



Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

Dialogue for Stability (DfS)

Annual report 2017

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1. Introduction

This document contains the 2017 annual report for the programme '*Dialogue for Stability: inclusive politics in fragile settings*' (DfS), which aims to contribute to open and accessible political systems and the legitimacy and responsiveness of political actors in countries affected by conflict and fragility.

Under the DfS programme, NIMD concentrated its efforts in 2017 on five countries: Burundi, Colombia, Jordan, Tunisia and Ukraine. Preparations for a programme in Lebanon were halted after consultations with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). In addition to these five country programmes, the DfS programme also invests in deepening NIMD's knowledge base and in developing new and innovative tools and instruments for its work in various contexts and in the strategic positioning of the organisation.

This annual report presents an update on each of the programmes included in DfS: Burundi, Colombia, Jordan, Tunisia, Ukraine (chapters 2.1-2.5), a brief explanation on the status of the Lebanon programme (chapter 2.6) and the thematic focus areas Knowledge & Innovation (chapter 2.7) and Fundraising & Positioning (chapter 2.8). Chapter 3 contains reflections on the Theory of Change for each country, followed by a section on PME (chapter 4) and a financial update (chapter 5).

2. Country programme updates

2.1. Burundi

In 2017, the political context was marked by further political polarization between an increasingly closed-off government and a divided and weakened opposition operating inside the country and in exile. The mediation process facilitated by the East African Community held several rounds of consultations and negotiations, achieving neither a conclusive outcome nor the satisfactory participation of the main actors on both sides. International attention as well as the national debate shifted from the contested third presidential term of Pierre Nkurunziza, to the preconditions for the presidential and legislative elections in 2020. Meanwhile, the government paved the way for a constitutional referendum to be held in early 2018, which could lead to two additional 7-year terms for President Nkurunziza and further restrictions on political participation.

In this climate, it continues to be essential to invest in a more solid basis and conducive environment for inclusive multiparty politics. Under DfS, we do this by facilitating multiparty meetings on the technical themes that affect the political space, such as political party management, the relationship between the security sector and politics, and political party finance. At the same time, we reinforce political parties' ability to look ahead and withstand outside pressures by engaging them in strategic planning for organizational development.

We also stepped up our efforts to promote women and youth politicians as well as local democracy, two key areas where NIMD can have a positive impact on the short term. Under DfS, NIMD supported the political participation of youth in all of Burundi's main political parties, together with its partner the Burundi Leadership Training Program. NIMD instructed 100 young political party members through five regional workshops on leadership and politics, and facilitated discussions on these issues with their provincial leadership. With women politicians, NIMD drafted 10 national action party plans to help their parties become more inclusive to meaningful participation of women. Furthermore, NIMD connected local politicians with the alumni of our democracy schools in two pilot provinces to discuss how their parties can help communities.



2.2. Colombia

The implementation of the Peace Agreement signed by the National Government and FARC-EP was at the centre of the social and political agenda in Colombia during 2017. In this process, significant advances have been made regarding the concentration and demobilization of ex-combatants, as well as in issuing laws and decrees that set the foundations for developing public policies established in the Agreement. Nonetheless, critical concerns have been raised by national and international actors over the persistent delays and difficulties for the implementation of key measures of the Agreement, partly due to deficiencies in the Government's capacity and the fierce opposition of political and economic sectors.

2017 presented a unique opportunity for NIMD to influence the Colombian political agenda for promoting a more open and inclusive political system, in the context of the implementation of the Peace Agreement, positioning the organization as a key reference in the field of political participation in the country. The appointment of NIMD as the technical secretariat of the Special Electoral Mission (SEM), a high-level expert commission created by the Peace Agreement that functioned between January and April 2017, was instrumental in drafting a policy proposal for the integral reform of the political and electoral systems in three areas: electoral institutional design, political financing and party system. Another highlight of NIMD's work in 2017 was the strengthening of the capabilities and responsiveness of four political parties, since the proximity of national elections demanded intense preparations by political parties. Finally, the first two local democracy schools were implemented as NIMD's main strategy for the promotion of democratic values, leadership and reconciliation in Colombia. 117 participants were trained in 2017.

2.3. Tunisia

2017 was another eventful year in Tunisia's democratic transition. Citizens took to the streets on several occasions to protest socio-economic policies and the decision to grant judicial amnesty to dozens of senior civil servants and businessmen associated with former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Another cabinet reshuffle saw 13 ministers replaced. In February 2017, the National Assembly passed the long-awaited law on elections and referenda, which regulates presidential, parliamentary, regional and municipal elections. Nonetheless, the municipal elections, which were supposed to take place in December 2017, were postponed once again. They are now scheduled to take place in May 2018. Despite these events, there is a high level of political will to continue to cooperate and reach common ground on these difficult issues.

The Tunisian School of Politics (TSoP) addresses the political circumstances by integrating current affairs into trainings and debates. In December 2017, 10 TSoP graduates visited The Netherlands to learn about local politics and social dialogue here. They met with local politicians and civil servants at the municipality of Rotterdam and with representatives of the socio-economic council (SER) and Dutch trade unions (FNV and CNV). The dialogue platform supported by NIMD is particularly preoccupied with the issue of decentralization and local elections. Key results were a statement to speed up ratification of the law on local authorities and a charter committing the parties to promoting a climate of mutual respect in the run-up to the municipal elections.

2.4. Ukraine

Politics in Ukraine in 2017 was characterized by very active anti-corruption bodies targeting high officials and members of the parliament. At the same time, new political parties were created and existing parties and movements have merged. Some parties tried to rebrand themselves, and renew their leaders to prepare for the next parliamentary election. Meanwhile the confrontation between the President and the opposition deepened in Ukraine. Former governor of Odessa



Region and leader of the political party Movement of New Forces, Mikheil Saakashvili, was stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship by President Poroshenko and is now forced to live outside the country.

In the same year, NIMD managed to successfully create a programmatic footprint in the country and to establish a good network and working relations with political parties, CSOs and the donor community both in Kyiv and two regions of Ukraine: Lviv and Odessa. Major milestones of the programme were the development of the curricula for Democracy Schools, the recruitment of a group of experts to carry out the trainings, a strong recruitment campaign for attracting the students to Democracy Schools and the eventual launch of them in both Lviv and Odessa. Another notable achievement was the organization of several capacity building programs (such as a fundraising training for women politicians and the participation of young Ukrainians in the regional forum in Tbilisi), giving NIMD a good foundation to expand its work in 2018.

2.5. Jordan

In 2016 the decision was made to launch a new DfS programme in Jordan. During the first half of 2017, we selected a local implementing partner (Identity Center), recruited a project coordinator, developed a Theory of Change and developed a curriculum for the Jordan School of Politics. In September 2017, the programme was launched under the patronage of H.E. Musa Maaytah, Minister of Political & Parliamentary Affairs, with contributions from Ambassador Barbara Joziase and Bernard Bot, chairman of NIMD's supervisory council. During the second half of 2017, the first training cycle of the Jordan School of Politics was conducted in four governorates (Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Karak). Out of 400 applications received, 120 were selected and 109 completed the training programme. One of the key aspects of the curriculum is emphasizing the importance of political parties in a representative democracy. The ten best students were invited to participate in a conference on political inclusion and exclusion, organized in cooperation with the Tunisian School of Politics.

NIMD is reviewing its partnership with the Identity Center following concerns about the capacity of Identity Center and allegations of mismanagement of funds from other donors. There is currently no suspicion of mismanagement of MFA/NIMD funds. While investigating this situation NIMD is exploring various options to safeguard the results achieved and continue the Jordan School of Politics, for example with a local NIMD representation or in a revised form of partnership with Identity Center. These deliberations are being conducted in close coordination with the Dutch embassy in Amman.

2.6. Lebanon

In 2017, NIMD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held several consultations about the possibilities for a DfS programme in Lebanon following the scoping missions that took place in 2016 and identified a clear need for an inclusive programme, which focuses on skills training for young leaders across the political spectrum. This led to the conclusion that the programme proposed by NIMD was not possible due to political sensitivities. We propose to re-allocate the unused funds to a regional programme in the MENA region, building on existing country programmes in Jordan and Tunisia but also including participants from a wider group of countries. Proposals for the focus and content of this regional programme will be coordinated with the MFA during 2018.

2.7. Knowledge & Innovation

In 2017, the Knowledge Unit focused on further advancing three thematic areas for the fragile and conflict affected settings (FCAS) approach. Firstly, delving into the process of political conversion of former armed movements into political parties, we conducted a desk study and organised an expert meeting to determine key elements of political conversion of armed groups in order to



develop a support strategy focused on the transition process in Colombia. Secondly, we conducted a study on the concept of trust building in dialogue processes and made a plan on how to test this approach in practice in Myanmar. Thirdly, NIMD organised a round table with peer organisations and peacebuilders on working as democracy and political support actors in synchronicity with peacebuilding actors.

NIMD also embarked on the development of a new political economy analysis approach to support politically savvy and adaptive programming. In 2017, the exploratory phase of the project was developed and rolled out, aimed at getting a better understanding of the concept and experimenting with the various elements of it. To this end, we conducted a number of in-house workshops to determine needs and parameters of the approach, designed the overall outline of the approach, and piloted in our programmes in Ethiopia, Burundi and Kenya with various analysis techniques. Furthermore, using the closing year of the Respect for Women's Political Rights (WPR) programme as leverage, the theme of women political participation was put central in an international lessons learned conference bringing delegates from over 16 countries together in Tunisia to discuss breaking down barriers around negative gender stereotyping, financial burdens, and political violence.

For the NIMD Actor level approach, we developed a brand new set of training modules on Policy Based and Responsive Parties. These trainings will feature in several country programmes in 2018. For the Innovation work stream a Democracy Lab took place with political parties in Colombia, and at the end of the year, the Innovating Democracy Conference brought tech innovators and political actors together to discuss threats and opportunities for democracy. Meanwhile, the innovatingdemocracy.io platform continues to serve as a global meeting place to exchange on this topic.

2.8. Fundraising & Positioning

Intensification of the fundraising efforts aimed at the EU resulted in several large new contracts (Colombia, Honduras, Global Pilot Programme on Political Parties, Myanmar, Jordan), while 2017 was also a busy year for NIMD's communications department. An enhanced focus on social media significantly increased our visibility and engagement across Facebook and Twitter. The number of people who saw our tweets (Twitter impressions), for example, was more than ten times higher than the previous year. This was coupled with the launch of NIMD's first ever online communications campaign, which drove engagement among our audience by asking the question "What does democracy mean to you?"

Internally, the team focused on improving the consistency of communications about NIMD, and published a new Style Guide website for NIMD's staff and partner network. In addition, a new interactive platform for the NIMD partner network was designed and launched. The Knowledge Hub allows all NIMD staff and partners to share their knowledge and experiences within the network.

3. Update on Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) explains the changes NIMD wishes to contribute to, the strategies and interventions that are put in place to contribute to that change, and the underlying assumptions. Country teams reflect on these ToCs twice per year: during the mid-year review, which serves as input for the annual plan for the following year, and in the annual report. In doing so, they take into account results achieved (for the full measurements of intermediate indicators, see annex A) and changes in the political context. Some reflections on the DfS programme ToC are listed below, followed by reflections on the individual country ToCs. Both the programme level ToC and the country ToCs will be



revised as part of the mid-term review conducted in 2018.

3.1. DfS programme progress

At *system* level the DfS programme aims to contribute to open and inclusive political systems that contribute to legitimate stability. One of the major instruments to achieve this is supporting inter-party dialogue for inclusive policy-making. In 2017, NIMD supported four dialogue platforms (Burundi, Colombia, Tunisia and Ukraine), each featuring between seven and eleven political parties from both ruling and opposition groups. A total of 63 meetings were held and nine policies jointly formulated. These dialogue encounters focused on contentious issues like political party finance (Ukraine), local elections (Tunisia) and implementation of the peace agreement (Colombia), thereby facilitating inclusive policy-making on these issues.

At *actor* level DfS aims to contribute to legitimate and capable political actors in fragile and conflict affected settings. A total of 35 political parties were trained in Burundi, Colombia, Tunisia and Ukraine in 2017. These trainings are intended to contribute to improved programmatic and organizational capacities of political parties to enable them to more effectively and legitimately participate in the political process. The strategic planning tool, for example, is being used in several countries to help political parties devise organizational strategies to achieve their political objectives. This enables them to better fulfill their representative and policy-making roles. In Jordan, where political parties are in a nascent state, a key objective of the programme is highlighting the importance of political parties and empowering young politicians to stimulate their own parties to become more responsive to society.

At *culture* level DfS aims to work towards a political practice that is based on democratic values. The main instrument to achieve this is by training politicians in democracy schools. Democracy schools in five countries (Burundi, Colombia, Jordan, Tunisia and Ukraine) yielded a total of 722 graduates in 2017. These students were trained in democratic values, leadership and cooperation with other political and civic actors. This contributes to several objectives: the participants do not only develop their personal skills but also have an often unique opportunity to meet with and learn alongside their counterparts from opposing political parties and form relationships which last beyond the duration of the training programme. This is especially meaningful when alumni reach positions of influence within their own parties or in the government, as is the case with several of our alumni in Tunisia. Meanwhile, alumni of our democracy schools in various countries transfer their skills in inclusive policy-making, citizen consultation and accountability to their political parties.

3.2. Country ToCs

Burundi: the Theory of Change remains valid, although there is an ever-present risk of relapse into violent conflict. There is also a risk of an implosion of the ruling party and contention over the Presidential candidacy for 2020. The upcoming constitutional review will provide a test for the stability of the regime. Such future developments may warrant a more elaborate review of the assumptions listed in the ToC. In the meantime, however, we continue to invest in stability by building trust between political actors, mainly through our dialogue activities. We also try to establish a sustainable culture of peace by building a democratic culture and promoting acceptance of democratic rules, especially through our democracy schools. At the same time, we continuously respond to political developments and new insights with minor programme adjustments. An important development is that we are increasingly taking advantage of the larger political space at local level and focusing on underrepresented groups, such as youth. Another is that we are increasingly engaging with the ruling party and the government as an objective in itself. On several occasions, we experienced that the work of NIMD and BLTP in Burundi plays a major



role in creating space for multiparty democratic politics. This space constantly needs to be negotiated and safeguarded.

Colombia: The signature of the Peace Agreement in Colombia was a watershed moment in the country's recent history. Nonetheless, both the problem analysis and the Theory of Change formulated at the beginning of the programme continued to be valid for the year 2017. The Colombian political system can still be considered as closed, with limited options for the emergence of political alternatives (besides the guaranteed seats for the FARC because of the peace agreement). In terms of political actors, most of the Colombian political parties still have limited interaction with their constituencies and the public, especially marginalized social groups like country-dwellers, women, youth, ethnic minorities and LGBTI people. In the Colombian political culture, misinformation and negative prejudices about the functioning of the political and electoral system and the implications of the Peace Agreement by society are still dominant.

Tunisia: The programme in Tunisia is highly responsive to daily political realities. The Tunisian School of Politics offers an opportunity to address current affairs in the training programme and in lectures and debates for alumni. Learning to work together on these issues is a crucial skill: participants and alumni report increased interaction with other political parties and with civil society after following the training programme (see annex A). The dialogue platform acts as a platform for political parties to discuss much-needed political reforms in a constructive environment. Its relevance became evident in 2017 when it produced two important statements on the forthcoming elections. In this way the programme plays an important role in safeguarding commitment to democratic reform and creating consensus on the reform agenda. To further support this process and build on the gains made in 2017, more emphasis will be placed on dialogue activities in the coming year.

Ukraine: The Theory of Change was revised to focus more on reforming the political system and culture and less on actor level interventions. NIMD and its implementing partner EECMD concluded that direct political party work is currently not feasible. This is due to the nature of political parties, in particular their highly hierarchical form of management, dependence on large business groups and limited institutional capacity. Hence the bulk of the effort was directed at the successful preparation and launch of Democracy Schools (the first 34 students graduated in 2017), producing policy papers and facilitating dialogue necessary for creating a more conducive environment for the emergence of democratic and more institutionalized political actors. The dialogue platform supported by NIMD produced five policy proposals. Other than that, no elections were held in 2017 and there were no significant changes in the political landscape which would warrant the re-examination of other parts of the Theory of Change.

Jordan: In 2017 NIMD organized an interactive workshop with NIMD staff and staff of the local implementing partner to develop a Theory of Change for Jordan. The first batch of 109 students from four different governorates participated in the Jordan School of Politics in 2017. The ToC will be reassessed on a regular basis throughout the remaining duration of the programme.

4. Monitoring & evaluation

In early 2017, the M&E team conducted workshops for local partners and country programmes in Tunisia, Ukraine, Burundi and Colombia to review the 2016 indicator measurements and resolve bottlenecks faced by the partners. The M&E team responded to particularly pressing need for M&E support in Burundi by commissioning MDF to conduct an M&E training for the BLTP team. Two workshops were conducted in Jordan: the first was an interactive workshop to develop a Theory of



Change and the second was a training on NIMD's M&E system and baseline measurement of outcome indicators.

NIMD commissioned an external review of the DfS results framework including the intermediate outcome indicators. The review made recommendations on how to standardize intermediate outcome indicators across countries, to reduce the number of country specific indicators and to be better able to aggregate and compare measurements across countries. These standardized indicators have been integrated into the country programme annual plans and result tables of 2018. A selection of the original, comprehensive set of country specific indicators continues to be used for monitoring purposes of individual countries. This adjustment will make it easier for partners to report on common results bi-annually and communicate them to the outside world.

What remains a challenge for most programmes is to further elaborate the country ToC, in terms of describing concrete pathways of how the programme interventions and activities lead to desired changes, and in elaborating and testing the underlying assumptions. This has mainly to do with the high level of abstraction at which country ToCs are formulated, but also with the capacity of partner staff. In 2018, further investments will be made to support local partners in working with the ToC. Furthermore, the Mid-Term Review process will be used to further reflect on the overall ToC and make adaptations where possible and relevant.

In 2017 the M&E team developed a ToR to contract consultants to conduct an outcome harvesting process in Tunisia and Colombia under the DfS programme. These will be conducted in the first half of 2018. Outcome Harvesting is a further investment of NIMD to identify outcomes and show results of the DfS programme next to the regular (intermediate) outcome measurements.

In 2017, NIMD continued to use IATI as their main reporting instrument towards the MFA for quantitative reporting on (financial) progress. The use of the regular bi-annual intermediate outcome measurements remain limited to activity tracking and a snap-shot of what has been achieved. In order to complement the quantitative data reporting in IATI to identify progress and impact, NIMD continued to invest in the development of human interest stories as a qualitative approach to provide insights into programme results (see Annex C for examples on Tunisia and Burundi).

5. Financial update

DfS focuses on fragile settings and this has an impact on programme planning and implementation. The implementing partners operate in a political context that is constantly changing which sometimes makes it difficult to implement the programme according to plan. This, along with the fact that some of the countries were new for NIMD, is reflected in a total budget expenditure of € 2.635.910 against the total approved budget of € 3.265.665, reflecting a budget depletion of 81%. More details are provided in the financial overview in annex B. Explanations are provided for deviations of more than 10% as compared to the original budget for country programmes and cross-cutting programmes.

Overall expenditure of the Dialogue for Stability budget for 2017 was 19% lower than anticipated, mostly due to postponement or cancellation of activities due to political circumstances. Some of these activities have been included in 2018 annual plans, for others (eg. Lebanon) reallocations will be proposed.

Because of the complex political situation in *Burundi* several planned activities were cancelled and/or postponed. The country team has mitigated this more structural deficit by requesting an adjustment in the plan and approving the reallocation of the underexpenditure for 2016 and 2017 to the Schools



for Democracy programme implemented with funds from the Dutch Embassy. The Ministry recently approved this reallocation.

The level of expenditure in *Colombia* for DfS was 99% depleted. However, activities that were on hold in 2016 took place in 2017. In addition to this, other activities (Democracy Lab and exploratory missions for the upcoming democracy schools) were implemented. The Colombia programme received an extra EUR 2.796 from a local NGO to strength democracy in Colombia.

Due to the political situation in *Tunisia* and the cancelation of the municipal elections, some of the activities planned for 2017 were on hold due to the fact that political parties were not able to propose fixed working groups for these activities. However after the election date was fixed the political parties expressed their wish to resume these activities in 2018.

Expenditure on *Ukraine* was slightly higher than anticipated. The transition of NIMD country office EEN into the independent organization EECMD and further extension of the programme in Ukraine required additional budget for staff.

Direct staff costs for *Jordan* were lower than foreseen because these were partly covered by NIMD's new EU-funded project in Jordan.

During 2017 NIMD staff continued to monitor political developments in *Lebanon* while consulting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the possibilities of starting a new programme in Lebanon. Because a final decision on this was not reached in 2017, there was no programme expenditure apart from monitoring and direct staff costs. NIMD will coordinate proposals for re-allocation of these funds with the MFA in 2018.

The underexpenditure on budget line 1.7 (enhanced knowledge and skills base for fragile settings) was mainly caused by reallocations to the development of a PEA approach under the budget line 2 (Knowledge & Innovation). There was slight underexpenditure on Innovation because one democracy lab pilot planned in Benin/Mali was postponed to 2018.

The 16% extra expenditure on budget line 3 (Fundraising & Positioning) is a reflection of the investments in new financing opportunities, especially with the EU.

Underexpenditure on PM&E was mainly due to limited internal staff capacity at HQ and the fact that funds available to spend on PM&E capacities at country level were not fully mobilized.

Annex A: Intermediate outcome measurements

Annex B: Financial Overview

Annex C: Human Interest Stories