the steps required for the restoration of democratic institutions after the events of 2012. No other organization has the same extensive network and near-universal buy-in of political actors as CMDID.

In fact, other development actors depend on CMDID to gain access to its network, which CMDID as a charitable foundation is happy to supply. CMDID collaborates with a variety of other international democracy promotion organizations on programme development and delivery. For example, CMDID worked closely with the US National Democratic Institute on the production and dissemination of a code of good conduct for political parties.

CMDID’s connection with NIMD is another comparative advantage that could perhaps be utilized to a greater extent than is currently the case, given the commonalities between its programming in different countries. NIMD facilitated exchanges to Burkina Faso, Benin and Senegal during the evaluation period, and could support more exchanges of experience among party representatives active in NIMD-sponsored projects.

CMDID should remain focused on its areas of comparative advantage: the multiparty platform, strengthening political parties, deepening dialogue and engagement between political and civil society, and fostering greater diversity in political life, particularly by enhancing opportunities for women and youth. Mali’s need for political stabilization and democratic development is quite extensive, and there is sufficient ‘room’ for a number of different actors to offer diverse types of support. NIMD/CMDID have specific comparative advantages that have been shown to be demonstrably effective.

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

The work of NIMD/CMDID in Mali in 2011–2015 was strongly shaped by the type of activities that were possible and needed to be prioritized. As is underlined above, the platform for multiparty dialogue proved extremely useful and overshadowed much of the other planned work, including the work on party capacity building and encouraging diversity. It is not realistic to expect political parties in Mali to have engaged in deep strategic planning in 2011–2015 because the environment was so unpredictable that it was necessary to be reactive. It would be interesting for NIMD and its Malian partners to consider how political parties could react quickly but at the same time thoughtfully in the future to changing situations.



Going forward, it will be crucial for NIMD/CMDID to achieve its objective of working to broaden the democratic dialogue in Mali to include as wide a range of social actors as possible. Democracy has not brought great dividends to the average Malian citizen, particularly in the past few years, and this presents a dual challenge: engaging Malian citizens in the democratic process through political parties and civil society structures while also ensuring that the focus of political debate is relevant to the average citizen. It is instructive that even in the midst of the conflict in the north of the country in 2012, citizens within the conflict zones were more concerned about ‘bread and butter issues’ than questions of power and national sovereignty. CMDID has carried out some activities on the policy issues that affect the daily lives of Malians, such as a workshop in 2014 on youth unemployment. More of these types of initiatives, which provide an opportunity to discuss pressing social challenges, would enable parties to consider programmatic issues within a practical rather than a theoretical framework.

In terms of gender, CMDID has enjoyed most success when working on specifically gender-focused issues rather than on gender mainstreaming. In a conservative environment in a country in crisis, attempting to mainstream without building a supportive constituency could leave both gender policy issues and women politicians marginalized.

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

CMDID is a well-run organization with a cadre of effective staff. It has built up considerable human and social capital in the seven years of its formal existence. The executive director and senior staff are widely respected. There is a willingness to consider new approaches and an interest in implementing innovative activities on the part of the senior staff.

Any limitations to the capacity of the organization derive primarily from its status as a creation of Malian political parties. As is noted several times in this evaluation, it is often structurally difficult for CMDID staff to lobby explicitly for changes that directly contradict the wishes or interests of the political parties’ representatives that together form the management board of the organization. Indeed, CMDID’s success as a dialogue platform effectively precludes a campaigning role except in unusual circumstances, such as when the collective interests of the political parties favour particular reforms, as might be the case for example with political party financing. With one full-time senior staff member focused particularly on gender issues, and another on youth issues, CMDID demonstrates a genuine commitment to supporting diversity within the Malian polity.

In terms of the impact of HQ restructuring and staff changes on the country programme, the biggest issue is the limited amount of time that the Mali Programme Manager can spend in Mali. CMDID brings a strong synergy between experience of international best practice and in-depth knowledge of Malian politics and personalities. A more frequent presence by the programme manager in the country would enable further two-way sharing of experience between the programme manager and the national staff at CMDID. As noted above, this could be particularly useful in building CMDID’s profile with international donors.



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

NIMD provides relatively modest funding to CMDID (a little over €300,000 in 2014). Given the positive impact on the Malian political environment in the post-coup period of the initiatives piloted by NIMD/CMDID, it is reasonable to ascribe a strong cost-benefit advantage—especially in the light of the exceptionally high price both in Mali and internationally of continuing instability and conflict, and the emergence of ‘ungoverned spaces’ that represent an existential threat to Mali, Africa and beyond. There is a continuing difficulty in leveraging additional resources from sources outside The Netherlands, and as noted above a predilection among some international donors to fund ‘international’ organizations rather than a ‘local’ one such as CMDID.

The goals on the diversification of CMDID’s funding have yet to be achieved. Relatively few international donors prioritize support to political parties, especially in the context of widespread human insecurity.

From the evaluators’ non-expert perspective, CMDID appears to be under good financial management, with a highly experienced financial manager and high quality support staff. The financial manager indicated that there had been some issues with financial management on the part of political parties, when the parties had been provided with advances on capacity building resources but, due to their weak financial control systems, had been unable to account properly for resource use after the funded activity was concluded. It has been agreed that in the future CMDID will not provide advances to parties but instead settle confirmed invoices.

## 5.6 Does the country programme have good monitoring and evaluation systems for monitoring and adjusting its objectives?

NIMD has a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system and has continued to elaborate new tools and approaches in recent years, closely integrated with the NIMD theory of change (NIMD, 2014e). The Baseline and Review Toolkit (BART) provides a comprehensive framework for baseline analysis to guide programme development (NIMD, 2015). The BART feeds into the NIMD Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Approach (2014), which is based on ‘transparency, active participation, results measurement and learning’ and combines formative and summative approaches. This produces a feedback cycle in which baseline information is used to develop a programme, continuous feedback and results measurement of programme activities, learning from the monitoring and feedback into programme refinement, and ultimately programme final evaluation. It will be important for NIMD to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation framework is consistently integrated into programme recordkeeping to ensure effective operationalization of the framework.

As the authors of the BART note, NIMD’s activities are typically carried out in highly volatile environments with a number of different external factors, which can confound results measurement and the attribution of causality. For example, although NIMD/CMDID had been operating for nearly ten years in Mali at the time of the 2012 coup d’état, it would be unreasonable to link the coup to any failings in the NIMD Mali programming.

CMDID keeps fairly comprehensive and accessible documentation on the activities it carries out (see for example, the *Synthèses des activités réalisées*). These contain a description of each activity sponsored or delivered by CMDID, some basic numerical data on the number of participants, and so



on. While these give some idea of the range of activities conducted and the levels of participation, they do not measure programme outcomes.

The framework for collecting, sharing and utilizing country programme data to feed into the NIMD central monitoring and evaluation framework could be clarified and refined. It would be helpful for NIMD and CMDID to agree on a reporting format for all CMDID activities to ensure that all relevant data are collected and can be used in monitoring and evaluation.

In the complex and volatile environment of Mali between 2011 and 2014, outcomes can only be assessed qualitatively through an iterative process of activity review and informant interviews, as well as the use of programme data. In this context it is most appropriate to select 'meso' indicators to measure outcomes, rather than macro indicators such as changes in overall democracy rankings for a country (Murphy, 2012). Meso indicators observe changes in behaviour, such as the use of dialogue platforms to address major political issues, rather than simple outputs such as the number of persons trained, and so on.

### **5.7 Is the country programme efficient in its use of resources?**

The exceptional events in Mali during the course of the evaluation period make a quantitative assessment of management and delivery milestones invalid. Indeed it is precisely the flexibility of the NIMD programme and its ability to diverge from previously planned activities in order to address an emergency situation that provides it, and CMDID, with its competitive advantage in Mali.

The modest resources of €300,000–€400,000 annually were used efficiently to deliver a wide range of activities that engaged the great majority of Malian political parties over the course of the evaluation period. The local NGO delivery model has particular cost advantages over a model that employs expatriate staff, as in the case of other democracy promotion organizations in Mali.

The alternative approach to programme delivery would be either through a resident NIMD staff member leading a project team, or through an international NGO, such as is the case for example with NDI in Mali. As noted above, the NIMD/CMDID model is particularly cost-efficient because the costs associated with national staff are considerably lower than those of international staff. At the same time, CMDID does not have the same advantages as an international organization in terms of mobilizing international networks, both within Mali and globally, to raise resources and even sometimes to identify international expertise. A more intensive engagement, including a more regular and intensive presence on the ground in Mali on the part of NIMD, would assist in rectifying this situation.





## 6. Sustainability of NIMD country interventions

### 6.1 How sustainable are the multiparty platform and country partnership overall?

Sustainability is always an issue in international development support and particularly with support to democratic development. In worst-case scenarios, actors engage with democratic development programmes mainly to gain some benefit, or in order to develop useful networks. All too frequently, the changes introduced through programmes are reversed once the financial or other incentives that support the new practices are removed.

In Mali, where the capacities for absorption by the state are limited, and where there are few clear administrative and procedural norms, the opportunities for formal adoption of best practices are quite limited. Sustainability therefore occurs in large measure through the naturalization of processes adopted during the programming phase. This will inevitably tend to be a medium- to long-term process.

In the case of the CMDID/NIMD activities, it is clear that there has been willing adoption by political parties of the principle of dialogue to resolve important differences, and to work towards consensus on defining and implementing reforms to the political system and its processes. It is less clear, however, whether the dialogue platform would remain in place and function in the event of withdrawal by NIMD.

NIMD and CMDID have for several years explored the potential for support from Mali's government through institutionalization of the multiparty platform as a 'public utility' and the provision of state funding. Some key informants expressed reservations regarding the public utility model, especially given the instability of the political system in which democracy has only recently been restored, and in the light of the tendency for dominant actors within the state to instrumentalize state structures and services.

CMDID has positive and mutually supportive working relationships with other actors operating in the democratic development field, and was highly praised by the respondents interviewed. CMDID is known as a highly collaborative organization, which ensures cross-agency synergies and effective leverage of resources. No negative impacts of such partnerships were noted.

Although no development activity can be funded indefinitely, the NIMD/CMDID platform has proved its effectiveness and warrants continuing support while Mali works in the medium and longer term towards the institutionalization of the dialogic and agonistic approaches that have been modelled by the NIMD/CMDID programme.

### 6.2 How sustainable are other elements of the programme

The long-term sustainability of the other aspects of CMDID programming seems less assured. As noted, the direct party assistance aspect of the political party strengthening has been in abeyance for some time. Although party activists who have benefited from strengthening activities warmly praise the DPA programme, and claimed that parties had become more effective as a result, there is limited evidence that this is the case. Support to parliamentary groupings is a potentially useful 'middle ground' as it would also encourage the necessary regrouping of political parties in Mali. As is noted above, there has been no substantial progress on the goals of engaging political and civil





society in deepening democratic dialogue and participatory processes, and thus there are few examples of changed practices to be sustained.

### 6.3 How sustainable are efforts to integrate gender and diversity?

CMDID has taken a number of positive initiatives to increase diversity, particularly as it relates to women and youth. There has been important resistance from conservative elements within Malian society to efforts to foster equality for women in both political and daily life. Reforms have been blocked to both the family and the personal status codes that govern many aspects of personal life, and to measures to increase women's political participation—including a modest women's quota of 15 per cent of elected representatives. At the same time, CMDID's activities to foster women's political engagement have been well supported and CMDID is one of a number of actors promoting gender equality in public life. It is likely that this campaign would continue even in the absence of CMDID, albeit in different forms.

In terms of youth political participation, the creation of an association of political youth with an enthusiastic and energetic leadership augurs well in terms of sustainability. At the same time, the capacity of the association to build branches outside Bamako and to effectively campaign for youth political engagement will inevitably be limited by a lack of resources, which is a problem for the sustainability of most development programmes in the world's poorest countries.



## 7. Main findings and recommendations

### 7.1 Context

NIMD/CMDID's activities are implemented in an unstable political environment in which the political class has lost much of its credibility among citizens. The political situation remains overshadowed by a recurring and continuing rebellion in the north of the country, and the aftermath of the coup d'état of 2012. As a result, any assessment of CMDID/NIMD's impact between 2011 and 2015 has to be made in the light of an overall political context that has deteriorated since the beginning of the evaluation period.

### 7.2 Findings

#### 7.2.1 Overall country programme findings

The evaluation addressed two main areas: (a) the extent to which the activities of NIMD/CMDID were carried out efficiently and effectively; and (b) the advantages and limitations of the multiparty platform approach in the Malian context. The overall conclusions are: that NIMD, through its alliance with CMDID, delivers programming that has a demonstrably positive impact on the political environment and the prospects for stable democracy in Mali; and that the multiparty platform has proved an effective approach to enhancing constructive dialogue between political parties and building common ground for democratic consolidation. The multiparty platform is a direct result of the work of NIMD/CMDID. The successes in facilitating the first post-coup dialogue and the strengthened opposition status provisions can be attributed to this work. At the same time, the multiparty platform is not always the most effective approach to addressing issues such as the exclusion and marginalization of specific groups, or when structural reforms are required to permit the political system to operate inclusively.

Key overall accomplishments of NIMD-supported activities in Mali:

- CMDID, NIMD's country partner and multiparty platform in Mali, has achieved widespread recognition and respect among political parties
- It has exceptional capacity to mobilize political parties for joint activities, workshops, training, and so on
- It has a strong reputation for being politically neutral and enjoys the confidence of political actors
- CMDID is widely acknowledged to have played a key role in facilitating inter-party dialogue after the 2012 coup
- It also played a central role in the development of the political parties' code of conduct agreement in 2013
- It played a key role in the finalization of the renewed 'statut de l'opposition' in 2014–2015
- Respondents from development partners and civil society provided positive assessments
- CMDID has demonstrable capacity to mobilize political actors and to efficiently implement a wide range of activities



### 7.2.2 To what extent did NIMD achieve results in inter-party dialogue and party strengthening?

NIMD:

- Provided a platform for multiparty dialogue on restoring democracy after the 2012 coup
- Ensured continuing multiparty dialogue during the democratic transition
- Supported the code of conduct for parties during election campaigns
- Supported party engagement in the election process, including voting observation
- Supported the development and adoption of formal status for the political opposition and leader of the opposition
- Facilitated information sharing and dialogue among political parties on the content and implications of the Peace Accord

### 7.2.3 To what extent did NIMD achieve results in dialogue and engagement with citizens and civil society?

- CMDID partnered with Malian television and radio to host regular debates and discussions between political party actors; two debates were carried out in 2014, ten in 2013 and three in 2012
- There has been good involvement of activist women from civil society with CMDID in joint activities to foster women's political participation
- Civil society representatives have been invited to, and participated in, many CMDID events

### 7.2.4 To what extent did NIMD achieve results in the areas of women and gender?

- Numerous training events have been carried out with women political activists and on the promotion of gender equality
- There has been collaboration with UN Women and UNDP on fostering more women candidacies and higher list placement
- Support was provided to the development of the observatories established throughout the country on women and elections
- CMDID has developed strong working relationships with networks of women promoting gender equality and women's political engagement

### 7.2.5 To what extent did NIMD achieve results in the area of youth political engagement?

- NIMD has established an active network of youth in political parties
- It has fostered debates among youth in political parties on key national political issues, such as the northern crisis, unemployment, political ideology as a basis for political organization and youth representation in elections
- The 2013 election resulted in greater representation of youth among elected parliamentarians

### 7.2.6 What was the influence of the *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2013* and the accompanying institutional reforms?

- Because CMDID operates as an independent organization from NIMD, any effects are experienced one level removed at the programme level in Mali



- CMDID staff noted that there was a general tightening of available resources and of programme management support from NIMD headquarters
- The severing of direct ties between Dutch political parties and NIMD led to a noted reduction in engagement by Dutch politicians in CMDID activities.

### 7.3 Main recommendations

While the outcomes of the NIMD / CMDID partnership are impressive overall, there would be benefits from closer engagement by and a more regular physical presence of NIMD in Mali, as well as from more regular leverage of NIMD's international capacity network in support of the delivery of activities and mutual learning.

- Expand the application of NIMD's learning from its international projects, particularly on cutting edge engagement in party strengthening
- Provide more opportunities for exchanges and sharing with other countries undergoing democratic development/transition
- Launch a shared reflection between CMDID and NIMD on how to address deeper issues of political relevance to accountability in Mali that could hamper democratic institutionalization
- Work with CMDID to pilot innovative methodologies for carrying out its work, for example, on building on the televised debates to increase public and civil society engagement
- Provide intensive support for CMDID/NIMD resource mobilization for activities in Mali
- Further work is required to find ways to enable greater engagement by CMDID/NIMD in building dialogue on the crisis in the north, while respecting CMDID national ownership

#### 7.3.1 Recommendations on inter-party dialogue and party strengthening

- Consider how to foster dialogue on issues that are sensitive but also critical to democratic stabilization, such as the growing influence of religion, the need to democratize political parties, and so on
- Consider replacing the suspended individual political party strengthening programme with a programme to provide capacity strengthening to parties collectively

#### 7.3.2 Recommendations on civil-political society interaction

- Innovative approaches could be trialled to 'bring politics to the people' by organizing debates on topical political questions around the country; these could be televised
- The place of the public debates in NIMD's overall intervention strategy and theory of change could be more explicitly clarified
- It would be useful to leverage international best practice on citizen engagement—innovative means for reaching citizens should be considered beyond the standard broadcast formats; these might include travelling roadshows, question and answer sessions, and so on, which could also be televised



### 7.3.3 Recommendations in the areas of women and gender

The absence of a critical mass of major women political leaders means that it can be difficult to leverage support for gender mainstreaming activities. CMDID is constrained from advocating gender quotas, because this does not enjoy support among many political parties. Similarly, CMDID is not in a position to promote the strengthening of protections for women in Malian legislation, given its governance by political parties that are themselves often reticent about advances towards quotas and gender equality.

- The emergence of strong conservative voices asserting religious arguments against equality requires reflection; CMDID could act to foster a discussion on the relationship between religion and politics in Mali
- It would be helpful to ensure that the televised debates regularly address issues related to women in politics and gender issues

### 7.3.4 Recommendations in the area of youth political engagement

- The radicalization of youth and undocumented youth migration are growing issues and risks in Mali. The exclusion of youth from effective citizenship remains an issue, and further reflection is required. CMDID could organize reflection workshops in conjunction with other democracy development actors.
- Youth remain effectively excluded from senior positions in many political parties. It would be helpful to foster a debate on the adoption of agreements on voluntary quotas for youth representation on party lists.

### 7.3.5 Recommendations on improving NIMD efficiency and effectiveness

- NIMD could be more present in supporting CMDID, particularly by: (a) providing opportunities for sharing international learning and innovation on political party strengthening and democratic development; (b) supporting the development and implementation of a resource mobilization strategy to ensure CMDID's long-term sustainability; and (3) working collaboratively with CMDID to help it to work on issues of high sensitivity but also national priority—the crisis in the north, gender issues and women's political engagement, youth political engagement and renewal of the political class.
- Effective monitoring and evaluation can be facilitated by agreeing with CMDID a standardized format for reporting on activities, ensuring that lessons learned are captured consistently and can be shared within NIMD.



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## Appendix A: Mission agenda, 13–29 July 2015

Jonathan Murphy (13–23 July 2015 ) and Naffet Keita (20–29 July 2015)

| Dates and time     | Activity  | Location                   | Contact Person  |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Monday 13/07/15    | Visits  |                            |   |
| 10h 00-12h 00      | Rencontre avec l'équipe technique                         | Siège CMDID                |   |
| 12h 00-13h 00      | Pause déjeuner  | _____                      |   |
| 13h 00 -14h00      | _____   | _____                      |   |
| 16h30-17h30        | Rencontre avec l'Ambassade des Pays-Bas                   | Siège Ambassade            |   |
|                    |   |                            |   |
| Tuesday 14/07/15   | Visits  |                            |   |
| 10h 00-11h 00      | Rencontre avec la Coopération Suédoise                    | Siège Coopération Suédoise | Désiré Ballo (20 70 70 00), Chargé de programme/ droits humains                           |
| 12h 00-13h 00      | Pause déjeuner  | _____                      |   |
| 13h30- 14h30       | Rencontre avec le Conseil d'Administration CMDID (bureau) | Siège CMDID                | Moriba Keita (Président), Dajié Sogoba (Vice président), Ahmed Cissé (Secrétaire général) |
| 16h00-17h00        | _____   | _____                      | _____   |
|                    |   |                            |   |
| Wednesday 15/07/15 | Visits  |                            |   |
| 10h 00-11h 00      | Rencontre avec le RECAN (AN)                              | Siège CMDID                | RECAN- AN (M. Diaby : 66 78 43 74)  |
| 12h 00-13h 00      | Pause déjeuner  | _____                      |   |
| 14h00- 15h00       | Rencontre avec ONU Femmes                                 | Siège ONU Femmes           | Maxime Houinato (représentant pays ONU Femmes)  |
| 16h30-17h30        | Rencontre avec l'USAID                                    | Siège USAID                | Brendan Sanders, Erik Pacific   |
|                    |   |                            |   |
| Thursday 16/07/15  | Visits  |                            |   |
| 10h 00-11h 00      | Rencontre avec le PNUD/ PAPEM                             | Siège PAPEM                | Mr Alain Ayadokoun (20 22 15 69)<br>Directeur du PAPEM                                    |



| Dates and time  | Activity                                       | Location       | Contact Person   |
|-----------------|--|----------------|--|
|                 |  |                |  |
| 12h 00-13h 00   | Rencontre avec IFES                            | Siège IFES     | Mr Lansar (66 71 16 47)                                |
| 13h 00 -14h00   | Rencontre avec le NDI                          | Siège NDI      | Mr Badié Hima (20 22 33 16)<br>Représentant pays NDI   |
| 14h00- 15h00    | _____  | _____          | _____  |
| 16h00-17h00     | Rencontre avec EISA                            | Siège EISA     | Mr Justin Doua (74 32 64 86)<br>Représentant pays EISA |
|                 |  |                |  |
| Monday 20/07/15 | Visits   |                |  |
| 09 h - 10h      | Rencontre avec Ibrahim Sory WAIGALO            | CMDID          | 76 83 75 68  |
| 10h-11h         | Rencontre avec Kissima GAKOU                   | FDPU/USJP      | 76 20 76 19  |
| 11h 30-12h 30   | Rencontre avec CRI 2002                        | Siège CRI 2002 | Abdoulaye Sall (20 29 42 30)                           |
| 12h 30-13h 30   | Pause déjeuner                                 | _____          |  |
| 14h 00 -15h00   | Réseau des Jeunes de Partis Politiques (RJPPM) | CMDID          | Bengaly Guindo (76 21 91 88)                           |



| Dates and time     | Activity   | Location              | Contact Person                                     |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Tuesday 21/07/15   | Visits   |                       |  |
| 10h00-11h 00       | Cadre de Concertation des Femmes de Partis   | Siège                 | Mme Maïga Oumou Dembelé (74 02 06 09/ 66 73 72 17) |
| 12h 30-13h 30      | Pause déjeuner   | _____                 | _____  |
| 14h00- 15h00       | Rencontre avec la FENACOF  | Siège FENACOF         | Ouleymatou Sow (66 71 73 46)                       |
|                    |  |                       |  |
| Wednesday 22/07/15 | Visits   |                       |  |
| 09h00-10h 00       | Rencontre avec le SADI   | Siège CMDID           | Massa Sogoba (76 43 50 31)                         |
|                    |  |                       |  |
| 12h 00-13h 00      | Pause déjeuner   | _____                 |  |
| 13h 00-13h 30      | Rencontre avec APEM  | Siège APEM            | Ibrahima Sangho (66 59 81 14/ 76 23 36 00)         |
| 14h00- 15h00       | Rencontre avec UE  | Siège UE              | Laura Mascagna (44 92 92 92)                       |
|                    |  |                       |  |
| Thursday 23/07/15  | Visits   |                       |  |
| 09h-12h 00         | Journée d'échanges interpartis sur l'accord d'Alger                                      | Grand hôtel de Bamako |  |
| 12h 00-13h 00      | Pause déjeuner   | _____                 |  |
| 13h 00 -14h00      |  |                       |  |
| 14h00- 15h00       | Rencontre avec Aïché Diarra  | Siège CMDID           | 76 18 42 75  |
| 15h30-16h30        | Rencontre avec Mamadou Samaké  | Siège CMDID           | Mamadou Samaké (76 26 42 66/ 66 85 06 18)          |
| 17h00-18h00        | Echanges avec le Directeur exécutif du CMDID sur la mission (fin de mission de Jonathan) | Siège CMDID           |  |



| Dates and time     | Activity  | Location                  | Contact Person |                                    |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Friday 24/07/15    | Visits  |                           |                |                                    |
| 10h 00-11h 00      | Rencontre avec la fondation Friedrich Ebert   | Siège fondation Friedrich | Confirmé       | Abdrahamane Dicko (66 74 08 63)    |
|                    |   |                           |                |                                    |
| Wednesday 29/07/15 |   |                           |                |                                    |
| 11h 30-12h 30      | Rencontre avec le Groupe Pivot/ Droit et Citoyenneté des Femmes   | Siège GP/DCF              | confirmé       | Nana Sissako (76 21 04 41)         |
| 15h-16h            | Rencontre avec le vice-président de Temedt (Association pour la consolidation de la paix, le développement, la protection et la promotion des droits humains) | Siège Temedt              | confirmé       | Mohamed Ag Akeratene (66 72 75 90) |