



Final Report : Mid-Term Review PoD-programme

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1 Acronyms

ABPoC	Actor Based Pathways of Change
AMwA	Akina Mama Wa Afrika
AU	African Union
AWLI	African Women Leadership Institute
CEMI	Centre for Mediterranean and International Studies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DGF	Democratic Governance Fund
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
EU	European Union
GORIN	Gorée Institute
GPMD	Global Partnership for Multiparty Democracy
IO	Intermediary Outcome
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LTO	Long-term outcome
MFA	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTR	Mid-term Review
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PoD	Power of Dialogue
PoV	Power of Voices
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers

2 Preface

This report reflects the mid-term review of the PoD-programme. The report consists of 9 chapters of which the executive summary (chapter 3), recommendations (chapter 4), findings (chapter 8) and conclusions (chapter 9) are probably the most important. The other chapters mainly cover the evaluation framework and methodology.

We have tried to keep the text as readable as possible. Therefore, we have worked with footnotes, referring to sources for evidence or to show that findings were triangulated. We have therefore also moved supporting documents to the annexes as much as possible. We have also attempted to visualise some of the findings through tables and figures. We hope this too contributes to readability.

The text does not mention names of individuals and avoids as much as possible references that could refer to specific individuals. We apply this principle in all our evaluation reports to ensure the anonymity of interviewees and stakeholders, thus protecting their privacy. The additional reason is that we also promise to do this as a principle which makes respondents more willing and able to talk freely.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this mid-term review. A lot of stakeholders were involved in this review. Some participated very intensively (as in Uganda, Ethiopia, Mali, NIMD HQ), others participated through online tools and online meetings. We were overwhelmed by the commitment, engagement, and passion for creating and supporting inclusive and democratic societies by all stakeholders. It is our sincere wish that this review will be of help to all stakeholders as to realize the strategic objective of the PoD-programme: *'Political and civic actors, collaborate, influence, and participate in legitimate, transparent, and accountable processes'*.

Disclaimer

This report represents the views of the members of the evaluation team. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of PoD Consortium Partners. The evaluation team bears the sole responsibility for the report in terms of content, as well as for its structure.

3 Executive Summary

ES 1. (Executive summary paragraph 1). The main purpose of the MTR is to generate insight into the implementation of the interventions and the achievement of the (intermediate) outcome results in the PoD-programme. The evaluation is therefore primarily geared towards learning and steering. The evaluation covers the period 2021 to mid-2023 of the Power of Dialogue (PoD) programme led by a Consortium of four partners: NIMD, AMwA, GORIN and CEMI. The PoD-programme is acting within the framework of 'The Power of Voices (PoV) of the MFA and is implemented in 15 countries.

ES 2. ToC. The PoD Consortium's ultimate goal is 'to contribute to peaceful democratic space, and inclusive, responsive and representative political decision-making at all levels.' The programme specifically focuses on aspiring young and women leaders as change agents for inclusive political systems and peaceful political change. Four pathways have been identified to reach the strategic objectives. The pathways are characterized by interventions, assumptions, intermediary and long-term outcomes. The first pathway should lead to '*the consortium, its network and local CSO's are effective enablers of change*'. The second pathway will lead to the long-term outcome: '*Aspiring young and women political and civic leaders are influential actors of change*'. The intermediary outcomes of pathway three should lead to '*political and civic actors who collaborate on a basis of trust*'. Finally, the long-term outcome of pathway four is described as '*Political and civic actors strengthen democratic space*'.

ES 3. Context of the evaluation. Democratic space is currently being threatened in many countries. All democracy indices point in the same negative direction. Whatever index is taken, the number of countries where democracy is declining outnumber those where progress is being made. Moreover, since the start of the programme, the situation has worsened in a number of programme countries (e.g., Sahel region, Myanmar, Uganda, Ethiopia...). This further illustrates the relevance of the programme and challenging context in which the PoD-programme is implemented.

ES 4. Evaluation Questions. The evaluation framework involves evaluation questions structured into four major themes. The first theme concerns the ToC, context analysis and risk analysis. The second theme refers to intermediate and outcome level achievements for the four pathways of the ToC. A third evaluation theme relates to partnership collaboration. The last theme covers the challenges, lessons learned and good practices and recommendations on the themes examined above.

ES 5. Methodology. The methodology consisted first of an analysis of the programme documents made available by the secretariat of the consortium. These were partly analysed based on the software package NVivo. In addition, the outcome harvesting database was scrutinized and then analysed. Because some shortcomings were identified in the database (in terms of descriptions of outcomes, contributions, significance), the full potential of the analysis of outcome database could not be exploited (see recommendation 4). Based on the outcome database and the enrichment of this database with outcomes from the annual reports of Uganda, Ethiopia, and Mali, two outcomes were selected per country. During the three country visits (Uganda, Ethiopia, Mali), these 6 outcomes were substantiated, and it was checked whether alternative contributions could be identified. During the country visits, the other evaluation questions were obviously also addressed. Finally, an online survey was organised after country visits in Uganda and Ethiopia. This aimed, on the one hand, to analyse the collaborative partnership between the consortium partners and to see whether some findings from the country visits could be extrapolated to all PoD countries. The findings presented below are triangulated to a significant extent. Where we experienced contradictory findings, this was explicitly stated in the text.

ES 6. ToC. The overall Theory of Change and adjusted Country Theories of Change appear to provide a flexible framework in which different activities and outcomes can be flexibly accommodated. Country PEAs do not lead to major changes in the overall ToCs. Especially the target actors were further defined in the country

adjusted ToCs. In a small number of cases, the content focus was also to a limited extent changed. Especially in the Actor Based Pathways of Change (ABPoC), the ToC logic for each actor type was further clarified. The ToC are highly interlinked and are not exhaustively defined. So, the different pathways are not independent from each other. This means that similar outcomes may be placed under different pathways in different countries. In addition, the evaluation team noted that some outcomes may evolve over time. For example, an outcome that was initially categorised under pathway 3 (e.g., building trust between different stakeholders within a particular dialogue platform) may evolve over time to pathway 4 if, for example, common policy agendas are established within that specific dialogue platform.

ES 7. ToC. The flexibility of the ToC has the advantage that adaptive programming can be applied without having to make major changes to the ToC. The PEA research reports are generally of high quality for all countries. In many cases the PEA's did not lead to a significant adjustment of the overall ToC but did identify opportunities and did largely determine which actors could or should be worked with. Analysing and updating these PEA's is well established practice in the NIMD offices and consortium partners visited by the evaluation team.

ES 8. Outcomes. Globally, most outcomes were achieved within pathway 2 and this pattern could be observed in all countries except Jordan, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Guatemala. The primary explanation for the majority of outcomes aligning with pathway 2 is the PoD program's specific emphasis on youth and women. This means that the program intentionally concentrated its efforts on these two groups, as evidenced by the alignment of most outcomes with pathway 2. In Ethiopia, most outcomes are located within pathway 3 and 4.¹ Furthermore, the main cooperation actors are regional and national government organizations and institutions. The main actors in Uganda and Mali are Young and Women leaders and CSOs led by young people or women. The changes to which the PoD-programme has mainly contributed are the changes in Practices and Collaborative processes. The contribution was mainly in the form of capacity building of individuals and organizations and by facilitating/supporting exchange platforms.

ES 9. Outcomes. The country studies confirm that adaptive programming is not a dead letter. This adaptive capacity is highly dependent on taking advantage of opportunities that arise and responding to them is only possible when an extensive social and political network has been build. Associated with this, in Uganda NIMD & AMwA are seen as a neutral non-partisan actor, accepted, and valued by a wide range stakeholders. What stood out in all country studies is that country offices are able to navigate in particularly politically volatile and polarized contexts.

ES 10. Outcomes. Another striking characteristic of the PoD-programme is the strong synergy and complementarity between different activities and initiatives. The networks created between young and women political leaders through Democracy Schools and AWLI programme undeniably contribute to creating platforms for consultation and dialogue between young people and women from different political parties. For this, the evaluators have strong evidence for all countries. Also, a high synergy and complementarity between other programmes of NIMD and consortium partners (e.g., NEED in Ethiopia, AMLI for AMwA) and other international ngo's have been observed.

ES 11. Outcomes. For all outcome harvesting cases studied in the three countries, it can be said that they fit within the logic of the ToC and can be situated within the intermediary outcome of the different pathways. Whether they will eventually lead to the indicated Long-Term outcomes is difficult to predict. In all three countries, this will largely depend on the political leeway that the different initiatives (platforms of dialogue, for example) will have, especially in the context of shrinking civic and democratic spaces.

¹ In Ethiopia, there are additional independently funded initiatives such as NEEDS, UKFCDO, and USAID OTI Ethiopia that have successfully adopted a dual approach. They have established an entry point through youth and women, such as EDAC, as well as another entry point through the party system. The intersection of these two approaches occurs through intergenerational dialogues.

ES 12. Outcomes. In general, the evaluators believe that results/outcomes are somewhat more easily achieved by supporting youth and women platforms of cooperation than those within a traditional party system. Trust and finding a common agenda with related action points seems easier to achieve within youth and women platforms, especially in polarized political contexts. Of course, the question remains whether these women and youth platforms can break into the existing party system and thus weigh on political decision-making. These findings in mind and based on findings in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Burkina Faso, an additional pronounced strategy could be to include decentralized structures as additional actors. When national platforms are dead-locked, diverting to sub-national structures could be an option to achieve concrete outcomes at these levels, which can subsequently serve as a leverage for the national level (see recommendation 3).

ES 13. Outcomes. PoD-programme is particularly strong in capacity building of young and women leaders. The evidence of change in terms of attitudes, self-confidence, and the courage to raise their voices is overwhelming. In this area, we have identified significant synergy with the other initiatives (democracy schools and AWLI programme, for example).

ES 14. Outcomes. The evaluation team had the opportunity to talk to many politically and socially engaged women during the various country visits. It was noticed that several hindering factors such as gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment, financial vulnerability, operating in patriarchal societies/culture (including gender stereotypes) have a strong impact on women's participation in political structures and decision-making mechanisms. As GBV and VAW-P (Violence against Women in Politics) is such a large and widespread problem and because it is a firm barrier to women's inclusion in the political and party system, the PoD-programme at the consortium level should put this issue on the agenda and should develop a strategy addressing these issues in all the PoD-countries (see recommendation 1).

ES 15. Outcomes. The evaluators noted a desire among young and women leaders to connect internationally. The main reason is that they want to learn from each other and share experiences. An additional benefit of creating such an international network is that they become stronger as a group and can exert more (political and social) pressure. They can create opportunities to support and lobby each other when, for example, the political context in their respective countries deteriorates or threatens to deteriorate. According to the evaluators, the PoD programme has enormous potential to enhance international networking among young and women leaders (see recommendation 2).

ES 16. Partnership. Regarding the cooperation between the consortium partners, the evaluators found that the partners agree that clear goals and roles have been defined and that the partners trust and are committed to each other. The evaluators noted that there were some tensions between consortium partners at the start of the programme, but these tensions were addressed in the early stages of PoD-programme implementation. In terms of collaboration between the Consortium Partners and the teams working in the 15 countries included in the PoD programme, the principles of autonomy and subsidiarity strongly apply.² Nevertheless it does seem appropriate to further clarify the concept of 'leading from the south.' We believe that it is the responsibility of the MFA to provide additional clarification for this concept in the context of future programming and to articulate its practical implications.

ES 17. Partnership. The topic 'partners are making progress towards diversity and feminist leadership' received the lowest score on the successful collaborative partnership dimensions.³ From one of the consortium partners, it was very much appreciated that within the PoD framework they conducted a gender audit at NIMD HQ. This illustrates the will to take diversity and feminist leadership seriously from an analysis point of view. On

² The country teams, whether they are composed of Consortium Partners, country partners and offices, have full ownership over the regional and country plans. They implement autonomously their programmes based on annual plans and have the flexibility to shift resources within the scope of their multi-annual plans, based on the budget allocations determined by the Consortium.

³ The evaluators are aware that the concept of Feminist leadership is much broader than just women and includes elements of unheard silent voices (such as including , local population, ethnic minorities, women, children, people of different race,...). Since the programme focuses mainly on women and aims to give women a voice, this evaluation focuses mainly on women.

the other hand, some partners suggest that steps have indeed been taken to include more women in the consortium's decision-making processes, but that the partners' management teams are still made up exclusively of men, apart from AMwA. We also see at three NIMD offices (visited by evaluators) that the concept of feminist leadership has taken root in a contextualised way (through concrete activities of AMwA).

ES.18 The evaluators uncovered compelling evidence of the PoD program's effectiveness in enhancing the capabilities of young people and women. This empowerment has translated into increased self-awareness, amplified voices, improved learning, and support in formulating shared agendas and policy documents. Notably, these benefits are most evident among the youth and women involved in the dialogue platforms supported by the PoD program. However, it is uncertain whether this individual capacity building also leads to enhanced organizational strength within the groups these individuals belong to (see recommendation 5).

ES 19. Partnership. The added value of the cooperation between the consortium partners is estimated to be high. Especially the ability to call on each other's specific expertise (diversity of the partnership), the exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices is highly appreciated. The evaluators noted that there is a particularly large amount of interesting material available in the digital knowledge hub and that it is not yet fully used by partners (see recommendation 6).

ES 20. Partnership. The partnership between PoD partners and embassies is generally rated as very good. There are particularly frequent contacts between NIMD Country Offices and the Dutch embassies. These often have an exchange of information on the political context and the party system as their object as well as coordinating on specific initiatives within PoD and other programmes (funded by the Dutch Embassy). The cooperation between the PoD Consortium and the embassies increases the credibility and impact of its work.

ES 21. Main Challenges. Volatile polarising contexts obviously remain a major challenge and determine the extent to which there is room for manoeuvre to pursue activities and achieve outcomes. However, the evaluators founded that country offices have the skills and network to navigate through this. The concept of adaptive programming also allows for adjustments to be made if the context requires it.

ES 22. Main lessons learned & Good Practices. The overall ToC complemented by the country PEAs, the adjusted country ToC and ACBPoC prove to be particularly flexible tools for adaptive programming. The most important asset of the PoD programme relates to human resources and the high quality of staff members that apply the principle of inclusiveness and impartiality. Above that comes the ability to navigate in political systems characterised by strong polarisation. Yet the country offices that were surveyed manage to be considered neutral actors. This is a very important asset to be nurtured. The excellent cooperation with the Dutch embassy deserves special attention. This cooperation can lead to strengthening each other's strategy. Sharing knowledge, experiences, good practices among the consortium partners is considered an important good practice as well as the fact that the diversity of consortium partners stimulate the exchange. Another important lesson learned is that physical contact between consortium partners and country offices remains necessary, despite the progress made in digital (collaboration) during the Covid-19 period. It provides the bond between partners in a way that is not possible through digital means. The capacity development activities with women (political) leaders by AMwA is considered as very good practice with tangible results (increasing self-confidence among women, introducing gender-sensitive policies within political parties). There may be further opportunities to extend these good practices and methodologies to other countries.

4 Recommendations

The recommendations below are strategic in nature and do not intend to make operational choices. The evaluators believe that this is for the consortium partners to decide in consultation, as the evaluators believe that there is a particularly high level of expertise within the consortium. Nevertheless, we present, within each set of recommendations, some good practices from the current evaluation and our experience that can serve as examples or directions. The evaluators also understand that not all recommendations, due to budgetary reasons, for example, can be implemented.

R1 (Recommendation 1). The evaluation revealed and confirmed findings from several NIMD papers and external research that **Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women in Politics (VAW-P)** should remain a major concern. It is strong barrier to political participation as much as a factor that makes many women decide to withdraw from the political arena. The evaluators believe that GBV and VAW-P should be strengthened in programming. The ToC does not need to be adjusted to include this topic. This action line can be fitted within pathway 2 and pathway 3. Some good practices can be found within the PoD programme that can be used as inspiration for strategy development:

- Engage male champions who advocate for women in leadership positions. This could be extended to themes around GBV & VAW-P.
- Initiating gender sensitive policies and policies against GBV in political parties as realized by women wings in some of the political parties in Uganda.

R2. Expanding the national networks to an international network. From this evaluation, it was clear that young and women political leaders are in demand to connect internationally with other national networks in other countries within the PoD-programme. The main reason cited is to learn from each other and share experiences. An important additional benefit is that being internationally connected between young and women leaders gives them back-up and support when the political situation in their own countries deteriorates. Support can then be provided from such an international network to navigate and lobby in such a changing context. Finally, international networking also involves creating long-term international networks of future leaders. According to the evaluators, there is huge potential for international networking within the PoD programme (and in synergy and complementarity with other initiatives such as the Democracy Schools, AWLI programme...). This recommendation can also be embedded into the current ToC under pathway 4 (and I.O 4.1).

A good practice can for example be found in Latin America. NIMD Guatemala has collaborated with the offices in Honduras and El Salvador to organize regional interactions with young activist from the three countries, with the objective to exchange on how to counter democratic backslides in Central America.

Another good practice is the organization of regional academy by CEMI, involving young civic actors from the MENA region. They worked together in different training sessions (i.e. political communication, negotiation, change management, etc.), with the support of CEMI experts.⁴

R.3. Several stakeholders mention that the support of the **PoD programme at the national level would also be particularly relevant at the local level** (village, district, provincial, regional). In some countries (e.g., Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar...), the PoD-programme support decentralized initiatives. There is little doubt about

⁴ Many other good examples can be found, e.g. the co-organization by GORIN and the NIMD offices in the Sahel of a Regional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forum on Gorée Island with the theme 'Democratic transitions and political stability in the Sahel.' The event gathered political and civic figures from the Sahel Region to discuss and reflect on the increasing challenges to political stability and development in the region. The forum provided a platform for participants to adopt a collaborative regional approach, working towards consensus and a shared plan of action. Attendees included civil society members, political actors, representatives from both state and non-state institutions, as well as MPs from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal; AMwA provides networking opportunity at small scale. For example 3 alumni from 3 different countries collectively participated in the Democracy Summit in Lusaka

the relevance of these initiatives. It could be concluded from the evaluation that sometimes a choice is made to work at the decentralized level if national structures no longer allow for the inclusive operation that the PoD-programme seeks. The evaluation also noted that shifting to new types of actors (such as young people and women leaders) led often to tangible outcomes. It is therefore probably not unwise to explicitly include a third level of possible actors, namely decentralized structures (and including same type of actors as at the national level: youth, women, CSO's,..) , as an option. Outcomes achieved at a decentralized level could then possibly serve as a model/inspiration for the national level.⁵

R4. During the review and the analysis of the outcomes of the outcome harvesting database, we gained insights in the structure and the quality of the harvested outcomes across the different countries. The quality of outcome descriptions, significance level and contributions vary widely. For this, a **OH refresher training is necessary**. The country offices are also asking for this.

At the PoD secretariat level, we think it is necessary to improve **the tagging of the different variables** in the database. We suggest developing standard set of tagging's that can be used and filled out during or after the harvesting. Based on previous OH experiences we recommend the following tagging's:

- Name of the partner/organization (pre-set standard list)
- Country (pre-set standard list)
- Name of actor (open text field)
- Type of actor (pre-set standard list of type of actors relevant for the programme)
- Timing of the outcomes (pre-set standard list referring to a period such as 2021-I, 2021-II, 2022-I, 2022-II,...)
- Intended or unintended outcome (yes/no)
- Type of change described in the outcome (pre-set standard list relevant for the context of the programme)
- Connection to the TOC outcomes (incl. intermediate outcomes) (based on a pre-set standard)
- Type of programme interventions mentioned in the contribution statements (pre-set standard list relevant for the programme)
- What other actors / factors contributed to the achievement

It would be useful to **create dashboards** that allow visualisation of the univariate distribution of the different tagging variables. For example, a visualisation of the outcomes achieved within the pathways, both at the level of long-term outcomes and intermediate outcomes. Another example is to visualise the types of contribution, allowing immediate monitoring at global and local levels. These dashboards could then be made available to consortium partners and country offices. This facilitates monitoring (and adjustment) at local and global level on the various data collected in outcome harvesting. Moreover, in this way, all partners immediately get an analytical return for their efforts in providing the outcome harvesting database with data.

Finally, the evaluators believe that an accurate database with associated dashboards, also implies the possibility that future (external) evaluations can create more added value. After all, based on the dashboard analyses, more tangible evaluation questions can then be formulated.

R5. The evaluators uncovered compelling evidence of the PoD program's effectiveness in enhancing the capabilities of young people and women. This empowerment has translated into increased self-awareness, amplified voices, improved learning, and support in formulating shared agendas and policy documents. Notably, these benefits are most evident among the youth and women involved in the dialogue platforms supported by the PoD program. However, it is uncertain whether this individual capacity building also leads to enhanced organizational strength within the groups these individuals belong to. For instance, when young leaders from

⁵ A stakeholder expressed the view that in states characterized by centralized political systems or dominant party structures, the subnational level frequently mirrors the political culture and dynamics of the national level. Consequently, it's essential to accurately analyze the dynamics at this subnational level, as the assumption that there might be more conducive conditions there for implementing successful programs might not always hold true.

different political parties are brought together in a dialogue platform, their individual empowerment contributes to the overall strengthening of these platforms. Yet, it's not immediately clear whether these young individuals subsequently utilize their acquired skills and capabilities to reinforce the youth wings within their respective parties. Considering these findings, **the evaluators recommend a deliberate focus on bridging the gap between individual capacity development and the organizational strengthening of which these individuals are a part.** This could be achieved by involving multiple young people or women leaders from each organization or by conducting specific training programs tailored to organizational enhancement.

R6. The partnership structure within the PoD program encompasses various levels. First, there are the consortium partners; second, the country partners, primarily the NIMD country offices, and third, the local partners in different countries. The primary focus of the evaluation was on the collaboration among the consortium partners, which was universally recognized as highly beneficial for the exchange of ideas, experiences, knowledge, and skills. The evaluators noted that the existing online Knowledge Hub contains a particularly large amount of useful and very interesting material. The assessors were unable to confirm that partners are fully aware of and make use of this extensive collection of materials. **It may therefore be useful to further disseminate the key files in the knowledge hub within the PoD programme network.** This might be accomplished, for instance, by scheduling more webinars and holding live classes in the regions or the countries.

5 Objective, scope, and context of the evaluation

5.1 Objective and Audience of the Evaluation

The purpose of the Midterm Review (MTR) has been clearly defined in the *Terms of Reference (ToR)* on page 7. The main purpose MTR is to generate insight into the implementation of the interventions and the achievement of the (intermediate) outcome results in the PoD programme for the period of 2021 – mid 2023. The evaluation is therefore primarily geared towards learning and steering. More specifically it will have dual objectives:

1. Assess programmatic aspects related to: Theory of Change, context analysis and risk analysis (including SEAH, fraud and corruption), achievements to date on the output and outcome indicators that are linked to Strengthening Civil Society and the Thematic Result Framework basket indicators, cross-cutting themes (gender, youth, climate), challenges, lessons learned, good practices, and sustainability.
2. Assess the partnership aspects related to: Leading from the South/localization, partnership with the Ministry and the Embassies, lessons learned and good practices.

The review should develop recommendations resulting from the findings and conclusions that can help further operationalize PoD's programme strategies and priorities for the remainder of the PoD period (mid-2023-2025).

The primary users for the MTR evaluation is NIMD, NIMD country offices, consortium partners, the MFA and embassies.

5.2 Scope

The evaluation covers the period 2021 to mid-2023 of the Power of Dialogue (PoD) programme led by a Consortium of four partners: NIMD, AMwA, GORIN and CEMI. The PoD-programme is acting within the framework of 'The Power of Voices (PoV) and is implemented in 15 countries (Burkina Faso, Columbia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, and Uganda).

All countries were included in the evaluation desk research. Field visits took place in three countries (Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda). As a result, programme implementation in these three countries was examined more thoroughly (see methodology chapter for more explanation regarding the approach).

The mid-term review focused on the four pathways in the ToC and, of course, on the intermediate outcomes, as this is a MTR (for a detailed description of the ToC and pathways, see below as well as in the evaluation findings section). Partnerships within the consortium were also analysed.

5.3 Short Description of the Programme and Theory of Change

The Power of Dialogue (PoD) programme (2021-2025) was jointly submitted in March 2020 by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Gorée Institute (GORIN), the Centre for Mediterranean and International Studies (CEMI) and Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), within the framework of the 'Power of Voices' (PoV) partnership grant instrument and in line with the broader 'Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society'.

The PoD Consortium's ultimate goal is '*to contribute to peaceful democratic space, and inclusive, responsive and representative political decision-making at all levels.*' The PoD-programme is centred around capacity strengthening for aspiring women and young leaders. Within the programme logic, the capacity strengthening empowers women and young leaders to effectively influence and participate in political processes that respect and promote democratic norms and values. Both civic and political actors are considered as central to the programme, as both groups have complementary roles to play. While civic actors legitimately advocate for the needs of people, political actors need to be responsive and accountable to the people, according to the programme documents. Since women- and youth-led groups are not always organized in a traditional, institutionalized way, the consortium makes a deliberate choice also to work with these emerging groups and equip them to take up their leadership and influencing roles. The Consortium strongly believes that it is equally critical to connect young and women leaders to other civic and political actors and foster broad and legitimate alliances between both well established and less established actors. Such alliances can help leaders push for their right to influence and participate in decision-making spaces. Furthermore, the programme places emphasis on the need to construct enabling environments that are responsive to the needs of women, young people, and other excluded groups, as well as stimulating dialogue, protecting human rights, and facilitating inclusive politics locally, nationally, and internationally.⁶

5.4 Context of Evaluation

Democratic space is currently being threatened in many countries. All democracy indices point in the same negative direction.⁷ Whatever index is taken, the number of countries where democracy is declining outnumber those where progress is being made. The best summary is probably provided by V-Dem project which consists of a large number of sophisticated indicators⁸:

- "The level of democracy for the average global citizen by 2022 is back to 1986.
- Democracy has deteriorated in many regions. Asia-Pacific is now down to levels of 1978.
- There are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies, for the first time in more than two decades."
- 72% of the world's population live in autocracies.
- Freedom of expression is deteriorating in 35 countries in 2022.
- Government censorship of the media is worsening in 47 countries over the last ten years.
- Government repression of civil society organizations is worsening in 37 countries."

Taking the Freedom House index⁹ as another reference, we find that none of the countries where NIMD works can be considered as free (democratic) countries.¹⁰ Moreover, it is clear that since the start of the programme, the situation has worsened in a number of countries (e.g. Sahel region, Myanmar, Niger..).¹¹ This further illustrates the relevance of the programme and difficult context in which the PoD- programme is implemented.

6 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation framework of the MTR of the PoD programme was clearly described in the ToR. It involves evaluation questions structured into four major themes. We have attached the full evaluation matrix with

⁶ NIMD, Multi-Annual Plan. Power of Dialogue Consortium 2021-2025, p.7.

⁷ E.g., International IDEA (2022). *Global State of Democracy 2022. Forging Social Contract in a Time of Discontent*. Stockholm; Freedom House (2022) *Freedom in World 2022*

⁸ V-DEM Institute. Democracy report 2023. *Defiance in the Face of Autocratization*, p. 9.

⁹ Important caveats can be made to the Freedom House index methodology because it places countries in three categories (not free, partly free and free).

¹⁰ See Freedom House [map](#).

¹¹ The indices do not yet include the new developments for example in the Sahel region (e.g., Niger) hence it would say little to detail the indices by country of the PoD-programme. Additionally, and this is more interesting, the country PEAs and contextual descriptions in the annual reports provide a very clear and balanced picture of democratic risks and opportunities in PoD-programme countries.

different evaluation questions in *Annex 1* (Evaluation Matrix). Below we give a short overview of the four evaluation themes. The specific evaluation questions can also be found in the findings section.

The first theme concerns the ToC, context analysis and risk analysis. These are questions aimed at assessing the extent to which the overall ToC is used as a guiding principle and the extent to which it was adapted at country level and the extent to which the actors are sufficiently well defined. In addition, the relevance, validity, and quality of the ToCs and assumptions obviously need to be checked.

The second theme refers to intermediate and outcome level achievements for the four pathways of the ToC described above. The relationship between interventions, intermediate outcome and the higher-level programme outcomes should also be explored.

A third evaluation theme relates to partnership collaboration. The focus here is on the added value of the collaboration between the various consortium partners and other potential partners including Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA and its embassies). For the evaluation of this theme, we developed a model of Successful Collaborative Partnership in which different dimensions of collaboration were examined (clear goals, clear roles, trust & commitment, and added value). The full elaboration of this model can be found in *Annex 2* and is briefly described in *8.3. Findings Evaluation Topic 3: Partnerships*.

The last theme covers the challenges, lessons learned and good practices and recommendations on the themes examined above. Aspects of the monitoring and reporting system were also analysed here. This can be considered a logical continuation of the evaluation activities carried out under the previous three evaluation themes.

7 Methodology

7.1 Desk research: Document Analysis

The initial document analysis has been carried out based on NVivo with a coding scheme that follows the evaluation questions (see annex 3). The document analysis provides us with initial answers to all the evaluation questions. On this basis, data gaps and elements for data triangulation were identified. Following this initial data analyses, additional data were collected and provided to the evaluators during the evaluation process (e.g., documents from the Knowledge Hub and annual reports 2022). These were no longer processed with Nvivo but were processed in a traditional way. That is, the documents were reviewed and provided an addition to the already existing analyses. Of course, documents were also consulted again several times throughout the evaluation process to contextualise, revise, check, and triangulate data obtained from interviews, group discussions and the online survey.

7.2 Desk research: Outcome Harvesting Database.

An important part of the desk research included the analysis of the outcome harvesting database. Evaluators were informed that possibly not all realised outcomes were included in the outcome harvesting database. This meant that outcomes from other sources such as annual reports needed to be added to the outcome harvesting database. For Uganda, Ethiopia and Mali, the evaluators were able to identify some additional outcomes that were added to the database.

Besides that, the evaluators gained during the review and the analysis of the outcomes of the outcome harvesting database, insights in the structure and the quality of the harvested outcomes across the different countries. Based on this, the evaluation team faced other challenges, both on quality and use of data. Although there is clear uniformity in the way the outcomes are formulated (name actors, time reference, ...), we observed that many outcomes are very short and miss a good description of the change in practice. Sometimes there is reference to activities rather than outcomes as behaviour changes, or it is hard to understand what the change is.

The significance statements are not always referring to the significance of the outcome statement but about the activities that were carried out. The quality of the contribution statements is diverse. Some statements are detailed and provide a clear overview of NIMD or consortium partners that contributed to the outcome. Other contribution statements are vague and not explaining the actual contribution. Finally, it was not always clear to which long-term outcome or intermediate outcome the recorded outcomes in the database referred to. The evaluators then did an initial clean-up of the overall database and then focused on fine-tuning the recorded outcomes of Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda. The results of these analyses, supplemented by data from other documents and interviews, can be found in 8.2. *Findings Evaluation Topic 2: Achievements to Date on the intermediate and outcome level.*

From the database and initial interviews with the country offices, two outcomes per country were then selected that were the subject of substantiation/contribution analyses during the country visits.

7.3 Data Collection: Country Visits and Country visits

During the inception phase, it was decided to organise country visits in three countries, the main purpose of which was to conduct substantiation of chosen outcomes, in addition to, of course, additional data collection

around the other evaluation topics. The choice of these countries was driven by a combination of the following criteria and practical concerns:

- Sufficiently tangible outcomes: based on an initial analysis, sufficient outcomes could be identified in the three countries that are interesting to further substantiate and apply aspects of contribution analysis. Outcomes could be identified in connection with the four pathways.
- The three countries are characterized by a challenging political context to which the programme tries to contribute in various ways.
- Regional activities: Mali for the Sahel region and Uganda for the Horn of Africa region have significant activities and results that have a regional scope.
- Variety of partners. There is wide variety of direct and indirect partners in these three countries.
- Importance of the three countries for the MFA. The two of the three countries (Uganda & Mali) are focus countries for the Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Learning potential. Based on the initial interviews, it was assessed that in these three countries the learning potential of this MTR is particularly high both in terms of achievements and challenges, as well as in terms of the different types of partnerships.

For the substantiation process in the three countries, both external persons (i.e., not directly linked to the outcome) and internal persons (those who were involved in the outcome) were chosen as interviewees. For Uganda and Mali, we achieved to identify external interviewees, for Ethiopia this was not possible in one of the two cases. You can find the country reports with topic lists and interviewees in *annex 4* (Uganda), *annex 5* (Ethiopia) and *annex 6* (Mali). These annexes also contain the concrete results of this substantiation exercise. Obviously, the main findings of the substantiation process are captured in the sections below.

During the country visits (Uganda: 24/6-1/07/2023; Ethiopia: 9/07-13/07/2023 and Mali: 12/09-15/09/2023), additional interviews and (focus) group discussions were organised, to enrich and triangulate the evaluation questions (including the four dimensions of the successful collaboration model: see *annex 2*).

We also organised several other online and face-to-face interviews with other stakeholders with the same purpose. Below in *Table 1* you can find an overview of the total number of interviews and (focus) group discussions.

Table 1. Number of (online) interviews & (focus) group discussions

	Interviews	(Focus) Group Discussion	Online Interviews
Uganda	14	2	2
Ethiopia	10	2	1
Mali		2	9
Global	11	1	5
Total	35	7	17

7.4 Data collection: online survey

We also sent out an online survey to all country offices and consortium partners early August. Among consortium partners, the Collaborative Success Partnership was further surveyed. All country offices and consortium partners were also asked several questions about the ToC, actor-based Pathways, cooperation with embassies and an assessment of cooperation within the PoD-programme. The latter questions served rather to test whether the results from the country visits could be extrapolated to all countries in the PoD-programme.

The overall results of this survey can be found in *annex 7* and will be discussed throughout various sections of this report.

7.5 Triangulation

Of course, the principle of data triangulation is an important part of the analyses and answering the evaluation questions. We applied this principle in answering all evaluation questions. If we arrived at uncertain non-unambiguous answers, we indicated the same. To increase the readability of the text, we have used footnotes (as already mentioned above). The footnotes were often used to refer to different data sources.

It is also important to mention that the evaluation team had thorough discussions among themselves about the outcome harvesting database. We applied forms of researcher-based triangulation here. Due to the amount of information in wide variety of countries, this form of triangulation was not possible for all parts of this evaluation.

7.6 Limitations

- The PoD-programme is being implemented in 15 countries and regions. Although in this evaluation study we analysed all relevant documents from all 15 countries and regions during desk research, the analyses are more superficial than the three case studies. However, we tried to detect major concerns and similarities across countries. But of course, some caution should be shown in generalizing findings from specific countries to the wider PoD-programme. We will also indicate these limitations throughout the report.
- A second limitation concerns the selection of outcomes in the three countries visited. These outcomes are selected prior to the mission. One of the selection criteria is the relevance of the outcome. By using this criterion, a selection bias could occur, resulting in only positive outcomes in line with expectations being selected. This problem cannot be entirely solved.
- The number of mission days in the three countries is quite limited and the number of evaluation topics extensive. This means that for each evaluation topic, there was limited time to collect additional empirical data. This was mitigated by additional online interviews and by an online survey.
- The above limitation also meant that we could not map all actors/partners during the country visits. Obviously, cooperation actors were interviewed, but this was mainly aimed at finding out the contribution of the PoD-programme on the selected outcomes. However, the detailed functioning of those actors could not be researched.
- The above limitation also hampered the evaluation team from examining regional impacts of the programme. For example, we observed that AMwA realized some outcomes in other non-PoD-countries. It was impossible to analyse the PoD-programme's contribution on these types of outcomes.
- The fact that only a few outcomes were examined in depth also means that the validity of the ToC could only be verified to a limited extent. This applies equally to the associated assumptions. Nevertheless, for the outcomes analysed, we could conclude that they have the potential to contribute to the long-

term outcomes given that the assumptions hold. Of course, the assumptions can only be maintained if there is enough room for inclusion and democratic functioning.

- The evaluation methodology involved visiting just two out of the four consortium partners, namely NIMD HQ and AMwA. As a result, there was a degree of bias, with many examples of good practices and lessons learned coming from these two consortium partners. However, it's important to note that this doesn't imply that the other two consortium partners lack good practices.

8 Findings

8.1 Findings Evaluation Topic 1: ToC

Evaluation Topic 1: Theory of Change, context analysis, and risk analysis

EQ 1.1 To what extent is the overall programme ToC guiding in the programme's delivery, and what can be said about its quality and validity at mid-term?

EQ 1.2. To what extent are country level- ToCs appropriate adaptations of the overall programme ToC, and how relevant are country-level ToCs to guiding in-country programmes?

EQ 1.3. To what extent are the actors targeted in the ToCs sufficiently concrete (civic and political actors, youth and women leaders, international actors)? Are there similarities in targeting across different contexts?

EQ 1.4. How are programme adaptations being made to the country ToCs, in response to contextual changes, risk analyses, assumption changes, or programme implementation monitoring, especially in contexts of conflict or where democracy is backsliding?

8.1.1 Summary of findings on Evaluation Topic 1

- The overall Theory of Change and adjusted Country Theories of Change appear to provide a flexible framework in which different activities and outcomes can be flexibly accommodated. Considering the limitations of the evaluation study (as described above), the validity of the ToC can be reaffirmed. (EQ1.1.)
- Country PEAs do not lead to major changes in the overall ToCs. Especially the target actors were further defined in the country adjusted ToCs. In a small number of cases, the content focus was also to a limited extent changed (EQ 1.4). Especially in the Actor Based Pathways of Change (ABPoC), the ToC logic for each actor type was further clarified. Most PoD program partners consider the country ToCs as a strategic framework in which all activities fit and against which initiatives are assessed. There are significant similarities between the different countries, especially when the achieved outcomes are analyzed. In the vast majority of program countries, youth and women are the main focus. (EQ 1.2. & EQ 1.3.)
- The PEA research reports are generally of high quality for all countries. In many cases the PEA's did not lead to a significant adjustment of the overall ToC but did identify opportunities and did largely determine which actors could or should be worked with. Analysing and updating these PEA's is well established practice in the NIMD offices and consortium partners visited by the evaluation team. This PEA's did not result in substantial changes of ToCs, except for the selection of actors (E.Q.1.4.)

8.1.2 Description of ToC

Before turning to the findings, we outline in general terms the Theory of Change as found in the programme documents.¹²

The ultimate goal of the PoD programme is a *"Peaceful democratic space and inclusive, responsive and representative political decision-making at all levels"* which is translated in the strategic programme objective *"Political and civic actors collaborate, influence and participate in legitimate, transparent and accountable political processes"*.

¹² Multi-annual plan, Power of Dialogue Consortium, 2021-2025, p.15-31

Four pathways have been identified to reach the strategic objectives. The pathways are characterized by interventions and intermediary and long-term outcomes (see visualization of the overall ToC in *annex 7*). For each pathway, assumption have been defined.

The first pathway should lead to *'the consortium, its network and local CSO's are effective enablers of change'*. To achieve this long-term outcome, it is envisaged that the intervention will engage the consortium, its partner networks and local CSOs in (i) mutual learning (knowledge support and training, e.g. consortium team of trainers), (ii) collaborative planning (e.g. shared annual planning), (iii) use complementary strengths through shared gender- and youth-responsive programming (staff peer-to-peer leaning and direct support, e.g. gender audits). The intervention activities will lead to the consortium that works complementary (1.1.), build each other's, it partners networks' and local CSOs`capacity (1.2.), and engage in joint lobby and advocacy at all levels (1.3). These three dimensions are considered as the intermediary outcomes. Achieving the intermediate outcomes will subsequently lead to the above defined long-term outcomes.

Assumption 1. Partner networks and local CSOs need capacity-strengthening by our consortium.

Assumption 2. Influential CSO networks are needed for effective capacity-building and lobby and advocacy for inclusive politics from local to international levels.

The second pathway intervention consist of giving access to (i) resources (e.g., seed money projects), (ii) capacity building (skills, e.g. AMwA leadership institute), (iii) knowledge (e.g. participatory research on youth & women), (iv) access decision making spaces for young and women leaders (e.g. to policy-influencing round tables). This will lead to the intermediary outcome that young and women leaders will (2.1) strengthen their movements or organizations, (2.2) lobby and advocate in decision-making spaces and (2.3.) amplify diverse young and women voices. Subsequently this will lead to the long-term outcome: *'Aspiring young and women political and civic leaders are influential actors of change'*.

Assumption 1: Targeted actors need to build leverage to be able to influence or take part in the decision-making.

Assumption 2: Existing unequal power relations can be broken or changed when aspiring young and women leaders use their leverage.

The third pathway intervention is focussing on diverse political and civic actors (i) build jointly their capacity and (ii) share inclusive spaces.

This will then lead to political and civil actors that (3.1.) address grievances through mediation, (3.2.) build trust to enable alliances across political divides, (3.3.) participate in meaningful dialogue and (3.4) to root causes of exclusion and conflict (=intermediary outcomes). Examples of activities:

- e.g., conflict mediation, healing of wounds workshops (sexual violence/post-electoral)
- Roundtables, e.g. on root causes of conflict
- Dialogue platforms, eg. Multiparty and multi-stakeholder
- Party and movement capacity building, e.g., on inclusivity through Democracy Schools

Finally, these intermediary outcomes will lead to *'political and civic actors who collaborate on a basis of trust'* (Long-term outcome).

Assumption 1: Civic space is sufficiently open for civic and political actors to engage with each other's positions, needs and interests.

Assumption 2: Dialogue and cooperation between political civic adversaries in inclusive safe spaces enable building sustainable relations across conflict or political divides.

The fourth pathway says that if the consortium, partners and local CSOs (i)lobby regional and international bodies and (ii) research and monitor democratic rules and behaviour and if civic and political actors share inclusive platforms for consultation and agenda setting then the following intermediate results will be reached:

- Regional and international bodies promote and protect democratic space (IO 4.1.)

- Civic and political actors safeguard civic space (IO 4.2.)
- Civic and political actors will adhere to existing democratic rules (IO 4.3.)
- and civic and political actors will set shared policy agendas. (IO 4.4.)

Subsequently these intermediary outcomes will result in the following long-term outcome: *'Political and civic actors strengthen democratic space'*.

Assumption 1: Civic space is sufficiently open to monitor adherence to democratic/electoral rules and for actors to collaborate; regional and international bodies are sufficiently relevant and motivated to acts as pressure points.

Assumption 2: Creating pressure points and enabling collaboration are sufficient to change political incentive structures to improve democratic rules and behavior.

8.1.3 Analysis of overall ToC

The starting point of the evaluators' analysis of the ToC was to link the outcomes listed in the outcome harvesting database to the different pathways (intermediate and long-term outcomes). Because the outcome harvesting database did not link all outcomes to ToCs' intermediary and long-term outcomes, the evaluation team (with outcome harvesting experts) tried to develop its own outcome tagging. The evaluation team had to discontinue this exercise because different outcomes described could be linked to different pathways. The fact that the same outcome can be linked to different outcomes is also illustrated below where country offices themselves indicate that a given outcome relates to two pathways. Of course, when the same outcomes can be categorised under different pathways, it is also obviously difficult to assess the validity of the ToC.

CEMI, described the following outcome in the outcome harvesting database: "In November 2021, CEMI launched the project of Youth Collaborative Platform which brings together young participants from different political parties and CSO's to discuss political, economic and social issues through several meetings that were organized both online and in CEMI's premises". That outcome has been linked to pathway 3 and 4.¹³ This illustrates that certain outcomes were linked to certain pathways, without further specifying which intermediate outcome they contributed to. If we take a similar outcome from another country, e.g. NIMD Uganda ("During the Youth Retreat held at Mbarara in June 2022, the political party youth league leaders, NYC and UNSA endorsed the creation of the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF) for cross-party collaboration to address issues affecting youth"), we see that this outcome is linked to intermediary outcome "2.1 Youths & Women leaders strengthen their movements or organisations".¹⁴ These examples illustrate that similarly described outcomes are linked to different outcomes in the ToC.

The fact that some outcomes can be linked to different pathways and intermediary outcomes can be explained by the description of intermediary outcomes which are not exhaustively defined. For example, let us take Intermediate outcomes 2.2. lobby and advocate in decision making spaces, 3.3. Participate in meaningful dialogue and 4.4. set shared policy agenda. If we take the concrete example from Uganda above as a starting point, namely the creation of a MYF (multi-party youth forum) and the endorsement of a 4-point minimum programme by youth leaders participating in this platform.¹⁵ Clearly, this outcome can be linked to intermediary outcomes 2.2, 3.3 and 4.4.

During the ToC workshop in Mali, another explanation has been raised by the NIMD team. They saw results progressing from pathway 2 and 3 to pathway 4, with time: first the young and female political and civic actors become credible and influential (LTO 2); and political and civic actors develop more trust-based collaboration (LTO 3), and thanks to their advocacy and recommendations, political and civic actors strengthen democratic space (LTO 4). This also went the other way to some extent, with engaged actors reinforcing their skillset and

¹³ Outcome Harvesting Database & Annual report 2021, NIMD Mali.

¹⁴ Outcome Harvesting Database & Annual report 2022, NIMD Uganda

¹⁵ IBID.

credibility through engagement with decision-makers. Thus, the pathways still made sense as separate, but they did not correspond to different “tracks” of work, more of a progression.

Another reason of confusion is the vague wording. Pathway 4 especially is worded as loosely as actors “Promote and protect democratic space” (4.1) or “safeguard democratic space” (4.2) or which is much less defined than partners “lobbying and advocating in decision-making spaces” (2.2). Thus, when can one start considering LTO 4 is being achieved?

Another reason for different categorisation of outcomes across countries is the possibility that the country and regional ToCs have been adjusted in such a way that comparison between countries no longer makes sense. As the next section in this chapter shows, this is not the case. Rather, the changes in country ToCs (relating to long-term outcomes and intermediate outcomes) are limited.

8.1.4 Country specific ToC’s

We analysed the country specific ToCs based on the PEAs, PEA strategy notes, the updated ToC documents, the annual reports, and the Actor Based Pathways. These data have been enriched with interviews during country visits and interviews at NIMD HQ. We analysed the extent to which the Long-term outcomes and intermediate outcomes were adjusted following the PEA and PEA strategic note. Then, based on the annual reports, we tried to ascertain whether profound changes were made afterwards. The *Table 2* below provides an overview of these.

The first cross-country observation is that in terms of pathways, there were generally no major changes in the ToCs. The changes that were made mainly related to further defining actors and target groups (e.g., Ethiopia, Jordan, Myanmar). In a few cases, outcomes were reformulated but did not fundamentally change the content of the long-term and intermediary outcomes, in some case the topics of the outcomes have been defined in the ToC (e.g., Uganda, Guatemala/regional programme). These findings have been largely confirmed by another information source, namely the online survey in which most country offices participated (*see Annex 3*).

There are two exceptions to this general observation, namely the ToC Columbia and Mozambique. The intermediary outcomes of Mozambique have been fundamentally reformulated for all pathways (based on an analysis of the annual report 2021. The content of the described intermediary outcomes does not correspond to the overall ToC. But these changes seem to be temporary in nature, as in the 2022 annual report we see that the ToC is back in line with IOs of the overall ToC. The changes to the Country ToC Columbia are rather limited and located in Pathway 3 and 4. There, the fundamental reformulation of intermediary outcome 3.1. appears to involve a combination of intermediary outcomes 3.2. and 4.4.

It should also come as no surprise that not all pathways (long-term outcomes & intermediate outcomes) are equally important in all countries. Hence, some countries did not include certain long-term and intermediary outcomes. A striking fact is that Guatemala (regional programme) did not retain pathway 2 (women and youth) in the ToC. This seems to have been captured by focusing in the other pathways on the concepts of inclusive political culture and inclusivity. In Columbia, pathway 2 was retained but women were removed as a target group. However, it seems that in these two countries, inclusiveness is stated more in general terms and that there is a specific focus on young people. This has not prevented both countries from also organizing activities and reaching outcomes with women as a target group.^{16 17}

¹⁶ Knowledge product, brief Political Violence against Women in Guatemala, Annual Report 2021, NIMD Guatemala, p.21.

¹⁷ The Congress of the Republic has the capacity to regulate the political system to advance in the expansion of the democratic space, through reforms that make it more open, inclusive and participatory (LTO4). This trajectory of change was reactivated in the second half of 2022, where in principle progress was made in four main areas: (i) Technical assistance in deliberative democracy processes and innovation processes; (ii) Strategy for the modernization of the Congress of the Republic; (iii) Prevention of Violence against Women in Politics; and (iv) Communications strategy and positioning of the actions of the House of Representatives (Annual Report 2022, NIMD Columbia, p.5

Table 2 Country specific ToC's compared to Overall ToC

Country/Region	Changes of the Overall ToC during inception phase
NIMD Uganda & AMWA	Minor changes, only specific actors and dialogue topics has been added
NIMD Ethiopia	Minor adjustments, focus on political parties and party systems as actors.
NIMD Jordan	Minor, target actors have been differently defined. Some I.O.'s haven been deleted
Sahel Region	Pathways 1 has been further elaborated in 6 intermediary outcomes (compared to the overall ToC) ¹⁸ Adjustments made basically to strengthen internal CD.
Kenya	Long-term outcome 1, 2, 4 has been more specified ¹⁹ as well as the intermediary outcomes, but no fundamental changes Actors and target groups have been defined in the ToC. Some intermediate outcomes focus on specific topic. E.g., 4.4(2) Shared policy agenda for gender parity in legislatures. Pathway 3 was not retained in the ToC.
Guatemala, regional programme	Pathway 2 has not been hold in this programme, inclusiveness has been integrated in IO 3.2 & 3.4 as specific targeted topics.
Columbia	Long-term outcome Pathway 1: slightly modified. IO 1.3. Changed in Enhance their capacities to support collaboration between political and civic actors. Long-term outcome Pathway 2: women was removed from the pathway formulation. Only IO 2.1 and 2.3 were retained and slightly modified (focus on young voices, not on women) Long-term Outcome Pathway 3 has been reformulated, same meaning. IO 3.1. has been reformulated profoundly: "Build trust in safe spaces to enable alliances across political or dialogical divides for shared a agenda development (seems to be combination of IO 3.2 and 4.4.) Only IO 3.1 and IO 3.3. are retained. Long-term outcome Pathway 4 has been specified,
Tunisia & Mena Region	No fundamental changes have been made. Numbering of the IO's pathways 3 & 4 seems to be changed/swapped
Mozambique	No fundamental changes have been made. Some I.O.'s have been deleted from the country ToC
Myanmar	Changes have been made by defining specific actors, formulation of some of the IO's are contextualized, e.g. 3.1 Democratic political actors engage in emerging dialogue at the sub-national level (Kayin, Kayah, Mon). Also target groups have been adapted within the country ToC to adjust to changing context.

Country adjusted ToC's were further operationalized in all countries in the Actor Based Pathways of Change (ABPoC). In all countries, key-actors are identified, and specific change paths were outlined for each of types of key-actors. Key actors are broadly defined (in, for example, 'youth & women', 'political parties', 'electoral bodies', etc.). From the ABPoC, for example, it cannot be deduced which specific CSOs are collaborated with. Even if we put the ABPoC alongside the annual plans, it's still hard to figure out who the specific actors are. Only the ABPoCs of Ethiopia and Uganda allow a concrete inventory of specific partners (and actors). It could possibly be interesting, from an analytical point of view, to also collect this data in the ABPoC. It then becomes possible, for example, to easily check how many CSOs are collaborated with. This data can then also be examined together with the data from the outcome harvesting database. It then allows to track effectiveness and efficiency at the overall programme level.

¹⁸ The six intermediary outcomes in pathway 1 are (translated from French): 1. Pool mutual networks to create synergy, generate knowledge about the role of democracy conflict prevention and resolution, 3. Jointly develop lobbying strategies vis-à-vis regional and international institutions, 4. Strengthening capacity of the NIMD Sahel team for gender-sensitive programming (AMwA); 5. Share experiments on political and democratic schools (CEMI); 6. Develop subsidiarity strategies (including risk management) to further strengthen local leadership (consortium).

¹⁹ Aspiring and elected young women are influential actors of change within CSOs targeting youth and women, political party youth leagues, parliament, and county assemblies.

8.1.5 ToC as a strategy & Adaptive Programming

Thus, from the above analysis, we could conclude that the construction of pathways was maintained in most countries and consistent with the overall ToC. The country specific ToCs were sometimes supplemented with the designation of specific actors. In other cases, the content of the intermediary outcomes was made more specific, without much impact on the construction of the logic of the pathways.

The evaluators found that the PEAs for the countries and regions involved in the PoD programme were of high quality. The conclusions of these PEAs (and the related PEA strategy notes) had no fundamental impact on revising the country specific ToCs (compared to the overall ToC) apart from more clearly delineating target groups and actors.

During our country field visits in Uganda, Ethiopia and Mali, the evaluators could also see that updating the PEA on a weekly or bi-weekly basis is a standard practice in the country offices. This is not always reflected in written PEA documents. What this does illustrate is that there is a culture within the offices that analyses the risks and opportunities of operational functioning continuously.

Even in countries with very difficult politically volatile contexts (such as in Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda), the partners manage to flexibly adapt the programme implementation to changing circumstances. For example, in Uganda, support work for IPOD (The Interparty Organization for Dialogue (IPOD), supported by NIMD since 2010) was suspended. After all, the inclusive nature of IPOD was lost due to the refusal of two key opposition parties (National Unity Platform & Forum for Democratic Change) to further participate in dialogues within this framework.²⁰ Nevertheless, NIMD and AMwA could continue to play their role as facilitators in organizing platforms. For instance, NIMD redirected its support towards the MYF (Multi-party Youth Forum) and AMwA supported the newly established IWOP. Both initiatives (outcomes) were unintended outcomes and pertinently illustrate the flexibility of the programme. These adaptations were done without significant changes to the ToC. Of course, the Actor Based Pathways (as an operational tool) were adapted according to the new actors involved.

Another example of adaptive programming can be found in Jordan where new actors have been added as political opportunity arose. *“Before the recommendations of the Royal Committee for Modernizing the Political System, working with PPs (political parties) was a very sensitive issue due to government restrictions; so the focus was on working with politically active youth within and outside of PPs and doing some projects with CSOs on youth participation. The Royal Committee’s recommendations brought back PPs to the political arena, which opened a new opportunity for the NIMD program in Jordan to work with PPs, and this time with the government’s blessing. Based on that, a project to build the capacity of PPs to conduct comprehensive strategic planning was implemented in cooperation with Politics and Society Institute during the second half of 2022; this has left a strong message that NIMD Jordan is now focusing on PPs. This had a direct impact on the ToC, where we can include the work with PPs directly instead of targeting them indirectly through building the capacities of youth in PPs”.*²¹

What these examples (and others²²) illustrates is that the overall ToC provides an extremely flexible framework in which a wide variety of actors (political parties, youth, women, CSOs, individuals, parliaments, government organizations, international actors) can be accommodated and brought together in a variety of ways (individual and collective capacity building, networking, support, and organization of platforms for consultation and dialogue....).

During the country visits, the evaluators also noted that the NIMD staff involved were very aware of the long-term outcomes and strategic objective of the PoD programme. These long-term outcomes and strategic objective formed the framework for them to make decisions on whether to undertake certain activities and initiatives. The actor-based pathways are then more of an operational tool for them to achieve long-term and to a lesser

²⁰ PEA Strategy Note, Outcome area 3 – Dialogue, NIMD Uganda

²¹ Annual Report 2022, NIMD Jordan, p.2

²² There are numerous examples of adaptive programming across countries, as for example in Myanmar where the office was relocated, activities were completely redirected, new audiences were addressed and a digital tool was developed to make School of Democracy more accessible.

extent intermediary outcomes. About intermediary outcomes, it could then be argued that whether something belongs to IO 2.3 or 2.1, for example, is of secondary importance.

To further validate these findings, several questions were asked about this in the online survey, the results of which present below in *Table 3*. The figures in *Table 3* seem to confirm the above observations. The ToC is regarded by a large majority of respondents as a strategic document that guides the achievement of objectives. More than 80 per cent of respondents indicate that PoD-ToC can be considered a strategic framework into which other projects and programmes can also be incorporated. To this extent, PoD-ToC can be considered as an organizational-level strategic framework.

This is further confirmed by the high complementarity and synergy of projects funded by other donors. Obviously, there are the Democracy Schools (funded by EU in some countries) that are closely linked to the objectives of the PoD programme and more specifically Pathway 2. But also, the support of, for example, FCDO and the Dutch embassy (NEED-project) in Ethiopia to the reconciliation process in Ethiopia and the Political Parties Dialogue are examples of how strong synergies and complementarities are realized with other projects that have direct links to the strategic objectives of the PoD-ToC (pathway 3 and 4).

Table 3. The role of ACBPs and ToCs

Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
We use actor-based pathways as a tool to implement concrete activities	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	18
Our partners are clearly articulated in the actor-based pathways	0.00%	16.67%	11.11%	55.56%	16.67%	18
The actor-based pathways can be seen as an operationalization of the Theory of Change	5.88%	5.88%	5.88%	41.18%	41.18%	17
We see our country-specific ToC as a strategic document that guides our objectives	5.88%	11.76%	0.00%	35.29%	47.06%	17
The country-specific ToC of the PoD programme can be considered as overall organizational strategic document applicable to other programmes and donors as well	5.88%	0.00%	11.76%	52.94%	29.41%	17

8.1.6 Validity and Quality of ToC

In general terms, the overall ToC appears to offer a particularly strategic and agile framework that has validity in different contexts. The adjustments made by some country offices relate mainly to actors and target groups. To a lesser extent, dialogue or agenda-setting topics were also included in slightly modified versions of the overall ToC.

Based on the interviews conducted during the country visits and based on the online survey, the evaluators believe that the ToC of the PoD programme provides a strong foothold for the PoD programme as well as for a

broader organizational strategic framework where other projects sponsored by other donors can also be used complementarily.²³

The construction of the pathways is logical, the intermediate outcomes logically contributing to the long-term outcomes. Each step can be seen as logical steps to achieve the strategic objective. Based on the outcomes studied in the three country cases, the logical structure can be confirmed. For example, strengthening the capacities of youth and women enables them to lobby within the platforms created for topics that concern them. These steps were effectively taken in the three countries. By creating and supporting the dialogue platforms, they also strengthen themselves organisationally. What has not yet been realised is that they have become 'influential actors of change' (long-term outcome). However, the evaluators found that the realised intermediate outcomes are a necessary but not sufficient condition to realise the long-term objectives. The assumptions described, which are mainly defined by contextual elements such as the openness/closedness of civic space, also remain, of course, highly relevant and are necessary to realise the long-term objective. The analyses of outcome 2 results (in mainly Uganda and Mali) confirm the assumptions, namely that leverage needs to be built to be able to influence or take part in decision-making. This leverage was built through explicit support to dialogue platforms, through training that empowers youth and women individually and collectively. The collective aspect then mainly relates to the agenda setting within the platforms. The long-term objectives could not yet be realized in all cases because another assumption could not yet be broken, namely that unequal power relations could be broken. The same reasoning should be built for the assumptions related to pathway 3 and 4, where the openness of civic spaces is the key assumption. It is rather obvious when this openness is not there, all intermediate outcomes cannot be realised. What the evaluation did illustrate is that when openness does not exist in certain contexts (e.g., in the national party system), it is particularly useful to move towards open spaces among other actors, such as young people and women (see below).

Nevertheless, as shown above, the ToC is sufficiently agile to accommodate even changes in context. Of course, changes in context may generate effects on the specific outcomes achieved and previously achieved outcomes may be overturned.

Finally, we would like to return to the observation that similar outcomes are placed under different pathways, depending on the interpretation made in the countries. The main question is whether this is necessarily a problem. According to several stakeholders and to the evaluators, this different categorization does not pose a strategic problem. Given the specific uniqueness of the processes in the programme, there will always be some form of overlap between the pathways. Recognizing the interconnectivity (e.g., the evolution from one pathway to another) between these pathways is major strong point of the ToC. Defining the particular outcomes strictly exhaustively (e.g., through larger delineations of target groups of actors or to reformulate intermediary outcomes) would not necessarily be a better solution.

However, the disadvantage of the non-discretionary nature of the different pathways is that an analysis of the outcome harvesting database does not allow for an unambiguous interpretation of the realized outcomes across countries. This may well complicate future learning on ToC processes. What could be a concern, but rather for future programming, is that the wording of intermediary outcomes be more clearly defined. For this, for instance, the five types of dialogue interventions (see NIMD publication, Just talk)²⁴ could provide guidance. Hence, the evaluators consider that the disadvantages (of not categorizing outcomes unambiguously) do not outweigh the advantages offered by a current agile and flexible ToC.

²³ The evaluators believe this is already demonstrably the case in some countries (e.g., NIMD Ethiopia).

²⁴ Violet Benneker and Nic van der Jagt (2021). Just Talk? Evaluating five years of political dialogue 2015-2020. The Hague: NIMD, p.22. (Political party dialogue, political actor dialogue, multi-stakeholder dialogue, informal dialogue and dialogue assistance)

8.2 Findings Evaluation Topic 2: Achievements to Date on the intermediate and outcome level

Evaluation Topic 2: Achievements to date on the intermediate and outcome level

EQ 2.1.a. What have been the main (intermediate) outcome results achieved at mid-term in relation to the following:

- (1) the Consortium, partner networks and local civil society organizations are effective enablers of change,
- (2) aspiring young and women political and civic leaders are influential actors of change,
- (3) Political and civic actors collaborate peacefully based on trust, and
- (4) Political and civic actors strengthen democratic space, as set out in the PoD Multi-Annual Programme Plan?

EQ 2.1.b. What can be said about the sustainability of these results?

EQ 2.2. What can be said about the relationship of intermediate outcome results achieved to the higher-level programme outcomes in terms of plausible contribution?

EQ 2.3. Which of the programme interventions appear to be particularly effective in producing anticipated intermediate outcomes, and are most likely to contribute to programme outcomes?

8.2.1 Summary on findings Evaluation Topic 2

- Globally, most outcomes were achieved within pathway 2 and this pattern could be observed in all countries except Jordan, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Guatemala. The primary explanation for many outcomes aligning with pathway 2 is the PoD program's specific emphasis on youth and women. (EQ.2.1.a)
- The changes to which the PoD programme has mainly contributed are the changes in Practices and Collaborative processes. The contribution was mainly in the form of capacity building of individuals and organizations and by facilitating/supporting exchange platforms. (EQ.2.1.a)
- The country studies confirm that adaptive programming is not a dead letter. This adaptive capacity is highly dependent on taking advantage of opportunities that arise and responding to them is only possible when an extensive social and political network has been build. Associated with this, NIMD & AMwA are seen as a neutral non-partisan actor, accepted, and valued by a wide range stakeholders. What stood out in all country studies is that country offices are able to navigate in particularly politically volatile and polarized contexts. (EQ.2.3.)
- Another striking characteristic of the PoD-programme is the strong synergy and complementarity between different activities and initiatives. (EQ.2.3.)
- For all outcome harvesting cases studied in the three countries, it can be said that they fit within the logic of the ToC and can be situated within the intermediary outcome of the different pathways. (EQ.2.2.)
- Trust and finding a common agenda with related action points seems easier to achieve within youth and women platforms, especially in polarized political contexts. (EQ.2.3.)
- PoD-programme is particularly strong in capacity building of young and women leaders. The evidence of change in terms of attitudes, self-confidence, and the courage to raise their voices is overwhelming. In this area, we have identified significant synergy with the other initiatives (democracy schools and AWLI programme, for example). (EQ 2.3.)
- The evaluation team had the opportunity to talk to many politically and socially engaged women during the various country visits. It was noticed that several hindering factors such as gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment, financial vulnerability, operating in patriarchal societies/culture (including gender stereotypes) have a strong impact on women's participation in political structures and decision-making mechanisms. (EQ.2.1.a) (see recommendation 1).
- The evaluators noted a desire among young and women leaders to connect internationally. The main reason is that they want to learn from each other and share experiences. An additional benefit of creating such an international network is that they become stronger as a group and can exert more (political and social) pressure. (EQ.2.1.a) (see recommendation 2).

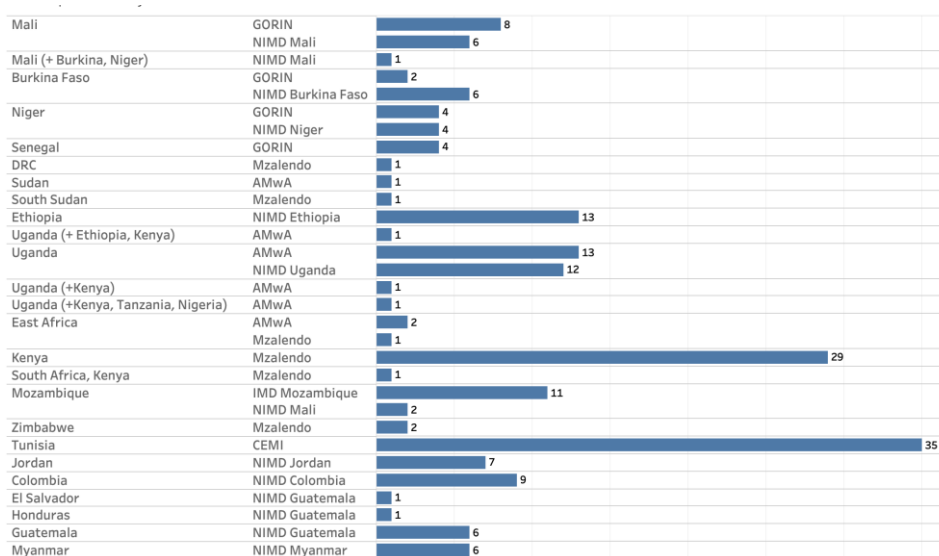
- The sustainability of the intermediary results will largely be determined by the political context of the countries in which the programme is implemented. The realised outcomes in terms of individual capacity building have a sustainable character in terms of the extent to which women and youth leaders can continue to use their newly acquired skills. The newly established platforms for dialogue are currently still largely financially dependent on the PoD programme. (EQ.2.3)

8.2.2 Outcomes Global perspective

The limitations of the outcome harvesting database in mind (*see 7.2 Desk research: Outcome Harvesting Database.*) and based on the tagging of NIMD and the enrichment of the database by outcomes identified in the annual reports of 2021, the evaluators were able to identify some global patterns on outcome level of the PoD-programme.

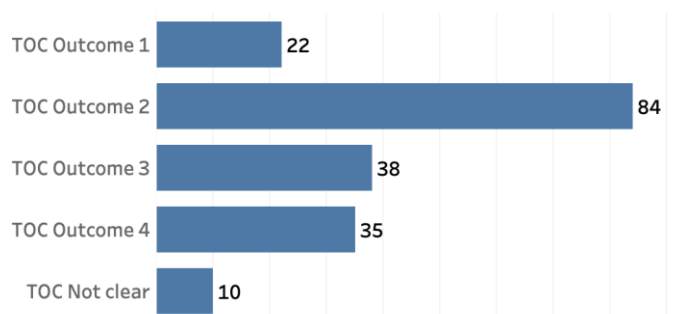
Most outcomes are harvested in Tunisia, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Mozambique (*see Figure 1*). However, this number of outcomes need to be tempered. Although there is clear uniformity in the way the outcomes are formulated (name actors, time reference, ...), we observed that many outcomes are very short and miss a good description of change in practice. Sometimes there is reference to activities rather than outcomes as behavioural changes, or it is hard to understand what the change is. We don't have an immediate explanation as to why many outcomes are formulated in some countries and fewer in others. One possible explanation is that outcomes are not recorded equally accurately in all countries. Another possible explanation is that in some multiple outcomes are generated because there is a great synergy and complementarity with other projects.

Figure 1. Number of outcomes harvested - Globally.



Based on the outcome harvesting database, and considering the remarks above, 22 outcomes are connected to pathway 1, 84 to pathway 2, 38 to pathway 3 and 35 to pathway 4 (*see Figure 2*). Ten outcomes could not be linked to any of the pathways. That more than 40 per cent of the outcomes refer to pathway 2 (which focuses on young and women leaders) means that the programme's emphasis on the inclusion of these groups is also reflected in the outcomes of the programme.

Figure 2. Outcomes per pathway - Globally



However, the distribution of outcomes is unevenly distributed between countries. Uganda (18) and Tunisia (21) achieved half the number of pathway 2 outcomes (*see Table 4*). Yet in all countries, the outcomes within Pathway 2 are the most numerous, apart from Ethiopia, Kenya, Jordan and Guatemala (where Pathway 2 is absent from the ToC).

Unfortunately, the shortcomings in the database (e.g. listing types of actors...) did not allow us to perform additional analyses of the database at the overall level.

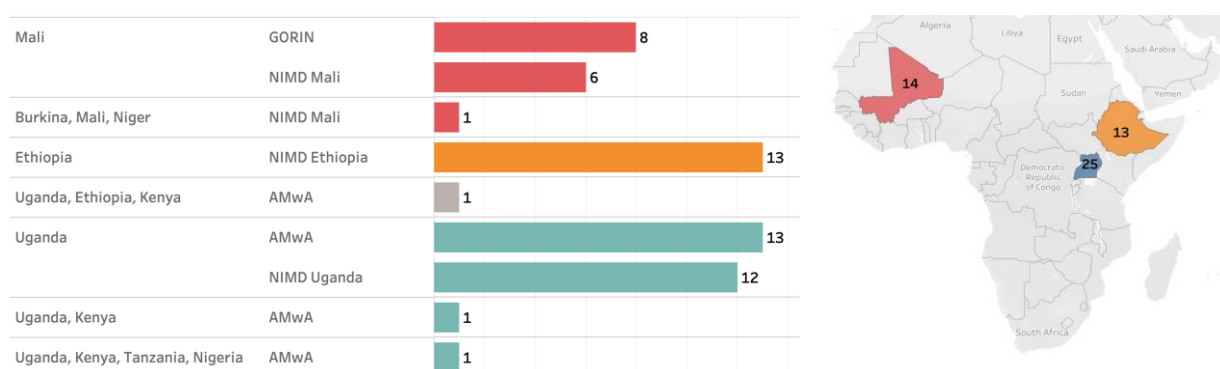
Table 4. Outcomes per country

	Total	TOC Outcome 1	TOC Outcome 2	TOC Outcome 3	TOC Outcome 4	TOC Outcome Not Clear
Mali	14		7	3		4
Mali (+ Burkina, Niger)	1			1		
Burkina Faso	8		4	3	1	
Niger	8	2	2	2		2
Senegal	4		3	1		
DRC	1	1				
Sudan	1			1		
South Sudan	1			1		
Ethiopia	13		2	5	6	
Uganda (+ Ethiopia, Kenya)	1	1				
Uganda	28	2	18	2	4	2
Uganda (+Kenya)	1	1				
Uganda (+Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria)	1		1			
East Africa	4	1	2			1
Kenya	24	5	5	3	11	
South Africa, Kenya	1		1			
Mozambique	14		7	6		1
Zimbabwe	0					
Tunisia	33	3	21	7	2	
Jordan	11		4		7	
Colombia	9	3	4	2		
El Salvador	0					
Honduras	2		1		1	
Guatemala	3			1	2	
Myanmar	6	3	2		1	
Total	189	22	84	38	35	10

8.2.3 Outcomes Three Country Case Studies

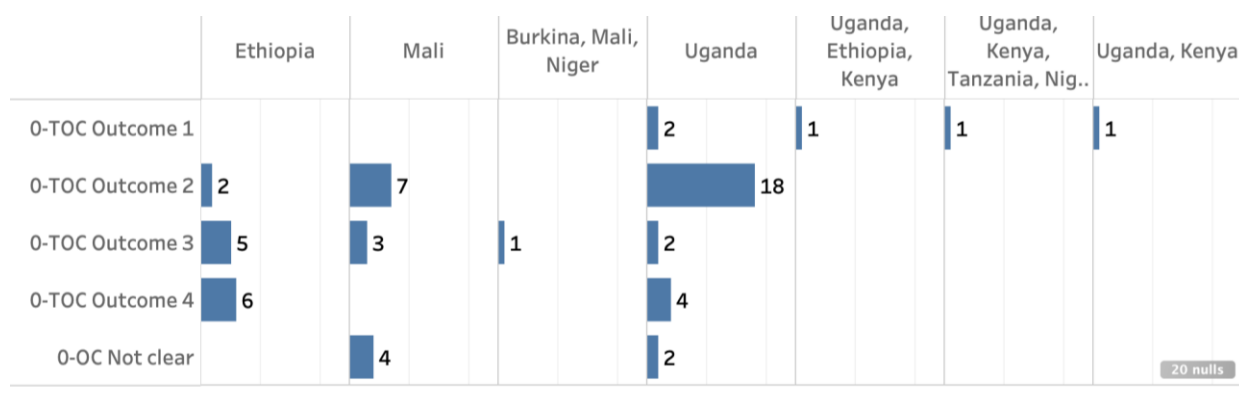
Considering the comments above, for the Mali, Ethiopia and Uganda outcomes, the evaluators screened the database in detail and provided detailed tagging. To make this analysis possible, additional information was researched for all described outcomes and adjustments were made in the database. However, we retained the links to the pathways/outcomes as tagged by the country offices and consortium partners themselves, because pathways are interpreted differently, and an additional interpretation of the evaluators was not desirable. A total of 56 outcomes were collected in the three countries of Ethiopia (13), Mali (14), Uganda (25). There were also 4 multi-country outcomes including Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Niger and Tanzania, (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Total number of outcomes in Ethiopia, Mali and Uganda.



Analysis of the upgraded database also revealed that most outcomes in Mali and Uganda (NIMD as well as AMwA) relate to pathway 2 while most outcomes in Ethiopia relate to pathway 3 and 4 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Outcomes ordered by pathway - Ethiopia, Mali, Uganda



In Table 5 below, we linked outcome descriptions in the database to the intermediary outcomes. This was not possible for Mali (including outcomes achieved by Gorin in Mali), as these were not specified in intermediary outcomes in the database.²⁵ The totals per pathway may be higher than in the Figure 4 above. This is because some described outcomes are assigned to different intermediary outcomes, albeit within one pathway. The table shows that for NIMD Uganda, most of the outcomes are located within intermediary outcome 2.2. (lobbying

²⁵ The tagging of the Intermediary outcomes for Mali have been discussed and added with NIMD HQ, but the evaluation team decided to stick to the original tagging of the countries in order to avoid further bias.

and advocacy in decision making) while for AMwA, the outcomes are more evenly spread across the three different intermediary outcomes within pathway 2, with an emphasis on 2.1. (Strengthening their movements/organizations). As already stated above, the outcomes in Ethiopia are mainly situated in pathway 3 and 4, with most outcomes achieved in IO 4.3 (adhere to democratic rules). Important outcomes were also achieved in the intermediary outcomes 3.1. (address grievances-mediation) and 3.4. (attend to root causes of exclusion).

Below, we will further analyse these outcomes by country and then look in more detail at two specific outcomes by country that were chosen in mutual agreement with the country offices and AMwA in the three countries. These specific outcomes were the subject of substantiation/contribution analysis during the country visits.

Table 5. Intermediary outcomes - NIMD Ethiopia & Uganda and AMwA

	NIMD Uganda	AMwA	NIMD Ethiopia
IO 1.1 Works complementary			
IO 1.2 Build each other's capacity		1	
IO 1.3 Engage in joint lobby & advocacy	1		
IO 2.1. Strengthen their movements/organizations	1	7	2
IO 2.2. Lobby & Advocate in decision making	6	4	
IO 2.3 Amplify diverse young and women voices	1	4	
IO 3.1 Address grievances - mediation	1		3
IO 3.2. Build trust to enable alliances across divides			
IO 3.3 Participate in meaningful dialogue			1
IO 3.4 Attend to root causes of exclusion and conflict		1	2
IO 4.1 Promote & Protect democratic space		1	
IO 4.2 Safeguard civic space		1	
IO 4.3 Adhere democratic rules			5
IO 4.4. Set shared policy agendas		2	1

8.2.4 Outcomes in Uganda

8.2.4.1 General overview outcomes Uganda

For NIMD Uganda, *Table 5* shows clearly that most of the outcomes are concentrated on intermediary outcome 2.2 (Lobby and advocate in decision making). All these outcomes are linked to consultations/discussion between several youth forums and the creation of a Multi-party Youth Forum (MYF). Besides the creation of the MYF, this platform also resulted in a common 4-point programme to be promoted by MYF and other youth organizations.

AMwA's outcomes are also mainly framed within Pathway 2. Many outcomes relate to strengthening feminist knowledge and leadership skills of individual women (political) leaders and to lobby and advocate gender-sensitive policies in political parties and politics (IO.2.2). Many of these outcomes are also related to other outcomes related to strengthening movements and organizations in which women are active (IO 2.1).

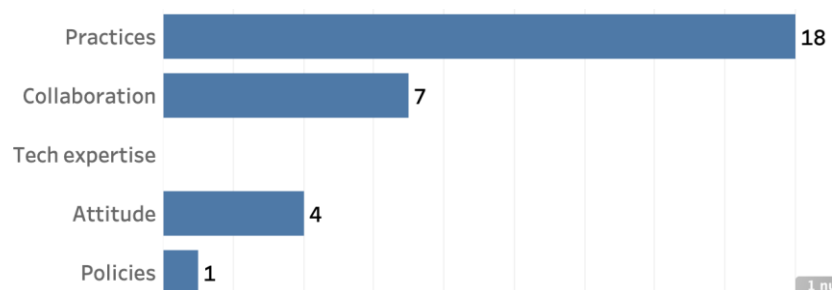
Of course, it is no surprise that the actors involved in the outcomes were mainly young and women political leaders (see *Figure 5*). When we take a closer look at the other actors, such as national media actors, for example, there is also a clear link to the gender theme. For example, women advocating feminist leadership in the media, demonstrating that women too can take up prominent leadership roles in politics (and wider society). Another example is CSOs. There, too, a direct link can be made to organizations led by young people and women. The analysis of actors in Uganda overwhelmingly illustrates that its focus is predominantly on youth and women.

Figure 5. Type of Actors Uganda



In addition, it is important to know exactly what changes have been generated. From *Figure 6* we observe that most changes have occurred in terms of practices and collaboration. To a lesser extent, a change in attitudes was described as an outcome.

Figure 6. Type of Changes in Uganda



In Outcome Harvesting **changes in practices, actions and activities** can take different forms depending on context but in general they refer to the actor's 'new ways of working' or introduction of practices that did not exist before. In Uganda the outcomes showing this type of change cover things such as:

- Development or approval of common agendas/directives/forums for improving cross-party and youth and women's dialogue, collaboration, and coordination.
- Commitment to promote women's leadership and bridge the gap between young and older women in politics.
- Development of the first youth memorandum as advocacy and lobby tool for youth political participation.
- Release of 51 detainees related to NUP supporters and agreement to organize an inclusive political dialogue.
- Radio talk show and youth dialogue organized for the first time to promote gender equality in governance processes.
- Implementation or prioritization of women and youth agendas or initiatives.
- Commitment to work with political parties on the electoral guidelines.
- Increased budgetary allocations towards women leagues in political parties and proposal to increase budget for youth leagues of political parties.
- Commitment by youth MP to champion the establishment of a National Graduate Scheme.
- Creation of a Communique to address issues limiting young women's participation in politics.
- Lobbying actions to increase women quotas of representation in political party leaderships.
- Country consortium strategies created for the first time.
- Implementation of a Women's 3-Day dialogue on Women Council Elections through partnership with UNWOMEN.

Changes in the stakeholders' relationships and/or collaboration normally refer to new partnerships or the shifts in the way individuals and organizations interact, cooperate, and work together to achieve outcomes. In Uganda these changes are:

- CSOs working together with a common voice to challenge the government for releasing illegally detained individuals.
- CSOs working in women's and youth's participation collaborated to improve coordination and duplication of initiatives.
- Strengthened sisterhood and solidarity among women from 5 political parties following a training.
- Local CSO (Open Space Centre) approaching NIMD for a partnership on the National Youth Symposium.
- Support to IWOP Inter-Party Women's Platform (IWOP).
- Support to the creation of Multi-Party Youth Forum (MYF).
- 51 women political leaders hold an inter-generational dialogue between young and old women to promote women's leadership.
- Youth leaders from different parties/leagues joined forces to operationalize a fund for youth in political leadership using the Multiparty Youth Forum.

Changes in attitudes or mindsets are issues like increased awareness (backed by contextual evidence that the awareness is likely to lead to action) but also increased self-confidence or self-efficacy and belief in their ability to bring about change.

In Uganda outcomes manifesting a change in attitudes and mindsets:

- National media shifted perception (from negative to positive) of women in political leadership.
- Increased understanding of feminist leadership skills by women political leaders through assessment

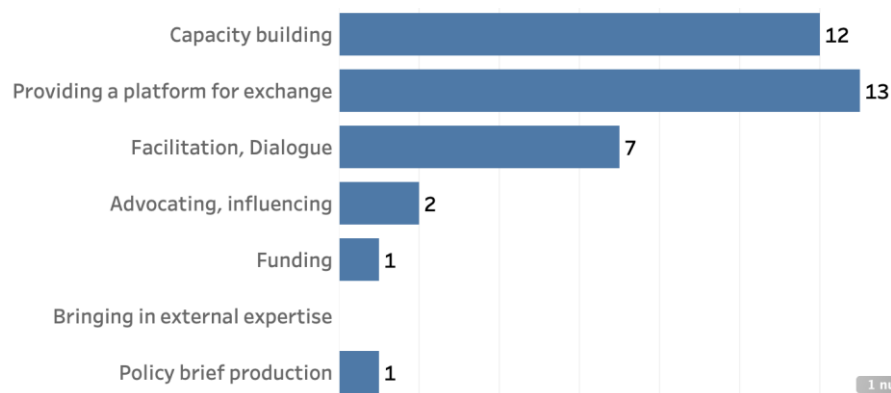
- 5 young women political leaders showed confidence to expose feminist leadership skills and principles during a panel discussion and to advance gender-responsive policies within their political parties.

Changes in **policies, laws, or regulations** in outcome harvesting refer to the adoption, revision, or implementation of new policies, laws, or regulations that are influenced by the outcomes or results of a particular program or intervention. In Uganda there is only one outcome showing this type of change and it relates to gender responsive policy formulated by young women political leaders together with their mainstream parties.

The changes mentioned above are thus numerous and immediately nuance the quantitative description of changes in Figure 6. After all, one specific outcome can trigger several other changes. For example, when gender responsive policies are introduced by women within their parties, this is more than counting one outcome. It can, of course, also generate different effects within those political parties. The same can be said by the creation of MYF and IWOP. This is listed as one outcome, but in turn generates different effects at the individual level (among the members of those platforms) as well as at the organizational level (namely within the political parties to which those platform members belong). This mapping requires additional research not contained in the database. We tried to use the case studies to gain more insight into these kinds of processes.

Finally, we also analysed how the consortium partners contributed to the changes realized. The three main contributions are: capacity development activities (training, individual coaching,..), supporting platforms (e.g., MYF, IWOP) and supporting dialogue (mostly within these platforms but not exclusively) (see *Figure 7*).

Figure 7. Type of Contribution Uganda



Below, we elaborate on the specific outcomes that were substantiated in Uganda during the country visits. These are NIMD Uganda’s support to the creation of Multi-Party Youth Forum (MYF) and AMwA’s support to Inter-Party Women’s Platform (IWOP).

8.2.4.2 Specific Outcome 1 Uganda: MYF (NIMD)

Outcome Description: During the Youth Retreat held at Mbarara in June 2022, the political party youth league leaders, NYC and UNSA endorsed the **creation of the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF)** for cross-party collaboration to address issues affecting youth. The youth leaders endorsed a 4-point minimum agenda. Subsequently at the National Youth Symposium (NYS) which took place from 18th -19th October 2022, the youth leaders from the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF), National Youth Council (NYC) and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) signed a communique and committed to operationalize a fund for youth in political leadership using the MYF structures. The formation of the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF) is significant because

it is the first of its kind in Uganda since the dialogue platform provides for the inclusion of other national youth structures such as the National Youth Council, Uganda Students Association and the Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs. This inclusive youth platform is a strong vehicle that will enable young civil and political leaders to effectively lobby and advocate – with the 7 parliamentary political parties and parliament – for alternative policy issues.

Description of changes experienced / witnessed.

- The creation of MYF itself, platform for youth party leaders to discuss and exchange ideas.
- Finalizing of the MYF memorandum of understanding and 4-point minimum agenda for engagement.
- Creation of trust among youth leaders of different political parties.
- At the personal level: gaining self-confidence to raise voices.
- As a consequence of the creation of the MYF, the following by-outcomes could be identified and validated:
- At the National Youth Symposium (NYS) which took place from 18th -19th October 2022, the youth leaders from the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF), National Youth Council (NYC) and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) signed a communique and committed to operationalize a fund for youth in political leadership using the MYF structures. (IO 2.1.)
- On 21st July 2022 at Skyz Hotel, Hon Boniface Okot the youth MP for Northern Uganda and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) committed to championing item No.2 of the MYF minimum agenda regarding the establishment of a National Graduate Scheme. (IO 2.2)

Contributions of PoD-programme and NIMD Uganda (substantiated)

- Opinions differed on who exactly was the initiator of the initiative to create the MYF. Some interviewees said that they themselves were behind the idea and went to NIMD with it, while others said that NIMD itself took the initiative and initiated it among the youth leaders. What was noted is that NIMD Uganda provided immediate support and at least seized the opportunity to create a new platform (after putting the IPOD activities on hold)
- There is no doubt that NIMD plays an important structuring role for the functioning of the MYF. The secretariat is guaranteed/hosted by NIMD. Without this support, the MYF would struggle to function.
- NIMD facilitated the process of creating a youth minimum agenda, starting with a youth consultative meeting, youth retreat and the validation meeting.²⁶
- NIMD provides technical capacity (agenda setting, creation of position papers) and CD trainings to members of the MYF.

Hindering factors

- It is unclear how much space this forum will have within the current Ugandan political context.
- Budget constraints on MYF's independent functioning. MYF members would like to have their own budget, separate from NIMD funding. Or have the disposal of some kind of basket funding from NIMD.

Future support

- Continue to support activities of MYF, CD-activities to increase the capacity of youth party leaders.
- It would be desirable if some donor diversification could be established for MYF so that it becomes less dependent on NIMD and the MYF can run its own programme as it wishes to do so.

²⁶ One of the conclusions of the PEA and strategy note by NIMD Uganda was to demonstrate that dialogue can lead to results (as opposed to IPOD's lack of results). With its contribution to this minimum agenda, this already seems a first important step. "NIMD (Uganda) wants and needs to show more results to keep a sustained interest in dialogue from parties and citizens alike, as well as showing that dialogue can deliver meaningful outcomes at all. To this end, the second track will focus on thematic discussions (e.g. climate change, youth unemployment, extractives) drawing in local thematic expertise and elected representatives." Cited from the PEA Strategy Note, Outcome area 3 – Dialogue, NIMD Uganda

- Members want to break into the political arena where decisions are made. This is not currently the case. How to establish the connection between the MYF and the political decision-making centres is the challenge for the future.
- Members are asking to be linked internationally with other young people who are also politically active. They want to be connected with peers. To share experiences, to learn from each other, but also to be supported by international network of peers (and future leaders)

Conclusion - outcome 1, MYF

The outcome was strongly corroborated by internal and by external stakeholders. NIMD's support was necessary to enable the creation and continued functioning of the MYF. The creation of the MYF and as results of the MYF activities, other outcomes could be identified and validated. Also, for these outcomes, NIMD's contributions are clearly identified.

This is a new platform situated within pathway 2, focusing mainly on strengthening organizations (IO 2.1.) and Lobby and advocacy (2.2.). The MYF is an embryonic platform that needs further support and development. The work done so far is necessary. Whether this platform will grow into an instrument where young people who are members of this platform are important agents of change (Long-term objective) remains to be seen in the coming years. The evaluators could observe that some members of the platform, have the strong will and ambition to break through in political decision-making. In conclusion, this platform has potential to enable policy change and inclusive politics (youth inclusion).

8.2.4.3 Specific Outcome 2 Uganda: IWOP (AMwA)

Outcome description: On 18th February 2022, women leaders from 9 political parties established the Inter-Party Women's Platform (IWOP). The women's league leaders signed a MOU and agreed to collectively advocate for measures that can boost women's meaningful engagement and leadership in the political party and national processes. The platform seeks to provide space for women from all registered political parties in Uganda to have a common voice on issues that affect their participation in politics. The 9 parties include the Alliance for National Transformation (ANT), National Unity Platform (NUP), Justice Forum (JEEMA), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA), Ecological Party of Uganda, Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP), National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Democratic Party (DP) and the National Women's Council.

Description of the changes experienced/witnessed.

- Creation of neutral ground for women politicians.
- According to some members of IWOP, women share the same kind of problems: common agenda setting is major objective of IWOP and has been achieved, e.g., IWOP's strategic plan/workplan to expand activities at regional/district level, support of women leagues.
- Growing self-confidence and awareness of women political leadership to make their voices heard.
- Rotating secretariat, office space provided by the political parties.
- The women trained by AMwA also use their acquired knowledge and skills in other spheres of life (e.g. communities, school boards...)

Contribution of PoD

- The idea of creating IWOP originated outside AMwA. But as soon as the idea took shape, the women leaders immediately took it to AMwA. The women political leaders came up with clear requests for support, which AMwA responded to. They explicitly wanted to shape the development of IWOP

themselves. Hence the principle of rotating secretariat within the framework of the political parties and not like MYF, where the secretariat is absorbed by NIMD.

- AMwA supported in terms of strategy and policy development. That support, according to those involved, proved necessary.
- AMwA also contributed indirectly. Especially through its trainings (transformative female leadership) and through AWLI (African Women's Leadership Institute) programmes, AMwA created a network of engaged political leaders. The evaluation team was able to speak to several women who have had CD activities from AMwA. The result of these activities is a growing self-awareness and self-confidence among most of those women, willingness, and courage to raise their voices and to participate in the public debate.
- Five members IWOP are alumni of these CD activities and took (together with others) the initiative to create IWOP.

Other key factors

- The launch of the platform has also been facilitated by the International Republican Institute and the Women Democracy Network Uganda Chapter.²⁷
- The commitment of the seven political parties to provide secretariat accommodation on a rotating basis.

Hindering factors

- Financial means of IWOP are limited. Only AMwA is supporting IWOP financially (based on activities).
- Women who engage in politics and opposition parties are often stigmatised. They have a hard time finding a job (because of their political engagement) and therefore find themselves in vulnerable positions.
- Female politicians are very often the victims of GBV.
- Female political leaders lack resource (income, campaigning...).
- Culture of patriarchal leadership.
- The political context in Uganda makes it difficult for AMwA to continue to deliver on its inclusive agenda (anti LGBT law, June 2023).²⁸

Future support

- Increase number of trainings (as demanded by many women leaders).
- Evaluating the impact of trainings, focusing on women who use the training to engage, to make a difference.
- AMwA supports many initiatives and organisations in civil society. The question arises whether it is better not to concentrate resources.

Conclusion – outcome 2, IWOP

The outcome was strongly corroborated by internal and by external stakeholders: AMwA did facilitate the creation of IWOP. The idea of IWOP has been co-created with the support of 5 AWLI alumni of AMwA. We have strong indications that this network and the CD-activities organised by AMwA for the benefit of women contributed significantly to the creation and operation of IWOP. But as with the creation of MYD, the IWOP is a very fledgling organisation that lacks financial strength in particular. The outcomes that have now been achieved are clearly at the level of the 3 intermediate outcomes of pathway 2. But it's still not clear if a breakthrough can be forced in political decision-making centers, as IWOP has just started and it needs further development to achieve long-term outcomes. Affirmative legislation in Uganda has reserved an important number of seats for women. What IWOP wants to strive on is that the competitive seats can also be won by women. This would be the ultimate test for achieving the long-term objectives of pathway 2.

²⁷ [The Independent, March 3, 2023](#)

²⁸ See for more information, e.g., [HRW](#)

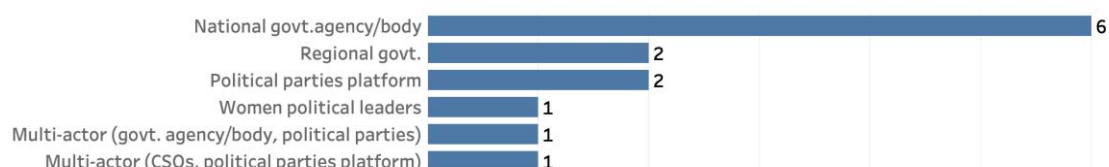
8.2.5 Outcomes in Ethiopia

8.2.5.1 General overview outcomes Ethiopia

For NIMD Ethiopia, the primary focus is on Pathways 3 and 4 (see *Figure 4 & Table 5*). The outcomes in Ethiopia are mainly reached through official political and governmental bodies (like NEBE, Caffé, HoPR) and platforms supported through these channels (such as Ethiopian political Parties Joint Council (EPPJC)). A large part of the outcomes is related to the better functioning of these bodies (development of manuals, M&E systems, implementation mechanism). These outcomes were categorized under 4.3 (adhere to existing democratic rules). The outcomes categorized under pathways 3 mainly have to do with supporting NEBE in organizing multi-party consultations/dialogues and supporting EPPJC where this resulted in a common agenda to discuss e.g., constitutional, and electoral reforms.

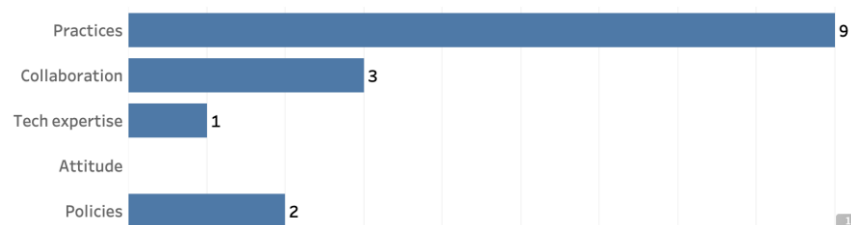
Given the context in which NIMD must operate, namely through official bodies like NEBE, it is not surprising that the actors NIMD Ethiopia works with are mainly national and regional governments and government organizations. In addition, NIMD also provided support to political party dialogue platforms organized by these national government institutions (see *Figure 8*). On the other hand, the target actors of youth and women in Ethiopia are covered by other programmes. For example, the EDACs (Ethiopian Democracy Academy) specifically targets upcoming and aspiring youth politicians (both men and women). Additionally, under an EU project 'Balancing the scales', NIMD Ethiopia is running an EDAC programme exclusively for women (and it is called EDAW)

Figure 8. Type of actors - Ethiopia



The outcomes described mainly relate to change in practices. In addition, change is also observed in terms of collaboration and policies. (see *Figure 9*).

Figure 9. Type of Changes - Ethiopia



In Ethiopia outcomes showing change in practices, actions or activities cover things such as:

- Plans to put youth and women initiatives into action.

- Formation of youth and/or women wings within political parties.
- Development of M&E frameworks.
- Development or approval of common agendas/directives for interparty dialogue.
- Requests for sector offices to put forward draft policies and monitoring the implementation of existing policies through a checklist.
- Briefing session held to share info about the peace talks process.

Changes in relationships and collaboration include:

- NEBE and political parties’ regular discussions and dialogues.
- Agreement between NEBE and political parties to postpone the elections due to the security situation in the region.
- CSOs and political parties dialogues.

Changes in attitudes and mindset

- Increased knowledge in gender transformative approaches to women’s leadership participation

Changes in policies, laws and regulations

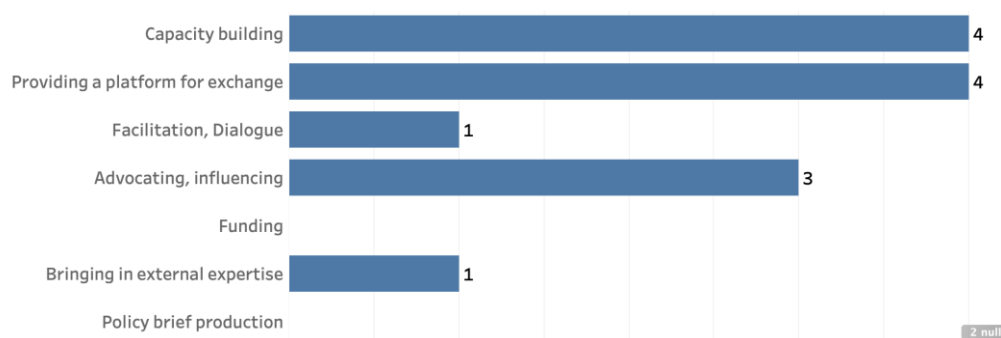
- Adoption of the first legal drafted manual produced by a group of researchers.
- Use of a new checklist to assess whether sector offices implement laws adopted.

Changes in technical expertise

- women leaders in the Oromia Region cascaded to their subordinates the transformational leadership training that they received.

NIMD Ethiopia contributed to these outcomes mainly based on capacity development expertise, supporting platforms and influencing and lobbying activities (see *Figure 10*).

Figure 10. Type of Contributions – Ethiopia



Below, we elaborate on the specific outcomes that were substantiated in Ethiopia during the country visits. These are NIMD Ethiopia's support to Inter-party dialogue and the support to the formation of youth, women, and People with Disability (PWD) wings of the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council (EPPJC).

8.2.5.2 Specific Outcome 1 Ethiopia: Support to inter-party dialogue / EPPJC

Outcome description: Since July 2021, NEBE conducts regular discussion with political parties on several issues like constitutional reform, election laws and NEBE support to political parties. The regular discussion between NEBE and political parties started again after a halt for more than a year due to covid and security reasons. The

NIMD office Ethiopia is supporting the dialogues among the political parties on two platforms: the Inter-Party Dialogue and EPPJC.

Description of changes experienced / witnessed.

- The biggest achievement is that high-level representatives of political parties participate in the inter-party dialogue.
- The inter-party dialogue has delineated themes that will be discussed during different sessions. During the visit of the evaluation team, only the second session of the inter-party dialogue based on the agreed themes, took place.
- First steps towards building trust have been taken by convincing everyone to participate. Nevertheless, several respondents indicated that there is still a high level of distrust between the different political parties.

Contributions of PoD /NIMD

- Providing/Funding technical support to NEBE.
- Facilitating/Funding the Inter-party dialogue sessions and EPPJC.
- Provide training to NEBE staff.
- In the background, NIMD played a very important role in convincing parties to participate in the process (soft diplomacy, confirmed by independent sources).

Enabling key factors

- NEBE is a key government organisation responsible for organising multiparty consultations. It is through NEBE that NIMD can provide support to multiparty dialogue.
- Birtukan Mideksa is an Ethiopian politician and former judge who has served as chairwoman of the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) from 2018 to 2023. She is trusted by all political parties because of her political track record.
- NEBE is supported by other organization like NDI, IFES, USAID, ECIS, NED. Those organization are working mainly with NEBE on the topic of elections. NIMD seems to have a privileged position with NEBE in terms of supporting platforms for party dialogue.

Hindering factors

- A very sensitive political context marked by boycott of the elections by some opposition parties after bloody civil war. Ethiopia remains marked by violent outbreaks of political violence in several regions.
- Although the inter-party dialogue has brought different parties around the table, the frustrations of the opposition parties over the handling of the crisis and most recent elections remain. As a result, the inclusive participation process remains very fragile.

Future support

- It is uncertain whether NEBE, with the resignation of its chairman, can continue to pursue an independent policy.
- NEBE is the only body in Ethiopia authorised to collect data on political parties, support political parties and organise forums for political party discussions. Therefore, if NEBE can stay on its independent course, it will have to remain the privileged partner of NIMD.

Conclusion - outcome 1, Support to Inter-party Dialogue

The outcome was strongly corroborated by internal and by external stakeholders, although it was hard to identify independent external stakeholders. NIMD Ethiopia provided dialogue assistance to NEBE. NIMD's contribution was situated in the areas of technical support, funding inter-party dialogue, capacity building of NEBE's

Political Party Division and forms of soft diplomacy to bring all political parties around the table after a period of civil war and boycott of elections of some major political parties. NIMD's role in soft diplomacy should be highlighted. By strictly applying the principles of neutrality/impartiality and inclusion, NIMD's work is appreciated. It will be a long way before long-term Objective 3 will be achieved. Nevertheless, through its support to NEBE and soft diplomacy in the background, NIMD Ethiopia has given an important impetus to a new inter-party dialogue after a period of civil war (and Covid-19)²⁹. The first necessary step of bringing all parties around the table with a common agenda has succeeded.

8.2.5.3 Specific Outcome 2 Ethiopia: The formation of youth, women, and People with Disability (PWD) wings of the EPPJC.

Outcome Description: On December 10, 2022, the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council (EPPJC) formed youth, women, and People with Disability (PWD) wings in Addis Ababa with support from NIMD. The women's wing appointed an executive committee composed of five members, the chairman and secretary were EDAC Alumni. And the Youth wing also appointed an executive committee and among the committee vice chairman and secretary were EDAC Alumni. Hence, the EDAC contribution in the political spheres is increased and influenced political parties to use the best out of the alumni.

Description of the changes experienced / witnessed.

- Creation of Women Wings within Political parties and standing committees within EPPJC.
- The women wing is considered by the women as very important to promote the interest of women in politics. Considered as first step to convince political parties that women should be involved in politics.
- The women wing failed to have quota in the general assembly of EPPJC, women are still largely underrepresented.
- Awareness creation among women that they should have their place in the political arena.
- Creating self-confidence among women politicians to raise their voices.

Contribution of PoD: Activities & Approaches

- Facilitating role of NIMD to convince NEBE and EPPJC to organize the wings.
- Technical and financial support of meetings
- Training of young and women politicians

Other key factors

- Additional support of NDI
- Positive role of NEBE (see above)

Hindering factors

- Patriarchal culture in party politics and the EPPJC.
- Financial vulnerability of women in politics

Coherence of PoD programming

- PoD programme is very coherent with other activities/initiatives of NIMD Ethiopia, like e.g., the EDAC (where young people and women leaders are trained, which is very beneficial to the functioning of the youth and women wings)
- There is overlap/synergy with other projects/programmes funded by other donors (e.g., the NEED project as it is addressing the same actors and subjects as the PoD programme)

Future support

²⁹ It is however important to also point out that from 2019 to 2021, NEBE was busy with pre-election preparation and post-election works which prevented it from overseeing the interparty dialogue.

- Increase number of trainings
- Support cooperation between CSO's, networks, alumni and the women political leaders.
- Sharing foreign experiences
- Need for leadership skills training.

Conclusion – outcome 2, EPPJC youth, women, and people with disabilities Wings

The outcome was strongly corroborated by internal stakeholders. The evaluation team was not able to meet with external stakeholders confirming the contribution of NIMD. Given the institutional context, the PoD programme's outcome description and contribution as described by internal stakeholders are considered highly credible. Especially as the modus operandi is like that of specific outcome 1.

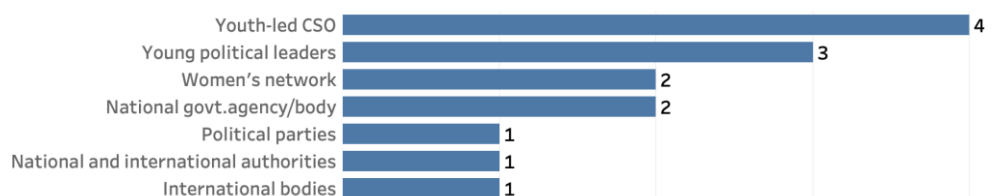
The creation of the various standing committees within the EPPJC for Women, Youth and PWD is also in embryonic stage. The necessary first steps have been taken. NIMD has facilitated the creation of these wings and standing committees. However, much work remains to be done to develop the full potential of women and to give them a voice in the political arena.

8.2.6 Outcomes in Mali

8.2.6.1 General overview outcomes Mali

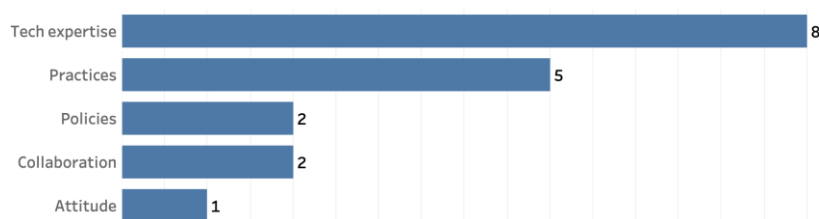
The types of actors in Mali are overwhelmingly linked to youth (see *Figure 11*) and, to a lesser extent, women's networks. National government agencies and bodies are also an important group within the outcomes achieved and reported.

Figure 11. Type of Actors - Mali



Unlike Uganda and Ethiopia, the changes mainly concern technical expertise and to a lesser extent changed practices. Some changes were also reported in terms of policies, collaboration, and attitudes (see *Figure 12*).

Figure 12. Type of Changes – Mali



In Outcome Harvesting **changes in practices, actions and activities** can take different forms depending on context but we generally refer to the actor's 'new ways of working' or introduction of practices that did not exist before. In Mali outcomes showing this type of change cover things such as:

- Youth networks developed by civil society actors for peace and stability in the Sahel.
- Financial support to local youth association.

Changes in relationships and collaboration include:

- Political party youth network is being increasingly consulted by national and international bodies on youth and women's participation.
- Following a mentoring programme part of the PoD, civil society actors created the Youth Alliance for peace and stability in the Sahel region.
- Alumni from political and democracy school set up and facilitated a reflection and action group for inclusive democracy and a forum for exchanging and sharing experiences.

Type of changes in policies, laws, and regulations

- New electoral law adopted by the National Transition Council
- Draft decree approving the strategic framework for rebuilding the State in Mali

Type of changes in attitudes and mindsets

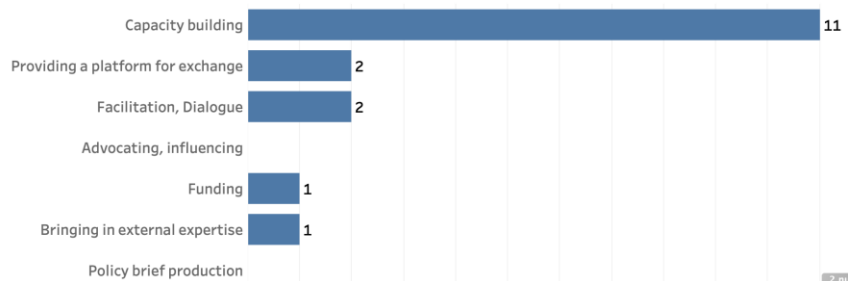
- Awareness raising project aimed at women and youth on conflict prevention by women's network.

Types of changes in technical expertise

- Cascade trainings or experience-sharing workshops organized by local CSOs, often reusing the same training resources and modules offered to them through the PoD-programme.
- Trainings led and organized by local CSOs aimed at civil societies' actors.
- Experience sharing workshop organized by youth-led CSO and involving 12 other youth-led organizations.

Considering the type of outcomes (changes) that were inventoried in Mali, it should again come as no surprise that NIMD Mali's contribution is mainly related to capacity-building activities and supporting platforms and dialogue (see *Figure 13*).

Figure 13. Type of Contribution - Mali



8.2.6.2 Specific Outcome 1 Mali: Electoral Reform

Outcome Description: From to 22 December 2019, civic and political actors recommended a new electoral law before any elections were organised during the Inclusive National Dialogue in Mali. On 17 June 2022, the National Transition Council adopted the new electoral law for the organisation of elections in Mali. On 24 June 2022, the President of the Republic issued a decree promulgating the electoral law for the organisation of elections in Mali. The new law considers the recommendations made by the Comité de Plaidoyer et de Suivi des Réformes Electorales (CPSRE), which NIMD supports to facilitate peaceful collaboration between the players involved in reform issues. Between 2019 and 2022, NIMD supported the CPSRE in the form of technical sessions (on lobbying and advocacy, drafting reform proposals), preparatory sessions and technical support. These activities subsequently contributed to the appointment of the President of the CPSRE to the Mission d'Appui à la Refondation de l'Etat (MARE) in 2022. And to the preparation of the CPSRE's listening session at the National Transition Council on 18 May 2022. These sessions have made the committee a visible and credible player on the political scene.

Description of changes experienced / witnessed.

- Exchange of information and perceptions across members of the Committee, broadening of conversations to include more civil society actors (Dakono).
- Increased access and ability to connect with authorities (Fofana, Dakono).
- Increased credibility for recommendations to be considered by government counterparts (Fofana, Dakono).

- More efficient advocacy: out of the 517 recommendations included in the electoral reform, 25 are those of the Committee (Fofana)

Contributions of POD

Activities

- Dialogue frameworks engaging civil society actors only, no “experts”, called “popular assemblies” that have a sensitization objective as well as building material for advocacy (Dakono).
- Expert thematic consultations called “citizen conversations”, bringing in external expertise on specific themes with the objective to formulate advocacy recommendations (Diarra, Dakono).
- Joint advocacy carried out by OCGS and CPSRE (Dakono).
- Advocacy trainings.
- Meeting support (logistical, financial).
- Connecting with key stakeholders.

Approaches

- Trainings were mentioned that increased the ability to carry out advocacy, although it was pointed out the Committee also had its own experts on which it relied (Fofana).
- The POD project was mostly mentioned in terms of facilitating advocacy opportunities and funding them, rather than capacity building (Fofana, Dakono).
- Specifically, it connected them to the right people (Dr Souleymane Dé³⁰ was mentioned specifically as a long-time ally, by Dakono) and gave them access to the appropriate fora (Fofana, Dakono, Diarra)
- NIMD “accompanied” suggested course of action by the Committee – as it was aligned with its own observations (Fofana, Dakono).
- Importantly for the context, NIMD was content with discrete support and low visibility to set the focus on Malian actors and democratic agendas (Dakono).

Other key factors

- Pre-existing quality of the Committee and of its members (Fofana, Diarra who mentioned specifically Mrs Gakou as an ex-minister, experienced and well connected, who was in fact nominated to be part of the Support Mission for State Refoundation, the State entity responsible for integrating such recommendations, **which was critical according to him**. More generally he said that the current Minister for State Refoundation knew the members well and trusted them).
- Experts within the Committee who could support the quality of outputs (Fofana).
- Context of the Transition which means authorities are looking to shape better policies and gain legitimacy (Fofana, Dakono, Diarra).

Hindering factors

- The very dynamic and unstable political context (2 coups, many ministerial rehaults) and resulting changes in priorities, actors, and frameworks (Fofana)
- Lack of political dialogue and culture in Mali, importance of money over political programmes (Dakono).
- When the elections are held, the work will need to change, and the project will need to adapt to an institutionalised set-up (Dakono).
- Because of the new constitution, the promulgated law needs to be revised (Fofana, Dakono).

Future support

- Extend activities to actors in the regions in the context of decentralisation and to not concentrate all power in Bamako (Fofana).

³⁰ President of the Law Commission of the National Transition Council. His perception of the promulgation of the electoral law is available here : <https://www.maliweb.net/interview/souleymane-de-president-de-la-commission-des-lois-nous-ne-sommes-pas-dans-un-reglement-de-compte-2981732.html> -- the electoral reform was in a context of tensions between the government and the NTC, and broadly considered a win for the NTC.

- Activities to raise awareness to the general public about not taking bribes and measuring politicians' work by their accountability and policies (Fofana).

Conclusion - outcome 1, electoral reform

The outcome was strongly corroborated by both internal and external stakeholders: the Committee indeed became a key credible source of recommendations which were taken into account in the law's drafting process.

The main contribution by PoD seems to have been:

- The judicious choice of participants to the Committee, based on a solid understanding of who could credibly shape and carry the key recommendations (specifically, Mrs Gakou Salamata Fofana, an ex-minister, as Committee President).
- The facilitation of advocacy opportunities and connections to key players that the NIMD already had connections with (specifically Dr Souleymane Dé, President of the Law Commission of the National Transition Council)
- The capacity building / training component was less mentioned, and interviewees pointed out the high capacity of Committee Members from the start of the process rather than it is needing for it to be built up.
- Generally speaking, the consultative approach of NIMD was highlighted as very valuable. Stakeholders felt valued and trusted to know how best to affect change, rather than pushed in a specific direction by the NIMD.

The context of the Transition also seems key in government stakeholders' will to listen and take recommendations on, as opposed to previous governments less interested in CSO voices. Accordingly, there is some anxiety around future political set ups and how to pivot strategies to remain pertinent and credible advocacy actors, including institutionalising their set ups and broadening their reach beyond the capital.

8.2.6.3 Specific Outcome 2 Mali: youth and women representation

Outcome description: As of June 2022, the Réseau des Jeunes des Partis Politiques du Mali (RJPPM) has become a player sought out and consulted by national and international authorities on issues of youth participation and representation in the State Refoundation process. The meaningful participation of young people and women in political and institutional reform processes is a key element of inclusiveness, political stability, and democratic consolidation. A Consortium of youth and women's organisations from political parties and civil society has been set up, consisting of the Réseau des jeunes des partis politiques du Mali (RJPPM), the Association des Blogueurs du Mali (ABM), the Réseau des femmes pour la consolidation de la paix (RFCOPA) and the Association Démocratie 101. The aim of this Consortium is to enhance and strengthen the commitment of young people to continue their constructive contribution to the process of rebuilding governance. The NIMD supports the Network of Young Political Parties in improving their capacity to participate in public debate. 10 and 11 March 2022: Workshop on the role of young people from political parties in the rebuilding process and in calming the socio-political climate.

Description of the changes experienced / witnessed.

- Increased capacities in leadership, political navigation, organizational management, advocacy, citizenship, democratic practices and the role of youth and women (Bah, Traoré)
- More connected network, discussion, and motivation space within the Network (Karembe, Bah, Traoré).
- Increased visibility to young people, with examples of new requests for individuals to join the networks (Karembe, Bah).
- Increased visibility towards the public, with examples of being picked up by national television for an hour-long debate show (Karembe, Bah).

- Increased credibility towards institutional partners, with examples of new interest by potential funders to work together (Karembe, Traoré).
- Increased credibility towards authorities, messages getting across better, with examples of being invited to pertinent fora, ease of contact to various Ministerial offices (Ministry of Refoundation, CNT, 3rd one to look up in Bah's contribution, Karembe, Traoré); and ability to successfully ask to be invited to fora when authorities did not (Karembe).

Contribution of PoD

Activities

- Workshops, support in elaboration of action plans, financial support for out-facing workshops and roundtables, support in finding training partners, trainings, awareness raising sessions, review of outputs and materials, experience exchange sessions amongst Network members (Bah, Traoré, Traoré)

Approaches

- Very consultative, taking directions from the members of the network and supporting their agendas (Karembe, Bah, Traoré). Good ability to set up relevant network and get them connected to relevant counterparts (Karembe).
- The Consortium was an idea formulated by the different networks, who had realized they could be more efficient at advocacy if using one voice. NIMD took their suggestion and supported them in the organization and kick-off of the Consortium (specifically by the ex-Head of NIMD, Mr Maiga, who facilitated meetings and pre-empted any issues, connecting organizations they all knew already). Then, activities were very much tailored to the Consortium's needs, NIMD acting as a support system rather than an initiator on behalf of the consortium (Karembe, Bah).

Other key factors

- Context of the transition, which is federating civil society voices to act as one.
- Transition authorities motivated intrinsically, want to be considered legitimate (Traoré).
- Promulgation of 052³¹ law on the integration of women in State authorities and institutions, and related external motivation from donors who require gender-responsive programming (Karembe).
- PAREM³² (Projet d'Appui aux Réformes et aux Élections au Mali) which is also a federating force for Civil Society Actors around election reform and gender and youth inclusion (Bah).
- The networks were highly motivated and had strong ideas about what would work before working with NIMD (Traoré).
- NIMD's positioning as an international NGO is discrete and supports the political will already there. This is different from others who have a stronger political agenda they want to implement through local actors (Traoré).

Hindering factors

- State authorities are currently slow to respond beyond participation to activities and short-term requests for input. While they have legal frameworks they are slow to implement and prioritise these agendas (Karembe).
- Trainings and NIMD support were not responsive enough to the evolving needs of the context – evolutions happened but were too slow (Traoré).

Coherence of PoD programming

- Activities are very aligned with strategy and needs of participants, as activities are defined together and very much upon the recommendations of the participants (Karembe, Bah, Traoré).

³¹ <https://www.studiotamani.org/132371-lapplication-de-la-loi-052-se-heurte-a-des-obstacles>

³² <https://www.undp.org/fr/mali/projets/projet-dappui-aux-reformes-et-aux-elections-au-mali-parem> supports electoral process and peaceful elections sensitization.

- External activities (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, PAREM via MINUSMA trainings and capacity exchanges with other young leaders – Bah; CECI Canada support for 052 implementation, NDI programming on electoral law reform) are all in line with PoD objectives (Bah).

Future support

- High volatility of the context: would be helpful to think of different scenarios of how the transition process will happen and when/what order the elections will happen in, so that the response by the Consortium remains relevant (Karembe, Traoré)
- Funds are insufficient to implement full action plans, especially of each member organisation) and not just of the Consortium activities alone (Karembe, Bah). Activities could engage a larger number for mass sensitization (Bah).
- More exchanges with regions, and more regional trainings should be broadened (currently they exist in Sikasso, Mopti, and online in Gao) to lessen the opportunity divide between participants from Bamako and from the rest of Mali (Bah).
- Opportunities to visit the Hague and exchange with young political leaders from there would be highly valuable (Bah).

Conclusion – outcome 2, youth and women representation

The outcome was corroborated both by internal and external stakeholders. Increased credibility towards government stakeholders was mentioned alongside more intermediary outcomes related to the Network itself (more coordinated, more dynamic, better capacities), described as having led to the efficient advocacy efforts. PoD's highly consultative approach was once again highlighted and appreciated as a key contribution towards this result. NIMD itself was saluted for remaining low-profile in this politically charged context.

The transition context seems also key here, with political actors especially motivated to listen to civil society groups, both intrinsically in search of popular legitimacy, and via external factors such as external donor pressures and agendas, as well as new legal frameworks they must follow.

Interviewees shared the difficulties associated with responding adequately to this very dynamic context, and they worry about waning political accountability efforts in future. They also worry that their individual organisations' strategies and action plans are not getting enough support compared to the Network's joint interests.

8.2.7 Further Interpretation on Evaluation Topic 2 (outcomes).

A striking characteristic is the strong synergy and complementarity between different activities and initiatives. The networks created between young and women political leaders through Democracy Schools and AMwA's AWLI programme undeniably contribute to creating platforms for consultation and dialogue between young people and women from different political parties. For this, the evaluators have strong evidence for all countries. Complementarity and synergies are also created by combining projects from different funding streams. NIMD Ethiopia, for example, also has a project NEED³³, funded directly by the Dutch embassy in Ethiopia. This budget is used in synergy with the PoD budget to support party dialogues. Complementarity, in turn, is created because other donors are also active with the same actors as NEBE. For example, IFES and UNDP (SEED-project) supported the electoral process in Ethiopia. Obviously, these activities are complementary to the party dialogue initiatives supported by NIMD. Synergy and complementarity could also be observed in Mali where many funding actors (e.g., EU) have been involved in the electoral reform. Notwithstanding the high intertwining of different activities, donors and actors, the evaluators were able to confirm the contributions of the PoD-programme in the 6 specific outcome harvesting cases investigated, in the three case study countries.

The country studies confirm that adaptive programming is not a dead letter. The contribution cited above in the creation of MYF and IWOP in Uganda, were unintended outcomes. In Ethiopia, too, we could see that support to, for example, various forms of inter-party dialogue are being used flexibly. Of course, this adaptive capacity is highly dependent on taking advantage of opportunities that arise and responding to them is only possible when an extensive social and political network has been built. Associated with this is that NIMD & AMwA are seen as a neutral non-partisan actor, accepted, and valued by a wide range of actors. What stood out in all country studies is that country offices can navigate in particularly politically volatile and polarized contexts. The contextualized PEA exercise, at the start of the programme, certainly contributed to this. Moreover, the evaluators found strong evidence that the update of the PEAs is an embedded practice in the country offices. This is not always reflected in a written-down analysis. Nevertheless, it is common practice, within the country offices studied, to analyse the political context (with opportunities and risks) several times a month.³⁴

The case studies also revealed that stakeholders (e.g., youth and women in Uganda and Mali, for example, NEBE in Ethiopia) find their way to NIMD and AMwA with the request to support certain initiatives. We found that NIMD and AMwA reviews such requests each time within the financial and strategic framework (ToC) including the principles of neutrality and inclusiveness, and then decides. Another key success factor is that in many cases NIMD keeps a low profile and acts as a supporting/facilitating actor.

For all outcome harvesting cases studied in the three countries, it can be said that they fit within the logic of the ToC and can be situated within the intermediary outcome of the different pathways. Whether they will eventually lead to the indicated long-term outcomes is difficult to predict. In all three countries, this will largely depend on the political leeway that the different initiatives (platforms of dialogue, for example) will have, especially in the context of shrinking civic and democratic spaces.

In general, the evaluators believe that results/outcomes are somewhat more easily achieved by supporting youth and women platforms of cooperation than those within a traditional party system. Trust and finding a common agenda with related action points seems easier to achieve within youth and women platforms, especially in polarized political contexts. Of course, the question remains whether these women and youth platforms can break into the existing party system and thus weigh on political decision-making. In any case, the strategy of working with other actors (young and women leaders) is an obvious but powerful way of moving dialogue initiatives to other arenas when inclusiveness cannot be guaranteed in the traditional party system. This

³³ Nurturing Ethiopia's Emerging Democracy (NEED).

³⁴ A political context analysis (including risk analysis) is also included in the annual reports and annual planning documents of all the PoD-programme countries.

observation could be extended to include the political level supported. Very often these are national political structures, although success stories can also be identified of support to decentralised structures (as, for example, in Ethiopia, although the evaluation team was unable to verify this). It is worth considering when national political structures have reached a total deadlock, to move out to centralised decision-making centres and support similar activities at sub-national level (recommendation 3).

PoD-programme is particularly strong in capacity building of young and women leaders. This is somewhat less evident in Ethiopia given its different emphasis. The evidence of change in terms of attitudes, self-confidence, and the courage to raise their voices is overwhelming. In this area, we have identified significant synergy with the other initiatives (democracy schools and AWLI programme, for example). As a result of all these initiatives, networks of young and women leaders also emerge, which in turn generate new initiatives (e.g., IWOP in Uganda and Women Wings in EJJPC in Ethiopia). Indeed, a lot of importance is given to individual capacity strengthening in the ToC (and programme implementation), but individual capacity strengthening does not necessarily lead to organisational strengthening. It is not because individual representatives of youth wing of a political party are involved in a dialogue platform that necessarily their youth wing is also strengthened. On the contrary it is even possible that they change disinclined not to share power within the party with other young people. We found too little evidence during the country visits that individual capacity building does lead to stronger organisations and movements. Perhaps this is a next step that needs to be realised, perhaps it also has to do with our evaluation research methodology that was mainly focused on analysing the pre-identified outcomes and to analyse the cooperation among the consortium partners which meant that too little attention could be paid during the evaluation to the aspect of movement and organizational strengthening of country actors and partners. In any case, it is necessary to pay sufficient attention in the programme to the linkages between individual capacity building and organisational strengthening (see recommendation 5).

The evaluation team had the opportunity to talk to many politically and socially engaged women during the various country visits. It was noticed that several hindering factors such as gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment, financial vulnerability, operating in patriarchal societies/culture (including gender stereotypes) have a strong impact on women's participation in political structures and decision-making mechanisms. These factors cause women not to step into politics or to drop out. These mechanisms are well described in the NIMD publication *Mind the Gap* and to a lesser extent in the GRIP publications.³⁵

Indirectly, of course, the PoD programme's objective is to break gender stereotypes by supporting women leaders expressing and building their capacities. Working towards financial autonomy is of course broader societal issue that cannot be addressed simply by a programme. However, throughout the programme relatively little concrete attention is given to the issue of GBV and sexual harassment. The number of publications on GBV or Violence against Women in Politics (VAW-P) is overwhelming and strong evidence is found all over the world.³⁶ A IPU research from 2016 estimated that *"across five regions, 82 per cent of women parliamentarians reported having experienced some form of psychological violence while serving their terms. This included remarks, gestures, and images of a sexist or humiliating sexual nature, threats, and mobbing. Women cited social media as the main channel of this type of violence, and nearly half (44 per cent) reported receiving death, rape, assault, or abduction threats towards them or their families. Sixty-five per cent had been subjected to sexist remarks, primarily by male colleagues in parliament"*³⁷

That GBV and VAW-P is a widespread problem is also found in NIMD documents. In the PEA from Kenya the severe problems with the topic have been identified: *"All female participants discussed having suffered actual or a threat of violence as a deterrent to their political aspirations. Interestingly, youth are stereotyped as the perpetrators of violence, and this also negatively affects their participation in politics as they are perceived as troublemakers. The respondents also shared that sexual harassment of women is also rife in political parties and sex is demanded as currency for*

³⁵ Sergio Rodrigue Prieto and Sebastian Bloching (2018). *Mind the Gap*. NIMD's work on Gender and Access to Power, p.12-14.

³⁶ E.g., IPU (2016). *Sexism, harassment, and violence against women parliamentarians*; NDI Report. *Violence against Women in Politics*; UNWomen. *Violence Against Women*.

³⁷ IPU (2016). *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*, p.3.

advancing political ambitions”³⁸ The PEA of Uganda, and the annual reports of Guatemala and Columbia also cite the problem of GBV.³⁹ Curiously, the issue is completely absent in some PEA’s, even if the PEA relate to women participation, as for example in Mozambique.⁴⁰ Because we all know (it cannot be ignored), that it is such a large and widespread problem and because it is a firm barrier to women's inclusion in the political and party system, the PoD-programme at the consortium level should put this issue on the agenda and should develop a strategy addressing these issues in all the PoD-countries (see recommendation 1).

There are also great examples of how GBV and VAW-P are being addressed. For example, in Guatemala (where pathway 2 is not included in the ToC) published a policy brief 'Political Violence Against Women in Guatemala' in 2021'.⁴¹ And in Uganda the Women League Leader of the Democratic Party facilitated the development and adoption of a Sexual Harassment Policy and Gender Equality Policy in the DP Party after undergoing the March 2021 African Women’s Leadership Institute programme (AWLI). This example was subsequently followed by other women wings with the adoption of gender-sensitive policies in their respective parties. The examples of Uganda and Guatemala might serve as inspiration.

The evaluators noted a desire among young and women leaders to connect internationally. National networks (of, for example, Alumni from different training programmes and young people/women from different political parties) are in place and appear to be working. Over time, due to the nature of the activities, these networks will continue to grow. However, what is absent from the programme and what is explicit demanded for from young and women leaders is to connect these national networks internationally between the different countries of the PoD programme. The main reason is that they want to learn from each other and share experiences. An additional benefit of creating such an international network is that they become stronger as a group and can exert more (political and social) pressure. They can create opportunities to support and lobby each other when, for example, the political context in their respective countries deteriorates or threatens to deteriorate. According to the evaluators, the PoD programme has enormous potential to enhance international networking among young and women leaders (see recommendation 2).

Finally, we would like to conclude this chapter and describe some aspects of sustainability based on the findings mentioned above. The sustainability of intermediary results will primarily depend on the political context in the countries where the program is being implemented. Any backsliding of the democratic context or the restriction of specific spaces would impede the intermediary outcomes. The achieved outcomes in terms of individual capacity building possess sustainability in how effectively women and youth leaders can continue to apply their newly acquired skills, whether within the political or civic sphere. Newly established dialogue platforms e.g., still heavily rely on the PoD program for financial support and require further assistance to remain operational. It would be beneficial to explore ways in which these platforms can continue to exist and develop in the future without relying on PoD program funding. One possibility is for the involved political parties to allocate funds to support the functioning of their youth and women wings.

³⁸ M. Kamunyu. Political Economy Analysis-Kenya, commissioned by AMWA, Mzalendo Trust and NIMD, p.26

³⁹ Hatchile (2021). Political Economy Analysis of the constraints to meaningful Political Participation Dialogue and Civic Spaces in Uganda, p.30.;

⁴⁰ IMD. Political participation of Women in Mozambique: Political and Economic Analysis.

⁴¹ Annual Report 2021, NIMD Guatemala, p.21

8.3 Findings Evaluation Topic 3: Partnerships

Evaluation Topic 3: Partnership collaboration

EQ 3.1 To what extent has collaboration between the different Consortium Partners created added value in programme countries or regional programmes (Uganda, Sahel)? To what extent is collaboration with other partners - outside the PoD Consortium - taking place in programme countries, including with other SCS partnerships, and what has been the added value of those collaborations?

EQ 3.2. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the Partnership in terms of the organizational aspects of programme delivery?

EQ 3.3. What has been the added value of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and separately, of its embassies, to the Partnership? And what is the value added of this Partnership to the MFA?

8.3.1 Summary on Evaluation topic 3.

- Regarding the cooperation between the consortium partners, the evaluators found that the partners agree that clear goals and roles have been defined and that the partners trust and are committed to each other (EQ. 3.1. & 3.2.).
- As was described in the chapter around outcomes, the various consortium partners and country offices work with other CSOs that are often led by young people and women (EQ.3.1.)
- The added value (and strengths) of the cooperation between the consortium partners is estimated to be high. Especially the ability to call on each other's specific expertise (diversity of the partnership), the exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices is highly appreciated (EQ.3.1. & 3.2.)
- The partnership between NIMD offices and embassies is generally rated as very good. There are particularly frequent contacts between NIMD and the Dutch embassies. These often have an exchange of information on the political context and the party system as their object as well as coordinating on specific initiatives within PoD and other programmes (funded by the Dutch Embassy). The cooperation between NIMD and the embassies increases the credibility and impact of NIMD's work (EQ 3.3.).

8.3.2 Cooperation among the consortium partners: Findings

The analysis of the partnerships was based on document analysis, interviews with the consortium partners and on an online survey. The online survey questioned the four consortium partners on the different dimensions of successful collaborative cooperation described in *Annex 2*. In addition, the country partners were also surveyed on cooperation within the PoD-programme. Cooperation between consortium partners and country partners on the one hand and local partners/actors on the other was not the main the subject of this evaluation. Below we present the main findings.

First, we present the results related to the online survey⁴² and the different dimensions of successful collaborative partnerships. The main findings are then explored in depth. As *Table 6* shows, we identified four different dimensions (*clear roles, clear goals, trust & commitment and added value*). The maximum score for each dimension is 4, the minimum 0. It is important to note that for some consortium partners multiple answers were received,

⁴² For AMwA the results have been collected during the kick-off workshop during the country visit.

while for others only one person answered. For this reason, we first calculated the average per consortium partner and then calculated the overall averages for the whole consortium.

Figure 14 shows that the overall averages for three of the four dimensions are quite high. These three dimensions are: Clear goals (3.4), Clear roles (3.3.) and Trust and Commitment (3.1). The score for added value is just below the average of 3 (i.e., 2.9). When we look at the structure of the different dimensions in detail (see Table 6), it is immediately apparent that all consortium partners agree that the *'goals of the partnership are clearly defined'*. The other elements of *'clear goal definitions'* also scored relatively high. The lowest score (namely 3) for *'the country-specific ToC is used as guide for the implementation of the programme'* can be explained by the fact that the ToC is considered a strategic document/framework rather than an implementation framework. This was confirmed in other questions on the ToC and Actor Based Pathways (see Table 3). Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that the consortium partners are convinced that the goals of the PoD programme are clearly and adequately formulated.

The *'clear role definition'* dimension also scores high overall. Consortium partners feel that responsibilities between partners are clear and that power balances between consortium partners are balanced. Around the latter theme, it was found (based on interviews, the open-ended questions in the online survey and document analyses) that there is no clear definition on the concept of 'leading from the south' or localization. Partners do generally agree that within the consortium, strategic decisions are taken in joint consultation. The evaluators did not note any major dissatisfaction with the cooperation. Most partners feeling strongly valued and saying they had a large share in strategic decisions. It should be mentioned, however, that the programme was launched in during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and did not allow face-to-face meetings. From this perspective, this complicated the start-up of the programme. The imbalance perceived by some partners is related to the fact that NIMD HQ has greater financial strength and is obviously better connected to the donor. The latter also relates to the fact that NIMD HQ has a clearer picture of MFA expectations (mainly related to reporting). These issues addressed here are not new and were already identified and addressed at the start of the programme. An external study was conducted that identified tension within the consortium and made recommendations.⁴³ Following that, an internal memo was drafted that aimed to address the core problems.⁴⁴ The various partners seem to have reached a modus vivendi that clarified initial concerns and difficulties. The imbalance, of course, has to do with the location of the secretariat which is associated with a larger budget for one consortium partner. The question that arises is whether 'leading from the south', within the framework of such a programme, means that the secretariat should be based in the south or the opposite, i.e., the establishment of a secretariat in the Netherlands, since the funding agency is obviously the Dutch government.

The topic *'partners are making progress towards diversity and feminist leadership'* received the lowest score within the dimension of 'clear roles', the score averaged 3, which is still considered high. From one of the consortium partners, it was very much appreciated that within the PoD framework they could conduct a gender audit at NIMD HQ. This illustrates the will to take diversity and feminist leadership seriously from an analysis point of view. On the other hand, some partners suggest that steps have indeed been taken to include more women in the consortium's decision-making processes, but that the partners' management teams are still made up exclusively of men, apart from AMwA.

As for the *'Trust and Engagement'* dimension, we see high scores related to trust between partners and willingness to depend on each other. The lesser score of 2.8 on the statement that all partners invest equally in the partnership, seems to be linked to the relatively low score (compared to the other dimensions) of the *'Added Value'* dimension.

⁴³ Matteo Pellegrini (2021). Mapping Tensions and Power imbalances in NIMD's Ecosystem. A case study review of the relationships between the NIMD Netherlands and Sahel offices and NIMD and the Gorée Institute.

⁴⁴ Memo, 22/11/2021, First Response to Power Imbalances Case Study

In the Added Value dimension, we see relatively low scores (of 2.6) on 'the Partnership did efficiently pool the (technical) resources' and the 'results could only be achieved thanks to the partnership'. The other two elements of that dimension score noticeably better among the consortium partners (The partnership was essential to increase the credibility of the programme & the partnership was essential to strengthen the capacity of our own organization).

For the evaluators, this part of the different dimensions was the most difficult to interpret because we were faced with conflicting data. On the one hand, it could be seen that a lot of joint activities are organized to promote cooperation between consortium partners and the wider network of offices. Numerous examples of this type of cooperation and joint activities can be found. E.g., the Gender transformative approaches training organised by AMwA in which several country offices participated; several interventions organised by NIMD HQ regarding its thematic lead role around dialogue and trust building; the organisation of 'the month of Democracy Education consisting of weekly online sessions involving the entire network; the organisation of multi-stakeholder dialogue seminar organized by Gorin on institutional stability in the Sahel with participation of many stakeholders; The organisation of Conference on Arab Youth and Political participation by CEMI. This is further confirmed from the document analysis⁴⁵ and from the interviews with different partners. The consortium partners clearly cite the added value of the partnership in that each other's expertise complements the other. They are also very satisfied with the diversity of experiences and knowledge, sharing of the knowledge, good practices, and the shared/mutual learning and mutual capacity building within the consortium. All the above elements mentioned as aspects of added value are considered by all the consortium partners as major strengths of the PoD programme. Overall, it can be said that the added value between the consortium partners is considered very high.

The evaluators did note that some consortium partners stated that their expertise is only used in their intervention countries and not within all countries in which the PoD programme operates. We have indications, from the analysis of the annual reports, that countries from Central America and South America benefit less directly from the expertise of all consortium partners and especially from the three consortium partners in Africa. Of course, this is not surprising since no consortium partners are included in this region.

It should be noted that some partners felt that too few periodical meetings were organized. However, the evaluation team understands that Covid-19 was a major impeding factor in bringing everyone together. We understood from the interviews that work is being done here to schedule dates for consultations on a more regular basis and well in advance.

⁴⁵ E.g., Annual Report 2021. Power of Dialogue Consortium. 31 March 2022, p.22-24 and Annual Report 2022, Power of Dialogue Consortium.

Table 6. Successful Collaborative Partnership - Consortium Partners

<i>How Successful is the Collaborative Partnership?</i>	Score (0=strongly disagree - 4=strongly agree)	Overall average
Clear Goals		3,4
The goals of the partnership are clearly defined	3,8	
Stakeholders are aligned around clearly identified common goals	3,3	
The country specific ToC is used as guide for the implementation of the programme	3,0	
Trust and Commitment		3,1
The decision-making process is transparent	3,0	
Partners are all similarly investing in the partnership' success	2,8	
Partners are willing to depend on each other	3,2	
Partners do trust each other	3,4	
Clear Roles		3,3
The responsibilities of the partners are clearly defined	3,4	
The partners are making progress toward diversity and feminist leadership	3,0	
The power balance between partners has been addressed accurately	3,4	
Added Value		2,9
The partnership did efficiently pool the (technical) resources	2,6	
Results could only be achieved thanks to the partnership	2,6	
The partnership was essential to increase the credibility of the programme	3,0	
The partnership was essential to strengthen the capacity of our own organization	3,2	

Figure 14. Spider diagram of Successful Partnership



8.3.3 Cooperation with the MFA & Embassies

During the country visits, the evaluators had the opportunity to have interviews with embassy staff. Unfortunately, key embassy contacts in Uganda, Ethiopia and Mali had just changed positions and rotated to embassies in other countries. In Uganda, the embassy has to follow up on more than 20 different programmes which means considerable work for the available staff. In Ethiopia, it was noticeable that the embassies interacted with the NIMD Ethiopia on a very regular basis. This relationship can best be characterized as an intensive collaboration. Consultations are held on an almost weekly basis on the political situation in the country and the willingness of different political parties to work together to implement reforms. The consultations between NIMD Ethiopia and the embassy also go beyond simply exchanging information. For example, for the launch of the National Dialogue Commission, NIMD Ethiopia, together with the embassy, did a lot of informal work to get all parties around the table. The embassy further strongly appreciates that new ideas present within NIMD are first checked off with the embassy. Finally, the embassy testifies that the NIMD office in Ethiopia is seen by all parties/stakeholders as an impartial actor that knows how to navigate in a splintered and polarized political landscape excellently. The Dutch embassy is keen to continue the current cooperation in the same intense way. Their explicit wish is to keep situation in Tigray sharp on the radar and explicitly include them in the programme.

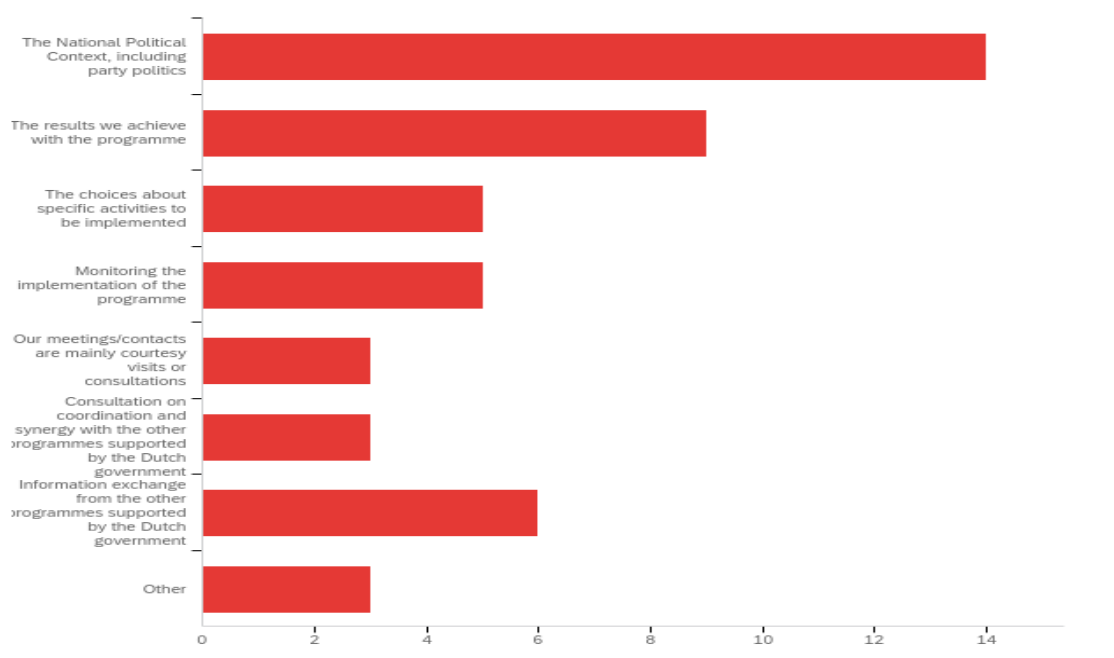
The evaluators wondered whether the observations we made could be extrapolated to all PoD-countries. As it was not desirable to survey all embassies, we surveyed country offices themselves for their views/opinions on cooperation with their respective embassies. It can be seen from the *Table 7* below that the very close cooperation between NIMD Ethiopia and Dutch embassy is rather exceptional and which can be partly explained by the fact that there are linked together by separate grant mechanism like e.g. the NEED-project. Nevertheless, we see that in almost all countries there is at least once a month contact between NIMD and embassies which can best be described as intensive. Only for GORIN, CEMI, NIMD Columbia and Myanmar there are 3-4 contacts a year.

Table 7. Regular Contacts between NIMD, Consortium Partners & Embassies

	Once a week or more	Once in two weeks	Once in Month	3-4 times a year	Never
Burkina Faso		x			
Cemi				x	
Columbia				x	
Ethiopia	x				
Gorin				x	
Guatemala		x			
Jordan			x		
Kenya			x		
Mali			x		
Myanmar				x	
Niger			x		
NIMD HQ			x		
<i>Totals</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	

The main topics discussed with the Dutch embassy are in order of importance: 1. sharing information regarding the national political context, including party politics; 2. the results achieved by the programme; 3. and information exchange to other programmes supported by the Dutch government (see *Figure 15*). These observations thus seem to be in line with the findings from Ethiopia, namely that there is a strong information exchange between NIMD country offices, PoD partners and embassies regarding the political situation and NIMD's achievements in programme implementation. This finding was further confirmed in a conversation with the MFA from which it was additionally confirmed that NIMD is an important source of information for the ministry.

Figure 15. Topics discussed between NIMD country offices, Consortium partners & Embassies



The caveat could be made that the very close cooperation between NIMD and the embassy carries a risk that NIMD will not be considered neutral because it is linked to the foreign policy and thus interests of a European country. Several interviewees state that they are aware of these risks, but that for now, this close relationship brings advantages rather than disadvantages. In other words, embassy backup increases the credibility and impact of background diplomatic work.

The above statement is reinforced by additional findings from the survey. A large majority indicate that the relationship between NIMD country offices, consortium partners and the embassy is based on trust. However, it can be seen from the Table 8 that interest in the PoD programme and organized consultation between the various programmes supported by MFA is not always optimal in all countries. The latter is of course also related to the fact that not all programmes are situated within the framework of PoV. So having the consultation with other supported programmes is not relevant in all circumstances.

Table 8. Some opinions about collaboration between NIMD & Embassies

Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Our relationship with the Netherlands embassy is based on trust	5.56%	11.11%	5.56%	38.89%	38.89%	18
Our working relationship with the Dutch embassy on the PoD programme is limited	22.22%	27.78%	11.11%	33.33%	5.56%	18
The Netherlands embassy does not seem particularly interested in the PoD programme	44.44%	16.67%	27.78%	5.56%	5.56%	18
Netherlands embassy has insufficient time to consult on our programme	16.67%	27.78%	38.89%	11.11%	5.56%	18
There is too little consultation with other organisations involved in other programmes funded by the Dutch government	11.11%	16.67%	27.78%	33.33%	11.11%	18

8.4 Findings Evaluation Topic 4: Challenges, lessons learned and Good Practices

Evaluation Topic 4: Challenges, lessons learned and good practices

EQ 4.1 How have power imbalances in the Partnership been addressed, and how is Leading from the South/localization being advanced in the Partnership? To what extent are the PoD Consortium Partners, local partners and other PoD actors making progress on their diversity and feminist leadership agendas?

EQ 4.2. What are the main challenges, lessons learned and good practices emerging regarding the Partnership collaboration?

EQ 4.3. What are the main challenges, lessons learned and good practices emerging regarding the implementation of programme interventions? What substantive learning can be draw from the programme implementation to date in terms of assumption held and evidence gaps emerging around the relevance and effectiveness of interventions?

EQ 4.4. What are the main challenges, lessons learned and good practices emerging regarding the monitoring of programme interventions, especially interventions aimed at mutual capacity building under Outcome 1, and capacity building through training and education under Outcome 2? To what extent are the monitoring and reporting system and requirements useful for learning and strategic policy-level exchange within the Partnership?

EQ 4.5. Is there evidence that recommendations from previous evaluations of Consortium Partners are being followed-up and there is learning from evaluations and reviews?

8.4.1 Monitoring

The potential of an outcome harvesting database has not been sufficiently exploited, according to the evaluators. Many of the analyses and findings we presented above could be generated automatically through a dashboard if the database is accurately organized. The evaluators lost a particularly large amount of time cleaning up the database and only partially succeeded. Because not all data were accurately displayed in the database, not all analyses that could normally be performed could be carried out. Although there is clear uniformity in the way the outcomes are formulated (name actors, time reference, ...), we observed that many outcomes are very short and miss a good description of the change in practice. Sometimes there is reference to activities rather than outcomes as behaviour changes, or it is hard to understand what the change is.

The significance statements are not always referring to the significance of the outcome statement but about the activities that were carried out. Guidance on a clear definition of what is meant by the significance statement in the context of the NIMDs work is recommended. *The quality of the contribution statements is diverse*. Some statements are detailed and provide a clear overview of NIMD or consortium partners that contributed to the outcome. Other contribution statements are vague and not explaining the actual contribution. Overall, there is a good basis of understanding on the outcome descriptions. Clearly efforts are made to capacitate staff to formulate the outcome descriptions.

Nevertheless, we argue that regarding the harvesting database, 3 actions are needed: 1/ better tagging of the central outcome harvesting database; 2/ the creation of multiple dashboards; 3/ refresher training for the country offices (see recommendation 4)

The evaluation team also questioned various aspects of outcome harvesting to consortium partners and country offices in the online survey. These questions were included in the online survey to further test some of the observations made during the country visits in Uganda and Ethiopia and to see if they could be extrapolated to other countries. From *Table 9* below, it is striking that almost 90 per cent of respondents indicated that outcome harvesting has added value to PMEL processes. At the same time, nearly 60 per cent of respondents indicate that it is difficult to map all outcomes. Our suggestion to organize additional refresher trainings is supported by the fact that 70 percent of respondents indicated a need for additional OH training.

Table 9. Outcome harvesting, opinions from Consortium Partners & Country Offices

Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Outcome harvesting has additional value for our PMEL processes	0.00%	11.76%	0.00%	52.94%	35.29%	17
It is difficult to identify all our outcomes through outcome harvesting	0.00%	35.29%	5.88%	47.06%	11.76%	17
We need more training on Outcome harvesting	11.76%	5.88%	11.76%	29.41%	41.18%	17
Outcome Harvesting tells us too little about our achieved results.	23.53%	35.29%	23.53%	11.76%	5.88%	17

The evaluators also analysed all annual reports from all countries. These reports are generally of a high quality where a lot of attention is paid to the (changing) political context within a country and how this affects the programme (activities) and the adjustments to the ToC. The additional questions (other monitoring questions like e.g., questions on collaboration with local partners and Dutch Embassy) in the country reports also provide a lot of additional relevant information. According to the evaluators, the global annual report is a good summary of the main developments, activities, and results of the overall PoD-programme. What the evaluators did find was that it cannot be clearly deduced from the annual reports that all the actors they work with are also clearly listed. What the evaluators would like to suggest is that an overview of the actors cooperated with would be included in the annual reports and that the type of actor involved be indicated for each actor, using the same tagging used in the outcome harvesting database. This has the major advantage that these actors and types of actors at activity level can then be linked to the outcome database at analysis stage. This would then allow realized outcomes to be compared with inputs to particular actors. Subsequently a better analysis of efficiency and effectiveness by actor type can be carried out.

8.4.2 Main Challenges

- The politically volatile context in most of the PoD countries is a major challenge accompanied by risks. Nevertheless, the evaluators found the PoD programme to be particularly agile in dealing with these changing contexts (ToC, PEAs, excellent staff in the country offices, adaptive programming).
- The PoD programme has focused heavily on the capacity building of individual women and young people who are active within an organization, political party, or network. As shown above in the analysis, there is ample evidence that this capacity building is highly effective at the individual level. However, the evaluators could find little evidence that it also strengthens organisational structures. As stated above, the lack of evidence for this may be motivated by several factors, including the evaluation methodology. The link between individual and organizational capacity building is an important step in the ToC (see IO 2.1) and a necessary condition for achieving inclusive political culture. Thus, the link between individual and collective capacity building deserves continued attention (recommendation 5).

- The evaluators noted that the existing online Knowledge Hub contains a particularly large amount of useful and very interesting material. The assessors were unable to confirm that partners are fully aware of and make use of this extensive collection of materials. It may therefore be useful to further disseminate the key files in the knowledge hub within the PoD programme network. This might be accomplished, for instance, by scheduling more webinars and holding live classes in the regions or the countries. (recommendation 6).
- Within the operation of this programme, balances and (financial) imbalances have been discussed and under control. For the future, in the light of future programme proposals, a challenge seems to be to better define the concept of 'leading from the south'. We think it is the responsibility of the MFA to provide additional clarification for this concept in the context of future programming and to articulate its practical implications.
- The start-up of the programme during the Covid-19 period was particularly challenging for the consortium and country offices, which made communication difficult in the initial phase. These start-up difficulties seem to be resolved with clearer agenda planning and frequency of meetings.

8.4.3 Main lessons learned & Good Practices

- The overall ToC complemented by the country PEAs, the adjusted country ToC and ACBPoC prove to be particularly flexible tools for adaptive programming. The PEAs, which are updated very regularly within the country offices, allow for flexible switching of actors if the context requires it.
- Orienting project activities towards youth and women was key, especially in the context of many countries where the political class is often much older than the median age. This reorientation seems to be very successful in reaching feasible outcomes while traditional political structures seem to be characterized by immobilism.
- The most important asset of the PoD programme relates to human resources and the high quality of staff members that apply the principle of inclusiveness and neutrality. Above that comes the ability to navigate in political systems characterised by strong polarisation. Yet the country offices that were surveyed manage to be considered neutral actors. This is a very important asset to be nurtured.
- The excellent cooperation with the Dutch embassy, in some of the countries, deserves special attention. This cooperation can lead to strengthening each other's strategy (i.e., both the embassy and the NIMD office).
- Sharing knowledge, experiences, good practices among the consortium partners is considered an important good practice as well as the fact that the diversity of consortium partners stimulate the exchange.
- Another important lesson learned is that physical meetings between consortium partners and country offices remains necessary, despite the progress made in digital (collaboration) during the Covid-19 period. It provides the bond between partners in a way that is not possible through digital means.
- The capacity development activities with women (political) leaders and capacity development within the framework of feminist leadership by AMwA is considered as very good practice with tangible results (increasing self-confidence among women, introducing gender-sensitive policies within political

parties). There may be further opportunities to extend these good practices and methodologies to other countries.

9 Conclusions

The overall Theory of Change and adjusted Country Theories of Change appear to provide a flexible framework in which different activities and outcomes can be flexibly accommodated. As illustrated above and based on the analysis of some specific outcomes, the assumptions are still valid. Country PEAs do not lead to major changes in the overall ToCs. Especially the target actors were further defined in the adjusted country adjusted ToCs. In a small number of cases, the content focus was also named. Especially in the Actor Based Pathways of Change (ABPoC), the ToC logic for each actor type was further named and clarified. The ABPoC provide the concrete operationalization of the ToCs, which in turn are rather considered a strategic document/framework. In other words, the ToCs indicates the long-term perspective in which all types of activities and inputs are considered.

The pathways are highly interlinked and are not exhaustively defined. So, the different pathways are not independent from each other. This means that similar outcomes may be placed under different pathways in different countries (e.g., comparison between similar outcome in NIMD Uganda and CEMI). In addition, the evaluation team noted that there is sometimes evolution in outcomes and between pathways. E.g., in Mali, the NIMD team saw (during the ToC workshop) results progressing from pathway 2 and 3 to pathway 4, with time: first the young and female political and civic actors become credible and influential (LTO 2); and political and civic actors develop more trust-based collaboration (LTO 3), and thanks to their advocacy and recommendations, political and civic actors strengthen democratic space (LTO 4).

The flexibility of the ToC has the advantage that adaptive programming can be applied without having to make major changes to the ToC. The PEA research reports are generally of high quality for all countries and thus, as mentioned above, in many cases did not lead to a significant adjustment of the overall ToC but did identify opportunities and did largely determine which actors could or should be worked with. Analysing and updating these PEA's is well established practice in the NIMD offices visited by the evaluation team. On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, country offices discuss the political situation and risks. These analyses are not always reflected in written documents. The annual reports and annual planning documents also include context analysis and risks as well. There is a clear link between these context analyses (and risks) and adjusting activities and actors (adaptive programming).

Globally, most outcomes were achieved within pathway 2 and this pattern could be observed in all countries except Jordan, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Guatemala. In Ethiopia, most outcomes are located within pathway 3 and 4. This can be explained by the fact that NIMD Ethiopia mainly works within a tight framework where working with political parties is the prerogative of a government organization NEBE. Furthermore, the main cooperation actors are regional and national government organizations and institutions. The main actors in Uganda and Mali are Young and Women leaders and CSOs led by young people or women. The changes to which the PoD programme has mainly contributed are the changes in Practices and Collaborative processes. The contribution was mainly in the form of capacity building of individuals and organizations and by facilitating/supporting exchange platforms.

The country studies confirm that adaptive programming is not a dead letter. The contribution cited above in the creation of MYF and IWOP in Uganda, were unintended outcomes. In Ethiopia, too, we could see that support to, for example, various forms of inter-party dialogue are being used flexibly. Of course, this adaptive capacity is highly dependent on taking advantage of opportunities that arise and responding to them is only possible when an extensive social and political network has been build. Associated with this is that NIMD & AMwA are seen as a neutral non-partisan actor, accepted, and valued by a wide range of actors and stakeholders. What stood out in all country studies is that country offices are able navigate in particularly politically volatile (and often polarized) contexts.

Another striking characteristic of the PoD-programme is the strong synergy and complementarity between different activities and initiatives. The networks created between young and women political leaders through Democracy Schools and AWLI programme undeniably contribute to creating platforms for consultation and dialogue between young people and women from different political parties. For this, the evaluators have strong evidence for all countries. Complementarity and synergies are also created by combining projects from different

funding streams. NIMD Ethiopia, for example, also has a project NEED⁴⁶, funded directly by the Dutch embassy in Ethiopia. This budget is used in synergy with the PoD budget to support party dialogues. Complementarity, in turn, is created because other donors are also active with the same actors as NEBE. For example, IFES and UNDP (SEED-project) supported the electoral process in Ethiopia.

For all outcome harvesting cases studied in the three countries, it can be said that they fit within the logic of the ToC and can be situated within the intermediary outcome of the different pathways. Whether they will eventually lead to the indicated Long-Term outcomes is difficult to predict. In all three countries, this will largely depend on the political leeway that the different initiatives (platforms of dialogue, for example) will have, especially in the context of shrinking civic and democratic spaces.

In general, the evaluators believe that results/outcomes are somewhat more easily achieved by supporting youth and women platforms of cooperation than those within a traditional party system. Trust and finding a common agenda with related action points seems easier to achieve within youth and women platforms, especially in polarized political contexts. Of course, the question is whether these women and youth platforms can break into the existing party system and thus weigh on political decision-making. This can only happen if several assumptions (included in the ToC) are realised, namely that unequal power structures are opened up and civic space is sufficiently open. In any case, the strategy of working with other actors (young and women leaders) is an obvious but powerful way of moving dialogue initiatives to other arenas when inclusiveness cannot be guaranteed in the traditional party system. These findings in mind and based on findings in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Burkina Faso, an additional pronounced strategy could be to include decentralized structures as additional actors. When national platforms are deadlocked, diverting to regional structures could be an option to achieve concrete outcomes at these levels (see recommendation 3).

The PoD-programme is particularly strong in capacity building of young and women leaders. This is somewhat less evident in Ethiopia given its different emphasis. The evidence of change in terms of attitudes, self-confidence, and the courage to raise their voices is overwhelming. In this area, we have identified significant synergy with the other initiatives (democracy schools and AWLI programme, for example). As a result of all these initiatives, networks of young and women leaders also emerge, which in turn generate new initiatives (e.g., IWOP in Uganda and Women Wings in ECJJP in Ethiopia). However, the evaluators could not find evidence that individual capacity strengthening leads to the reinforcement of organizations, which is a necessary step (also within the existing Theory of Change). In any case, it is necessary to pay sufficient attention in the programme to the linkages between individual capacity building and organisational strengthening (see recommendation 5).

The evaluation team had the opportunity to talk to many politically and socially engaged women during the various country visits. It was noticed that several hindering factors such as gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment, financial vulnerability, operating in patriarchal societies/culture (including gender stereotypes) have a strong impact on women's participation in political structures and decision-making mechanisms. These factors cause women not to step into politics or to drop out. These mechanisms are well described in the NIMD publication *Mind the Gap* and to a lesser extent in the GRIP publications.⁴⁷ Because we all know, that it is such a large and widespread problem and because it is a firm barrier to women's inclusion in the political and party system, the PoD-programme at the consortium level should put this issue on the agenda and should develop a strategy addressing these issues in all the PoD-countries. (see recommendation 1).

The evaluators noted a desire among young and women leaders to connect internationally. However, what is absent from the programme and what is explicit demanded for from young and women leaders is to connect these national networks internationally between the different countries of the PoD programme. The main reason is that they want to learn from each other and share experiences. An additional benefit of creating such an international network is that they become stronger as a group and can exert more (political and social) pressure. They can create opportunities to support and lobby each other when, for example, the political context in their respective countries deteriorates or threatens to deteriorate. According to the evaluators, the PoD programme

⁴⁶ Nurturing Ethiopia's Emerging Democracy (NEED).

⁴⁷ Sergio Rodrigue Prieto and Sebastian Bloching (2018). *Mind the Gap*. NIMD's work on Gender and Access to Power, p.12-14.

has enormous potential to enhance international networking among young and women leaders (see [recommendation 2](#)).

Regarding the cooperation between the consortium partners, the evaluators found that the partners agree that clear goals and roles have been defined and that the partners trust and are committed to each other. The evaluators noted that there were some tensions with one of the consortium partners at the start of the programme, but these tensions were addressed in the early stages of PoD programme implementation. Of course, the fact remains that one of the partners, by hosting the secretariat, has a financially stronger position within the consortium. The evaluators do not wish to comment on what is desirable. After all, strong arguments can be found for having the secretariat function in the Netherlands because of its proximity to the donor. It does seem appropriate to further clarify the concept of 'leading from the south.' We think that it is the responsibility of the MFA to provide additional clarification for this concept in the context of future programming and to articulate its practical implications.

The topic '*partners are making progress towards diversity and feminist leadership*' received the lowest score within the dimension of 'clear roles', the score averaged 3, which is still considered high. From one of the consortium partners, it was very much appreciated that within the PoD framework they could conduct a gender audit at NIMD HQ. This illustrates the will to take diversity and feminist leadership seriously from an analysis point of view. On the other hand, some partners suggest that steps have indeed been taken to include more women in the consortium's decision-making processes, but that the partners' management teams are still made up exclusively of men, apart from AMwA.

The added value of the cooperation between the consortium partners is estimated to be high. Especially the ability to call on each other's specific expertise (diversity of the partnership), the exchange of experiences, knowledge and good practices is highly appreciated.

The evaluators noted that the existing online Knowledge Hub contains a particularly large amount of useful and very interesting material. The assessors were unable to confirm that partners are fully aware of and make use of this extensive collection of materials. It may therefore be useful to further disseminate the key files in the knowledge hub within the PoD programme network. This might be accomplished, for instance, by scheduling more webinars and holding live classes in the regions or the countries (see [recommendation 6](#)).

The partnership between NIMD offices and embassies is generally rated as very good. There are particularly frequent contacts between NIMD and the Dutch embassy in the respective countries. These often have an exchange of information on the political context and the party system as their object as well as coordinating on specific initiatives within PoD and other programmes (funded by the Dutch Embassy). The cooperation between NIMD and the embassies increases the credibility and impact of NIMD's work.

Finally, we would like to end this conclusion with some findings concerning outcome harvesting. The evaluation team found that there is a broad consensus on the added value of outcome harvesting within the PMEL system. The evaluation team found that the logic about OH is well understood in many countries. Nevertheless, the quality is not consistent regarding the formulations of outcomes, significance and contributions. Tagging in the database is also inconsistent. This complicates analyses or even makes them impossible for some purposes. As a result, the enormous potential of the database cannot be exploited. We therefore suggest improving the tagging, the development of a corresponding dashboard and the organization of a refresher training (see [recommendation 4](#)).