

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

25
YEARS

Of Standing For Democracy.

2025: NIMD'S ANNIVERSARY YEAR



Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

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MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 was a year that tested democratic resolve around the world and reaffirmed why standing for democracy matters more than ever.

Autocrats are feeling the wind in their sails, emboldened by a flagrant disregard for the rule of law and international norms. Democratic backsliding is accelerating, and in too many countries where we work, the space for open political participation is shrinking.

But we know that people want democracy. In Kenya, a generation mobilized for transparent and accountable politics, an energy that NIMD helped to translate into real political action.

In Bangladesh, youth-led protests opened a fragile but real democratic opening, an opening that NIMD has since 2025 started to build upon. In Mali, our colleagues and partners press, keeping the hope for an inclusive democratic future alive in an incredibly complex context. Everywhere where the NIMD network is active, we see people who refuse to give up on democracy, not as a slogan, but as a living practice.

That is exactly why NIMD exists, has been working all over the world and why we must continue our work.

2025 also marked NIMD's 25th anniversary. Looking back at where we started, in the early days of democracy in post-Apartheid South Africa and seeing the breadth of our work today across nearly 20 countries, is both humbling and inspiring. But anniversaries are not just moments to celebrate. They are moments to recommit. Investing in democracy makes the world more stable, more just and more secure.

Global events and changes have shown us: It is not business as usual. So, at NIMD we also adapted, 2025 was a year of reflection on how we do that work. Together with our offices worldwide we are moving to a lean, agile, and decentralized network. Under the NIMD banner, we continue to strive for inclusive democracies worldwide. We have strong local roots and a dedicated international community of democracy practitioners. We further deepened our commitment to elevating the voices of those most often excluded: women and young people. We strengthen democracy

where it is under pressure, and we support democratic political actors and a culture of democracy where the space for dialogue is shrinking. Because Democracy is the only system capable of serving the interests of society as a whole in a fair way.

None of this is done in isolation. The pages of this report reflect the dedication of our global team, our partners, and the countless individuals who put democracy into practice under difficult circumstances every single day. I am grateful to all of them.

The challenges are real. But so is the demand for change, and NIMD will keep flying the flag for Democracy.

Tijmen Rooseboom Executive Director, NIMD



TIMELINE: NIMD THROUGH THE YEARS

2000 - Our story begins in South Africa, where we help political parties rebuild trust and define their roles after Apartheid. Nelson Mandela urges Dutch parties to take this work to other countries. [Read more](#)

2009 - Indonesia sees the launch of one of our first [Democracy Schools](#). Since 2009, we have built an international network of 10,000 graduates of the NIMD Democracy Schools, committed to advancing inclusive democracy in their countries

2012 - The Jasmin Revolution that took place in 2011 radically changed the Tunisian political landscape. Since only one year later, the Tunisia School of Politics has been equipping young political actors with skills and knowledge necessary for participating in a fledgling multiparty system. [Read more](#)

2012 - The Ghana Presidential Transition Act, supported by the Ghana Political Parties Programme, set out clear processes for a peaceful transition of power, for the first time in the country's history. [show video](#)

2018 - Uganda's High Level Political Forum brings together party leaders in unprecedented dialogue amidst deep interparty tensions. [Read more](#)

2021 - Following irregularities and violence in the 2017 elections, we work with Honduras's electoral bodies to pave the way towards electoral reforms and restore trust in the electoral process. By 2021, Honduras's new and strengthened institutions oversees peaceful elections with high voter turnout.

2022 - Following Myanmar's 2021 coup d'état, NIMD sets up a regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform. This quiet yet powerful initiative brings together a diverse group of local stakeholders from various political institutions and civil society organizations. It provides a rare safe space for open dialogue in a high-risk context, where such conversations are often silenced. [Read more](#)

2024 - Through dialogue and consultation forums, NIMD and other partners ensure diverse women's voices are heard in the consultative period preceding the signing of Colombia's long awaited National Action Plan (NAP) 1325. [Read more](#)

2024 - After two years of political dialogue, trust-building, and institutional strengthening on the island of Sint Eustatius, NIMD is delighted to see all democratic rights and structures returned to the island, after a long transition process. This process has been 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.



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NIMD IN 2025

In 2025, NIMD implemented 20 programmes across Africa, Latin America, the MENA Region, Central and Southeast Asia and the Dutch Caribbean.



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Bangladesh

In 2025 NIMD started its work in Bangladesh to support the country's democratic transition ahead of the 2026 general elections. Together with the European Partnership for Democracy and the JAAGO foundation trust, NIMD works to strengthen political parties' capacity for inclusive and accountable governance. In our first year, we established strategic relationships with political parties, civil society and key institutional actors, laying the groundwork for the elections and beyond.

Benin

On 16 December 2025, in Bante, traditional hunter tribes from the departments of Borgou and Collines signed the Charter for Peace with the presence of Government officials and civil society. This act symbolizes their commitment to working toward the preservation of peace during the 2026 general elections. It should be noted that in 2019 and 2021, the municipalities and presidential elections were marked by violent armed clashes between republican forces and traditional hunters' tribes in the departments of Borgou and Collines.

Burkina Faso

In 2025, NIMD Burkina Faso continued to develop the Jamana Yaam platform, bringing together academics, experts, young researchers and public actors to produce analytical notes and socio-political studies on governance, state rebuilding and social cohesion. The platform created a shared space for knowledge production and multi-stakeholder dialogue, connecting intellectuals from diverse backgrounds with young people from NIMD's School of Citizenship. Through this collaboration, Jamana Yaam generated new research and facilitated dialogue sessions that shed light on Burkina Faso's political trajectory and contributed to a growing culture of evidence-based public debate.

Burundi

Throughout 2025, NIMD Burundi worked with 10 political parties to strengthen their ability to develop their respective policy programmes and strategic plans aligned in light of the Burundi vision 2024. At the same time, gender equality strategies were put into practice across these parties, including four women-led parties, which supported more inclusive leadership. Together, these efforts contributed to stronger internal governance and encouraged greater participation of women in political decision-making.

Colombia

NIMD Colombia continued to push for a more open democracy. In their efforts they consolidated the Alliance for an Open Congress, supported the IX Action Plan for an Open and Transparent Congress, and worked on building meaningful collaboration between Congress and civil society. It also meant showing up for young people: ahead of the 2025 Youth Councils elections, where NIMD supported 265 young leaders across five cities to engage in formal politics and put forward three legislative proposals of their own.

Ethiopia

In 2025 NIMD Ethiopia's Alumni Networks Formalised. EDAC and EDAW alumni, previously engaged through informal forums, have established two formal associations: the Ethiopian Visionary Leaders Association (EVLA) and the Emerging Women Leaders Association (EWLA). These registered organisations now serve as platforms for continued interaction among alumni and advocates for the political inclusion of youth. Members of EVLA and EWPA are also engaging with their peers in neighbouring countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, and Somaliland.

El Salvador

In 2025, NIMD El Salvador organised five community festivals, creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and reflection through theatre, music, and community-based artistic expression. Held in Suchitoto, Tecoluca, Santiago de María, San Rafael Cedros and Santa Marta, the festivals brought together 1,324 people to promote citizen participation, social cohesion, and human and civic rights through art, with women making up 70% of all attendees. The festivals were organised in collaboration with Plan International and youth organization Plataforma Global.

Guatemala

In 2025, NIMD Guatemala supported civil society organizations in strengthening social accountability mechanisms. The initiative focused on building the capacities of local actors to conduct social audits, monitor public policies, and engage constructively with public authorities. Through training, technical accompaniment, and the creation of dialogue spaces, civil society organizations developed tools to track public decision-making and promote transparency in governance processes. By strengthening citizen oversight and encouraging constructive engagement between civil society and authorities, the programme contributes to more accountable and responsive democratic institutions in Guatemala.

Honduras

Ahead of Honduras's presidential elections in November 2025, NIMD Honduras Democracy School alumni took an active role in safeguarding electoral integrity. Alumni led a citizen oversight initiative that organised representatives at polling stations, trained electoral observers, and conducted a parallel vote count to provide independent verification of results. Others collaborated to develop a digital tool enabling field observers to report irregularities, collectively engaging over 1,000 Hondurans as electoral observers through the VEO initiative. Youth alumni also mobilized participation in oversight activities through the Global Network of Young Politicians.

Kenya

NIMD Kenya partnered with the Office of Registrar of Political Parties in 2025 to build the capacity of women on electoral participation across three counties. Through a series of training sessions, the women built their understanding of electoral processes, explored the opportunities available to them and identified the barriers standing in their way.

Jordan

NIMD Jordan launched the country's first Interparty Dialogue programme in 2025, bringing together representatives from all nine parliamentary political parties to discuss local administration and provide recommendations on a new draft law. Each party nominated six representatives to engage across three key themes: municipal councils, governorate councils, and the electoral system for local elections. Over seven months, 33 dialogue sessions totalling 187 hours of discussions were held, culminating in a consensus document adopted by all participating parties and officially launched in March 2026.

Iraq

In 2025, NIMD and its partner, Women Empowerment Organization, expanded the Iraqi School of Democracy alumni network to 125 young leaders from across Iraq. After the inclusive SoD programme, the top 15 alumni participated in an Advanced Training programme to strengthen their understanding of democratic governance, policy development, conflict resolution, and advocacy. Additionally, 20 alumni received small grants to implement initiatives in their communities, including democratic dialogue sessions, peer-to-peer trainings, advocacy campaigns, and research addressing key democratic challenges in Iraq.

Mali

With NIMD Mali's support, the Advocacy and Reform Monitoring Committee established the Forum of Political Parties and Movements in Bamako in late 2024, bringing together at least 80 political parties and movements to foster dialogue across Mali's political landscape. Throughout 2025, the Forum built real momentum, organising reflection sessions on the Charter of Political Parties, engaging civil society through joint press briefings, and ultimately being heard by the Law Commission of the National Transitional Council on the reform of the Charter.

Mozambique

By 2025, at least three political agreements or initiatives involving parties and civic actors to promote the representation of women and youth were achieved with facilitation from IMD Mozambique, namely: the Inclusive Electoral Manifesto; the National Youth Declaration; and the National Sustainable Agenda for Women. Showing incremental but tangible steps toward a more inclusive and consensual political culture.

Myanmar

Myanmar's ongoing conflict and political fragmentation have deepened mistrust among political and ethnic actors, limiting opportunities for formal engagement. Despite this, in 2025, NIMD Myanmar, together with Demo Finland, continued to convene subnational dialogue platforms, building on years of trust and relationship-building. Democratic actors worked across divides to jointly develop recommendations for the Bill of Rights in the state level constitution draft, including protections for women, youth, and minority groups. A more inclusive, peaceful and democratic future for Myanmar depends on political actors who continue to engage in dialogue and collaborate on shared solutions.

Niger

In 2025, NIMD Niger moved towards becoming an independent office. In 2025 the office supported their alumni in their preparations to participate in the inclusive national dialogue organized by the government to define a roadmap for transition for Niger. To this end, the alumni drafted a memorandum containing their proposals, which they presented and defended during the proceedings. By taking part in this multi-stakeholder dialogue, these young people participated in a major decision-making process.

Somalia

In 2025, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) advanced the digitalization and institutional strengthening of the House of Representatives of Somaliland, enhancing transparency and efficiency through the modernization of the parliamentary chamber, the launch of a new parliamentary website, and the digitization of legislative records. At the same time, the establishment of the Gender Advisory Office marked a significant step in institutionalizing gender equality within Parliament, supported by targeted training, policy engagement, and the formation of a women's caucus. Complementing these efforts, a dedicated women-only Democracy Academy trained 24 young female political aspirants, while fourteen women-led dialogue events were conducted across Borama, Burao, Berbera, and Hargeisa, promoting grassroots women's political participation and leadership.

Sint Eustatius

In 2025, the Political Dialogue Platform Statia held its second town hall meeting with the citizens of Statia following the last town hall in 2023. The meeting showed the public that the dialogue platform was indeed continuing and stable following years of instability. Further steps were also taken to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the Dialogue platform.

Uganda

NIMD Uganda launched 'Let's talk peace' a nationwide civic engagement campaign in 2025 ahead of the 2026 general elections, aiming to foster national unity and promote peaceful participation throughout Uganda's electoral process. The campaign produced and aired over 20 peace bulletins, engaged more than 2,000 marketplace vendors, directly reached over 55,300 citizens, installed six community peace walls, and organized six regional-level gatherings of community members. As part of TUONGEA - let's talk peace in Swahili - an eight-month media campaign further extended this reach, engaging over seven million Ugandans through online platforms, television broadcasts, and in-person market activations.

The dentist who continues to treat the country's pain through politics

A poet, dentist, politician and a father, someday, he is mostly one or the other. But most days he is all these. Dr. Mulalem Tegegnework, a pioneer alumni of NIMD Ethiopia's first Democracy Academy, embraced politics with cautious optimism that his country is transitioning to democracy. Today he is chairman of the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (Ezema) party, a citizen-based political movement. He spoke with us via Zoom, calling in from Addis Ababa.

From dentist to politician: How did that happen? Any surprising similarities in the work?

Medicine, like politics, is generally about serving people and communities: to improve their quality of life and give them hope for a better tomorrow. As a politician, you do that through influencing or making policy, for example, on economic and political issues; by resolving violence, by building peace; caring for the community at a different scale.

As a dentist, you work with one person, you try to treat one person, and you try to relieve their pain in a conducive environment. Every procedure gives you a chance to understand and relieve the pain of that person. I really feel the pain of my country in the same way I feel the pain of my patients. And if there is a chance, I can treat that pain, I will do it.



Ethnicity is central to of Ethiopian politics, what are your views on this?

Personally, I don't belong to any ethnic group. My parents—and even my paternal and maternal grandfathers—are from different ethnic groups. So, how could I choose one ethnic group to define myself? I believe identity is complex and cannot collapse into one category.

Unfortunately, in Ethiopia, ethnicity is more structural than a matter of simple personal choice. It defines your everyday interaction—in politics, at the bank, and anywhere you go. I don't believe that is beneficial for Ethiopia. We are a diverse people. We have different cultures, different religions, different perspectives. This diversity should be accommodated. But my experience and feeling—also during my student days—is that everything is politicized ethnically. And it shouldn't be so mixed up.



How did your student days shape your views on politics?

I went to Jimma University – based in the Oromia region – to study dentistry, it was only after university that I started to read into the political history of our country and became involved in politics in general. But Jimma gave me a taste: The politics was radical and related with different languages. If you don't speak such languages, you are an outsider and you don't feel that you are at your own country. During my university years, I was also very active in the community because I was president of Jimma university student union charity club and also a poet.



Through EDAC you met politicians with varying political views, colours and parties. How did you experience this?

I was young then, about 33—the age of most participants. What struck me is that despite our different party affiliations, we shared the same vision and collective desire to improve the country. We wanted the same things—justice, freedom, equal opportunity for everyone; a prosperous, civilized and democratic Ethiopia. EDAC really re-shaped my views about politics—our shared vision should push us to collaborate even across party lines despite differences in perspectives and approaches.

After we graduated from the Academy, the alumni collectively created the Ethiopia Visionary Leaders Association. We agreed that we have the same vision and we can work collectively towards it. We believe dialogue is the first thing to do, to circumvent differences and assumptions, and in our country, there is no chance to sit down and discuss what everyone exactly wants. It is all about violence, war, and armed struggles. So, we try to offer an alternative to our association. Even though we have different theoretical and philosophical beliefs in our politics, we believe that our differences can be resolved through dialogue and sitting together around the table.

What would you say is the biggest obstacle for meaningful dialogue in Ethiopia?

Political violence, war and armed conflict as well as identity politics come to mind in terms of obstacles. Identity politics is crucial. First, are the ethnonationalists who approach politics through an ethnic lens, advocating greater power and autonomy for states, based on ethnicity. Then, we have the Pan ethiopianists, advocating for one Ethiopia where a single Ethiopian citizenship supersedes ethnic identity. Both groups distrust each other. Pan ethiopianists accuse ethnonationalists of wanting to split the country. Ethnonationalists accuse Pan ethiopianists of assimilationist politics. We need to find common ground between these two spectrums.

An initiative from the government has started, the National Dialogue Commission. Here, different political parties, actors, and emerging leaders engage in a dialogue to address some of these issues. The Ethiopians Visionary Leaders Association, which reunites EDAC/EDAW alumni, conducts similar initiatives but with senior politicians and emerging leaders. In our country, history has a lot of value and there are multiple narratives. We have to critically examine these different narratives. For example, we got a chance to discuss identity politics and the constitution. The

current constitution is rooted in ethno-nationalist doctrine, leaving those like me who reject identity politics grounded in ethnicity, feeling left out. So, the Constitution needs to be amended to accommodate people like me. This scares those who want ethnic identity to be the principle for organizing or structuring the state, as they worry about losing the ethnic identity. This is an example of one of the dialogues we hold.

A father, a poet and a politician: How do you combine all your roles?

It's actually the most difficult profession, because everyone assumes that politicians are not reliable. Politicians are not those people who get respect or credit. I think being a dentist compensates for that gap, love from the patients, and respect from the clients in a time when I really feel down about my political work. And when I can't bring my politics home, I find support from my fellow EDAC alumni through our association. EVLA has an office where I sit with friends from different political parties, and coffee to discuss political ideas, what's happening in the country, and how politics affect our lives. We get a chance to comfort each other when something happens. When I became chairman of my party for example, most of the members from different political parties helped me on social media. We are not from the same party, but they were helping me because, as EDAC alumni, we believe we are the same family. That is a big support.

What would you say to other young people thinking about a life in the public service?

People who want to join politics should read and understand what politics looks like first, then put that into a vision. Not a vision for personal profits. Don't get into politics for personal gain as it is the most – the most – uncomfortable place to look for personal benefits. You should come to politics to give, not to get. Politics has a cost and they should understand this. But the cost becomes very easy or becomes normal or understandable if you are principled and have a vision for change that serves the community.

Dr. Mulualem sees his last patient of the day at six. He will be at a party meeting by seven.

Disclaimer: This interview has been edited for clarity and conciseness.



Current trends in the Democracy landscape



As practitioners of Democracy NIMD has long standing experience on the ground, this allows us to notice trends as they emerge, in a new section for our annual report we outline the top four trends in Democracy as we see them and what we are doing to address these trends.

Youth, Peace and Security

In 2025, the YPS agenda gained significant momentum, marked by the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and the unanimous adoption of a further resolution urging greater youth participation in peace processes. Yet young people remain caught in a paradox: too often drawn into political violence, while simultaneously being among the most motivated actors for peaceful change. For NIMD, this agenda is a natural extension of our work on inclusive democracy and youth participation in politics. Through programmes in contexts such as Liberia and Honduras, we work to ensure young people are active contributors to stability, accountability and lasting peace.

Preventing Electoral Violence

The 2024 electoral cycle was marked in many contexts by unconstitutional postponements, cancelled elections and votes marred by violence, making long-term, trust-based approaches to peaceful elections more urgent than ever. In 2025, NIMD worked across multiple contexts to break the cycle before it takes hold. In Uganda, the Multiparty Youth Forum brought young politicians together across party lines, signing a collective peace pledge and committing to lead peace campaigns across the country's 18 subregions. In Liberia, an inter-party youth dialogue resulted in a peace pact among representatives from six political parties. In Mozambique, Peace Rooms monitored electoral processes in real time and resolved disputes before they escalated. In Somaliland, community members were trained as election observers, strengthening citizen participation from within.

Environmental Governance

Environmental governance is increasingly a democratic issue. Those most affected by climate change are often least represented in the governance structures designed to address it, and for NIMD, this gap is fundamentally a democracy problem. In El Salvador in 2025, NIMD continued to partner with youth environmental organisations to co-create agendas with local governments to protect environmental rights. The Protectoras Ambientales Morazán project further empowered women as agents of change in environmental and climate governance, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Digital Governance

From the use of artificial intelligence in public service delivery to internet shutdowns and the role of platforms in political discourse, the governance of digital spaces is becoming an urgent political challenge. For NIMD, engaging with digital democracy means moving beyond tactical support towards a more structural approach, one that examines how digitalisation reshapes democratic norms, institutions and power dynamics. In 2025, NIMD developed a digital governance module for our Democracy Schools curricula, ensuring that current and aspiring political leaders are equipped to navigate and influence this rapidly evolving landscape.





Our Themes

For 25 years, NIMD has stood as a defender of democracy — in countries where it is fragile, under threat, or still taking shape. From the very beginning, dialogue has been at the heart of who we are: bringing political actors together across divides, building trust, and strengthening the relationships between politicians and the people they serve.

We do this because democracy matters. Every society needs well-functioning, accountable political institutions that are responsive to people's needs — and when those institutions break down, economic stability, social cohesion and human dignity suffer. That conviction has driven our work across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, the Dutch Caribbean and Southeast Asia for a quarter of a century.

Our strength lies in our people and our presence on the ground. Country-based expertise, deep political networks and a genuine understanding of local contexts allow us to contribute meaningfully to change — in political systems and in political culture. At the heart of everything is inclusiveness: ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender, background or age, can participate in political decision-making.

NIMD's work falls into five themes — Dialogue, Democracy Education, Women in Politics, Youth in Politics and Responsive Politics. We are proud to present our highlights from 2025 for each of these themes.



Our Approach

Dialogue has been woven into NIMD's DNA from day one. We firmly believe that when political actors from different creeds and colours come together to talk, listen and find common ground, a country has a far greater chance of forging lasting peace, implementing meaningful reform and building a truly inclusive democracy. Through our six signature dialogue interventions, we facilitate everything from political party dialogues to intergenerational dialogue processes that bring together diverse voices from across society. What unites them all is a shared commitment: by sitting down together, people can build the trust that a strong and inclusive democracy depends on.

Find out more about our approach to
nimd.org/what-we-do/dialogue/

Dialogue

Our work in 2025:

- Dialogue platforms were active across multiple contexts in 2025. NIMD Jordan launched the country's first Interparty Dialogue programme, bringing together all nine parliamentary political parties to discuss local administration and provide recommendations on a new draft law. In Uganda, the Multiparty Youth Forum organised a Regional Youth Dialogue event on peaceful electoral participation, while also engaging Members of Parliament and civil society on electoral reform ahead of the 2026 elections. In Mali, the Forum of Political Parties and Movements, established with NIMD's support, built real momentum throughout 2025, ultimately being heard by the Law Commission of the National Transitional Council on the reform of the Charter of Political Parties.
- NIMD also supports dialogue that feeds directly into reform. In Burundi, inclusive dialogue spaces engaged over 700 participants from political parties, civil society and marginalized groups, leading to practical community initiatives driven by young people. In Kenya, NIMD supported Political Parties Liaison Committee legal reform meetings, bringing together political parties, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties.
- Recognizing that meaningful participation does not always happen in formal settings, NIMD continually seeks new ways to create safe spaces for dialogue. In El Salvador in 2025, community arts festivals across five districts used theatre, music and art as entry points for conversations about rights and civic participation, complemented by participatory social mapping processes that gave communities a direct voice in local decision-making.

Dialogue in numbers:

Number of Dialogue
meetings held?

82

Joint proposals developed in
Dialogue meetings

21

How many CSOs in
Dialogue activities:

102



Our Approach

A resilient democracy needs people who understand it, believe in it, and know how to participate in it. At NIMD, we support political actors in developing their skills and knowledge through a range of training programmes, courses and initiatives, including our renowned Democracy Schools. By bringing participants together from across the political and ideological spectrum, these programmes build lasting networks and connections that bridge divides, counter polarization and give democratic values a real chance to take root.

Find out more about our approach to Democracy Education at nimd.org/what-we-do/democracy-education/

Democracy Education in numbers:

Number of Graduates:

646

Number of Countries with a Democracy School:

17

Democracy Education

Our work in 2025:

- NIMD's Democracy Schools continued to equip emerging leaders across 15 countries in 2025. In Liberia, a Democracy School held in February brought together 30 young leaders from political parties and student organisations to develop their knowledge and skills for effective political engagement. In Iraq, the School of Democracy alumni network expanded to 125 young leaders, with the top 15 participating in an Advanced Training programme on democratic governance, policy development and advocacy. In Kenya, NIMD ran three Democracy Schools under the PIERK and WYDE programmes, covering topics including youth political rights, dialogue, negotiation, leadership and campaigning, complemented by informal dialogues on youth inclusion in electoral reforms and intergenerational political participation ahead of the 2027 elections.
- The long-term impact of NIMD's Democracy Schools is increasingly visible through the achievements of alumni networks. In Uganda, graduates have taken up leadership roles including Chair of Youth Councillors in Buganda and Vice President of the Uganda Student Association, with 78% expressing their intention to stand in the 2026 general elections. In Honduras, alumni of the 2024 Democracy School went on to stand as candidates in the 2025 primary elections, while others took an active role in electoral observation during the November 2025 presidential elections. In Mali, a graduate founded ACJEM to support young women and children, reaching over 17,000 people through 67 educational conferences.
- Building on its ongoing commitment to deepening alumni learning, NIMD continued to invest in advanced and cross-border exchanges in 2025. In Jordan, jointly with Dutch political parties, NIMD established a Political Youth Camp bringing together Democracy School alumni from Jordan and young representatives from Dutch political parties, creating a peer-learning space on the role of youth in politics and democratic governance.



Our Approach

Inclusive democracy is not possible without the full and meaningful participation of women in political life. Over 25 years, this has been a constant thread in our work. At NIMD, we partner with political and civil society actors to build a more open political culture, one where women, in all their diversity, can exercise their political rights and take part in decision-making at every level. Because when women are at the table, democracies are stronger, more representative and more responsive to the needs of everyone.

Find out more about our approach to promote the political participation of nimd.org/what-we-do/women-in-politics/

Women's political participation in numbers

Number of women trained in political skills

1351

Percentage of women graduates from our Democracy Schools:

56%

Women in Politics

Our work in 2025:

- In 2025, NIMD published a reflective report on its Women, Peace and Security work spanning 2021 to 2025, documenting how context-specific capacity strengthening, safe dialogue spaces and strategic partnerships with civil society and national institutions have supported over 3,183 women to meaningfully engage in politics and peace processes. [Read more.](#)
- To inform our internal programming, NIMD also developed three publications on gender and political participation in 2025. The first examined how gender-based violence manifests in political spaces, including emerging digital threats, analysing intersectional vulnerabilities to offer actionable strategies to prevent and mitigate GBV in politics. The second drew on feminist research and NIMD's field experiences to explore how violence against women in politics differs from general political violence and why these distinctions matter for programme design. The third looked at how gender shapes political participation, interaction, and ideology across diverse democratic contexts, identifying practical entry points for more inclusive programming.
- As a learning organisation, NIMD continuously reflects on its practice and documents the experiences of those it works with to strengthen its programming. In collaboration with Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, NIMD documented the experiences of 42 Women Peace Ambassadors (WoPA) in Myanmar's Shan State, women from diverse ethnic backgrounds who, despite operating in an active conflict zone, continued to mediate disputes, provide humanitarian assistance and advocate for women's rights at community and subnational level. Their testimonies, published in early 2026, offer a rare first-hand account of women's informal leadership in one of the world's most challenging political environments.



Our Approach

The political challenges of today will be shaped and solved by the generation coming up. At NIMD, promoting the political potential of young people is an increasingly central part of our work. We partner with both youth and established politicians to open up pathways into political life, challenge the barriers that keep young people out, and find innovative ways to connect a new generation with the decision-making processes that shape their futures.

Find out more about our approach to Youth in Politics at nimd.org/what-we-do/youth-in-politics/

Youth Political Participation in numbers:

Democracy School
graduates under 35:

87%

Youth Political Participation

Our work in 2025:

- In response to the growing wave of Gen Z civic engagement, NIMD established intergenerational dialogue processes bringing young people and senior politicians together to build bridges across generations and ensure youth voices shape the political agenda.
- In Uganda, the impact of this investment became tangible ahead of the 2026 elections, where 78% of Uganda Democracy Academy graduates contested for office and 65% successfully secured roles in local government, political party structures and national youth bodies, demonstrating what meaningful youth inclusion in politics can achieve.
- Young people from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda jointly developed the Roadmap for Youth Political Participation in East Africa, advocating collectively for greater youth representation in democratic processes.





Our Approach

Democracy only works when political institutions are accountable, functional, and genuinely responsive to the people they serve. In 25 years of working across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, the Dutch Caribbean and Southeast Asia, we have seen what happens when those foundations erode. At NIMD, we help politicians and political actors strengthen the checks, balances and relationships that hold democratic systems together, so that countries can build the resilient, inclusive infrastructure that serves everyone and stands the test of time.

Find out more about our approach to Responsive Politics at nimd.org/what-we-do/strengthening-democratic-infrastructure/

Supporting responsive politics in numbers

Number of political parties trained:

84

Number of political parties participating in our dialogue meetings:

232

Responsive Politics

Our work in 2025:

- We published our Promoting Responsive Politics via Accountability Actions paper: Lessons from Niger, Guatemala and Kenya in 2025. The paper was also published in Spanish and French. [Read more.](#)
- Throughout 2025, NIMD worked with political parties across multiple contexts to strengthen their internal governance, policy capacity and inclusiveness. In Jordan, NIMD's capacity building programme worked across three levels of party structures, providing political education and leadership training for youth wings, operational support for party functions, and executive-level training on internal governance, media handling and financial management. In Burundi, NIMD worked with 10 political parties to strengthen their ability to develop policy programmes and strategic plans aligned with Burundi Vision 2040-2060, helping them articulate their positions in relation to national priorities. Gender equality strategies were put into practice across these parties, including four women-led parties, contributing to stronger internal governance and greater participation of women in political decision-making.
- Across its programmes, NIMD supports political parties, parliaments and civil society to strengthen the foundations of responsive and accountable democracy. In Somaliland, NIMD advanced the institutional strengthening of the House of Representatives in 2025, modernizing the parliamentary chamber, launching a new parliamentary website, and digitizing legislative records to enhance transparency and efficiency. A landmark development was the establishment of a Gender Advisory Office within Parliament, supported by targeted training, policy engagement and the formation of a women's caucus, marking a significant step in institutionalizing gender equality within the country's legislative structures.

NIMD in Colombia:

Closing the gap between what was promised and what has been built



NIMD has been working in Colombia since 2010 and played a key role in supporting the promotion of peace since a landmark 2016 agreement that ended the protracted conflict of 50 years between the Government and the FARC-EP guerilla group. The agreement resulted in a disarmament process, the official formation of a political party of FARC – now known as the Comunes party. NIMD had however, been identified as an accompanying organisation to the peace process, specifically in the international verification of point 2 of the final peace agreement.

For Carolina Sarmiento, the 2016 Colombia Peace Agreement was not an endpoint but a beginning. A signatory to that agreement, former political prisoner, former combatant, and member of the Comunes party, she has spent the years since navigating the gap between what was promised and what has actually been built. NIMD Colombia accompanied her through much of that journey through the multiparty roundtable established within the [LEAP4Peace](#) programme. We sat down with her to reflect on her political journey and what participation has looked like in practice.

Throughout your journey, what stands out as the most significant milestones in your political activity?

I served as Gender Advisor and was part of the Bogotá Women's Advisory Council for nearly five years. The latter is a citizen participation body in which we have a space as women signatories of the peace agreement, there I was monitoring the implementation of public policy for women and diverse groups, working alongside the social organizations. I studied international relations and will be graduating soon. And in the last regional elections, I ran for local council in the Kennedy district as part of a coalition list.

Your political participation has always been closely linked to a woman's perspective. Where does that commitment come from?

We, and I say "we" because it was never just me, always carry the woman's perspective at the forefront. It is cross-cutting within the peace agreement, and we consider it a historical debt to women in Colombia. As a revolutionary woman, defending women's rights was already my practice. But now I feel there is greater clarity. Because there won't be a country at peace, there won't be a truly free country, if women don't have a genuine exercise of gender equity alongside men.

What have been the main obstacles to women's participation in politics?

Just by being a woman signatory, a combatant, there were already difficulties. Stigmatisation by the media, by government agencies. And the very act of participating: not being able to enter spaces that are often deeply hostile. Over time I came to understand that the struggle to get into those spaces is itself a form of political violence. It is not something women should have to fight for.

Within our own party, we have had necessary internal discussions to ensure women's voices remain strong. Today there are more women than men in the national and district leadership, which is already a major achievement. But there are still barriers to financial resources, access to training, and significant security barriers. Traditional parties have resources and structures that we simply do not have. Women do not arrive with the same level of preparation because we lack the necessary financial resources. In addition, women from working-class parties do not have the same economic, employment, or professional conditions as women leaders in traditional parties.

The multiparty roundtable brought together women from across the political spectrum. What did dialogue across those divides actually look like in practice?

At first, we were a little wary. All the parties would be there, and in other contexts these are our opponents. But we said: we don't have to agree; it's mainly about what unites us, what brings us together. And in practice, that turned out to be more than we expected.

We held meetings on political violence, bringing women leaders from Congress and local government together with social organisations and ordinary women so they could learn more about women's leadership in different spheres. We organised a political party fair so people could get to know the different parties and their activities. We also had meetings with the Ministry of the Interior and the multiparty committee, sharing our stories and what each of our parties had experienced, including how candidates were selected internally. We realised that in some traditional parties, it simply came down to whoever the party president chose. In our party, we hold an internal consultation process that involves the entire membership, from the regions to the national level. The contrast was eye-opening.

One very important issue that emerged was the need to strengthen internal protocols and to develop shared ones for situations like cross-party attacks on women leaders. When our councillor Luceris from Ciudad Bolívar faced attacks from opposition parties, the multiparty roundtable supported us. We had met at a forum on political violence, built a relationship, and that solidarity became real. What we realised, even with women from parties we are ideologically opposed to, is that there is more to build as women than to divide along party lines. Ideologically, we have major differences, but here we are in this struggle together. The roundtable was also a space to surface what was happening beyond Bogotá. Colleagues had to withdraw from the last regional elections because they were threatened by armed groups. We raised this, and the economic barriers too: the fact that women don't arrive less prepared because they can't, but because the investment hasn't been made. It's important that the reality of the regions be known so that we can support and help ensure that people there can participate in the best way possible.





How do you see the current situation for women in politics and peace in Colombia?

It's difficult. The Comunes party lost its legal status in the last parliamentary elections in March 2026, and that has not been easy. Over 400 signatories have been murdered. Colleagues have faced threats and displacement. This year, many signatories also learned they would no longer receive their monthly allowance, including women who are mothers, whose partners have been killed, who had already had to step back from political spaces just to keep life going.

And yet the current governing political party -- Pacto Histórico --has the highest representation of women in Congress. In the recent 2026–2030 congressional elections, the Pacto Histórico accounts for 43.3% of the elected female senators. Women's participation in politics has improved, and its surrounding organisations have grown stronger.

While the number of women on electoral lists is high, the number who actually get elected remains very small. We are always there, strengthening campaigns and coalitions, but it isn't reflected in the seats. This discrepancy needs to be taken seriously.

What are your expectations for women's political participation in the future?

Full implementation of the peace agreement, including its gender chapter. We are at around 10 or 20% of what that should look like, but it remains a real tool for measuring progress and moving forward. A Congress genuinely strengthened by women who truly represent us, not just women who get in, but women who lead and shape public policy alongside women's organisations. Not quotas as a ceiling, but 50% as a floor.

And in the regions: let the women already emerging from those territories be the ones to step forward. I have every hope that we will continue advancing in this democratic transition, and that it will bring substantial progress in everything that pertains to our rights.

This interview was conducted in Spanish and has been translated and edited for clarity and conciseness.

Our organization:

NIMD's Commitment to Equality, Integrity and our People



Gender and Diversity

In 2025 we:

- L4P closing event in Bogota, learning knowledge product was released following the event
- A Gender Task force was set up at NIMD the Hague and invested in researching the impact of GBV in politics. A research document was created from this with Key Recommendations on Gender Sensitive programming.
- NIMD's signature PEA was updated by the Gender Task Force to include a gender lens and was fully gender mainstreamed.
- NIMD's Women Peace and Security expert attended and participated in the SIPRI conference in 2025 in Stockholm Sweden and to support the joint event with the Rapid Response Window (RRW).
- New commitments were made by NIMD's Executive Director to the International Gender Network for 2025.
- NIMD the Hague facilitated an exchange in 2025 between the Red Nacional de Mujeres, NIMD and the MFA of the Netherlands on challenges and opportunities for sustainable peace in Colombia, regarding the implementation of the peace agreement 2016, the implementation of the NAP 1325, and the Total Peace policy.

Integrity

NIMD is committed to safeguarding and promoting integrity. We expect all employees to display an open and responsible attitude towards each other, being respectful, embracing differences, being honest and accountable, thus promoting a healthy and safe working environment for all employees and partners we work with.

We do this by ensuring that all employees, at all levels of the organization, take responsibility for integrity. We share our integrity policy and code of conduct at the start of any work relation. The integrity policy was revised in November 2024 and again in January 2026. The key principle of the policy is that every person working for and with NIMD will be treated with respect and dignity. In 2025 we held our annual Integrity Refreshment event, a day dedicated to integrity for all staff in the Netherlands, where we discussed and addressed hypothetical integrity dilemmas and how to deal with them. At this event we also looked at our intercultural communication during a training given by the Clingendael Institute.

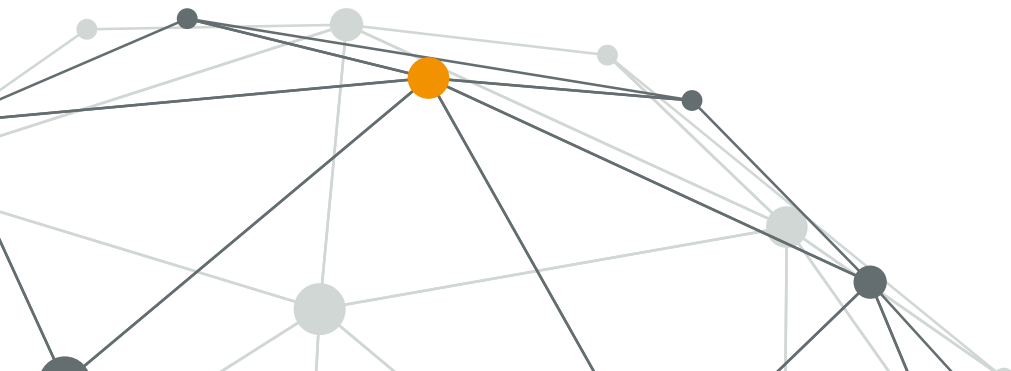
During the refresher event, we rolled out the newly created NIMD Dilemma Game, which created NIMD specific ethical dilemmas that colleagues could discuss and reflect upon. The code of conduct was also resigned during this day at NIMD the Hague.

At NIMD, we make sure that people feel safe to speak up and address any kind of misconduct. We are constantly working to improve measures to ensure the

prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). The explainer videos created in 2023 are pivotal to communicating NIMDs position on SEAH as well as explaining SEAH to any new colleagues that join the network. They are readily available both on our internal learning platform as well as external corporate website.

NIMD has three Confidential Counsellors at Headquarters (two internal and one external). In general, the Confidential Counsellors guide and support staff with questions and complaints related to unwanted behaviour such as sexual intimidation, aggression and violence, bullying, and discrimination.

In 2025, there were 0 reports made to the confidential counsellors at NIMD the Hague. At NIMD, we value and learn from our mistakes; that is how we maintain our commitment to integrity. We continuously exchange and work together with integrity specialists and learn from the practices of other organizations through the platform of the Branche organization Partos.





People and Leadership

- 2025 was pivotal year for NIMD in light of the large reorganization process that took place at NIMD the Hague. As part of this process, advice was sought with the Employers Organization on how to best carry out the reorganization process. Alongside this, an external HR advisor was hired to take part in the selection committee for the new team.
- NIMD has always focused on providing its staff with a platform for growth and development. In 2025, a separate policy was set up regarding the training budget for 2025.
- Following NIMD's objective to support staff in their development and considering the challenging outlook within NIMD in 2025, plus the challenges in the wider development sector, the MT decided to double the normal annual personal training budget to €4.000 in 2025. This meant that requests for training and personal development related to transferable skills or career development can be made up to the end of 2025. A special memo was sent out to all staff in the Hague outlining the specificities.
- NIMD addresses working conditions and health & safety through multiple mechanisms. In the Hague office, we maintain two certified Emergency Response Officers responsible for workplace safety, first aid, evacuation procedures, and emergency response coordination.
- Following the announcement of the reorganization, in June 2025 a Stand out and get Hired workshop was held for all staff to assist with updating their CVs and LinkedIn.
- In 2025 the Staff Representation played a key role in the reorganization process, working on ensuring better collaboration during the process and trust-building between all NIMD staff to limit tension and unnecessary anxiety. Specifically, they:
 - Advocated for:
 - Information provision on rights and benefits during a reorganization process
 - An updated and clear training policy which reflects new needs in light of the upcoming reorganization and the changing NGO landscape
 - Provision of Job application support by NIMD
 - Provision of Well-being support by NIMD
 - Organized:
 - Open-door sessions for individual consultations with staff every Thursday at lunch time, from 27/03 until 26/06 then it became upon request if needed.
 - Frequently liaised with the ED and occasionally also with the MT and HR, regularly providing solicited and unsolicited advice to ensure staff's needs are met.
 - Organized two staff consultation meetings at pivotal moments in the reorganization process.

A more detailed overview of our governance and organizational structure can be found in our 2023 Financial report [here](#).

Our 2025 funding partners

- **Demo Finland**
- **European Union**
- **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office**
- **German Agency for International Cooperation**
- **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**
- **United Nations Peacebuilding Fund**
- **United Nations Multi-partner trust fund for peace**
- **UN Women**
- **Women Peace & Humanitarian Fund**

NIMD's audited financial figures for 2025 – including income, expenditure and results – will be available as of October 2026 in our 2025 Financial Report at www.nimd.org.

Democracy starts with dialogue.