

THE **POWER**
OF DIALOGUE
CONSORTIUM

Annual Report 2023

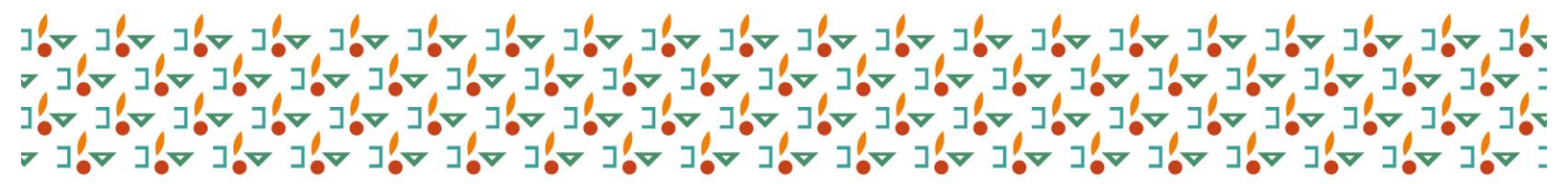




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1. Introduction

This document outlines the 2023 Annual Report for the Power of Dialogue (PoD) programme, which is being implemented under the 2021-2025 Strategic Partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), in the framework of the 'Power of Voices' (PoV) grant instrument. The PoD Consortium is composed 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). The programme, which is implemented in 15 countries¹ and includes regional and global components, carries the ultimate goal to 'contribute to peaceful democratic space, and inclusive, responsive and representative political decision-making at all levels.

This PoD Annual Report first provides an overview of key developments that occurred in 2023 in programme countries (Section 2) and then presents the results achieved in each country and region targeted by the programme (Section 3), as well as at global level (Section 4). The report further reflects on other monitoring questions (Section 5) such as how the programme is addressing the issue of localization, and on how the identified risks that materialized were mitigated. Finally, this report provides a narrative overview of the financial report (section 6), for which the details are provided in Annex 1, including justification for deviations from the approved budget. Annex 2a provides an overview of the contribution of the PoD results to the Security, Rule of Law and Strengthening Civil Society frameworks. While annex 2b provides an overview of actual vs. targeted results per country. Annex 3 compiles the links to all the PoD-related Human Interest Stories produced during the course of 2023.

2. Key developments in programme countries

This section intends to highlight some of the main contextual changes that have had an influence on our programming in 2023.

Coup in Niger

2023 started in relatively calm political climate in Niger, as President Bazoum began the third year of his mandate still proclaiming his desire to improve democratic governance. However, the concrete measures to translate this desire into action were slow to materialize. The resumption of political dialogue, which began in the last quarter of 2022, remained stuck in technical discussions, while no substantive discussions had been held on reforms. Furthermore, no concrete action has been taken to combat corruption, even though scandals were revealed on a daily basis. Moreover, the security situation had hardly improved in the so-called 3-border area, leading to a feeling of disillusion for the population affected by the conflict.

¹ Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Mozambique, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Colombia, Guatemala and Myanmar.



It was in this apparent calm that the army burst into the Presidential palace on 26 July 2023, putting an end to 12 years of elected regimes. The security situation and poor governance were put forward by the military to justify the coup. Few internal voices (apart from close supporters of the President) were raised to condemn the coup. The popular support to the military was strengthened by the sanctions imposed by the international community. The threat of armed intervention to put Bazoum back in his seat was interpreted by public opinion as a declaration of war against Niger. Patriotic feelings were aroused, leading the vast majority of the population to support the military. So far, the new authorities have not attempted to restrict democratic and civic freedoms. NIMD Niger was able to continue working and implementing the programme, although the foreseen work on government accountability and parliamentary support obviously had to be suspended.

Diplomatic isolation in the Sahel

Relations between Mali, Niger and Burkina and their regional (ECOWAS) and international (European Union, France) partners continue to deteriorate considerably with the announcement, on the one hand of the withdrawal of the Sahel Alliance States (Mali, Burkina, Niger) from ECOWAS. And secondly, with the end of cultural and scientific cooperation with France. Although the European Union intends to continue its commitment to civil society, its ambassador in Mali has still not officially taken up his post. It should be noted that Norway has closed its embassy and that other European cooperation agencies are reluctant to commit new funding.

Despite these diplomatic tensions, the United States have decided to maintain a presence in the region, in a context of a growing bilateral cooperation of the three countries with Russia, China and Turkey, among others. In the fight against terrorism, the Malian authorities have put an end to MINUSMA's mandate on 31 December 2023. However, there has been a resurgence of terrorist attacks against military bases and civilian targets, including the attack on the civilian boat Timbuktu on 7 September 2023, which killed more than 60 people. On 25 January 2024, the government of Mali put an end to the internationally recognized Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation resulting from the Algiers process, and an inter-Malian dialogue will be initiated, as mentioned by the President of the transition.

Elections in Guatemala

Since 1985, the year of transition to democracy in Guatemala, there has not been an electoral process so atypical as the 2023 elections, which saw Bernardo Arévalo from the Movimiento Semilla getting elected with around 60% of the votes. From opening ballot boxes, re-counting votes, cancelling the parties running in the electoral race, and attempting to declare the election results null and void.

Despite all this, Arevalo took power on January 14th, protected by the Constitution and legitimized by six months of popular mobilizations to defend the vote. As political analysts mention, Bernardo has the potential to start countering democratic backsliding in Central America. He symbolizes a new political generation of young



people, students, academics, and social leaders willing to challenge an outdated political system full of privileges and corruption.

NIMD has worked with Semilla since its inception in 2017. It is a result of a long process that began before the 2023 election, of working closely with youth party members, fostering their political engagement, and helping to build a new political generation. And although there is a long road ahead of Arevalo's government, Guatemala now stands as a clear example of how change happens.

Increasing political tensions in Uganda

Over the course of the last year, the political discourse has been dominated by 'transition politics', referring to the expected political change after President Museveni leaves power. The President's son, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has increasingly profiled his political ambitions to the public. Through twitter and grass root campaigning he is tapping into the youth electorate, mobilizing supporters to join what is called the MK movement and openly opposing the popular young opposition leader Bobi Wine. It remains, however, unclear if he will contest against his father in the 2026 election or wait for his retirement. The MK movement has no political affiliation with political parties and has openly criticized the ruling party. Whereas the president's son moves freely, can mobilize supporters and hold rallies, the opposition parties are restricted from mobilizing their supporters. The room for opposition voices continues to be curtailed using the public order management act.

NUP, the largest opposition political Party, has come under scrutiny for impudence, bullying, and tribalism. During a public rally in Luwero town, NUP leader Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) made accusations against the government, claiming collusion with foreign entities to displace specific ethnic groups. He singled out the Baganda community, accusing authorities of orchestrating land grabs and marginalization. Kyagulanyi's remarks were met with criticism, with many Ugandans expressing concern over the potential of such rhetoric to fuel tribalism and exacerbate existing tensions. Moreover, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) is experiencing internal divisions and faces challenges in reconciling conflicting narratives regarding financial transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the democratic and civic space in Uganda further shrunk as a result of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and several actions by the government. The Government of Uganda decided not to renew the UN Human Rights Commission's Country Agreement in the wake of several concerns regarding the Anti-Homosexuality Bill which criminalises same-sex relationships, and the arbitrary arrest of political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders. In 2023, several journalists were harassed including four reporters who were covering local elections in Bukedea district while in July 2023, a police officer slapped reporter John Xerxes Ogulei from Teso Broadcasting Services. The officer accused the reporter of tarnishing the government's image through his coverage. As a political tool, the AHA Bill shrinks an already restrictive legal environment for NGOs. It includes severe penalties, the death penalty, and imprisonment of up to 20 years for individuals advocating for LGBT rights, establishing a system of complete censorship on LGBT issues.



Emerging conflicts in Ethiopia

The armed conflict in Tigray has had a huge impact on the overall political situation in the country and has negatively affected the efforts to promote democratic values, attitudes and practices among politicians in the country. After the loss of about a million human lives and enormous property destructions, the conflict has now de-escalated. Despite reports of atrocities committed against civilians, including rape and sexual violence against women and girls, the trend so far inspires optimism about the prospect of peace and inclusive political process in Tigray region.

However, different levels of hostilities across the country remain unaddressed; and new ones have emerged. Following the government's recent increased level of mobilization of its forces, new round of warfare has been going on in different parts of Oromia. Recent reports have shown enormous loss of human lives and heightened levels of civilian crisis. In Amhara region, following declaration of state of emergency in August 2023, an all-out war has been waged against the informal armed group called Fano. Weeks of hostilities between the federal and informal armed groups have led to human rights violations and the loss of several human lives. A few weeks after federal intervention, the government reported that stability had been restored to most of the region. Nonetheless, the security situation in the region has continued to be fragile.

Apart from causing severe humanitarian crisis, the conflicts continue to affect the overall political environment of the country. Unless the conflicts are addressed in a sustainable and reasonable manner, the general efforts made to promote democratic values, attitudes and practices will be seriously affected. Furthermore, Ethiopia's political parties remain divided on various issues including those associated with ongoing hostilities and conflicts in the country, underscoring the relevance of continued dialogue efforts and broad and inclusive consultation at different levels.

3. Country-level and regional results

This section provides an overview of the results achieved during 2023 in each country targeted by the PoD programme Theory of Change (ToC), which focuses on four mutually reinforcing Long-Term Outcomes (LTOs):

- **LTO 1 - Consortium, partner networks and local civil society organizations are effective enablers of change:** Consortium partners will strengthen each other, their partner networks and local CSOs by capitalizing on complementarity. This is an enabler for the other LTOs.
- **LTO 2 - Aspiring young and women political and civic leaders are influential actors of change:** investing in aspiring young and women leaders, both to fulfil their civil and political rights and catalyze their ability to spur political change.



- **LTO 3 - Political and civic actors collaborate peacefully on the basis of trust:** focusing on facilitating and enabling trust-building, dialogue and collaboration, and ensuring shared access for all civic and political actors to inclusive spaces.
- **LTO 4 - Political and civic actors strengthen democratic space:** allowing civic and political actors to jointly advocate for the interests of their constituents, either at national level, or through the creation of external pressure point at regional and global level.

3.1 Sahel

3.1.1 Mali

Lead: NIMD Mali

LTO 1: NIMD is frequently approached by national organizations, particularly youth organizations, not only for funding but also for technical support. It was in this context that NIMD Mali's Country Director took part in a week-long high-level workshop on taking gender into account in reforms, moderating a panel on political and electoral reforms. NIMD also provided technical support to the legal clinic of a private university in the organization of a "university symposium on democracy, good governance and citizenship". NIMD ran a training session on democracy based on a comic strip on preconceived ideas about democracy in Mali. Alumni were also mobilized to lead panel discussions.

LTO 2: NIMD Mali supported the Youth and Women's Consortium in developing an advocacy document to improve their access to elected and appointed positions. Their flagship proposal for a quota law was one of the key recommendations of the Estates General on Youth (EGJ). The members of the Consortium had the opportunity to defend their proposals in various forums, and its presidents are regularly consulted by national and international stakeholders on youth issues.

NIMD also supported the alumni of the political and democratic schools in continuing their commitment by implementing citizen projects that are having an interesting impact on women in local communities. One of these projects is called "Espace DJEMU", which aims to create a space for dialogue between alumni and young high school and university students (public and private), with a view to improving their understanding and fostering in them a capacity for analysis of the real issues and challenges facing Mali, particularly democratic issues in connection with the process of rebuilding Mali. Another example is the 'MUSOW KA FASOJO BARONI' project (talks and debates on democracy in women's tontines in Bamako - Commune I), which aims to increase the participation of women in tontines in local governance in Commune I.

LTO 3: NIMD supported the CPSRE (*Comité de Plaidoyer et de Suivi des Réformes*) in setting up an interparty platform, as requested by Malian political parties, with a



view to harmonize their understanding of the reforms and to de-escalate tensions through the inclusion and participation of all stakeholders. As a result, around fifty participating political parties have agreed to go beyond their partisan positions in order to deconstruct the negative perception that citizens have of politics, and to make a positive contribution to the reforms planned during the transition. In addition, the training and exchange forums on transitional reforms organized by CPSRE for political parties have proved very beneficial to be very beneficial for them, as they have requested the Committee to continue sharing of knowledge and tools.

NIMD also continued to work with OCGS (*Observatoire Citoyen sur la Gouvernance et la Sécurité*), through the organization of discussion forums (People's Assemblies) held at national and local level, bringing together different categories of citizens to engage in collective reflection leading to citizens' proposals on governance issues. These multi-actor frameworks help to maintain a climate of exchange in a difficult context.

LTO 4: NIMD regularly contributes to informal civil society reflection groups set up by various diplomatic missions in Mali. The office also meets regularly with national and international authorities are opportunities for advocacy and communication to facilitate their understanding and support for NIMD's activities. NIMD also participates in the Support Committee of the National Transition Council (CNT), which aims to strengthen the institution by training its members.

3.1.2 Burkina Faso

Lead: NIMD Burkina Faso

LTO 1: A number of actions were carried out during the year and results achieved. The most illustrative results include the NIMD Sahel strategic retreat, which provided an opportunity for the three countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) to share their experiences in a volatile sub-regional context beset by a political and security crisis in the Sahel. As part of the retreat, the three countries presented and shared the results of the study on the issue of women's political participation in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). NIMD Burkina Faso invited representatives from the ministry responsible for women and gender, from civil society working on gender issues and from the transitional legislative assembly to contribute to the discussions.

NIMD Burkina also continued strengthening its partnerships with local partners, by organizing several exchanges with partners such as CBDF, Balai Citoyen and ARGA. This partnership was further consolidated during the working visit of NIMD's Executive Director to Burkina Faso in March 2023. Discussions led to guidelines to help projects achieve greater social impact.

LTO 2: Capacity-building activities for youth and women were carried out as planned. The results achieved include the training of 21 youth from political and civil society organizations from various regions of the country, as part of NIMD's Democracy Schools. This training took place in a somewhat difficult context with the suspension of political party activities, but with the participation of the 4th Vice-President of the



Transitional Legislative Assembly, who had an exchange meeting with these young people a few days before the training.

In addition, through the capacity-building and advocacy for political decision-making project for women and girl leaders in Burkina Faso, implemented with CBDF, thirty women leaders and potential candidates for the next elections were trained. In the commune of Koudougou, a plea was also made for women and girls to be more involved in decision-making bodies at the level of the special delegation, which takes the place of the town hall following the dissolution of the local executive offices following the coups.

Another important result to note is the implementation of a citizen initiative by the alumni. This is the 'School for Democracy and Social Cohesion' (EDCS) project, which is being implemented in two pilot schools in the Centre region of Ouagadougou. The aim is to work towards strengthening the democratic culture at its roots, i.e., among the youngest students, which could give rise to new hope for a democratic Burkina Faso with greater social cohesion.

LTO 3: Under this LTO, one of the key areas of progress has been the impact of the policy cafés organized in partnership with ARGA. The policy cafés, a multi-stakeholder forum that began in 2021, have tackled the issue of social cohesion and the need to renew political thinking to get young people and women more involved. The policy cafés also produced three policy briefs, which will be finalized and shared within the NIMD Burkina networks. Regional political cafés were also organized in partnership with NIMD Mali and Niger.

NIMD Burkina also continued its partnership with Balai Citoyen on local multi-stakeholder dialogue in the rural commune of Bama. The stakeholder involved in the dialogue worked to set up and make operational a Conflict Prevention and Management Committee (CGPC). This formal, inclusive framework brings together the commune's key players and establishes a shared understanding of the issues facing the commune.

LTO 4: Under this LTO, progress has been made in strengthening relations between NIMD and certain diplomatic representations, in particular the Dutch Embassy and the European Union delegation. Several meetings were held to discuss funding opportunities for NIMD activities. In addition, as part of its efforts to improve dialogue with national players, NIMD Burkina, in collaboration with organizations such as the CGD, NDI, Diakonia, Pax, etc., organized a forum bringing together national players and others from Africa on the theme "Sahel States facing the challenge of security and governance: squaring the circle or window of opportunity? The forum was an arena for exchanging innovative ideas, sharing experiences and putting forward concrete proposals to turn challenges into opportunities and pave the way for a safer, more prosperous and resilient Sahel.

3.1.3 Niger

Lead: NIMD Niger



LTO 1: NIMD Niger updated its PEA specifically with regards to youth and women in elections. The formal and informal obstacles to their participation were analyzed and potential strategies to overcome them were identified. Furthermore, a note was produced on women's political participation in Niger. This note analyses the factors and constraints of this participation and formulates hypotheses to remedy them.

LTO 2: Through the Democracy and Political Schools, NIMD trained 172 young aspiring leaders from both civil society and political parties. They are now equipped to lead debates in public, to train other youth and make their voices heard. In addition to the theoretical training, the participants had the opportunity to engage with their counterparts from Mali and Burkina through virtual Masterclasses. This activity is part of the strategy of monitoring alumni in their post-training trajectories in order to assess their ability to contribute positively to change in their communities.

NIMD Niger also created opportunities for thematic debates through round tables and political cafés. These are safe open spaces for youth to exchange ideas and express their views on democracy, even if they often are very much opposed. It is a genuine forum for questioning decision-makers and raising the level of political culture within youth in Niger. Nine sessions were held in 2023, enabling at least 540 people to take part in the discussions.

LTO 3: As part of the 'Présimètre 2021' initiative, a survey was carried out to assess the performance of the President during his second year in office. This report was meant to be discussed at an accountability forum - a space for dialogue between civil society and government. The forum was planned for 29 July 2023 - the day on which Niger celebrates its National Day of Democracy. The forum was cancelled following the coup d'état on 26 July. The "Présimètre" project was also suspended as a whole.

Instead, NIMD decided to undertake an opinion poll on the theme: "Citizens' perceptions of the coup d'état and prospects for solutions to ensure a successful transition". The survey, in which 542 people took part, showed that the majority (88%) welcomed the coup. The results of this survey were debated at 2 conferences organized in Dosso and Maradi. These 2 conferences were attended by over 300 people, 17% of whom were women, with the participation of regional authorities. These were 2 key moments for the participants to debate their perceptions of the coup d'état and their expectations of the transition in front of the regional authorities.

NIMD also organized a forum of young democrats to mark the International Day of Democracy. Over a hundred young people took part. At the end of the forum, these young people drafted a memorandum as a contribution to the inclusive national dialogue that the authorities have decided to conduct as a way to draw up the transition's roadmap.

LTO 4: The plan to conduct capacity-building for parliamentarians could not be implemented, due to the fact that parliament was dissolved following the coup d'état.



3.1.4 Regional Approach Sahel

Lead: GORIN

LTO 1: The Gorée Institute continued to collaborate with NIMD Sahel in 2023. Several meetings were held between the programme managers of the NIMD Sahel country offices and the Gorée Institute. The focus was on strengthening the synergy between the Gorée Institute and NIMD Sahel and organizing an advocacy meeting with ECOWAS. The meeting to network the Gorée Institute's partners in Burkina Faso was organized thanks to the contribution of the Burkina Faso office. The mutually beneficial partnership and collaborative commitment with NIMD Burkina Faso made it possible to organize the regional youth forum in Ouagadougou, which was attended by over 200 participants and the transition authorities.

LTO 2: In 2023, the planned capacity-building activities and leadership trainings were successfully implemented. Activities focused on strengthening the skills of women and young people in peace-building leadership, electoral conflict prevention and political decision-making, as part of an effort to strengthen their role in terms of advocacy and influencing policy. Knowledge of the formal, informal and structural elements involved in conflict, as well as the peacebuilding and conflict prevention measures required to intervene effectively at community, national and regional levels, was deepened through the use of mediation and negotiation techniques.

The peacebuilding and conflict prevention training courses were developed with the implicit aim of mitigating political instability and strengthening the skills of women, young political leaders, peacebuilding practitioners and our network partners operating in the target countries in the Sahel. This year in particular, all the women and young people who benefited from the training of trainers in leadership and electoral conflict prevention each held one or two training sessions for other young members of CSOs and political parties.

LTO 3: The activities implemented during the year (i.e., regional consultative meetings on women and youth political participation and creation of a youth network of peacebuilders) helped to strengthen the capacity of civic actors, including women and young political actors, to influence change in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and political decision-making. The actions undertaken during this period have strengthened the capacity of civic actors, including women and young people involved in politics, to positively influence the peace-building process, conflict prevention and political decision-making. By actively involving young political leaders and women at all stages of the programme, we have been able to amplify the voice of young people in democratic processes, as well as in peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts. From this perspective, peacebuilding and conflict prevention have not been treated in isolation at the national level. Our multi-stakeholder dialogue initiative, engaging state and non-state actors simultaneously, has fostered greater mutual understanding and broadened consensus among all parties to work together to secure long-term stability in the countries concerned.

LTO 4: During 2023, the Gorée Institute will contribute to a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding the fragility of democracy and the challenges currently



affecting stability in West Africa, with a particular focus on the Sahel. Similarly, the meetings held, such as the annual symposium, enabled a wider intellectual and political debate on coups d'état, constitutional changes and political dynamics in the Sahel. They also shed light on the gaps present in democratic governance policies and practices in the region.

In this way, a framework for dialogue, reflection, learning, exchange of experience and good practice has been provided for young people and women, to improve their participation in the peace and political processes in their respective countries in the Sahel. Young people had the opportunity to interact with authorities and representatives of international and sub-regional institutions and to learn from their experiences.

3.2 Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

3.2.1 Tunisia

Lead: CEMI

LTO 1: CEMI has shared its expertise and practical guidelines with consortium partners and provided support when approached. For instance, in Iraq's democracy school initiative, CEMI provided support in conceiving the curricula and capacitating the trainers involved in the programme. In addition, CEMI's best practices on youth political participation were shared and presented within the network, in particular in adapting the programme to include newlytargeted groups.

LTO 2: CEMI implemented another training cycle for the first level mixed class of the Tunisian School of Politics (TSoP). The curriculum was adjusted according to the current national context characterized by economic and financial crisis aiming to reinforce and endow the participants with the skills and knowledge associated with the economic and financial analysis tools. The emphasis was put on the consolidation of democratic values, pluralism and mutual respect through coaching sessions along the training cycle. Some participants evolved within their organizations – for instance one was elected in the political bureau of the “Courant Démocrate” party.

This year's Training of Trainers (ToT) class was composed by 12 TSoP Alumni from political parties and CSOs seeking to disseminate the knowledge and skills acquired within their respective organizations. By the end of the cycle, four training sessions were realized as planned, along with an evaluation session to bridge between the 2 levels of the ToT training cycle. Some of the participants have announced that they have already been solicited to conduct training sessions within their organizations or their professional network.

CEMI also continued with its Youth Council activity, aiming at engaging youth that are not active in political parties and CSOs through face-to-face, interactive activities and meetings. Five workshops were conducted of a planned series of soft skills workshops for 30 participants. These sessions are helping the youth to shape their



soft skills, acquire knowledge related to democratic values, pluralism and dialogue, develop new ones and discover themselves.

The work on the YouTube channel “#Freesh” also continued in 2023. The content of the channel related economy, elections, youth engagement and participation, providing an attractive open space for non-engaged youth, reaching a total number of 199.7 followers on social media and 8.7 million views.

CEMI also conducted another edition of its regional academy, involving 20 participants from the MENA region, as well as the regional conference, gathering 38 youth and experts to discuss “The current landscape of the Political parties in the Arab World”.

LTO 3: CEMI was committed to promote and diversify the spaces for dialogue as the most peaceful to guarantee a successful exit from the crisis. CEMI offers a safe space where all our participants can securely exchange ideas and engage in peaceful, judgment-free debates no matter how polarized their views might be. As part of this effort, CEMI organized seven dialogue activities in 2023, involving Members of Parliament and over 200 TSoP alumni. These dialogue activities addressed topical issues related to the national context and highlighting youth participation in public affairs.

Following the parliamentary elections, CEMI also approached the newly elected MPs in order to present CEMI’s work related to the parliament’s activity and encourage them to join the Nouabook online platform, which facilitates interactions between MPs and citizens. The platform has been updated and CEMI is gradually securing the participation of MPs.

In addition to aforementioned dialogue activities, CEMI organized three workshops within the Youth Collaborative Platform in different governorates: Monastir, Beja and Kairouan. During this debate workshops, the participants discussed the barriers and challenges they are facing when attempting to participate in local affairs. It has also helped them acknowledge the importance of their active role in civil society.

LTO 4: CEMI research cell has produced 12 policy papers, 20 policy briefs, 1 analysis note and 2 books addressing topical issues related to the national and international context dealing including youth political participation.

3.2.2 Jordan

Lead: NIMD Jordan

LTO 2: NIMD Jordan continued to implement the School of Politics (SoP), which directly targets young women and men through building their capacities in different topics and focusing on the importance of party life in politics. Other activities were also implemented under SoP, such as dialogue activities and debates with an emphasis on women and youth in political parties and their role in political life. This focus extended to local-level participation by expanding the dialogue activities with



youth and women led CSOs. The 2023 SoP included a big positioning event, six capacity-building activities, one high-level dialogue session, nine local dialogue activities, and the production of seven policy papers on different topics. Additionally, SoP participants and alumni participated in two regional events in Tunisia under the topics “Political Parties in Arab Countries”, and “Environmental Justice and Politics”.

LTO 3: The progress under this LTO was significant due to the state stakeholders' openness to work with political parties, and the increased willingness of political parties to engage in activities that will advance and improve their structures. This resulted in more coordination with political parties, and the launching of the political parties' leadership programme for young women and men, in cooperation with the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA). Unfortunately, the programme was not concluded due to challenges linked to the war in Gaza (see section 5.1 below), but it is expected that the progress under this LTO is going to significantly improve during the coming years through implementing more activities focused on strengthening political parties under PoD.

LTO 4: NIMD Jordan keeps monitoring the democratic space in Jordan by observing the situation, and periodic meetings with different stakeholders (governmental, political parties, experts, and civil society actors). In addition to that, SoP participants are requested to develop policy papers to reflect on issues related to democratic space and political participation; in 2023 SoP participants developed six policy papers on topics related to “Climate Change and its Effect on Human Rights and Security”, “Administrative Detention under the Crimes Prevention Law”, “Asylum Seeking between International Law and Jordanian Legislation”, “The Constitutional Court in Jordan”, “Education in Jordan”, and “Youth in Political Parties”.

3.2.3 Iraq

Lead: WEO

LTO 1: WEO helped with capacity strengthening of the six local professional trainers participating in the School of Democracy, in order to equip them with the necessary skills. Accordingly, WEO held several consultation meetings with CEMI and the trainers to review the programme curriculum. CEMI and WEO also conducted a Training of Trainers, with the aim to prepare the trainers to deliver soft skills and specific training modules, especially law and political topics. This intensive training helped trainers to impart leadership and democratic values effectively.

LTO 2: In 2023, the second round of the School of Democracy (and first as part of PoD) was implemented. 25 youth leaders were selected to participate in three distinct sessions: the first training session provided in-depth knowledge and skills to enhance participants' understanding of state and social contract theories, international mechanisms protecting rights and freedoms, the decentralized system and distribution of competencies, as well as civil and political rights in Iraq.

The subsequent 5-day training explored its independent bodies, political reform, the Iraqi political system, balance issues, and participatory democracy mechanisms. This



session also included soft skill training on leadership, networking, and public speaking. The third and final training session focused on political systems and their types, public freedoms, independent judicial and national mechanisms protecting rights and freedoms, social justice, democracy, and communication skills.

In addition, WEO launched the Alumni Reunion Event in Erbil on the International Day of Democracy. The objective of the event was to bring together young female and male leaders from the first and second rounds of the School of Democracy to meet and get to know each other and create a wider network together. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences. A biography booklet was designed, printed, and disseminated during the Alumni Reunion Event. The purpose was to create a broader network of leaders committed to democratic engagement and learn about the backgrounds, achievements, and roles of the new Democracy Ambassador.

3.3 Horn of Africa

3.3.1 Uganda

Lead: NIMD Uganda

LTO 1: NIMD, in partnership with AMwA and UN Women Uganda, played a key role in facilitating agenda-setting initiatives. 19 CSOs participated in the CSO Agenda-Setting retreat, used to harmonize organizational capacities of the various CSOs along 4 priority areas for engaging stakeholders. 6 youth organizations were involved in this process. (UPFYA, YAFU, UYONET, NYC, MYF, Raising voices, FARAJA, African Youth Federation). The leadership of NIMD also convened a meeting with Persons with Disabilities (PWD), MYF (Multiparty Youth Forum), and IWOP (Interparty Women's Platform) to discuss inclusion in politics. During the meeting, NIMD expressed a commitment to providing support for these groups in their political participation efforts. Furthermore, NIMD organized CSO Agenda setting retreat, held between CSOs and political leaders.

The outcomes of these activities include the development of a harmonized framework for CSO engagement on priority areas. NIMD's facilitation and commitment to creating an environment for effective collaboration among CSOs demonstrate progress toward being an effective enabler of change. Likewise, the active involvement and collaborative contribution of NIMD Uganda and local CSOs has resulted in more opportunities for joint initiatives. This progress signifies a transformative shift towards a more cohesive and effective landscape, reinforcing the potential for sustained positive impact in the realm of civic and political engagement.

LTO 2: Youth leaders have become more cohesive in their approach to lobbying for the critical issues affecting their meaningful participation in politics. The Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF) facilitated by NIMD designed seven electoral reform proposals ahead of the 2026 elections which were presented to the Minister of Justice and Electoral Commission. The young leaders of the MYF have also experienced internal



growth within their political parties taking up positions such as Deputy Publicity Secretary; Head of Media and Communications; and Acting Spokesperson.

Women leaders from various political affiliations jointly developed and harmonized a comprehensive minimum agenda, with joint support from NIMD Uganda and AMWA. The co-creation of a women's agenda demonstrates tangible outcomes in promoting gender equality and women's effective participation in politics. This had led to various initiatives under the IWOP who have made joint strides towards raising awareness of the plight of women in politics, including issues such as gender-based violence, and the barriers and inequalities that prevent women from taking up space at the decision-making tables.

LTO 3: Political leaders completed a targeted stakeholder engagement and dialogue training, refining skills crucial for effective communication and collaborative decision-making. As a result of the adoption of dialogue methodologies, political parties' leaders of the FDC and DP have embarked on a reconciliation process to mend internal rifts through dialogue. Although these peace talks are in their early stages, both parties are making strides towards resolving their disputes.

3.3.2 Kenya

Lead: Mzalendo Trust and NIMD

LTO 1: There were several positive results from the collaboration of the consortium partners in making them effective enablers of change. In 2023, the partnerships and learning and exchange sessions yielded new skills among staff members of the different partners. Secondly, NIMD, AMWA and Mzalendo took stock in June of the state of democracy on the continent to craft forward-looking approaches towards promoting vibrant and tolerant democracies. Thirdly, the consortium partners, Mzalendo and AMWA were invited at the Africa Drive for Democracy and Summit for Democracy as thought-leaders. In collaboration with AMWA, Mzalendo was invited to contribute to the induction programme of the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA).

LTO 2: On influencing youth and women as actors of change under LTO2, on 10th August 2023 the National Assembly adopted resolutions reached during the youth Bunge dialogue that was held in Kenya's Parliament. While in plenary, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly lauded efforts by Mzalendo in partnership with Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA) in ensuring the voice of the youth is included in policy and legislation making processes. Secondly, through our work with KYPA, KYMCA invited us to develop their strategic plan and showed their interest in partnering with us to create dialogue spaces at the county level under LTO2. Consequently, in partnership with KYMCA, Mzalendo held the inaugural regional youth assembly in Mombasa.

Through a simulated session, participating youth came up with resolutions that will be adopted by their respective county assemblies. In 2024, these proposed legislative interventions will be tabled in the respective county assemblies. On



influencing youth and women as actors of change under LTO2, On 30th October 2023, on the request of Kisii Woman Representative Mzalendo hosted a Community Dialogue Forum in Kisii County, aimed at driving movement building for women and young people. The Young and Women came up with resolutions aimed at challenging the status quo in Kisii County. The forum offered discussions and actionable strategies to bolster their active participation in governance and politics to ensure an inclusive political landscape.

Furthermore, to assess the effects of technology on youth participation, Mzalendo and KYMCA celebrated the International Day of Democracy 2023 discussing the status of youth democratic participation, especially in the era of digital platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and also technology impact, compliance performance and policy influence for a more transparent and accountable democratic process. As a result of this meeting a policy brief on “Effects of technology on youth political participation in Kenya” was developed.

LTO 4: Through the ‘promise tracker’, Mzalendo managed to inform the conversation on Kenya Kwanza’s one year in government. The promise tracker was used in prime-time news where it informed a multi stakeholder dialogue in assessing president’s Ruto’s scorecard after one year in office. In collaboration with APNAC, Mzalendo hosted a media roundtable discussion on the proposed amendments to the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act (ACECA). The Bill sought to amend the Act to allow leaders convicted of corruption to vie in elections. Mzalendo through the National Integrity Alliance (NIA) advocated for the withdrawal of the amendment bill. Thereafter, APNAC publicly declared their stance on the proposed legislative amendments. On 22nd November 2023, during the afternoon sitting of the National Assembly, the Deputy Majority Leader announced a move to stand down the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes (Amendment) Bill following consultations. Furthermore, on accountability, Mzalendo convened civil society organizations under the umbrella of Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network (CSPEN), and effectively collated a memorandum and presented it before different committees.

Finally, Mzalendo supported the Parliamentary Caucus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Business to hold its inaugural session, in which they strategized on how to develop an implementation tracking tool that would assist in producing parliament-based evaluation reports on the implementation of SDGs in Kenya. Mzalendo further supported the launch of the Kenya Parliamentary Caucus on Democracy and Human Rights. The forum that was open to the public and aimed at localizing as well as promoting and protecting democracy and human rights in Kenya. Mzalendo committed to continue partnering with the Caucus to deepen democracy and human rights issues.

3.3.3 Ethiopia

Lead: NIMD Ethiopia

LTO 1: NIMD and its local partner the Centre for Governance and Security Studies (CGSS) participated in training and retreat events, gaining experience in facilitation



techniques, team building and problem-solving skills. The 10-day Bridge 'Train the Facilitator' training provided a comprehensive understanding of these techniques, allowing them to have the confidence and skill to facilitate similar workshops and trainings in the future. The event also provided an opportunity for staff and partners to network and exchange ideas, further enhancing their knowledge and expertise in facilitation and, more importantly, strengthening their ability to effectively engage with diverse stakeholders in the electoral process.

LTO 2: On different occasions, the alumni from the Ethiopian Democracy Academy (EDAC) have agreed to establish an alumni network. Representatives have been elected as coordinators by the six promotions of EDAC, ensuring that all alumni are represented, and their agendas are pushed forward. NIMD supported them in planning a consultation workshop, where participants agreed to take concrete steps towards establishing the network, including forming a committee to develop a governance structure and seeking funding sources for its implementation.

LTO 3: Ethiopian political party leaders had the opportunity to attend a peer learning exposure visit to South Africa, where they learned about the challenges facing the country's political system. The delegation of the political parties gained valuable insights into the democratic culture, power dynamics, infrastructure, and experiences during the transition from apartheid to democracy. The visit also highlighted the importance of investing in democratic infrastructure, such as robust parliamentary systems and platforms for open dialogue and debate. The firsthand experiences from visiting countries with established democratic systems have shown the positive impact of inclusive dialogue spaces on trust and collaboration among political actors. The visit has reinforced the importance of investing in inclusive dialogue spaces for building peaceful and cooperative political environment. These inspired the delegation to start discussions with opposition parties in their own country on forming coalitions and the possible areas of compromise. As the delegation recognized that investing in inclusive dialogue spaces is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process that requires continuous commitment and resources, they started showing determination and bringing up the issue, in the different meetings that happened after, to establish long-term mechanisms for open dialogue and debate within their own country, with the aim of fostering trust, collaboration, and ultimately, a more effective and harmonious political environment.

LTO 4: The main achievement under this LTO is the development of a mobile application called BRIDGE (Bridging Research and Innovation for Democratic Governance and Enhanced Participation—BRIDGE for Participation) for Caffee Oromia. The main purpose of the App is to increase interaction between citizens and their elected representatives by providing a digital platform where citizens can engage with the elected representatives from their fingertips. The result and effectiveness of this component remains to be tested (as the app is still to be launched in 2024). In addition, the App also serves informational purpose, accommodating the sharing reports, proclamations, and minutes with the 504 caffe members, data capturing, communication, staff interaction. The mobile application comprises a



website with an admin page, containing information about coffee, calendar of events, council laws, and profiles of members. The app also allows constituents to ask questions to MPs.

Finally, NIMD also supported the House of People's Representatives (Hope) in the implementation of a new monitoring and evaluation system, which will greatly improve the productivity of the institution.

3.3.4 Regional Approach Horn of Africa

Lead: AMwA

LTO 1: In 2023, AMwA experienced increased demand for its technical and thought leadership in national and regional in policy engagement and political dialogue spaces. AMwA participated in the 2nd Democracy Summit, Eastern and Southern Governance Forum, the UN ESARO consultative meeting and presented a paper at the African Democracy Drive. Furthermore, NIMD Uganda, NIMD Kenya, NIMD Mali, NIMD Hague and Mzalendo expressed increased interest in AMwA's Feminist and Transformational Leadership (FTL) approach. AMwA conducted an on-demand online introduction to (FTL) for NIMD Sahel, as well as an introduction to all PoD partners.

AMwA, in collaboration with NIMD Uganda, also conducted a 2-day dialogue training for women and youth political and civic actors in Ethiopia. The training equipped participants with tools and skills for effective and meaningful dialogue processes, mediating and resolving conflict. It was also a significant space for women and young people to deliberate on how they can contribute to the National Dialogue, peace and governance processes in the country. Following this training, Addis Powerhouse through their "Ajirit: Young Women in Motion" project brought together young women with diverse political perspectives to hold a conversation on national consensus building.

LTO 2: Following the Gender Responsive Governance and Budgeting trainings organized by AMwA, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women's Caucus, Hon. Kayonga Rwivanga Caroline, moved a motion to increase in funding allocation within the 2023/2024 EALA Budget toward Gender Responsive activities during the June 2023 EALA Plenary Budget Session held at the East African Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania. Three members of the EALA Women's Caucus, Honalso committed to move a private members bill on climate justice.

In Uganda, a group of 20 alumni from the African Women Leadership Institute (AWLI), who are seasoned women political and civic leaders, developed an action plan with three strategic commitments to facilitate the women's agenda during the High-Level Breakfast Meeting that was held in Kampala. The commitments included the need to create stronger collaboration between CSOs and women political leaders, strengthen the function and mandate of the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) and build women leaders' financial and economic capacity in Parliament.

LTO 4: Through joint effort, AMwA and its partners: NIMD Uganda, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), and Building synergies Uganda, in Kampala,



developed a shared political agenda to foster inclusive democracy in Uganda. This built onto previous initiatives which include the CSO Minimum Agenda and women political leaders Minimum Advocacy Agenda, as reported in Uganda LTO 1 results above.

AMWA also participated in the 2nd edition of the Africa Drive for Democracy that took stock of the state of democracy on the continent. A paper “From to Other Rooms to the Power Rooms: Feminist Alternatives to Inclusive Democracy” was developed and presented. The paper sparked conversations with African leadership in thinking about contemporary and future challenges affecting the promise of democracy and identifying opportunities and means to deepen and broaden democratization on the continent.

3.4 Southern Africa, Latin America and Asia

3.4.1 Mozambique

Lead: IMD Mozambique

LTO 1: IMD, in partnership with NIMD - Ethiopia, organized an exchange of experiences that took place from October 2nd to 8th in Maputo, Mozambique. The exchange brought together alumni from the Democracy Schools of Ethiopia, a group composed of young members from different political parties in Ethiopia who are also members of the Ethiopian Democratic Academy for Youth (EDAC) and the Youth Democratic Academy of IMD. The initiative aimed to promote the exchange of experiences among Mozambican and Ethiopian young politicians, as well as representatives of youth civil society organizations and youth party leagues, regarding youth engagement in political processes and decision-making.

LTO 2: IMD, through the Women's Political Academy, facilitated an exchange of experiences between women leaders in Mozambican and South African politics. The visit comprised various components, including capacity building (training), lobbying and advocacy, dialogue sessions, and the exchange of experiences. As a result, a platform was created, comprising women and youth from party leagues, male party members, women parliamentarians, and leaders of civil society organizations. This platform will contribute to changes within their organizations and serve as contact points in the political task force.

With the aim of contributing to strengthening the capacity of political actors in the development of gender-sensitive and youth-sensitive electoral manifestos, IMD organized a training session that benefited 13 out of the 22 political parties competing in the municipal elections. The motivation behind organizing the training was the understanding that electoral manifestos have often shown little sensitivity to marginalized groups.

Furthermore, IMD established an assistance line for political parties in the design of their electoral manifestos to ensure that electoral competitors would respond



positively to the advocacy efforts aimed at drafting manifestos from a gender-sensitive and youth-sensitive perspective. The sessions conducted with the 3 parties with parliamentary representation (MDM, Renamo, and Frelimo) contributed to the competitors developing written manifestos that address the interests of women and youth. Although they still need to be improved in terms of inclusivity, there are advancements being made that may allow for a significant improvement by the 2024 elections.

LTO 3: IMD periodically holds dialogue sessions with political parties on various agendas. During election periods, in particular lobbying and advocacy sessions for inclusive political agendas and practices are often held. In this context, one of the results achieved was that political actors agreed to develop a non-partisan national women's political agenda, which will be signed by civic and political actors.

LTO 4: Two rotating dialogue sessions involving women leaders in politics were also held, including female presidents of Provincial Assemblies, female secretaries-general of political parties, presidents of women's leagues, women-led civil society organizations, academics, and female candidates for municipal elections, as well as diplomatic entities (ambassadors) from the Netherlands, Finland, Canada, UK, and Sweden, in March and September. The March meeting was prepared in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and took place at the official residence of the Dutch Ambassador.

3.4.2 Guatemala

Lead: NIMD Guatemala

LTO 1: Consistent progress has been made in strengthening NIMD Guatemala's capacities. The priority for 2023 was to improve the structure and processes, through ISO 9001 accreditation and development of a multi-annual plan. This means that NIMD Guatemala now has stronger procedures in place that allows the organization to be seen as more robust by funding partners. By 2024, the structure and procedures will have to be appropriated so that they become part of the organizational culture.

With regard to strengthening NIMD's local partners, a number of workshop and trainings have been organized. As an example, six workshop were held for six indigenous women associations on issues related to political analysis, planning, project writing, design of training processes, M&E and budget execution.

LTO 3: In 2023, NIMD reached several interesting results in terms of alliance building and collaboration. First, the implementation of pre-electoral dialogues between candidates and civil society have contributed to transcend the divide between political and civic actors. This constitutes fertile ground, in the short term, for the PoD's objectives of supporting the generation of synergies and trust in order to reach agreements or build political proposals.

Furthermore, NIMD organized a regional meeting with the participation of youth representatives of political parties of different ideologies such as VIVA, SEMILLA,



CABAL, CREO. This space was conducive to capacity building, awareness raising, consensus building and exchange, generating their intention of forming a multi-party roundtable of "youth for democracy", which will be supported by NIMD in 2024.

LTO 4: Since 2023 was an election year, it was difficult to conduct to engage with political actors on work foreseen under this LTO. However, NIMD did manage to establish a communication channel with elected and re-elected women politicians, paving the way for future engagement on legislation and policy influencing.

3.4.3 Colombia

Lead: NIMD Colombia

LTO 1: This result is oriented towards the internal and organizational strengthening of the NIMD office in Colombia and the consolidation of NIMD as an agent of change in the innovation ecosystem. In this sense, the Alliance for Congress was established, composed of three axes: (1) training, which focuses on generating spaces for strengthening knowledge and capacities in relevant topics for a legislative work more open to citizens; (2) Participation, which aims to create spaces for dialogue between citizens and congressmen and congresswomen, as well as to generate their own methodology; and (3) Transparency, which focuses on building knowledge to strengthen the pillars of the Open State inside and outside Parliament.

The first national Youth Citizens' Assembly (or 'Mini Public') was also held in conjunction with the Quórum project, with the participation of 495 young people in its virtual stages of training and territorial deliberation, and with approximately 100 young people in the national face-to-face deliberation in the Congress of the Republic, where 60 proposals for change were presented to strengthen youth participation in 6 major themes. This process resulted in the book 'Youth in Dialogue: tools for the transformation of the Colombian political and electoral system', an advocacy tool and a boost to leadership that will serve as an input for young people who want to replicate these methodologies and participate in the construction and mobilization of proposals.

LTO 2: NIMD Colombia continue to implement its Democracy Schools, aiming to increase the knowledge, skills, appropriation and application of innovative tools and methodologies in civic, social and political leaderships that will run as candidates for the territorial elections of 2023. Approximately 364 candidates and pre-candidates took part in the campaign with the objective of increasing their chances of being elected. The schools were implemented in the departments of Córdoba, Cauca and Bogotá.

NIMD further worked on the Occupy Politics (OLP) initiative, which proposed to give citizens a voice so that candidates and future public decision-makers commit to and put into practice a different kind of politics, open to participation, transparent with citizens, that overcomes personalism and is committed to involving voters, building collaboratively with them from the campaign phase and throughout their work.



LTO 3: This result was oriented towards the development and implementation of multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces with an emphasis on the collaborative construction of public policy, proposals for candidates for the 2023 Elections, as well as the creation of roadmaps for other processes developed in collaboration with other partners. Regarding the work with the Alliance for Congress, an agreement was signed with Luminare. The objective of this project agreement was to increase the representation of historically under-represented groups in policymaking, using civic engagement methodologies, and to increase the technical capacities of congressmen and their working teams to carry out citizen-centered legislative work.

NIMD also developed a collaborative dialogue space in collaboration with the *Personería de Bogotá* and the Chamber of Representatives, called 'From College to Congress' aiming to bring students closer to their elected representatives. At this meeting, 71 student representatives, aged between 14 and 18, identified 63 problems and 33 alternative solutions associated with the main challenges facing schools and the student community in the areas of education, security, the environment, mental and emotional health, including timeframes, action plans and actors identified for the advocacy route.

LTO 4: On the one hand, NIMD Colombia worked on the modernization strategy of the Congress of the Republic, where NIMD leads, together with the Alliance for Congress (LTO 1), a strategy focused on supporting the Congress so that it can channel proposals that strengthen its management in training components that contribute to citizen participation in decision-making spaces; innovation focused on improving the levels of citizen participation through the application of methodologies; transparency through the creation and implementation of action plans focused on accountability and citizen participation.

On the other hand, the working relationship with the Ministry of the Interior was resumed and formalized through the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding to move forward in 2024 with technical assistance on issues related to the participation of under-represented groups, as well as to accompany the action plan on the implementation of Point 2 of the Final Peace Agreement, and the formulation of the Public Peace Policy.

3.4.4 Myanmar

Lead: NIMD Myanmar

LTO 1: 2023 has been a year of strategic refinement, capacity building, and commitment to organizational and programmatic excellence for NIMD Myanmar. A strategic mid-year review, employing the 7S management framework led by the Country Director, allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the organization. NIMD Myanmar also invested in its team's expertise and knowledge management throughout the year. Key staff members received capacity-building training in dialogue, coaching facilitation and one staff member undertook extensive online political science training to strengthen knowledge for effective management of the democracy school.



LTO 2: In 2023, NIMD Myanmar contributed to the promotion of democratic values and fostering collaboration among diverse political actors. Three in-person trainings and three online learning seminars of the MyDemocracy School (MDS) programme were organized, engaging a total of 520 active users through the MyDemocracy School mobile application. This underscores the program's commitment to Young, women and ethnic leaders becoming politically influential actors of change at their states and regions in Myanmar. The MyDemocracy School Trainings emerged as an encouragement for youth, women, and ethnic leaders seeking a common ground for understanding. Participants from diverse political backgrounds engaged in peer knowledge sharing, transcending party lines. The training provided a unique opportunity for individuals to learn about the intricacies of other ethnicities within their respective states, fostering a more inclusive political agenda. The MyDemocracy School programme did not only facilitated interaction but also resulted in tangible outcomes. Alumni actively applied their training, contributing to political processes, and advocating for human rights from their states and regions.

LTO 3: In 2023, NIMD successfully facilitated 11 consecutive dialogue meetings in Kayin State, involving 8 male and 7 female participants. These dialogues were instrumental in addressing key issues affecting the state, following a structured progression. During the 2nd and 3rd dialogue meetings, participants engaged in problem mapping and analyzed factors impacting Kayin State. This led to the identification of critical issues, including justice weaknesses in the rule of law, armed conflicts, and concerns related to China's Shwe Kok Ko Project, such as gambling and human trafficking.

In the subsequent meetings, participants delved into discussions around the vision and mission of the dialogue, guidelines, roles, and responsibilities. In the 11th meeting, criteria was set for inviting participants to future expansion of dialogues, emphasizing compliance with standards, and limiting the total number to a maximum of 30. The 12th dialogue prioritized further analysis of evolving constitutions at the state, including KNU's drafting constitution, to align with the mission set by the dialogue.

The dialogue platform proved crucial for Kayin State's democratic political actors, fostering trust and understanding in a complex political landscape. The creation of a safe space by NIMD allowed actors to engage both within and outside the platform, leading to increased mutual trust. As a result, democratic political actors actively discussed grievances not only within the dialogue but also with key decision-makers, creating a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing issues. Criteria for new dialogue members, along with strategic and action plans, were established to effectively address grievances and work towards the vision of the dialogue.

4. Global level results and learning

The global work of the PoD Consortium is implemented and coordinated by NIMD Headquarters. This global programming relates closely to the Consortium learning agenda that is designed around the four LTOs.



4.1 Learning agenda

The learning agenda is structured around thematic learning linked to the four LTOs, and to each Consortium member's area of expertise. Each LTO has specifically formulated learning questions that operationalize learning and that guide the work of Consortium partners. Below are descriptions of contributions made to each of these learning questions:

For LTO 1: To what extent and how are Consortium, partner networks and local civil society organizations effective enablers of change?

In terms of mutual learning, the highlight of 2023 was certainly the **Partner Week** that the Consortium organized in June in The Hague for all partners and country offices involved in the PoD and LEAP4Peace programmes. As both programmes reached their mid-term, this week enabled us to collectively reflect on the progress made, challenges and opportunities to achieve more inclusive and peaceful societies, where women, youth and other unrepresented groups participate meaningfully in political and peace processes. The partners also took time to reflect on how they can apply feminist leadership and approaches to their work.

The programme of the Partner Week included discussions on diversity in politics, youth political participation, responsive political actors and a full day focusing on our work with regards to women's political participation (including breakout sessions on Violence Against Women in Politics and working women networks). Furthermore, a very open exchange session with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by Ms. Karen Burbach, Head of Taskforce Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and Mr. Tijmen Rooseboom, Special Envoy for the Sahel Region, was organized during the week.

The key discussion points and main take-aways from the various sessions were compiled and shared with participants. Most importantly, a lot of bilateral collaboration between various PoD partners and NIMD country offices – as reported in the country chapters above - were initiated during the Partner Week.

Through this LTO, NIMD has also worked on **strengthening the capacity** of its **country offices** taking part in the PoD programme. A number of POD country programs, including Colombia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Myanmar, received hands-on trainings from NIMD Finance and Contract Specialists. Also, a **regional workshop** was organized for the Sahel region including, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger. The capacity support included the following areas:

- Support the processes to develop the POD Annual reports, Annual plan including Annual Institutional Plan.
- Facilitate exchange of best practices among Sahel countries, including Mali office presenting; optimal use of bookkeeping system Tompro
- Capacity support for all country programs in financial management and proposal development as part of capacity support to diversify financial resources.
- Better understanding of HQ fundraising guidelines



NIMD Headquarters also carried out **internal audits** in several country offices, including Guatemala and Thailand (hosting NIMD's Myanmar team). The audit is used not only as a tool to assess the financial performance of the Country Programmes but as a tool for capacity building to improve financial management.

NIMD also took steps to harmonize the salary scales per country office. Around 5 offices currently use remuneration information from the **Birches Group surveys** and this will be rolled out further.

Furthermore, NIMD provided quality management system implementation support to two offices (Guatemala and Ethiopia). A one-week workshop was organized in each country with the participation of all staff. The Quality Manager from The Hague office continues to provide support and follow up on implementation.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and promoting integrity, in 2023, NIMD held a webinar with our network on SEAH. The webinar aimed to raise awareness among the PoD network about the significance of SEAH. The participants also exchanged experiences and discussed how to work on this more effectively in their own contexts

In addition, NIMD The Hague also provided bilateral capacity support to several country offices in various areas. As an example, support was provided to the Mali office in developing their safety and security internal policy.

For LTO 2: To what extent and how are aspiring young and women political and civic leaders becoming influential actors of change?

Next to the bilateral support provided to the network by CEMI in terms of youth political participation, and by AMwA in terms of women political participation, the main focus of the Consortium in 2023 was to roll-out a multi-country **study on youth political participation**, jointly supervised by CEMI and NIMD.

This final global paper, which will be published in 2024, synthesizes seven country case studies that were carried out by the Consortium in six countries, namely Burkina Faso, Guatemala, El Salvador, Uganda, Colombia, and Tunisia. It provides global perspectives on youth political participation and seeks to enhance the learning and knowledge of youth political participation by identifying common trends, challenges and lessons learned across the PoD Consortium programme countries.

Examples of recommendations include promoting the effective engagement and close involvement youth as well as youth organizations in strategy and programme development right from the beginning of programme design, as well as utilizing national youth policies (which are often in place and not implemented) and councils in bringing various stakeholders together for advocacy on matters youth political participation.



For LTO 3. To what extent and how are political and civic actors collaborating peacefully on the basis of trust?

In 2023, the PoD Consortium continued to invest in supporting and strengthening all staff in the PoD network involved in dialogue work. We did so (i) by continuing to strengthen Global Southern peer-to-peer learning; (ii) developing new learning papers on needed dialogue innovations to stimulate inclusion of marginalized groups, both in close collaboration with different teams from within the PoD Network, and finally (iii) providing bilateral dialogue support and advice.

Regarding (i) continuing to strengthen **Global Southern peer-to-peer learning**; several activities were implemented in 2023.

Most importantly, in order to make the Consortium's approach to peer learning on dialogue more sustainable and to give it a permanent character, the '**Baobab**' **initiative** was launched. This is a more formalized peer learning structure, specifically for all the individuals in the PoD network and beyond that are directly involved in dialogue facilitation and design.

This Baobab initiative is now led by 7 PoD network representatives, each from one region of the global PoD network: Asia; Eastern Africa; Horn of Africa; MENA; Latin America; Southern Africa; Western Africa. NIMD provides advice and logistical support to this Steering Group. In 2023, this Steering Group was formed, and met for the first time live. They developed the necessary essentials for this learning network to grow in 2024, including the ToRs for the Baobab Steering Group and the Baobab Network itself, as well as the PoD annual plan for dialogue in 2024, focusing on how the Steering Group wants to give further shape the peer-learning on dialogue in the PoD network and beyond.

Also, the annual online 'Introduction to political dialogue training' was given again, focusing on bringing together all new staff in the PoD network and beyond to learn the basics on different dialogue initiatives and interventions taking place throughout the network. In addition, a dialogue training was given to the staff at NIMD Headquarters, in order for them to provide better support to PoD programmes with a dialogue component.

Moreover, the Consortium continued to facilitate expert peer-to-peer live exchanges. This time the exchange was hosted by NIMD Ethiopia and took place in Addis Ababa. It brought together dialogue experts from different countries, including Kenya, Somaliland, Mozambique, Mali, Senegal, and Ethiopia itself. This exchange addressed several topics, including dialogue process design, sharing lessons learned from each country's dialogue processes, and dialogue facilitation techniques.

Regarding (ii) **developing new learning papers** on needed dialogue innovations to stimulate inclusion of marginalized groups; NIMD supported and developed two innovative dialogue learning products in collaboration with different teams in the PoD network. As democratic and civic space continues to shrink in many countries in which the PoD Network operates, innovations to the PoD dialogue approach remains absolutely crucial, especially when it comes to including marginalized groups. Without



innovation, most dialogue processes or interventions would stall, or would not be inclusive. NIMD works with different teams to capture the innovations they developed in one country, and to make them accessible to all others in the PoD network.

Examples of these learning papers in 2023 include the development of a **learning paper to include marginalized young people in dialogue processes**. This became a guide on how to facilitate effective dialogues between youth and senior political party leadership 'Intergenerational political party dialogue: A practical guide to setting up intergenerational political party dialogues. This guide was developed in a collaboration between NIMD Ethiopia, who spearheaded the new dialogue intervention, and NIMD Headquarters.

An **intergenerational political party dialogue** is a dialogue process in which young people from various political parties and seniors from the same political parties are united for trust-building between generations. The objective is to build trust between generations and helps to increase mutual understanding, overcome stereotypes, and diminish polarization between generations in politics.

This innovation was necessary, as the PoD network recognizes around the world that the decrease in civic space is particularly detrimental for youth political participation. Meaningful youth participation cannot be achieved without an enabling environment, which is usually dominated by senior politicians. Dialogues, and particular political party dialogues, do not automatically include youth. This new guide now makes it possible to implement specific and effective strategies to make sure that young voices are heard in political party dialogues.

A second example of such a learning paper on the inclusion of marginalized groups in dialogue is a guide for developing multi-stakeholder dialogues 'Designing Multi-stakeholder dialogues: A practical guide to selecting the theme and participants for an impartial multi-stakeholder dialogue'. This guide was developed in collaboration with NIMD Guatemala. This knowledge product was necessary, as polarization has become a very dominant aspect of many PoD countries. This makes it therefore increasingly difficult to operate in an impartial manner, especially when it comes to inclusions of marginalized civic actors. This guide is therefore an essential tool to be able to continue to work on dialogue in highly polarized contexts in an impartial and inclusive manner.

And finally, for (iii) **providing bilateral dialogue advice and support**, support was provided to different teams throughout the PoD network in setting up new dialogue interventions or making sure current dialogue processes could continue effectively in 2023.

For LTO 4: To what extent and how have political and civic actors strengthened democratic space?

This section highlights all the work done by the Consortium, supported by NIMD Headquarters, around the positioning and International Lobby & Advocacy activities in support of the objectives of PoD:



Summit for Democracy

On 29 March, during the global Summit for Democracy, NIMD organized an edition of #DemocracyDrinks the Hague, together with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and The Hague Humanity Hub. The event centered around the objectives and procedures of the wider Summit, where the Netherlands, next to Costa Rica, Zambia, and South Korea was one of the Co-hosts. The event featured several high-level speakers, most notably Shefali Razdan Duggal, the U.S. Ambassador in The Netherlands; Arnaldo Brenes Castro, Ambassador of Costa Rica in The Netherlands, and André Haspels, Ambassador of the Netherlands to the United States. The event was well attended by roughly 120 people, including NIMD staff and Supervisory Council representatives, Ambassadors and representatives of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In two other co-host countries, there were events taking place whereby the Consortium participated. In Costa Rica, the thematic focus was on youth inclusion where the Consortium organized a panel discussion with alumni from the Democracy Schools from Guatemala and El Salvador on youth civic and political participation.

Similarly in Zambia, alumni from Democracy Schools in Mali and Ethiopia participated and exchanged experiences with peers on democratic inclusion (see <https://nimd.org/nimd-at-the-summit-for-democracy-shining-a-spotlight-on-democracy-around-the-world/>). AMWA also participated in the Zambia Summit and facilitated the participation of representatives NIMD Uganda, Mzalendo Trust and AWLI Alumni from Sudan and Ethiopia.

Linking to the Summit, in partnership with the Democracy under Threat coalition in the Netherlands, NIMD co-organized an event in Groningen, titled 'underMINING democracy' on 23 March. Speakers included representatives from Dutch civil society, the Province of Groningen, citizen collectives and NIMD's partner in Mozambique that has worked a lot on natural resource management and political dialogue on this issue, creating a link on the importance of democratic participation in issues around resource extraction. .

Collaboration with Dutch Embassies

In 2023, the PoD partners continue to report very satisfactory collaboration with the Dutch embassies involved in the programme, though the intensity and strategic nature of the interactions differ very much per country. The different types of collaboration can be grouped as follows:

- Inviting each other to participate in activities: the embassies are regularly inviting the PoD partners to participate in partnership meetings (i.e., SCS-wide alliances meetings, etc.), or to engage with Dutch officials and diplomats visiting the country. Equally, PoD partners are often inviting embassy representatives to take part in programme activities. Such participation occurred in almost all PoD countries last year.



- Sharing each other's networks, particularly with regards to the identification of high potential young and women political and civic leaders. This was for instance the case in Iraq, where the Embassy helped securing the presence of high potential youth member of emerging political parties in WEO's School of Democracy.
- Strategic bilateral discussions, including mutual sharing of analysis on the latest political developments. Such meetings have been occurring on regular basis in several countries last year, including in Colombia, Tunisia, Ethiopia, and Senegal. Some embassies have also consulted PoD partners on various matters, such as the development of the new Multi-Annual Country Strategies (i.e., Burkina Faso) or as part of their third-party monitoring of Dutch funded projects (i.e., Mozambique, Iraq).
- Funding partnership: in a few countries, the Dutch embassy is financing PoD partners to run projects that are complementary to the interventions implemented as part of PoD. In 2023, this was the case in Tunisia, Ethiopia, Iraq and Guatemala (as part of a broader Central America project funded by the Embassy in Costa Rica).

Ambassadors Reception

In November NIMD organized the annual Ambassadors Reception. The objective of this event is to provide Ambassadors from NIMD Programme Countries and from around the world that are based in the Hague with interesting insights on the Dutch political and governance landscape that also have an international angle. Furthermore, the reception contributes to the recognition of the city of The Hague as the city of peace and justice. This year, the theme was decolonization and the place of the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands. The opening speaker was Alderman Marielle Vavier from The Hague, with keynote speakers Prof. Wouter Veenendaal, Leiden University and Dr. Nilda Arduin, who is the NIMD dialogue facilitator on St. Eustatius. The focus of the speakers was on the Netherlands' involvement in slavery, the impact on the Caribbean islands, and how this impacted the past, present and future of the the relationships within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This context was an insightful canvas to have a broader reflection on what it means to have an inclusive democracy and how to support this.

Dutch youth organizations political parties

When NIMD was established almost 25 years ago, there was regular contact and exchange with the youth wings of the Dutch political parties. Especially since the restructuring of the organization in 2011 these relationships changed and became inactive. With an increased focus on youth political participation also in the PoD programme, NIMD invested therefore also in re-establishing contact with the different youth wings and organized meetings with them. It was agreed to have (1) a thematic meeting/exchange twice a year (2) Increased Cooperation and coordination on events and activities. A concrete event was planned to take place in early 2024.



European Union

In April, a delegation from Kenya, consisting of Mzalendo, NIMD Kenya and the Kenyan registrar met with the EU EEAS and EU INTPA in Brussels to discuss political developments, the follow-up of the recommendations of the Electoral Observation Missions, and what the current developments mean for inclusive democracy in Kenya. The meetings were well appreciated by the EU officials.

During the Programme meeting of the Democracy Days organized by the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), NIMD facilitated a session on the methodology of Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and how to use it in practice.

Leveraging funding

NIMD participated in the yearly Political Party Peer network conference, hosted this year by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Washington on 27 and 28 March. NIMD and the PoD consortium presented its work and results on democracy education. In follow-up, NIMD met with Global Affairs Canada and the US State Department, USAID, National Democratic Institute (NDI), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), UN Peace Building Fund (UNPBF), UN Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund (UNWPHF) and Open Society Foundation (OSF) to exchange information on democratic developments worldwide, and gauge interest to support the objectives of the programme. These meetings led to increased cooperation and coordination, and we expect for instance the NED to become a new funding partner.

Capacity building on ILA and fundraising

During the PoD partner week, NIMD organized a full day introductory training for global programme staff on Lobby & Advocacy. Participants had the opportunity to learn how to target, frame, time and execute lobby and advocacy strategies.

Furthermore, NIMD developed practical tools like '25 fundraising tips' and an explanatory video on strategic relation management and the writing of proposals for the colleagues working on fundraising within country offices and partner organizations.

4.2 Adaptive programming

Regarding the workflow on **adaptive programming**, 2023 saw the creation of numerous activities and products designed to foster further adaptations across our network, encompassing country offices and partners.

Learning Events

Throughout the year, we organized approximately 10 events focusing on learning topics. These topics spanned the realms of democracy, existential threats, and the cultivation of dialogue and trust in our areas of operation. Notably, these events



featured high-level speakers from academia and government, sharing insights on best practices and lessons learned in democracy support. The discussions covered strategic planning, impact maximization, risk mitigation (from geopolitical shifts to the challenges posed by artificial intelligence), and the enhancement of inclusion policies. With contributions from experts worldwide, including Belgium's University of Leuven, the Netherlands government, and the United States Harvard University among few, the events were live streamed to our country offices and partners, sparking discussions and furthering our collective learning.

Case Studies

Regarding the consortium focus on **adaptive programming**, in 2023 several (new) procedures, activities and products were initiated, which were designed to foster adaptations across the PoD network.

Learning Events

Throughout the year, approximately 10 learning events with expert speakers focusing on actual challenges our collective work faces. These topics, zoomed into the existential threats to democracy and the role of dialogue and trust in our work area. These events featured high-level speakers from academia and government, who shared insights on best practices and lessons learned in democracy support. The discussions covered strategic planning, impact maximization, risk mitigation (from geopolitical shifts to the challenges posed by artificial intelligence), and the enhancement of inclusion policies. With contributions from experts worldwide, including Belgium's University of Leuven, the Netherlands government, and the United States Harvard University among few, the events were live streamed to our country offices and partners, sparking discussions and furthering our collective learning.

Country Case Studies

Based on interviews with country teams programme beneficiaries and other stakeholders, three country case studies were drafted on how the programmes had adapted to changing contexts. The first countries include Colombia (adapting to new changes in government and their relation to the peace agreement), Myanmar (adapting to the coup d'état), and Ethiopia (overall navigation in tense context). There also is a case study developed on Somaliland, although not a PoD country this fragile context and its relations to Ethiopia and Kenya programmes still make this a relevant insight on how to adapt and set up a programme from scratch.

Regular Reflective Sessions

An integral part of our adaptive programming approach has been the regular (roughly every 3 months) reflective sessions. These sessions whereby country teams from the PoD network are interviewed to reflect on the past period and share their adaptations, serve as key moment to also discuss successes, challenges, and support needs. These sessions have proven to be effective tools for risk assessment and the



creation of strategic adaptations, as well as new or updated political economy analyses

5. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Global PME

For the global **Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation** processes, the main focus was on assessing the programme achievements and partnership through the external Mid-Term Review (MTR) and the midterm outcome level indicator measurements.

Mid-Term Review

For the MTR a steering group had been established, consisting of M&E focal points of the consortium partners supplemented the PoD Secretariat and the DSH counterpart. Out of 24 applications the steering group selected the Belgium based consultancy firm FocusUP to conduct the MTR. The review was done in accordance with the IOB quality standards for evaluations and focused on achievement to date and the functioning of the partnership.

The review was done through a desk study for all PoD country projects and a partnership survey for all of the partners and country offices involved in the PoD programme. The desk study was supplemented by three country case studies (Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda), where harvested outcomes were substantiated and complemented with contribution analysis, and a wider range of key-stakeholder interviews were conducted.

The recommendations of the MTR included 1) a further focus on gender based violence (GBV) as a main barrier to women's political participation, 2) expanding national networks of political and civic actors trained under the PoD programme to international networks, 3) expanding the programming on sub-national level and foster linkages between sub-national and national level politics, 4) improving quality and use of the outcomes harvested through trainings and a functional database, 5) a deepening of capacity support to individual actors to effect more systemic and organizational level change. The consortium's formal response to the recommendations will be shared separately with the Ministry.

Late November, the MEL focal points within the PoD network organized a follow-up session with the outcome harvesting expert in the evaluation team to elaborate further on the recommendations to improve the Outcome Harvesting approach and build a database and dashboard for better use of the harvested outcomes.

Mid-term Outcome level indicator measurements

Furthermore, in 2023 the midterm outcome level indicator measurements were conducted in-house by the country teams. Most country teams deployed a mixed



method approach, consisting of desk review, stakeholder interviews, and sometimes a brief survey. The midterm outcome measurements are a replication of the baseline studies done in the first year of the programme, using the same conceptualization and methodology. This ensures comparability to the baseline itself and documents midterm these measurements, with an eye to the end-term outcome level indicator measurements foreseen at the end of the programme.

The midterm outcome measurements were put on the radar of the country teams during the regional PMEL meetings in 2022. Technical support was provided in webinars at the beginning of May 2023. The data collection by the country teams was mostly done between June and July, to keep the values as close as possible to the midterm timeframe as possible. Throughout the data collection and analysis process 1-on-1 support and Q&A sessions were organized. This resulted in a country report and a cover report for the programme as a whole, submitted on 1st November 2023.

The main findings from the midterm measurements included, first of all, incredible progress has been made compared to the baseline values, as well as huge strides towards the targets. On the level of laws, policies and norms implemented we see an increase from 1 at baseline to 68 at midterm. Half of the 68 are reported by AMWA, including support to the Uganda Democratic Party Women's League to the development and adoption of their Gender Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy and supported the National Youth Council to move the motion to pass the EAC SRHR Bill during the 5th East African Youth Parliament (EAYP). Combined, all the PoD countries at different levels, succeeded 463 times to created spaces to engage through L&A, dialogue meetings, created spaces and inclusive policy making processes, as compared to 49 times in the first half year of implementation at baseline. Moreover 211 advocacy initiatives have been carried out at midterm, as compared to 18 in the first half year of implementation at baseline.

Secondly the PoD programme has made its greatest contribution to creating space for civil society actors to engage with political actors (SCS 3 and sub-indicators) through various forms of dialogue, inclusive policy-making processes whereby civil actors work together with political actors and created spaces for women and youth to participate politically. Just to give an example to illustrate the type of results the PoD programme made, Mzalendo in Kenya, together with other partners, convened a National Dialogue on the Two-Thirds Gender Representation in the 2022 General Elections. The result was a candid, focused, timely, broad based, inclusive political dialogue on gender diversity and inclusiveness in the 2022 elections as candidates.

Thirdly, the differences per country and the great progress made notwithstanding, on aggregate level the 5-year targets have mostly been adjusted downwards. The adjustments in the target setting are in many cases not a matter of under –or overperforming, but the setting of targets is not suited for the complexities of the operational environment of the PoD project. The justifications for the lower of targets can found in the individual reports as well.

Regular PMEL work



Last year also saw a consolidation of the regular PMEL work, despite a year that was heavily focused on the midterm deliverables, including technical support and reflection around the Annual Reports 2022 and the Annual Plans 2024, the use and design of NIMD's project management system (ProjectConnect), and fine-tuning our IATI reports in relation to reporting on the SCS/SRL result frameworks. The PMEL team with the Secretariat also organized an in-house training for staff at NIMD the Hague to message on the importance of MEL and generate support for MEL work.

5.2 Monitoring challenges and obstacles

Similarly to 2022, most challenges and obstacles reported by PoD partners and country offices in 2023 were related to a deteriorating context. Most notably:

- The war in Gaza had huge implications for all organizations working in Jordan the field of democracy support, and significantly affected all the partisan organizations due to their political parties' pro-Israel positions. In the case of NIMD Jordan, which did not happen because of NIMD's non-partisan approach – also not publishing any statement. Nonetheless, the implementation was affected due to the unwillingness of state stakeholders to engage in democracy support activities, as well as the engagement of politically active youth in pro-Palestine movements - leaving them no time to engage in other activities.
- The war in Sudan made it virtually difficult for AMwA to continue coordinating with the National Sudanese Women's Association as their needs because of survival. All AWLI Alumni have been displaced and though some are still accessible, the merging outcomes were largely eroded. Nonetheless, one active AWLI Alumni is currently in Uganda and through other contacts. AMwA also contributed to evidence-based advocacy by ensuring that Sudanese women's voices are engaged in the development of the Policy Brief by Inclusive Peace.
- The deterioration of the political and security context in the Sahel created difficulties for the NIMD Sahel offices, and even more for the regional work of the Gorée Institute. The coups in three of four countries targeted by the Institute under PoD have had a major impact on the implementation of the programme. This is due to increasing difficulties for participants to travel from one country to another, combined with a steep increase of plane ticket fares. In addition, the activities of political parties – one of the programmes' main target groups – have mostly been suspended, reducing the scope of intervention. Finally, the NIMD offices noted that the shrinking civic space had an effect on the quality of interactions with political actors, who tend to practice self-censorship.
- In Uganda, the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act, continued to criminalize inclusive rights and implementation during this period, increasing the pressure on AMwA. The bill buttressed the already existing punishment of minority groups



calls for the death penalty in certain circumstances and outlaws what it calls the “promotion of homosexuality,” effectively instituting a system of complete censorship on LGBT issues.

- AMWA also notes that the legitimacy and capacity of women stakeholders to effectively engage in political processes continued to be challenged by intersecting systems and structures of oppression against women’s political, economic and social autonomy in the East-African region. The poor effort toward gender-responsive governance continued to challenge women’s substantive representation and participation in the national and regional political and decision-making processes and spaces. These challenges included limited technical capacity and meaningful representation, patriarchy coupled with misogyny, sexism, and negative socio-cultural attitudes, the high risk of online and offline violence, high personal costs and monetary costs women in political leadership face, neopatrimonialism and pervasive negative media portrayal of women in political leadership among other intersecting systems and structures of violence.

Next to contextual challenges, a number of PoD partners and country offices also describe operational challenges such as staff turnover, reduced funding, difficulties to implement activities in election years, or regular struggles to find resources persons with a specific expertise.

5.3 Localization

Since the start of the programme, the PoD partners continued to conduct **capacity strengthening activities for local CSOs**, as described in the country chapters above (LTO results). However, the collaboration with these local organizations goes way beyond top-down capacity development approaches. For instance, linked in Burkina Faso, the collaboration between NIMD and local partners was based on a **co-creation approach** to the LTOs (LTO 1 to 4). The approach consisted of bilateral meetings with each of our partners: CBDF, Balai Citoyen and ARGA. At the end of these bilateral meetings, which are diagnostic frameworks, concept notes and budget proposals were drawn up and submitted to the NIMD for assessment, guidance or readjustment. In an iterative process, final project documents with key indicators and a defined implementation schedule were produced.

The collaboration also involved working meetings with local partners to identify Outcome Harvesting. This co-construction also enabled the various partners to gain a better understanding of the Outcome Harvesting issues in particular and in general to familiarize themselves with NIMD's vision, objectives and procedures. In addition, the NIMD team regularly participates in the activities of local partners, and vice versa. This strengthens collaborative links and makes it easier to monitor the progress of activities. Through this methodology, the partners and the NIMD are in constant contact, and this enables a rapid response to certain deviations that occur from time to time. NIMD also strives to introduce partners to potential donors as a way to scale up their respective activities.



Next to the collaboration with local CSOs, the Consortium Partners also strives to **involve beneficiaries in programme design**. This is done in various ways throughout the 15 countries included in the programme. For instance, Mzalendo conducted a needs assessment discussion with their stakeholder within the Kenyan parliament while planning their intervention. Similarly, NIMD Jordan is interacting with MOPPA at every stage of programme design, while the Tunisian political parties participating in CEMI's activities are represented in the organization's advisory board.

Finally, localization also manifests itself within PoD through **empowering local initiatives**. In Uganda, local political partners such as the Multiparty Youth Forum (MYF) and the Interparty Women Platform (IWOP), have taken the initiative to draft their workplans and approached NIMD to help fund certain critical activities that would advance the agenda of women and youth in the political governance of Uganda. A similar approach was taken by NIMD offices in the Sahel.

5.4 Risk management

A number of risks identified in the 2023 annual plan ended materializing over the year, some of which have affected programme implementation. This is true for contextual risks related to instability that have occurred in many countries, for instance in Ethiopia where the risk of increased political violence played out with infrequent outbreaks of violence and clashes between the government and armed political factions. These incidents further weakened the security situation in the country and posed challenges to the implementation of programming and the functioning of the office. Due to the security situation, we were obliged to change places of events and relocate some of our operations to safer areas. Despite efforts to mitigate the risk by maintaining strong relations, upholding non-partisan values, and promoting peaceful cooperation, the ongoing tensions proved difficult to fully address, requiring continued vigilance and strategic interventions.

A number of countries also increased the scrutiny over local and foreign CSOs, like in Uganda, but also in the Sahel following the coups. In Mali, the Ministry in charge of NGO registration is now asking NIMD to submit monthly activity reports and to request 'non-objection certificates' before implementing certain activities.

Assessing whether or not the mitigation measures identified in the annual plan have proven effective is a difficult exercise, especially when it comes to contextual risks. Embracing adaptive programming proved to be the main response, though not fully mitigating the impact of democratic backslides on our programming.



6. Notes on the financial report

Overall, the total costs for 2023 are EUR 6,518,114. The updated budget for 2023 was estimated at EUR 6,876,908. This means there is a 5% underspending i.e. EUR 358,794 compared with the approved budget. The slight under-spending is due to the under-expenditure from Consortium partner CEMI and due to the political situation in the NIMD country offices in the Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) which slowed down activity implementation. The specific reasons for deviations between the approved budget and the actual costs are explained below, per cost categories, per country and per LTO.

Deviations per cost categories



		Original Budget 2023	Updated Budget 2023	Actuals 2023	%
	I. Direct staff costs				
IA	A. Staff costs	€ 667,719	€ 709,550	€ 762,670	7%
IB	B. Local staff costs	€ 1,460,771	€ 1,366,157	€ 1,248,437	-9%
IC	C. Consultants and advisers	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%
I	Subtotal I	€ 2,128,490	€ 2,075,707	€ 2,011,107	-3%
	II. Other direct programme costs				
IIA1	Staff	€ 196,671	€ 207,399	€ 174,371	-16%
IIA2	Country specific interventions	€ 980,895	€ 1,513,329	€ 1,279,453	-15%
IIA3	Country specific interventions focus	€ 425,111	€ -	€ -	0%
IIA4	Consortium interventions	€ 546,540	€ 606,799	€ 558,330	-8%
IIA	A. Activity costs	€ 2,149,217	€ 2,327,527	€ 2,012,154	-14%
IIB1	Staff	€ 455,256	€ 458,044	€ 494,701	8%
IIB2	Interventions	€ 33,500	€ 50,000	€ 48,213	-4%
IIB	B. Costs of consortium partners and local NGOs	€ 488,756	€ 508,044	€ 542,914	7%
IIC	C. Activity-related travel costs	€ 360,227	€ 375,102	€ 417,973	11%
IID	D. Project office costs (if applicable)	€ 352,505	€ 343,256	€ 286,368	-17%
IIE	E. Equipment and investments	€ 33,780	€ 55,297	€ 73,621	33%
IIF1	Staff	€ 297,217	€ 314,143	€ 324,385	3%
IIF2	Interventions	€ 162,741	€ 183,466	€ 179,672	-2%
IIF	F. Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€ 459,957	€ 497,609	€ 504,057	1%
II	Subtotal II	€ 3,844,443	€ 4,106,834	€ 3,837,087	-7%
	Total of I and II	€ 5,972,933	€ 6,182,541	€ 5,848,194	-5%
	III. Overheads / indirect costs				
IIIA	A. Costs of support staff	€ 255,505	€ 265,382	€ 265,561	0%
IIIB	B. Not directly allocable administrative costs	€ -	€ -	€ -	0%
IIIC	C. Other non-allocable costs	€ 429,594	€ 428,985	€ 414,451	-3%
III	Total of III	€ 685,099	€ 694,366	€ 680,012	-2%
	Total of I, II and III	€ 6,658,031	€ 6,876,908	€ 6,528,206	-5%
	Contingencies (max. 5%)	€ -	€ -	€ -	
	TOTAL	€ 6,658,031	€ 6,876,908	€ 6,528,206	-5%

Figure 1: Budget vs. actuals 2023 per cost category

IA Staff costs: Overspending at NIMD HQ level due to higher hourly fees as salaries have been adjusted for inflation correction in line with the CAO Rijk.

IB Local staff costs: Underspending mainly coming from Ethiopia ; Colombia; GORIN and Jordan due to spreading staff costs over additional funding streams which haven't been foreseen during the annual planning phase.

IC Consultants and advisers: N/A

IIA Activity costs: This underspending is driven by two main factors. On the one hand, there is an underspending in NIMD HQ office on IIA4 Consortium interventions. This



is because the nature of most of the costs under this line are travel related costs, so this counter-balances with the overspending on the line IIC due to the Partner Week that took place in June 2023, whereby all NIMD country offices, consortium partners and partners involved in PoD were invited to attend in the Hague. On the other hand, the political situation in the Sahel countries with the coup d'état in Niger didn't allow for a smooth and timely implementation of all the activities planned. NIMD offices in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger all had an underspending of about 25% on the line IIA2 - Country Specific intervention.

IIB Cost of consortium partners and local NGOs: While NIMD Headquarters coordination activities have been implemented according to target, there is an overspending at NIMD HQ level due to higher hourly fees as salaries have been adjusted for inflation correction in line with CAO Rijk.

IIC Activity-related travel costs: Overspending at NIMD Headquarters level due to the Partner Week that took place in the Hague in June (c.f. justification on line IIA). Additionally, due to the global context of soaring goods and services prices, costs related to planning this event were much higher than anticipated (e.g. flights, hotel, dinners etc.)

IID Project office costs: The underspending is mainly coming from GORIN; NIMD Ethiopia ; WEO Iraq ; AMWA and NIMD Jordan due to spreading staff costs over additional funding streams which haven't been foreseen during the annual planning phase.

IIE Equipment and investments: The overspending is due to the fact NIMD Burkina Faso and NIMD Niger both had to request additional equipment during the course of the year, mainly to invest in generators due to increased power cuts and soaring electricity prices.

IIF Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing: This budget line is on target with only a 1% overspending.

IIIA Costs of support staff: This budget line is fully spent

IIIB Not directly allocable administrative costs: N/A

IIIC Other non-allocable costs: This budget line is on target with only a 3% underspending.



Deviations per Country

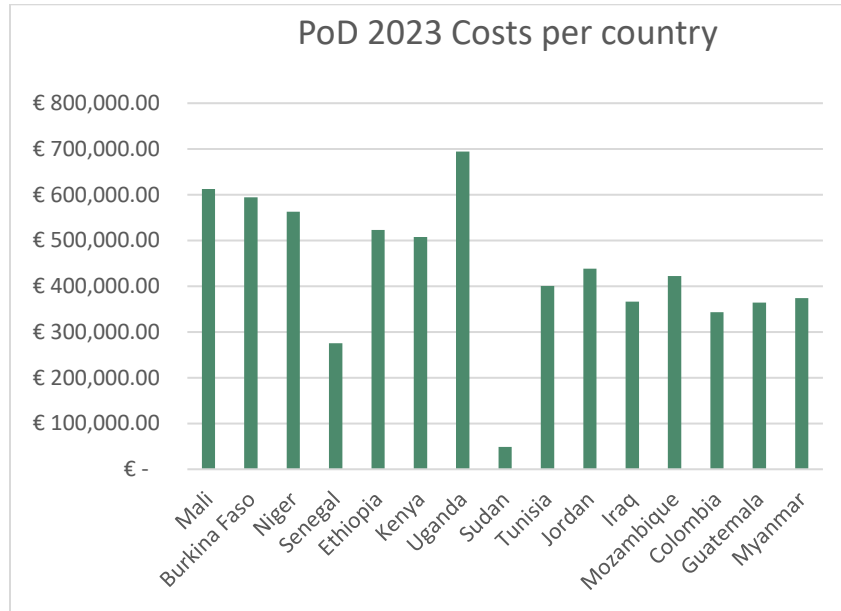


Figure 2: Actuals 2023 per country

Deviations per LTO

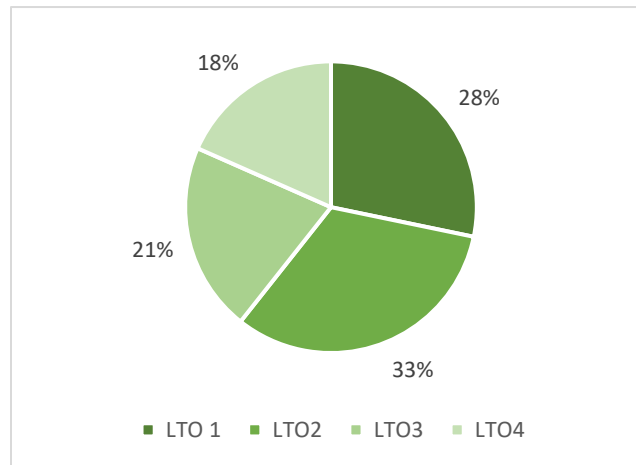


Figure 3: Actuals 2023 per Long-term Outcome 1-4



7. List of annexes

Annex 1 – PoD Financial Report 2023

Annex 2a - Overview of the contribution of the PoD results to the Security, Rule of Law (SRL) and Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) frameworks

Annex 2b – Overview of deviation from targets per country

Annex 3 – Human Interest Stories