

SMALL STEPS,

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

BIG IMPACT



Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

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Defending democracy in difficult times: Reflections from NIMD's 2024 Executive Directors

In November 2024, Tijmen Rooseboom took over as NIMD's Executive Director. Here, both Directors look back on the past year, and forward to what's ahead. They are guided by a shared belief: real change often begins with the smallest of steps.

Thijs Berman

For almost six years, I have been privileged to contribute to NIMD's vision, and to witness the pride, commitment and passion of our colleagues and partners around the world.

One thing always stood out: the immense potential for change our work holds. By working in the right contexts with people truly committed to democratic change, we enable those people to make a meaningful, lasting impact. In my final year, I saw this time and again:

- ▶ In **Myanmar**, Women Peace Ambassadors cascaded their training on various topics – including democratization, Women Peace and Security, and conflict resolution – to 1065 others, amplifying women's voices in their communities.
- ▶ In **Colombia**, our dialogues across different territories and identities shaped the new National Action Plan 1325, helping ensure diverse voices are part of the country's future on Women, Peace and Security.

- ▶ In **Sint Eustatius**, our dialogue supported the return of democratic rights and structures to the island.

- ▶ And, in **Uganda**, 78% of our Democracy Academy alumni have publicly expressed their intention to participate in elective politics.

As proud as I am of what we've accomplished, I know I am leaving NIMD at a difficult moment. The clouds above global democracy support are darkening. Democracy and the Rule of Law face growing threats, even in traditional strongholds.

Meanwhile, funding for this work is declining, as many wealthy countries slash development cooperation budgets. In stark contrast, these same governments pledged to double military spending at the June 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague. Coherence seems low on the list for those claiming to defend peace through military strength while neglecting the world's most vulnerable.

Every house needs a fire extinguisher, but peace, safety and security also depend on the wellbeing and shared responsibility of everyone under the roof.

That's why NIMD's work matters more than ever. I left in November 2024, a bit nostalgic perhaps, but above all proud of everything we achieved. And proud to have Tijmen as my successor. Tijmen, your task won't be easy, but that comes with the territory. After all, democracy is a work in progress. It has to be built, defended and sustained. Every day. The same is true for democracy support.



Tijmen Rooseboom

Taking over as NIMD's Executive Director has been an honour for me. I am proud to guide this organization into the future, building on the strong foundation laid by Thijs and our global team, which has established NIMD as a trusted and effective player in democracy support around the world.

I realize that – just as Thijs has said – this task will not be easy. The changing environment demands deep reflection. In 2025, we will adapt our approach and structure, making daring – and sometimes difficult – decisions. These changes are catalyzed by external pressures, but they are equally a reflection of our beliefs, our values and our commitment to staying relevant and effective.

As part of this process, we will carefully consider where our work can have the greatest impact, and with whom.

We will be bold. That means also recognizing the limits of dialogue in shrinking democratic spaces and placing even greater emphasis on elevating the voices of structurally excluded groups, particularly young people and women. It means standing firmly with those who genuinely defend democracy, amplifying their voices and creating opportunities for them to drive change.

This is the essence of NIMD's approach: By working with and supporting agents of change, we help unlock broader democratic transformation.

Democracy remains the only form of governance that can serve the broad interests of society. It is the foundation of stable, just and inclusive societies. That's why we must continue to stand up, speak out and defend it against autocrats, dictators and all those who seek to divide rather than unite.

At NIMD, we are ready for that challenge. And I'm honoured to be part of the journey ahead.



NIMD IN 2024

In 2024, NIMD implemented 21 programmes across Africa, Latin America, the MENA Region, Central and Southeast Asia and the Dutch Caribbean.



Armenia

In 2024, NIMD and our partner [OxYGen](#) launched the Armenian Multiparty Democracy Academy (ARMDA). The Academy brought together politically and civically engaged young people from political parties and civil society organizations, offering them a safe space to exchange ideas and engage in dialogue across political and ideological divides. Through this initiative, participants gained the necessary knowledge and skills to become influential leaders and advocates for democracy and civic engagement in Armenia – promoting a culture of inclusivity and democracy.

Benin

After receiving hands-on training, a group of promising future leaders from our Democracy School stepped into the role of parliamentary assistants, supporting Benin's women MPs with tasks like social media management, research and policy development. This initiative not only freed up valuable time for the MPs, allowing them to focus on their core legislative work, but also opened doors for the alumni. By working side by side with elected leaders, they gained rare, first-hand experience of how parliament functions and built their political networks.

Burkina Faso

NIMD Burkina Faso worked with NIMD Mali and NIMD Niger to produce a study entitled 'The role of the media in democratic renewal: How do the media influence public opinion?' The study examined how the media shapes public attitudes and perceptions towards democracy across the region. The study's findings served as a foundation for dialogue with media professionals and civil society actors, with the goal of strengthening the media's role in promoting informed public discourse and enhancing citizen participation in political processes in Burkina Faso.

Burundi

In 2024, NIMD Burundi supported nine political parties and coalitions to develop formal strategic plans and electoral programmes, some for the first time. These clear programmes strengthen party cohesion and promote the inclusion of youth and women, ensuring broader representation. In addition, this support enhances democratic engagement and prepares parties to contribute constructively to national debates in the run-up to Burundi's 2025 and 2027 elections. With more coherent policy positions, parties will be better able to offer voters meaningful choices during these elections.

Colombia

NIMD Colombia and our partners organized a series of dialogue and consultation forums to ensure that women's diverse voices were heard in the consultative period preceding the signing of Colombia's long-awaited National Action Plan (NAP) 1325. The NAP is a national policy framework for implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which calls for the meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Our inclusive approach has set Colombia's new NAP apart, ensuring it reflects the priorities and perspectives of women across different territories, identities and communities.

El Salvador

NIMD El Salvador and our partners worked with a number of youth environmental organizations to enhance their capacity to influence public policy. Following training to hone their dialogues and advocacy skills, these organizations had the opportunity to engage directly with local government. Through a series of open and respectful dialogues they forged connections, built consensus and, ultimately, co-created a series of agendas to protect and defend environmental rights. With the force of both youth organizations and local government behind them, these agendas hold a strong potential to drive meaningful change.

Ethiopia

At NIMD, we firmly believe that a dialogue process can only be truly democratic when all relevant groups are at the table. So, when 15 regional and national political parties pulled out of the country's long-awaited National Dialogue, NIMD Ethiopia jumped into action, organizing interparty dialogues, high-level meetings and trust-building efforts to explore ways to make the National Dialogue more inclusive. A number of the parties have now agreed to take part, enhancing credibility and preventing a widening of rifts. Amidst conflicts between regional states, NIMD also successfully convinced key regional stakeholders to take part in NIMD-facilitated dialogues to defuse tensions.

Guatemala

One of NIMD Guatemala's priorities in 2024 was to ensure a broad range of voices be reflected in parliamentary processes. In strategic partnership with [ParlAmericas](#), we held two targeted training sessions with technical staff from the Congress of the Republic. These sessions focused on citizen participation in legislative work and explored how digital technologies can be harnessed to foster closer engagement between citizens and lawmakers. By strengthening the knowledge and skills of parliamentary staff, the training lays the groundwork for more participatory processes, greater transparency and legislation that better reflects the needs and priorities of the wider population.

Honduras

NIMD Honduras organized a seminar for journalists on their role in upholding and enhancing democracy, with support from the Honduran Journalists' Association and the National Electoral Council. A total of 28 journalists from radio, print, television, and digital platforms participated, marking the beginning of a strategic alliance between the media they represent and the Honduran Journalists' Association. With the next general elections in Honduras expected in 2025, this dialogue and learning space provided journalists with information they need to fully take up their role in informing the public and fostering informed debate – key contributions to a healthy democracy.

Iraq

In 2024, NIMD and our partner, Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) held a Symposium, bringing together government officials, civil society, academics and Democracy School alumni to foster collaboration and innovation. By engaging in critical discussions and showcasing inspiring TED-style talks on the role of youth in democracy, the event is not just a celebration but a call to collaborate, building networks across ideological divides and different sectors of society to collectively shape a more inclusive and resilient democracy.

Jordan

In the run up to Jordan's parliamentary elections in September 2024, NIMD worked to inform and engage voters. We produced 14 voter education videos for the [Independent Election Commission](#) (IEC), as well as displaying public awareness posters on highways, in cities and on buses, in collaboration with the [Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs](#). We also launched the Voter Advice Application to give voters clearer insight into party agendas and priorities, encouraging political engagement based on concrete policy positions. Our efforts aimed to strengthen democratic participation by enabling citizens to make informed choices and feel confident about casting their vote.

Kenya

In 2024, NIMD Kenya launched our Democracy School, bringing together young (aspiring) leaders from political parties, civil society organizations and academia, with a focus on youth from under-represented groups and those living with disabilities. During two intense six-day retreats, participants explored leadership, ethics, Kenyan political history, intergenerational dialogue, and gender and inclusion. By promoting political engagement and democratic leadership, our School equipped them with the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to political life at a time when the Kenyan political class is at a crossroads. The School also fosters long-term commitment to democratic values and positive change.

Liberia

In 2024, NIMD kicked off our work, in partnership with the [United Nations Development Program](#) (UNDP) and [UN Women](#), to promote a more inclusive and responsive democracy in Liberia. We aim to collaborate with political parties, civil society and the National Legislature to build a network of people willing to work across divides to shape and strengthen their democracy. In our first year, NIMD built strategic relationships and partnerships with political parties, the leadership of the Legislature and civil society organizations. This strong foundation will enable collaborative planning and co-creation of future activities, therefore supporting the programme's long-term sustainability.

Mali

In Mali, 40,000 young people took part in national consultations organized by the State as part of the ongoing reform process, across 600 communes. The strong participation of NIMD's alumni in these consultations demonstrates the impact of NIMD's Democracy School and dialogue on the political participation of these young leaders. In a context where youth often face limited political representation and growing disenchantment with institutions, these alumni played an active role in sustaining democratic values through civic engagement and public debate. Their involvement fostered a stronger sense of ownership over their role as active citizens and helped reinforce the importance of inclusive participation in shaping Mali's future.

Mozambique

NIMD and the [Institute for Multiparty Democracy](#) joined other partners to jointly facilitate Mozambique's Peace Room, an election monitoring platform that works to safeguard the integrity and legitimacy of the electoral process. After the 2024 general elections, the Peace Room initiative also trained political parties on electoral litigation, equipping them to address electoral irregularities through non-violent means. This has helped the parties establish a new set of transparent legal processes – a first step towards rebuilding trust in democracy and reducing the risk of future electoral violence.

Myanmar

Myanmar's military coup deepened divisions, leaving the country's diverse political and ethnic groups unwilling to engage. Despite this, and drawing on years of trust building, NIMD Myanmar and Demo Finland have been able to bring together regional political and civil society representatives in monthly dialogue. The group has bridged divides, agreed on eight key principles for future laws, and advanced a peace and state-building agenda. A democratic Myanmar will depend on actors such as these, who champion collaboration, respect and dialogue.

Niger

In 2023, Niger faced an unexpected coup d'état. However, NIMD was able to adapt its work to the changing climate. The team used tools and structures from previous projects to conduct an opinion poll among citizens, gauging their perceptions of the coup and the prospects for a successful transition. With over 500 responses, the results were debated at two large-scale conferences. By providing reliable data on public opinion and creating space for open debate, we helped foster a more informed and inclusive conversation on the country's future at a time when citizens' voices were especially at risk of being sidelined.

Sint Eustatius

After two years of political dialogue, trust-building, and institutional strengthening on the island of Sint Eustatius, NIMD was delighted to see all democratic rights and structures returned to the island, after a long transition process. This process was supported by the NIMD-facilitated Political Dialogue Platform Statia, a safe space for Sint Eustatius's political representatives to engage in dialogue, and strengthen democratic practice and culture. In addition to building a strong dialogue culture, NIMD supported political parties with strategic planning, and trained Dutch civil servants to strengthen dialogue and improve collaboration between The Hague and Sint Eustatius.

Somalia

Prior to expanding our programme to Somalia in October 2024, our main focus was on laying the foundation for inclusive elections in Somaliland, working closely with electoral bodies ahead of the 2024 Presidential and Political Party Elections. We trained over 8,000 polling staff and 16,800 party agents across Somaliland's six regions, while partnering with 43 civil society organizations to increase public awareness and participation. We also set up a national call centre to provide tailored support for persons with disabilities, enabling an additional 695 to successfully register to vote and making the electoral process more accessible for all.

Uganda

By providing our participants with the tools and confidence to engage in politics and make meaningful contributions to their communities, the Uganda Democracy Academy creates a broad network of engaged young people, which stretches beyond traditional political divides. Since the Academy's launch in 2023, alumni have taken leadership roles in their communities, including Chair of Youth Councillors in Buganda and Vice President of the Uganda Student Association. What's more, 78% of alumni have publicly expressed their intention to participate in elective politics through their own political parties, National Youth Councils, National Women's Council, local government and national political spaces in the 2026 general elections.

Venezuela

NIMD Venezuela's dialogue platform continued to unite women leaders and male allies from diverse political parties and sectors, all dedicated to advancing gender equality in political participation and representation. In 2024, this group developed a shared identity and advocacy strategy to guide their ongoing work, outlining plans to explore further opportunities for joint advocacy activities. As NIMD concluded our programme in March 2024, we are proud to leave behind a strong group ready to expand its impact and continue breaking down barriers to women's participation in decision-making spaces across political, trade union and social sectors.



Women Peace Ambassadors make their voices heard in Myanmar



Since 2019, amid the immense challenges of civil war, a small group of determined Women Peace Ambassadors has been actively engaging communities within Myanmar's Shan State - raising awareness, challenging mindsets and advocating for lasting change.

Drawing on NIMD trainings, this growing group of lawyers, civil rights activists and political party members has passed knowledge on to over 1,000 community, youth and women leaders. This cascading approach shows how determined action, even by a few, can build momentum – fostering inclusive communities and amplifying women's voices in spaces where they have historically been excluded.

The work of a Woman Peace Ambassador is diverse and multifaceted. Beyond trainings, they also provide legal advice, conduct research and inspire other women to speak out. Many have become trusted leaders, taking on roles in resolving disputes within their communities.

Together, their efforts have a profound impact, strengthening Myanmar's path towards a democracy where rights are respected and all voices are heard.

A cascading impact: The Women Peace Ambassador Network in numbers (as of June 2024)

Number of people trained by Women Peace Ambassadors

1065

Legal cases related to Women, Peace and Security
handled by Women Peace Ambassadors

19

Local disputes mediated by Women Peace Ambassadors
since 2022

37



Noticed and heard

“I am a former Chair of a political party in Shan State”, another participant told us recently. “Nowadays I work as a lawyer. I have served as a Women Peace Ambassador for six years. I have attended so many NIMD trainings that I’ve lost count. They are the reason I feel so empowered to advocate for women’s rights in the civil society organization I work for”, she says.

She recounts that, due to her knowledge on democracy and conflict resolution, she and other Women Peace Ambassadors now hold leading positions in their communities. Villagers come to them to ask if they can address certain issues, solve problems or mediate in disputes.

In this way, women’s voices are being heard for the first time. “Before my ambassadorship the men in my community didn’t notice me. Now I feel seen, heard and respected! My knowledge is being acknowledged. Male villagers gave me the space to take up my leading role. I feel more confident when I speak in public about women’s rights and gender equality.”

Indeed, a crucial part of the Women Peace Ambassadors’ work is engaging both men and women in discussions on women’s political participation in peace and security. Change can only take root if all groups are invested, and the Women Peace Ambassadors actively invite men to join trainings and take up their important role as advocates for women’s rights in politics.

Inspiration

Today the Women Peace Ambassadors stand up with courage to speak in their villages and communities, like one freelance trainer who raises awareness on gender and equality through her work. With pride, this political party member tells us about her experiences. “I’ve been a Women Peace Ambassador since the end of 2023. Ever since I attended eleven trainings on democratization, conflict resolution, and Women, Peace and Security. Thanks to the work of NIMD, I feel empowered to advocate for equal rights. I am inspired by NIMD’s teachings, which I also use in my own training programmes.”

While she acknowledges that her messages have also met resistance, especially among older generations, she is also happy for the chance to engage with those who hold different views. And she values the opportunity to sow seeds of change among young people, who are more open to rethinking traditional gender roles. “I have also gained ideas to solve conflict situations in my community and I am better able to deal with conflicts in my personal life. I learned to have respect for other ideologies and that all people have their own, different rights.”

This Women Peace Ambassador is thankful for her new opportunities. “Thanks to NIMD, I no longer feel limited in my abilities. I have been able to improve my skills and knowledge and now I deliver them to my community. NIMD’s networking events helped me and my trainings a lot!”

Vitamin shot

Another Woman Peace Ambassador describes her personal growth, having started out as someone who was shy to speak up. “Currently, I advocate for women’s rights and gender equality, and I do so without fear of those who disagree. As a member of the Shan State Council, a position I was able to get thanks to NIMD’s trainings, I initiate talks about implementing a federal democracy.”

Her ambassadorship brought her much more than she had anticipated beforehand.

“I do see changes in my environment towards me. I have gained the trust of my community, because I get things done. When our area flooded in October, I arranged humanitarian aid to be delivered to my village. I feel the change in my community. It is as though I got a vitamin shot from NIMD. I just want to get the energy going.”

Committed to an inclusive society

The work of the Women Peace Ambassadors is not easy. The armed conflict is an everyday presence in their lives and work. They also face practical challenges like travel restrictions and the recurring lack of internet and telephone accessibility.

Despite this, they remain committed to a better, more inclusive society. Their success motivates us to continue our support. We believe that we can make small steps towards a different political system where women fully contribute to the democratic peace-making processes in Myanmar.

NIMD’s work on amplifying women’s voices in politics and peacebuilding in Myanmar

Diverse voices are critical for lasting peace and democracy. Yet, Myanmar’s civil war and the current political landscape offer limited room for women to take up leadership roles in state- and peacebuilding efforts. That’s why, in 2019, we set up the Women Peace Ambassador Network.

As part of the [LEAP4Peace programme](#), funded by the [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), we provide ongoing support to this network. Our specialized training sessions cover democratization, Women Peace and Security, engaging men, peace processes in Myanmar, conflict resolution, political ideologies, mediation training and mindfulness. We believe it is crucial for the Ambassadors to share knowledge and experiences. That’s why we also create safe spaces where they can engage with and uplift one another.



Our Themes

At NIMD, we strive to promote peaceful, just and inclusive democracies worldwide.

We do this by fostering trust and respectful dialogue between politicians, political parties, civil society and citizens. We bring people closer to their elected representatives; and we bring politicians together to collaborate across political divides.

NIMD deeply believes that, by building more equal and peaceful societies, and tackling the root causes of global challenges, we can foster a more stable, inclusive and prosperous world for everyone.

At the heart of all our work is the principle of inclusiveness: we strive to equip people – from traditionally marginalized groups to established politicians – with the skills, knowledge and networks to meaningfully participate in politics. Because, at NIMD, we passionately believe that societies can only thrive when all voices are heard.

Our work broadly falls into five categories or themes – Dialogue, Democracy Education, Women in Politics, Youth in Politics and Strengthening Democratic Infrastructure.



Our Approach

At NIMD, we believe that democracy starts with dialogue. We know from experience that when different political groups come together in dialogue – with each other, with civil society, or with their population in general – a country has a much greater chance of implementing reform, forging lasting peace, and cultivating a thriving inclusive democracy. Through our dialogue initiatives, we aim to inspire trust and consensus between political parties and other political actors. In addition, we foster political responsiveness and trust in state institutions by building connections between politicians and the people they represent.

Find out more about our approach to [dialogue](#).

"Genuine dialogue demands bravery. It requires accepting the other as a legitimate partner for conversation – even if their opinions, beliefs and behaviour go against or even threaten everything you believe in. This is no task for the timid."

Dr Violet Benneker, NIMD Dialogue Lead

Dialogue

Our work in 2024:

2024 was a year of consolidation and strengthening for our dialogue programmes. For us, a key focus was on nurturing our network of dialogue facilitators. Their skills and experience are what sets our dialogue interventions apart. These skilled facilitators ensure that each NIMD dialogue intervention is responsive to the specific needs and goals of the people we work with, and sensitive to political dynamics in their country.

Some of the highlights from 2024 include:

- Significant progress in peer learning within our worldwide network of dialogue facilitators, ensuring that their knowledge, challenges and innovations are shared across programmes. One example is a regional exchange held in Latin America, bringing together dialogue facilitators to learn from one another's experiences.
- Development and launch of a new training module for setting up an intergenerational dialogue process. This module provides practical guidance on how to get the most out of exchanges between young (aspiring) politicians and changemakers, and more established politicians, building trust across generational divides.
- Across our programmes, a continued focus on building trust and enabling change through dialogue. On Sint Eustatius, for example, we supported the return of all democratic structures to the island through the NIMD-facilitated Political Dialogue Platform Statia. This safe space allowed political representatives to engage in dialogue, and strengthen democratic practice and culture. And, in Colombia, NIMD and our partners organized a series of dialogue and consultation forums to ensure that women's diverse voices were heard in the consultative period preceding the country's long-awaited National Action Plan 1325.

Dialogue in numbers:

Political parties/
associations participating:

337

Dialogue meetings held:

153

Civil society organizations
participating:

368

Legislative proposals
developed:

65

Building on our activities in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to:

- Roll out our new mentorship programme, which will equip experienced dialogue facilitators with the skills and tools to become effective mentors for the next generation of facilitators. By strengthening their ability to guide, support and inspire others, the training helps ensure that our approach to dialogue continues to grow and adapt through shared learning.
- Sustain our efforts to build trust and foster stability through dialogue, and document best practices and lessons learned to strengthen our future work.





Our Approach

At NIMD, we foster an inclusive democratic culture through democracy education. We work with political leaders, aspiring politicians and civil society to help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to contribute meaningfully to their democracy. Our Democracy Education initiatives include games, trainings, talks, campaigns, festivals and our renowned Democracy Schools. This multifaceted approach helps build a network of people committed to working across political divides, fostering change and advancing inclusive, responsive democracy.

Find out more about our approach to [Democracy Education](#).

"Though no two Democracy Schools are the same, they all share one purpose: to help participants understand themselves as changemakers, negotiate their role within their context, connect across divides and build more inclusive democracies."

Reem Judeh, NIMD Democracy Education Lead

Democracy Education

Our work in 2024:

Based on learnings from across our network and the findings of our 2023 Democracy Tracer study, 2024 was a year of consolidation and harmonization for our Democracy School programmes. We took time to reflect on what makes our Democracy Schools unique; and what sets them apart from other democracy education initiatives.

In response to growing demand for our Democracy School programmes, we used these reflections to develop a practical guideline with step-by-step support for setting up an NIMD Democracy School. Launched across all our offices, the guideline emphasizes the importance of trustbuilding to our approach. It includes information on how to create a safe space; and select participants based on their commitment to democracy and change. This has been an important step to help us further harmonize while preserving the tailor-made curriculums and objectives that make each Democracy School unique.

Other highlights of our work in 2024 include:

- The launch of our new Democracy School in Kenya, bringing together young (aspiring) leaders from political parties, civil society organizations and academia, with a special focus on youth from under-represented groups and those living with disabilities.
- Strong investment in linking our Democracy Schools to other interventions within our programmes. Whilst ensuring that our Schools contribute holistically to our impact within a country, this also creates new opportunities for our Democracy School alumni. For example, across multiple programmes, we invite young participants or alumni to intergenerational dialogues with more established politicians. Such dialogues build trust across generational divides within politics; ensure the voice of young changemakers are heard; and provide a valuable chance for our participants to expand their networks.



Democracy Education in numbers:

2024 Graduates:

1312

Countries with a Democracy
School:

15

Building on our activities in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to:

- Continue to investigate new avenues for supporting our alumni networks, both through increased opportunities for ongoing trustbuilding and networking, and by offering tailored support as they take action to drive change.
- Further facilitate mutual learning between our programme countries. This takes two forms. Firstly, we will continue to arrange exchanges and learning events for NIMD offices and partners. Second, we aim to encourage more regional cooperation among Democracy School students and alumni. Our first regional Democracy School network, with a hub based in Ethiopia, is planned for the end of 2025.



Our Approach

At NIMD, we know that the political participation of women is essential for any inclusive and responsive democracy. Women, in all their diversity, must have the chance to exercise their political rights and meaningfully participate in all political decision-making. That's why we aim to inspire change at different levels: bringing more women to the policy-making table; stimulating a more inclusive political culture; and contributing to changing the rules of the game.

Find out more about our approach to promote the participation of **women in politics**.

"At NIMD, we recognize that gender parity in politics – while an ambitious goal – is not enough on its own. We also tackle the complex, gender-related challenges within political systems to dismantle obstacles and create space for women's meaningful participation."

Floortje Klijn, NIMD Women in Politics Lead

Women in Politics

Our work in 2024:

For the past decade, NIMD has been advancing women's political participation, championing diversity and inclusivity as the cornerstone of a thriving democracy.

Today, the global landscape is shifting in ways that profoundly impact the progress made for women in politics. The pushback against democracy, coupled with the rise of autocratic regimes, is stalling – and, in many cases, actively rolling back – the gains made in gender equality. The political environment has become increasingly polarized, with divisive gendered discourse creating new barriers for women seeking to enter and thrive in politics.

In 2024, NIMD sought to strengthen its interventions and methodologies, deepening our understanding of the complex nature of violence against women in politics – addressing its root causes and adapting to emerging threats, by:

- Further refining our Political Economy Analysis – a tool we use to understand political processes and design effective interventions, fully integrating a gender perspective lens to better address the complex political dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. For example, a recent political economy analysis in Liberia explored how family and clan networks, and political marriage, can influence political participation. This marked a shift toward more context-sensitive, politically informed gender work, which challenges underlying power structures.
- Advancing our internal knowledge on violence against women in politics as a multidimensional issue. This includes the growing threat of amplified bias and online violence powered by AI.
- Launching a joint publication as part of the [LEAP4Peace Consortium](#), combining practical insights and proven strategies from our network, to offer a clear roadmap for committed policymakers and stakeholders.
- Continuing to create a safer, more supportive environment for women in politics across our programmes. In Colombia, for example, we trained the Ministry of Interior's Unit Responsible for Electoral Transparency to better identify cases of violence against women in politics. Since the training, the number of cases reported has increased from 9 to 61.

Women's political participation in numbers

Women trained in political skills:

1473

Women graduates from our
Democracy Schools:

57%

Building on our activities in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to:

- Invest further in our network's understanding of gendered political dynamics and their impact on underrepresented groups, with a particular focus on violence against women in politics.
- Continue to support women-led organizations in peace processes around the world as part of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.





Our Approach

At NIMD, we work to ensure that young people not only have a seat at the table, but can also meaningfully engage in the decision-making process. We help them build the knowledge, skills and networks to navigate the political sphere. We also create more space for youth participation by shifting mindsets, garnering political will and securing commitment from governments, politicians, political parties, civil society, development organizations, the private sector and the media.

Find out more about our approach to promoting the participation of [youth in politics](#).

"Today, the world has the largest generation of young people it has ever seen. This presents immense potential for democracy, with each young person bringing new ideas and new energy."

Roxanne van der Bliek, NIMD Youth Political Participation Lead

Youth in Politics

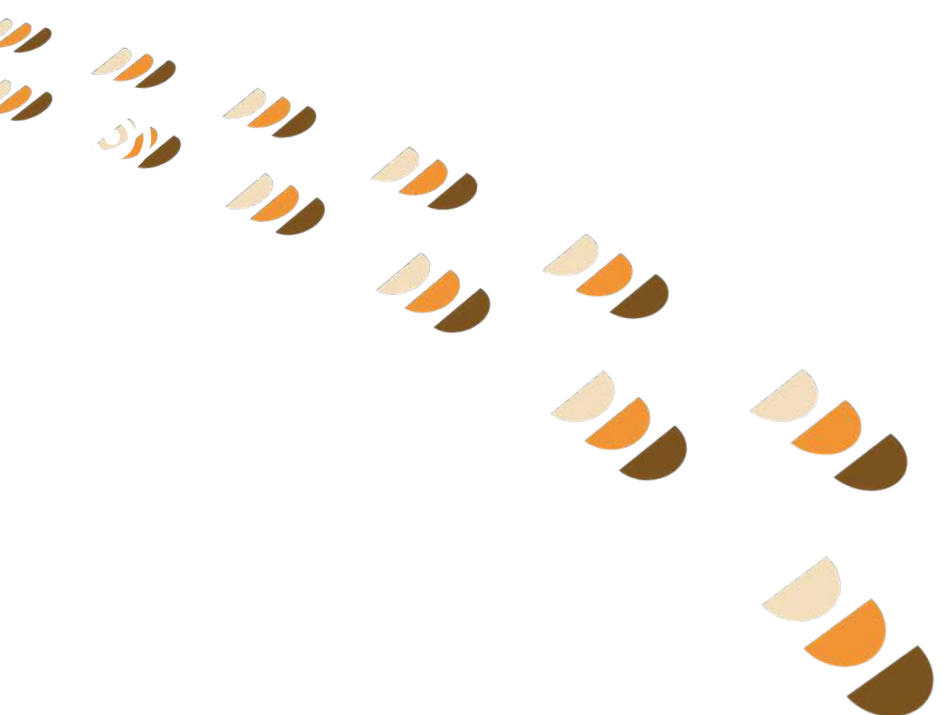
Our work in 2024:

In 2024, one of our main priorities was fostering learning exchanges across our network. We have such a wealth of knowledge within NIMD. Indeed, every one of our programmes engages young people. And each diverse context brings unique challenges and opportunities. By sharing experiences and insights, we sharpened our understanding and expanded our toolbox for supporting youth in politics, enabling us to grow further together and continue innovating.

At the same time, we focused on exploring different ways to enhance young people's participation in politics and presenting our work to a broader audience, to raise awareness and support for young people in politics.

In 2024, some of the highlights of our work include:

- Our learning event on Youth in Politics and Democracy Education, which created space for mutual learning and strategizing among the [Power of Dialogue](#) network in Tunisia. Over several sessions, we deepened our understanding of youth participation, particularly innovative youth dialogue approaches.
- The launch of a cross-country collection of case studies entitled '[The Voice of Youth at the Table](#)'. Developed together with our partners, the [Centre des Etudes Méditerranéennes et Internationales](#) (CEMI) and [Akina Mama wa Afrika](#), this report the shared global challenges and lessons learned by NIMD and our partners across six countries.
- Our side event to the High-Level Political Forum in New York, jointly organized by NIMD, the Dutch Permanent Representation to the UN and the UN Youth Office, where a group of young participants from our Democracy Schools made their voices heard as speakers.
- Our new NIMD Youth Approach in Kenya, which comprises a more refined youth strategy and adapts programme activities to better reflect the context and needs of young people in Kenya.
- Continued exploration of new innovative ways to enhance young people's potential to influence public policy. In El Salvador, for example, our dialogues between youth environmental organizations and local government led to the co-creation of a series of agendas to protect environmental rights.
- A deepened understanding of young people as potential contributors to democratic stability. In Liberia, for example, NIMD's dialogue between political party youth wings was a rare space for trust-building across party lines. The result was a jointly signed peace pact; a powerful demonstration of youth leadership and cross-party commitment to peaceful elections amid ongoing electoral violence.



Building on our activities in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to:

- Develop an internal training module on intergenerational dialogue to harmonize our approach across our programmes and harness the full potential of this powerful tool to bridge generational divides in politics.
- Take time to reflect on – and learn from – what makes our work on youth unique. These insights will feed into a practical NIMD guide for supporting youth participation in politics.

Youth Political Participation in numbers:

Democracy School graduates under 35:

76%





Our Approach

At NIMD, we strive to ensure that politics is inclusive and politicians are held accountable by the people. We support politicians and political institutions as they develop the skills, knowledge and mindsets needed to respond to their societies' needs. We also work to give the population a meaningful voice through open dialogue with their representatives. With these requirements in place, trust can grow between the people and their political leaders, strengthening the foundations of responsive democracy.

Find out more about our approach to supporting [responsive politics](#).

"We believe that democracy thrives when civic and political actors can engage. It is crucial that politicians are inclusive, transparent and accountable to citizens. These ideals are at the heart of responsive politics. They contribute to fostering trust between people and politics, which is a cornerstone of resilient democracies."

Tayuh Ngeenge, NIMD Lead for Responsive Politics

Supporting Responsive Politics

Our work in 2024:

Since the very beginning of our work in 2000, supporting responsive politics has been central to what we do. That's why, in 2023, we developed a framework paper to provide both a conceptual understanding of this work, and a comprehensive review of our efforts to support political actors in their efforts to be more responsive. In 2024, we built on that work by deepening our understanding of how NIMD and its partners have put the framework's key pillars into practice.

This learning is crucial because it helps us understand what works, what doesn't, and why. By reflecting on our own practice and gathering insights from different contexts, we can sharpen our strategies and make our support to political actors more effective. It also allows us to respond to changing political realities with approaches that are grounded in evidence and shaped by experience.

In 2024, some of the highlights of our work include:

- The start of our work on the first spin-off product from the conceptual framework: A comparative lessons-learned paper examining how NIMD and its partners have promoted responsive politics through accountability initiatives in Niger, Guatemala and Kenya.
- Support to election processes worldwide. During what is widely referred to as the "year of elections", with an unprecedented number of national elections around the world, we strived to increase voter engagement and information. This included our Jordanian Voter Advice Application, which gave voters clearer insight into party agendas and priorities, encouraging political engagement based on concrete policy positions.
- Through our programmes, we continued to expand on the concept of responsive politics outlined in our framework, not just as accountable governance, but as inclusive policymaking that actively involves citizens. For example, NIMD Ethiopia developed an interactive app to boost citizen participation and engagement with members of the Lower House of Parliament.

Supporting responsive politics in numbers

Number of political parties/associations trained:

232

Building on our activities in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to:

- Use our 2024 learnings as a stepping stone to develop more practical tools for our programmes, which can be adapted to each office's unique contexts.
- Continue exploring technology as a tool to enhance political communication.
- Finalize, publish and disseminate within the NIMD network the first spin-off product from the conceptual framework.
- Launch a second spin-off paper focusing on inclusion and participation within NIMD, and drawing valuable lessons from recent experiences. This paper will highlight how meaningful citizen engagement strengthens responsive politics and provide practical guidance for enhancing inclusiveness in politics.



NIMD in Uganda: Channelling youth leadership for democratic change



A new chapter in a long-standing commitment

Having worked in Uganda for over a decade, NIMD has built a reputation for fostering trust and strengthening democratic processes. Our early work focused on dialogue; bringing different actors to the table to help lay the foundation for a deeper democracy.

While dialogue remains central to our approach in Uganda, we have also developed a new strategic focus toward a powerful driver of change: youth.

Our dedication to youth in politics

Uganda is the second youngest country in the world, with a vibrant, politically engaged youth population. Across the country, youth leaders are already shaping democracy through advocacy and activism on electoral reform, unemployment and human rights. And so, we have turned our focus to harnessing this power, and opening up pathways for young people to actively shape their democracy.

"In Uganda, youth aren't just the future of democracy; they are the majority. Investing in them is one of the most powerful ways to create lasting impact."

Primus Bahiigi, NIMD Uganda Director

We believe that even small-scale efforts, when carefully designed, can have a real impact. In a country with millions of engaged young citizens, supporting even a small group of committed and capable young people can catalyze waves of change that go far beyond individual actions.



The Uganda Democracy Academy in 2024

One of our key activities is the Uganda Democracy Academy, where young people gain the knowledge, skills and networks to uphold democratic values and drive long-term change.

The Democracy Academy itself may seem small. But our impact doesn't come from scale; it comes from strategy. Our key is in targeting motivated democracy advocates from diverse backgrounds. We select participants with care, based on demonstrated potential, a commitment to democratic values, and the ability to lead by example. By identifying those who can become catalysts in their communities, we make a strategic and far-reaching investment in Uganda's democratic future.

Indeed, in 2024 alumni have already taken up leadership roles in their communities, including Chair of Youth Councillors in Buganda and Vice President of the Uganda Student Association. What's more, 78% of the alumni have publicly expressed their intention to participate in elective politics through their own political parties, National Youth Councils, National Women's Council, local government and national political spaces in the 2026 general elections.

And these are just the early signs of a broader shift. With every graduate who steps into public life, facilitates dialogue or champions democratic reform, the influence of the Academy multiplies.

"UDA has made us realize we should and can change from transactional leaders to transformative leaders."

Uganda Democracy Academy participant



An emphasis on dialogue

In line with NIMD's strong and enduring belief in dialogue and trustbuilding, the Uganda Democracy Academy also places a strong emphasis on collaboration, trust building and respect.

Our participants represent seven political parties and various national youth structures from across Uganda – bringing different political and ideological perspectives. The intense 18-day Democracy Academy retreat – alongside extracurricular activities such as nature walks and campfire conversations – foster solidarity and networking among this diverse group of participants.

Indeed, as the course has unfolded, participants have reported being "united in diversity," with political party and regional differences giving way to trust and respect.

"Although we are from different political parties and opinions, we can have discussions, agree on solutions, and more importantly, see each other as human beings"

Uganda Democracy Academy participant

This investment in trust is foundational to lasting democratic impact. While they enter the Academy as a group divided by difference, our participants leave with lasting connections; a belief in respectful collaboration across divides; and a strong network of well-informed, skilled and determined young people dedicated to working, not only alone but together, towards a more inclusive and responsive democracy in Uganda.

Opening doors for youth leadership

We also ensure that young leaders can put their skills into practice through platforms like the Multiparty Youth Forum: a platform for cross-party collaboration among young civic and political leaders.

Through this, along with our intergenerational dialogues between established politicians and young leaders, we're creating real opportunities for youth to shape the political landscape – from uniting their voices behind youth initiatives, to presenting proposals which enhance the meaningful political participation of young people.

Looking ahead: small steps, lasting change

NIMD's work in Uganda is a testament to the power of starting small but thinking big. By supporting young democracy champions, we are helping plant the seeds of a political culture grounded in dialogue and consensus across political divides.

That's the vision behind our work, and the reason we'll continue to walk alongside Uganda's young changemakers, one step at a time.

The Uganda Democracy Academy (UDA) is implemented by NIMD with support from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Demo Finland. UDA is led by WYDE Civic Engagement and powered by the European Union and the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD).



Our organization:

NIMD's Commitment to Equality, Integrity and our People



At NIMD, we know that our impact relies on the passion, knowledge, and expertise of the people we work with. We are proud of our extensive global network of country offices and partners, all working towards the vital goal of establishing responsive democratic systems.

We therefore strive to create a safe, open and respectful working environment for all our colleagues; one that is based on integrity and inclusiveness.

As of the end of 2024, NIMD has 15 country offices in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Somalia and Uganda. Our head office is based in the Netherlands. The number of NIMD employees worldwide is 142.



Integrity

NIMD is dedicated to upholding integrity within our organization – we expect all employees to act with openness and responsibility – showing respect, valuing diversity, and demonstrating honesty and accountability. This is how we foster a positive, safe, and inclusive environment for our employees, and ensure healthy and respectful relationships with our partners.

Our Integrity Policy and Code of Conduct are vital documents, which set out our values and expectations. The key principle embedded in these documents is that every person working for and with NIMD will be treated with respect and dignity. We share these documents at the start of any employment relationship, and they are available on our website.

We also recognize that there are two sides to integrity within any organization. While our policies provide an important starting point, true integrity also goes beyond rules, guidelines or policies. That is why we actively foster ongoing conversations about integrity.

Integrity refresher

In order to keep integrity at the heart of our work, NIMD held our annual Integrity Refresher event for staff in the Netherlands. Whilst initially scheduled for 2024, this event was held in March 2025 due to planning and logistical challenges.

At this event, we trialled the Dilemmas Game – developed in-house to foster open discussions around integrity – which presents hypothetical scenarios and encourages participants to explore how they would respond.

Our Integrity Refresher event also served as a trial run for future plans to roll the event out to NIMD offices around the globe. Additionally, we explored different alternatives to the event – including workshops and integrating integrity topics into weekly staff meetings. Such alternatives will offer NIMD’s country offices the opportunity to integrate more conversations on integrity into their ways of working, in a manner that fits their context and needs.

Learning and adapting

At NIMD, we are proud of our worldwide network of country offices and partners. We are also committed to our principle of decentralization – which means that decisions and leadership are not concentrated at our headquarters, but shared across our network. This approach allows our country teams to lead in shaping programmes that respond to their specific political, social and cultural realities. It reflects our belief that those closest to the context are best placed to drive meaningful and sustainable change.

In order to encourage mutual learning among our country offices, and ensure the wealth of knowledge and experience is shared, we organize regular learning events for our network.

In 2024, we also conducted a capacity scan to assess resources and needs within all NIMD country offices, including how integrity and our Code of Conduct are embedded in each office’s operations and culture.

This was complemented with Leadership Training, both for our Country Office Directors and the teams in each country. The training took the form of both in-person coaching sessions and virtual sessions conducted by an external trainer. We hope that, by bringing our global teams together to learn and develop, we also provide an environment where they can solve issues together, build team spirit and create the foundations for ongoing collaboration and mutual learning.



Gender and diversity

NIMD is dedicated to ensuring that all voices are heard in politics around the world. Our firm belief in equality and diversity is also reflected within our organization. We foster a culture that prioritizes respect and inclusion among colleagues, and we work to embed an awareness of diversity in our decision-making and programme design. As part of this commitment, we reviewed our standard vacancy text in 2024 to ensure that it clearly states that NIMD is an equal opportunities employer. This helps ensure our recruitment processes reflect our values and attract a diverse pool of candidates.

Confidential Counsellors

NIMD has three Confidential Counsellors at Headquarters (two internal and one external).

The task of the Confidential Counsellors is to guide and support staff with questions and complaints related to unwanted behaviour such as sexual intimidation, aggression and violence, bullying and discrimination.

In 2024, there were no reports to the Confidential Counsellors at Headquarters.

A more detailed overview of our governance and organizational structure will be available as of 15 August 2025 in our Financial Report 2024 (www.nimd.org)



Our 2024 funding partners

- **Canadian Government**
- **Demo Finland**
- **European Union**
- **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office**
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands**
- **Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands**
- **National Endowment for Democracy**
- **Open Society Foundations**
- **Openbaar Lichaam Sint Eustatius**
- **Rockefeller Brothers Fund**
- **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency**
- **Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs**
- **United Nations Development Program**
- **United Nations Peacebuilding Fund**
- **UN Women**
- **United States Agency for International Development**
- **United States Institute of Peace**
- **Women Peace & Humanitarian Fund**

NIMD's audited financial figures for 2024 – including income, expenditure and results – will be available as of 15 August 2025 in our Financial Report 2024 at www.nimd.org.



Democracy starts with dialogue.