# WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PEACE

## HOW NIMD ADVANCES THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

Netherlands Institute for
**Multiparty Democracy**

LESSONS LEARNED
**2021-2025**

# CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

The political participation of women, in all their diversity, is essential for inclusive and peaceful societies. Women are powerful agents of change and political actors who contribute to building sustainable peace and inclusive democracies. The evidence shows that peace processes are more likely to result in an agreement, and peace is more likely to be sustainable, when women have participated. Women's political representation is also a key indicator of peace and stability in post-conflict states. Recent evidence shows that local women's participation in and influence on both formal peace processes (Track I) and the informal processes that feed into them (Track II) significantly increases women's representation in politics after conflict, specifically in intrastate conflicts.

Furthermore, inclusive and representative peace processes have the potential to be pivotal moments for countries and societies, when these address the root causes of conflict. Peace negotiations and agreements can reshape the political system and expand access to politics for underrepresented groups, including for women. Peace processes have the potential to increase women's political representation, particularly when such processes are inclusive. Hence the importance of supporting and investing in local women's participation and influence in these decision-making spaces.

Despite all the evidence above, women continue to be excluded from peace negotiations, politics and most formal decision-making spaces. NIMD strives to address this gap. From 2021 to 2025, NIMD led the LEAP4Peace programme, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs under its Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Grant. LEAP4Peace aimed to build a conducive environment for women's full and meaningful participation in politics and peace in Burundi, Colombia and Myanmar. Since 2021, NIMD has also been an INGO partner of the Rapid Response Window (RRW) of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, and has provided more than 14 grants to women's organizations to support their political advocacy to influence peace negotiations (Track I and Track II) and the implementation of peace agreements.

This track record presents results, success factors and lessons learned from these programmes, with the objective of informing future programming. By highlighting the value of women's meaningful participation in peace processes and political decision-making, we aim to build a strong case for continued investment in women's leadership in peace and politics.

## CONTEXT

Twenty-five years ago, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, recognized the critical role women play in peacebuilding. Despite the efforts of women leaders, peacebuilders and women's organizations across the globe and in every conflict, the advancement of the WPS is under threat. The current global context is marked by an unprecedented increase in authoritarianism, armed conflict and militarization. This is coupled with increased backlash against gender equality, and women's and LGBTQI+ rights. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests a link between anti-gender backlash and authoritarianism, with autocratic and anti-democratic regimes often relying on traditionalist restrictive gender norms and discourse, and appealing for the return of traditional gender hierarchies. As a result, women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, politicians and social leaders are disproportionately affected by discrimination, gender bias and violence; strategies used to silence their advocacy and prevent their participation in public life.

A widespread decrease in international funding for aid, development and democratic support, coupled with a general de-prioritization of gender equality, has resulted in less support for, and investment in, women's networks, women's organizations, and critical tools and platforms to advance WPS and to support women's participation in peace. Today, fewer conflicts are being resolved through peaceful means and, when peace talks do occur, these are mostly taking place in closed formats and are often focused on transactional or partial agreements. This also results in fewer opportunities for women to influence and engage in peace.

In terms of political participation, women continue to be consistently underrepresented due to gender discrimination and bias. In 2024, the average percentage of women representatives in the lower or single house of the legislature increased by less than one percentage point, standing at roughly 26% in countries which held elections. These numbers are even lower in conflict-affected countries. Globally, the overall proportion of women in parliament has yet to surpass 27%, dropping to just 21% in conflict-affected states.

The main barriers to women's participation in politics still persist. Although these are context-specific, NIMD identifies common factors across its programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America: capacity barriers (limited access to knowledge, lack of confidence); economic barriers (lack of access and control over resources, limited access to campaign financing, limited resources from political parties and movements); cultural barriers (restrictive gender norms, gender stereotypes, unequal distribution of power between men and women, violence against women in politics); and institutional barriers (legal architecture that is not gender responsive or transformative).

Photo by Leonardo Basso on Unsplash

# The WPS Agenda offers a framework to advance women's participation in peace, politics and security

**Women, Peace and Security** The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda is the name for a set of UN Security Council resolutions around women's participation in peace and security. Resolution 1325 recognizes and codifies that women are essential to peace and security and urges countries to take urgent action to ensure women's meaningful contribution. WPS is composed of four pillars: **participation**, conflict prevention, protection, and relief and recovery.

The WPS agenda includes additional key resolutions focused on the pillar of participation such as:

- Resolution 1889: Urges Member States, international and regional organizations to take further measures **to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes** […] including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of recovery processes, through […] promoting women's leadership and capacity to engage in aid management and planning, supporting women's organizations, and countering negative societal attitudes about women's capacity to participate equally.

- Resolution 2122: Further expresses its intention to include provisions to facilitate women's full participation and protection in: election preparation and political processes, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, security sector and judicial reforms, and wider post-conflict reconstruction processes where these are mandated tasks within the mission.

**WPS resolutions offer a normative framework to advance women's participation and hold states accountable. More than 112 countries have adopted National Action Plans for the implementation of the WPS agenda. These represent opportunities to support and motivate states to fulfill their commitments regarding women's participation in peace and politics.**
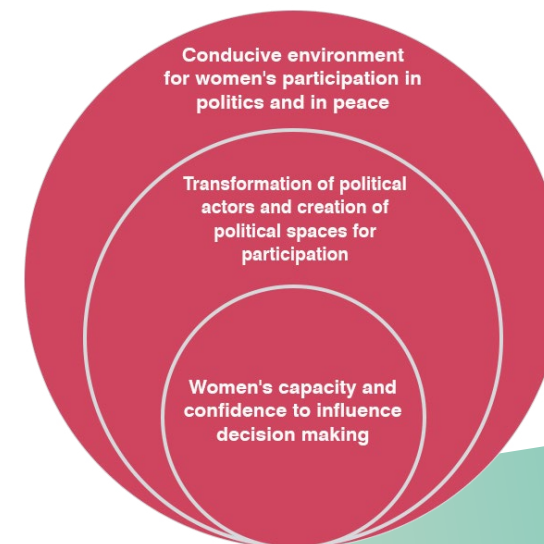
# NIMD's strategies

## to increase the participation and influence of women in politics and peace

For the past decade, NIMD has been at the forefront of advancing women's political participation, championing diversity and inclusivity as the cornerstone of a thriving democracy. NIMD's approach recognizes that women are not a homogeneous group and their needs and priorities might vary. This also means recognizing the different roles of women's leadership in peace and politics and therefore working with a variety of key actors, including political parties, political institutions, women politicians, women's caucuses, women peacebuilders and women civil society organizations. This approach is also based on the premise that peacebuilding is political, and women's participation and influence in peace and security must therefore be achieved by both supporting women's political leadership and working with political institutions.

Over the past few years, NIMD has continued to strengthen its approach to ensure interventions are gender sensitive and responsive. Our work is informed by our analysis of how gender power dynamics operate in the realm of formal and informal politics, and our identification of the factors for exclusion and inclusion. Therefore, NIMD's approach includes different levels of intervention to ensure not only that women have strengthened capacity to engage in politics to sustain peace and more inclusive democracies, but also that the political actors and the environment are responsive and conducive to their meaningful participation.

Conducive environment for women's participation in politics and in peace

Transformation of political actors and creation of political spaces for participation

Women's capacity and confidence to influence decision making

# NIMD'S INTERVENTION APPROACH ON WOMEN IN POLITICS

## Strengthening the capacity and confidence of women to engage in politics and peacebuilding

Through democracy education (either in mixed Democracy Schools or women-only Democracy Schools), women social leaders, women interested in politics, women candidates, women party members and women in elected positions strengthen their capacity, skills and confidence to participate in politics.

## Transformation of political actors

In our work with political parties and political institutions (such as municipal assemblies, regional councils and national assemblies), NIMD supports the development of more inclusive and democratic structures. By creating multistakeholder and multiparty dialogue spaces for women and supporting women's caucuses, NIMD also provides an entry point for women to exchange experiences and build joint agendas. This can strengthen and support their leadership within their political parties and institutions, as well as enhancing advocacy within these institutions.

## Enabling a conducive environment

NIMD aims to go beyond representation and achieve women's meaningful participation and influence within decision-making spaces and processes. This requires a conducive environment. Our strategies include evidence-based policy influencing and technical assistance to support political and electoral systems in achieving gender parity; recognition of women's leadership, and support that responds to their specific priorities and needs; and the establishment of mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against women in politics. By challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes, NIMD also raises awareness of women's right to participate in and influence politics and peace.

# KEY RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM LEAP4PEACE AND THE RAPID RESPONSE WINDOW (RRW) OF THE WOMEN'S PEACE AND HUMANITARIAN FUND (WPHF)

## STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP THROUGH CONTEXT-SPECIFIC GENDER RESPONSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Through the LEAP4Peace programme, more than 3183 women strengthened their knowledge and skills to engage in political and decision-making spaces, and influence peace in their countries and communities. As part of our approach, NIMD tailors trainings and capacity-strengthening activities to the specific needs and priorities of diverse women.

Indeed, a key factor for success has been the **integration of intersectional and social inclusion approaches**, which engage women from different backgrounds, political affiliations, origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identities. Additionally, when designing capacity-strengthening activities, NIMD takes into account the specific leadership journey and needs of diverse women leaders and aspiring leaders.

Our trainings use innovative, context-specific and gender-responsive approaches to deliver key skills and knowledge surrounding politics, advocacy and gender equality.

More than **3183** women strengthened their knowledge and skills, through the LEAP4Peace rogramme.

# CONTEXT-SPECIFIC, GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMES IN ACTION

## COLOMBIA

In Colombia, many women play key roles in keeping social cohesion and positively transforming their communities as social leaders and peacebuilders, but don't engage in formal politics. To respond to this, NIMD's tailor-made training for women social leaders and emerging political leaders has helped to increase the number of women interested in engaging in politics.

These trainings were conducted in conflict-affected areas, with participation from women of diverse backgrounds, including women from indigenous communities, Afro-Colombian women, LGBTQI+ women, young women, social leaders and women engaged in political parties. To ensure accessibility and responsiveness to the participants' needs, these trainings employed practical strategies to take into account women's role as caretakers (due to the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between men and women) as well as their income-generating activities. The training spaces included daycare facilities so mothers could join. Additionally, trainings often took place during the weekends or at times when the participants would be able to attend without missing their income-generating activities.

The topics covered included key skills and knowledge on politics and political marketing, as well as gender equality and violence against women in politics. Since violence against women in politics is identified as one of the main barriers preventing women from engaging in politics in Colombia, a specific training on this topic was provided to women candidates. This training aimed to equip them with the necessary information, options to seek support and tools to develop their own care strategies for themselves, to ensure violence is not normalized as the cost for women to engage in politics.

The trainings were strategically planned before elections (parliamentary and local council elections in 2022 and local authorities elections in 2023). Around 30% of women trained later expressed their interest in engaging in the different electoral processes.

## MYANMAR

Another key success factor has been **the adaptation of training spaces and content to respond to the specific needs and concerns of women**. In Myanmar, despite the challenges posed by post-coup conditions, the LEAP4Peace programme remained committed to supporting women's participation and leadership in advancing WPS in the country. NIMD Myanmar and GEN facilitated online safe spaces for women leaders to receive training on digital security, WPS, federalism, democracy, advocacy strategy development, international justice, and more. These spaces were created with the specific safety concerns of the participants in mind, allowing them to join anonymously to protect their identities and reduce risk. Over time, these training spaces also became networking platforms, as trust started to consolidate among the participants. This strategy was complemented by in-person WPS forums held outside of Myanmar, bringing together women peacebuilders from the national and sub-national levels to exchange their experiences.

To date, workshops, seminars and training programmes have strengthened 132 women in leadership roles and enhanced their capacity across Myanmar's Kachin and Shan States.

**Investing in women's capacity, leadership and skills in conflict-affected and peacebuilding contexts is essential to ensure that women can shape political spaces and decisions to influence and sustain peace. Women engaged through LEAP4Peace have gained transformative tools to exercise their political and social leadership and, as shown in the section below, are using these tools to create a positive impact.**

# SUPPORTING WOMEN LEADERS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE WPS AGENDA, ENABLING THEM TO DRIVE THE TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR COMMUNITIES AND CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING PEACE

## LOCALIZATION OF THE NAP 1325 IN COLOMBIA

In November 2024, Colombia's first National Action Plan 1325 was approved. Among the UN member states that have a NAP, Colombia's development of its own plan stood out for its participatory nature. Women in all their diversity from different regions of the country engaged in community and regional forums, where they could voice their needs and priorities to advance the WPS Agenda in their communities and territories. The LEAP4Peace programme supported this process, holding consultations with 111 people, including young women and women signatories of the 2016 Peace Agreement to inform the NAP 1325 (67 women signatories and 5 men signatories; and 39 young women).

In these consultations, the participants from different regions of the country were able to dialogue with government representatives on their peace and security priorities. As result, a document containing their recommendations was submitted to the National Government.

Additionally, NIMD Colombia and GAPS provided advice and technical assistance for the drafting of the NAP, specifically surrounding issues related to governance, collaboration with civil society and monitoring.

NIMD's work did not stop with the approval of the NAP 1325 on WPS. The NAP now serves as a key tool for advocacy, allowing women to advance their participation in peace and politics in their communities and regions. Through LEAP4Peace, we have worked to increase the awareness and capacity of local women leaders and civil society organizations on WPS.

NIMD provided specific trainings on the WPS agenda and advocacy, with a particular emphasis on transparency and open data; the use of and access to public information; the analysis of evidence; the development of action plans to monitor the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement; and the development of proposals for integrating the NAP into local development plans.

As a result, women have an increased ownership of the WPS agenda and have started to advocate directly to local governments to include WPS priorities in their local development plans. Through their advocacy, supported by LEAP4Peace, **60 provisions directly linked to women's priorities on WPS were included in local development plans in Meta, Cauca and Bolívar.** Engaging in complementary partnerships with women's civil society organizations, such as Red Nacional de Mujeres and LIMPAL, has been essential for NIMD to be able to reach a higher number of grassroots women leaders and organizations in conflict-affected territories.

## SUPPORTING WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS TO DRIVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT

Also in Colombia, NIMD supported the local women-led organization Colectivo de Mujeres Enredhadas PorLaPaz (CMEPP) via the RRW, providing strategic resources and support to influence the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement within their territories. **In Vista Hermosa, Meta, where CMEPP implemented the project, two women-led CSOs (Veeduria Colectiva and AMUPAP organization, comprising 35 representatives) joined the Community Table for Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDET).**

**These decision-making spaces are traditionally composed mostly or exclusively of men. And, based on research conducted by CMEPP, women reported being discriminated against in these spaces and suffering symbolic violence when they attempted to participate.**

**The work of CMEPP, increased women's participation in these decision-making mechanisms for the local implementation of the final 2016 Peace Agreement.** This is essential for the inclusion of a gender perspective and gender provisions within the implementation of key aspects of rural local development (central in the Peace Agreement, as the origins of the conflict are linked to land use and rural reform). In this way, women are able to engage as agents of change in their territories and not only as victims of the conflict.

CMEPP achieved recognition and access to national networks and stakeholders. **Crucially, a dialogue space was created between CMEPP and the Agency for Territory Renewal (ART), in charge of the development of PDETs.** For example, CMEPP participated in a meeting with regional and national authorities to follow up the regional plans.

**CMEPP achieved recognition and access to national networks.**

## WOMEN ADVANCING THE WPS AGENDA IN MYANMAR

**Women peacebuilders are advocating for women's participation in decision-making and democratic processes at the local and regional levels.** Some notable approaches of women peacebuilders supported by GEN in Myanmar include establishing dialogue platforms in displaced communities; utilizing social media to raise awareness on gender equality and democracy; and facilitating community dialogues and reconciliation processes. Women Peace Ambassadors supported by NIMD Myanmar are coordinating humanitarian activities in their communities, for example coordinating a response to the arrival of internally displaced persons, and leading training and awareness-raising sessions on peacebuilding within their communities. They also contribute to conflict resolution and mediation, and directly engage with Ethnic Armed Organizations and other civil society partners and stakeholders.

LEAP4Peace has also played an important role in facilitating network-building among women peacebuilders. Through the networks supported by NIMD, peacebuilders exchange information on the changing dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding initiatives on the ground; share strategies for their political activism; take measures to ensure their safety; and have consolidated an active support network. In the case of GEN, WPS forums have also offered opportunities for women peacebuilders to connect with peacebuilders from other conflict-affected countries such as Syria, Ethiopia and Nigeria to share experiences and protection strategies; discuss how to effectively advance the implementation of WPS; and plan collective efforts.

**These experiences highlight the importance of building partnerships with women's organizations at all levels and providing strategic support to women's advocacy efforts at the grassroots level. The experiences of Colombia and Myanmar provide a clear example of the importance of investing in women's leadership amidst conflict. As women transforming their regions in both Colombia and Myanmar attest, they are resisting for democracy and fighting for gender equality.**

# FOSTERING INCLUSIVE NETWORKS AND CULTIVATING PARTICIPATORY DIALOGUE SPACES THAT ARE CONTEXT-SPECIFIC AND RESPONSIVE TO DIVERSE WOMEN'S NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Multiparty women's spaces and multi-stakeholder safe spaces in Burundi, Myanmar and Colombia have significantly **enhanced the visibility, perceived legitimacy and capacities of women politicians and peacebuilders.** Within the LEAP4Peace programme, these spaces have been designed and implemented taking into account the specificities of each context and the key barriers that prevent women's participation in politics and peacebuilding.

## BUILDING SAFE SPACES IN MYANMAR

NIMD Myanmar has created environments for women political party members to regroup and re-connect with other women in politics, and chart a path forward towards peace and democratic transition. These spaces for exchange and connection have provided **lifelines to women activists amid violent repression and insecurity,** facilitating much needed connections and support. Women Peace Ambassadors and peacebuilder networks bring diverse women together in safe spaces, and have emerged as a critical force, with women engaging in conflict mediation in their communities, directly engaging with Ethnic Armed Organizations, and building foundational support for women as critical actors in peace processes and the transition to democracy.

The Peace Ambassadors supported by NIMD Myanmar have agreed on common priorities to advance the WPS agenda in Shan State and in their communities by conducting trainings on democracy, gender equality and peacebuilding.

## FOSTERING MULTIPARTY COLLABORATION IN BURUNDI

In Burundi, **the multiparty spaces created by BLTP address one of the main barriers to women's political participation: lack of access to and control over financial resources.** Politics in Burundi can be costly due to a multifaceted system of membership fees that is reinforced during elections. With BLTP's support, women politicians at Burundi's grassroots level are participating in multiparty village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). This allows them to engage in income-generating activities and increase their financial autonomy to participate in politics. As well as addressing a key barrier to political participation, BLTP's approach fosters multiparty collaboration: the women participating in the VSLAs also share strategies for positioning themselves within their political parties and coordinate joint initiatives.

**The Women Peace Ambassadors in Myanmar have established a referral system for women victims of gender-based violence, referring 151 cases to relevant service providers and support services in 2025**

## WOMEN'S MULTIPARTY DIALOGUE SPACES IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, multiparty women's spaces at the district level (in Bogotá) and at the national level have supported women's leadership and the development of joint agendas. **In Bogotá, a key success factor in the consolidation of the multiparty space has been NIMD's partnership with city authorities,** mainly the District Secretary of Women's Affairs. Indeed, gender parity is one of the targets and policy objectives of the city of Bogotá. The collaboration between NIMD and the city supports the sustainability of the initiative and its solidification as a key space to strengthen women's leadership.

Another key success factor has been the commitment of the political parties to consistently send the same people as representatives. Long-term participation from across the political spectrum allows for trust building among the participants. During a LEAP4Peace meeting in July 2025, women participants in these spaces shared how engaging over time with women from different political affiliations and perspectives has enriched their political journey. They expressed how this space has allowed them to exchange across party lines to develop shared strategies to push for gender equality, for example, defining protocols to respond to gender-based violence within their individual political parties. As a result, their leadership and recognition within their political parties has also grown.

## BUILDING WOMEN'S NETWORKS TO INFLUENCE PEACE IN VENEZUELA AND ARMENIA

**Network building has been a key best practice and outcome of the RRW, proven to support women's participation in peace processes and to connect Track 2 initiatives with Track 1 processes.** In Venezuela, the use of mediation, healing and conflict-resolution techniques among a group of both pro-opposition and pro-government women laid the foundations for the development of a joint agenda. This agenda was shared with representatives involved in the peace negotiations, with the aim of influencing the peace talks at the time (prior to the 2023 elections).

In Armenia, women and youth leaders from regions bordering Azerbaijan, including participants from both forcibly displaced communities and host communities, have joined forces to create a network and develop a position paper on the priorities of women, with support from NIMD's partner, OxYGen. The position paper was shared in a national conference on women's participation in peace processes, with the objective of influencing the local authorities involved in peace negotiations with Azerbaijan.

**Overall, the multi-stakeholder approach has expanded women's access to the key stakeholders, vital information, referral networks and resources needed to advance their political activism and peacebuilding work.**

# STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY AS AN ENTRY POINT

**Advocacy by women political leaders can drive the transformation of political actors and spaces**. As NIMD has witnessed across our programmes, women who participate in training, networks and multiparty and multi-stakeholder spaces often engage actively in political activism and advocacy. This contributes to a shift in how political institutions approach gender equality and women's participation.

## THE DISTRICT-LEVEL GENDER MULTIPARTY SPACE IN BOGOTA: FROM SAFE DIALOGUE SPACES TO STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

The Gender Multiparty District Level Space in Bogotá, facilitated by NIMD Colombia in partnership with the District of Bogotá, is a safe space for women from different political parties and backgrounds to identify joint priorities and interests. In 2022, participants jointly developed an Action Plan focusing on five thematic priorities:

1) Organizing a forum to give visibility to the experiences of women in political parties;
2) Developing a joint advocacy strategy;
3) Delivering training;
4) Defining protocols to respond to cases of violence against women from political parties;
5) Mapping women's participation within political parties.

In line with priority 1, the Forum of Women in Political Parties in Bogotá was held in 2022 as an open event with public participation in the discussions. Designed to give visibility to women's leadership and their role in politics, the Forum was strategically planned ahead of the 2023 local elections.

NIMD's continued technical support has allowed the consolidation of this space. Indeed, in 2025, the Forum approved its operation guidelines and 2025 Action Plan. The members of the multiparty space developed a joint communication campaign to promote young women's participation in the local 2025 youth council elections. This is evidence of the strength of this dialogue space to generate impactful collective action. Today, this space brings together 18 political parties and is a reference point for collaboration among women of different political ideologies.

## COLOMBIA

Since before the start of the LEAP4Peace programme, NIMD Colombia has invested in understanding, defining and building evidence on how violence against women in politics affects their political participation. Evidence from the country's women's dialogue spaces shows that violence against women in politics affects women from all backgrounds, regardless of political affiliation, leadership position or age. The launch of the Observatory of Violence against Women in Politics represented a key milestone, coordinated by NIMD in partnership with Colombian Governmental institutions including the Alta Consejería Presidencial de la Mujer and the Ministry of Interior. The Observatory brings together state and civil society actors who monitor and analyze violence against women in politics in Colombia. Their main objective is to denormalize violence against women in politics and advocate for the recognition of this phenomenon. **This sustained advocacy has contributed to significant legislative victories.** In 2024, Law 2453 on Violence against Women in Politics in Colombia was approved and sanctioned, subsequently creating legal frameworks that protect women's political participation.

## MYANMAR

In Myanmar, evidence-based advocacy has been essential to ensuring that Myanmar remains on the international agenda throughout the current conflict and humanitarian crisis, focusing international attention on the voices, experiences, needs and priorities of the women of Myanmar. A key factor for success has been **coalition building**, carried out through the WAC-M (an alliance of women's organizations from Myanmar who coordinate international advocacy with support from GEN) and with international partners such as GAPS and NIMD. Advocacy initiatives led by GEN have contributed to key outcomes at the international level such as the UN Security Council's 2024 decision to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar. Additionally, at the local level, GEN's advocacy towards the National Unity Government (NUG) authorities has enabled GEN and the WAC-M to influence the Gender Equality Position Paper of the NUCC, the advisory council of the NUG.

## RRW

Through the RRW, NIMD-supported initiatives in Colombia, Guatemala and Ethiopia have also used coalition building and strategic partnerships to support political advocacy. Evidence-based advocacy, based on the lived experiences, perspectives and realities of diverse women, has also been a key entry-point to create space for women to influence the implementation of peace agreements and peace negotiations. In Colombia, through the RRW, the Red Nacional de Mujeres was able to coordinate the 5th Report on the implementation of the gender provisions of the 2016 Peace Agreement, developed in partnership with G-Paz (an alliance of women and peacebuilding organizations focusing on following up on the implementation of the Peace Agreement from a gender perspective). The support of the RRW allowed the Red Nacional de Mujeres to include qualitative reflections in the report, providing a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and challenges surrounding the implementation of gender provisions.

# STRATEGIC FUNDING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL ADVOCACY IN PEACE PROCESSES

Through our partnership with the Rapid Response Window of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, NIMD has supported 14 civil society organizations with flexible, rapid and accessible funding. The RRW allows organizations to access key funding to support their political activism towards peace and in peacebuilding decision-making scenarios. This support focuses on initiatives to influence Track I and Track II processes to increase women's participation in the implementation and negotiation of peace processes.

Through the RRW, NIMD has been able to support diverse initiatives by civil society and women's organizations in Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Armenia, Myanmar and Iraq. These organizations have put in place a wide variety of mechanisms to influence peace agreements and peace negotiations, such as collecting evidence from the perspectives and lived experiences of women; building platforms and networks for women to advocate for their priorities; investing in the development of tools to monitor and assess policies, practices and outcomes, for example, gender measures and the gender responsiveness of peace processes.

As an INGO partner working with different civil society partners in very different contexts, NIMD has been able to support knowledge exchange and connection among the different women's organizations supported under the RRW, contributing to increased connections and visibility. For example, CSOs across Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela documented their best practices under the RRW. Three projects were central to this documentation process:

•In Guatemala, the project – supported by Women's rights organization Asociación Mujer Tejedora del Desarrollo (AMUTED) – focused on strengthening the advocacy efforts of indigenous women to advance the implementation of Peace Agreement commitments to indigenous women.

•In Colombia, the project – implemented by Movilizatorio – brought together women victims and women signatories to develop a joint advocacy agenda and campaign advancing the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

• And finally, in Venezuela, the project focused on building a joint platform and shared advocacy agenda among women from different backgrounds and political affiliations to influence the peace negotiations for the transition to democracy.

The documentation of best practices among these organizations, in a safe online space, created new synergies and opportunities for collaboration. As a result of this session, NIMD supported an exchange visit for the women members of the Venezuelan network to Colombia. With support from the RRW and UN Women, the Venezuelan women were able to exchange with women leaders and women's organizations from the peace feminist movement in Colombia. Together they explored key strategies to influence the Peace Process; build and consolidate a network; reach consensus; and perform evidence-based advocacy.

# CONCLUSION

This track record has provided a snapshot of NIMD's approaches and outcomes in advancing the Women's Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, offering key insights into lessons learned and critical success factors. Given the current political polarization surrounding gender equality and women's rights, it remains vitally important to continue advocating for women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes and political decision-making. The results and reflections presented above offer the following key insights:

Peacebuilding is political. Women's participation in and influence over peace and security is achieved by both supporting women's political leadership and working with political institutions. This also means recognizing the different entry-points and roles from which women engage in politics and in peace.

Investing in women's capacity; safe spaces for dialogue; trust building; and the creation of networks and joint agendas among diverse women is an effective strategy to influence the transformation of political actors and create a conducive environment and public policies. Through these strategies, women take ownership of processes and engage actively in advocacy initiatives.

Adaptability is key; approaches must be context-specific and gender-responsive. They must respond to specific needs in terms of training spaces, safety concerns and barriers.

In contexts affected by conflict and/or where civic space is restricted, strategies to expand participation in politics and in peace need to work across different levels, from grassroots to national. Women social and political leaders at the local level play a key role in localizing and implementing the WPS agenda.

Partnerships are key to amplifying change. In the case of LEAP4Peace, partnerships with national women's organizations, women's networks, national institutionality and district or local level institutions allowed increased reach and sustainability of the progress made.

# REFERENCES

Aanstoos, K. (2025) 'A Voice at the Table: How Women in Peace Processes Shape Political Representation', Politics & Gender, pp. 1–31. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/5DD38680AA1FEE5171C7A1D0F5C317B3/S1743923X2510038Xa.pdf/a-voice-at-the-table-how-women-in-peace-processes-shape-political-representation.pdf (Accessed: 21 November 2025).

Carnegie Endowment (2024) Why Gender Is Central to the Antidemocratic Playbook: Unpacking the Linkages in the United States and Beyond [Online] Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/11/women-lgbtq-democracy-authoritarianism-trump?lang=en (Accessed: 21 November 2025).

International Idea (2024) The 2024 Global Elections Supercycle [Online] Available at: https://www.idea.int/initiatives/the-2024-global-elections-supercycle (Accessed: 21 November 2025).

UN Women (2015) Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. [Online] Available at: https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (Accessed: 21 November 2025).

UN Security Council (2024) Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary General. S/2024/671. [Online] Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S-2024-671.pdf (Accessed: 21 November 2025).