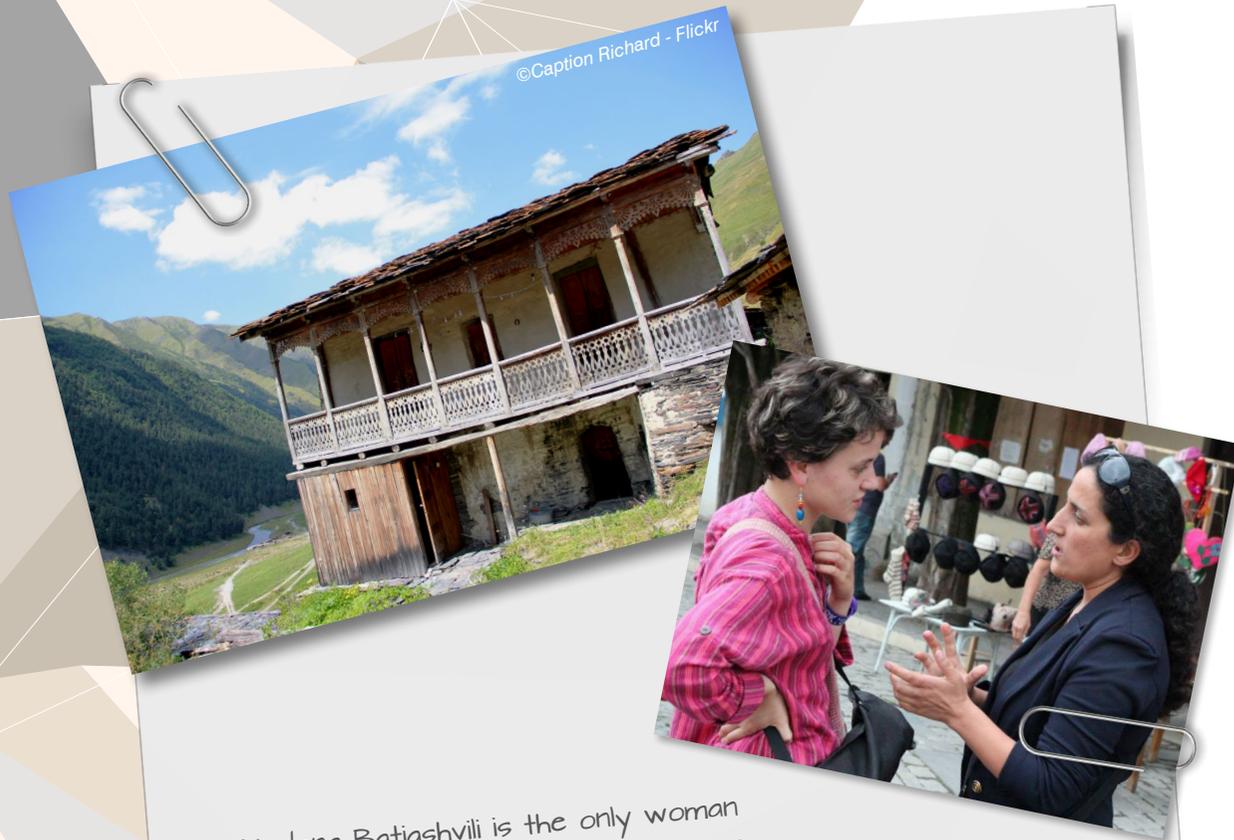


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Madona Batiashvili is the only woman Vice-Mayor in Georgia's Kakheti region. It's a platform she uses to make sure everyone has a voice. Having been appointed in 2017, her first steps in office were to engage and empower two groups that are often marginalized from politics in Georgia: young people and women.

OUR WORK IN GEORGIA

## EMPOWERING A LOCAL LEADER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### The NIMD Democracy School

Madona is one of more than 500 NIMD Democracy School graduates in Georgia. When she joined the School in 2016, she found herself in a melting pot of students from a whole range of backgrounds. Public servants, civil society representatives, political parties, business representatives and academics gather in the schools annually. Over the five-month training period, these participants deepen their understanding of the key concepts of democracy, expand their analytical capacity and gain relevant skills that will help them make effective changes in society.

Georgia's four Democracy Schools – based in the cities of Telavi, Gori, Kutaisi and Batumi – are playing an active role in enhancing political culture and building the capacities of civil society and political leaders at the local level. This is what enticed Madona to sign up for the Democracy School – she wanted to learn alongside people who shared her ambition to make a difference.



## Enhancing skills and changing perspectives

When Madona first started at the School, she found it hard to work and learn together with people from different political affiliations. But she soon realized that interacting in such an environment was actually beneficial for her. The Democracy School debates equipped her with the skills to think through her own arguments, manage her emotions, and tolerate critical and diverging opinions.

She believes that these skills help her today when she has to persuade colleagues or opponents to make certain decisions. *“Before attending the Democracy School, I had never had the opportunity to work with the people with different political convictions. Since attending the School, I have become more tolerant and sociable.”*

## Promoting inclusion

Madona also recalls that studying at the school made her realize that *“a contemporary leader needs to be believed by people. We need more openness as well as a different rhetoric.”* This new perspective made a crucial difference when she started working in her high-position public service role. She was determined to open up to the public, closing the gap and calling for inclusion of the different groups she represented.

In fact, one of Madona’s first moves as Vice-Mayor was to establish contacts with young people. Youth engagement in local self-government is very low in Georgia, and young people are often disenchanted with politics. That’s why, having reached out to youth in her region, Madona set about making amendments to the local budget, creating funds for initiatives for local youth organizations. These funds will take the form of grants, which will be opened up for applications from all youth organizations in the region.

Madona firmly believes that the engagement of youth is vital to securing a prosperous future for her region. She hopes that the new funds will help young people engage in politics, realize their potential, find jobs locally and, ultimately, stay in Kakheti.

Another issue Madona feels strongly about, having attended the Democracy School, is women’s rights. Women’s political participation in Georgia is alarmingly low. Women hold only 16% of seats in the Parliament of Georgia, while less than 12-13% of elected officials at the local level are women. Men head 63 out of the country’s 64 municipalities, including the eight in Kakheti region. In her new role, Madona is determined do her best to ensure that active and successful women are given the opportunity reach their full potential.

And she has already taken action to make this a reality. In an attempt to offset the large number of men in politics, Madona has recommended several women as representatives of the Mayor in villages. By bringing more women into these local roles, Madona hopes that she will give them a voice and help them to make a difference in their communities too.

Madona’s work with youth and women is underpinned by a strong conviction, influenced by her time in the Democracy School: *“It is important to realize that when you dislike the way things work, or you disagree with somebody’s policy decisions, you have start working on changing those decisions. I am glad that I came to that conclusion, because now I am a public servant and will do anything I can to make the local self-government function better.”*



Madona is determined to use what she has learned to make this difference. Through the Democracy Schools in Georgia, NIMD’s goal – along with our partner EECMD – is to empower more people like Madona to become leaders in their communities and make effective changes in society.



Kizito Kuchekwa is a long-time and dedicated member of ZANU-PF, the political party that liberated Zimbabwe from British colonial rule under the leadership of Robert Mugabe.

Kizito grew up in the 'keeps', or isolation villages set up by the colonial regime. This was a formative period in his life. In the 1970s, before Zimbabwe's liberation, Kizito's father was arrested and brutally tortured by the colonial regime. He passed away shortly after. Kizito's pain and hurt from this loss spurred his hatred for the colonial system. That's when he got involved in ZANU-PF to support liberation.

Kizito rose quickly through the ranks of the party, soon reaching the national level where he has held several key portfolios. In his current position as Director in the Commissariat, he is responsible for membership recruitment and party structures.

## OUR WORK IN ZIMBABWE

# ▲ GIVING COOPERATION A CHANCE BUILDING RELATIONS AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES THROUGH DIALOGUE

## Engaging in dialogue

It was as a fully trusted cadre of his party, with strong political convictions, that Kizito first engaged in interparty dialogue. He became a member of the Zimbabwe Political Parties Dialogue, a platform which brings political parties together to discuss issues of national interest.

This platform is supported by NIMD and our implementing partner, the Zimbabwe Institute, and its work is based on our principle of inclusiveness. At its core is the conviction that real meaningful change can only be achieved by engaging with all three of Zimbabwe's parliamentary parties, ZANU-PF – the ruling party – and the opposition parties MDC-T and MDC.

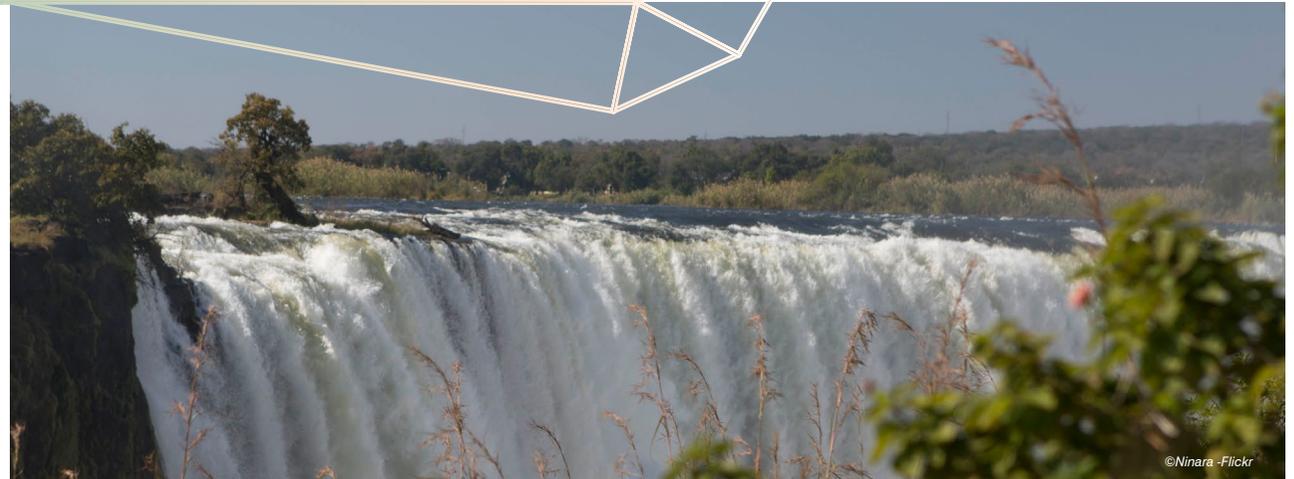
The platform brings together the Secretaries General of each of these parties to engage in dialogue with an equal voice. Each Secretary General is supported by technical staff from their party, known as political liaison officers.

Kizito was selected as the political liaison officer for ZANU-PF because of his impeccable track record in the party. He testifies that participating in the dialogue programmes has changed his outlook. Looking back at when he first joined the interparty dialogue in 2009, he says he was intransigent, driven by party interest. However, *“the programme transforms you; models the way you perceive things – shapes what you see as right and wrong.”*

## Observing multiparty cooperation in action

This change in perspective came about slowly, as Kizito witnessed the power of dialogue in action time and again. Most recently, Kizito observed how cooperation between parties can ensure that citizens have a voice in crucial elections. The voter registration process for Zimbabwe’s 2018 elections started in October 2017. But, the process was interrupted soon after the voter registration centres opened, when political turbulence within the ZANU-PF caused the long-standing President Robert Mugabe to step down. This distracted the public from registering.

In past elections, the role of voters has been a major point of contestation and a thorough registration process was essential to ensuring the legitimacy of the elections. With the deadline fast approaching, few people had registered and both national and international criticism was rising. It was clearly in the interest of all the political parties to have a legitimate election with as many citizens as possible registered. But the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission was not keen on extending the process since this would disrupt their plans.



Kizito, together with his fellow liaison officers from the opposition parties, prepared several meetings between the parties’ Secretaries General. Together they came up with a common lobby position to try to extend the voter registration period. Drawing on their common ground, the parties were able to convince the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to extend the deadline from 10 January to 8 February 2018.

## Developing as a democrat

A process such as developing a joint lobby position means constantly engaging with liaisons from other parties. This type of contact, and the feeling of working on a common goal, slowly builds interpersonal cross-party relationships. Kizito chuckles and admits: *“Soon I found myself borrowing money from my colleagues, attending their [family] funerals and visiting their families. [...] I came to realize that, despite our party differences, we had the same anxieties; the same aspirations; the same wishes. They were human – not the monsters I had grown up to know them as.”*

Looking back at his involvement in the dialogue process, Kizito reflects on how he has developed as a person: *“As youth leader of ZANU-PF in Harare, which was the stronghold of the MDC, I had witnessed violent clashes between youth. I had seen some of our young people with axe wounds and broken bones...a close friend of mine had been shot dead in Mbare. So I came into the dialogue process with a view that I was going to engage the enemy and I had to be under full guard to defend my party.”*

Although he is still convinced that he has a duty to defend his party position as a liaison officer, Kizito now realizes that engagement and dialogue, rather than confrontation with the opposition, is the best route to national development. He actively tries to find ways to help other members of ZANU-PF, many of whom have not had the privilege of the human lessons the programme has afforded him, to give cooperation and dialogue a chance.



In Honduras, not many women are involved in politics. Fátima Mena is an exception to that rule. As a law graduate, she has always held deep convictions based on the principle of justice. In her handbag, she carries the Honduran Constitution and a bible to remind her that democratic principles always come first, no matter how you look at things.

## OUR WORK IN HONDURAS

### ► BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS THE STORY OF A YOUNG LEADER'S POLITICAL CAREER

At the heart of Fátima's convictions is her experience living in exile. As a result of her mother's role as a magistrate, her family had received threats of abduction and had been forced to flee Honduras. Working for a human rights NGO during her time abroad, she came to realize that it is possible to make a difference in the life of others as a professional.

This realization deepened when she became a mother on her return to Honduras. Following the birth, she suffered severe depression, which she blames on the political instability in her country and flaws in the justice system. She started to believe that she was "irresponsible for bringing my son to live in a country with so much corruption".

It was during this time that she decided to volunteer for the Anti-Corruption Party in Honduras. She climbed quickly within the party, becoming coordinator for the Cortés Department, a member of the national council of the party, and a candidate for the 2013 parliamentary elections.



## The NIMD Candidates' Academy

In 2013, to help her prepare her campaign, Fátima took part in the first ever Women Candidates' Academy, organized by NIMD in cooperation with NDI, UN Women, UNDP and the Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (National Institute for Women, INAM). The Academy strengthens the capacities and knowledge of women candidates on topics such as gender, communication and political strategy. Fátima found the experience very helpful. She admits that, before she participated, her political knowledge had been limited, based mainly on her own perceptions and experience.

With the support of the Candidates' Academy, Fátima ran a successful political campaign with only scarce resources. She based her campaign on proposals that were achievable, tangible and believable for citizens. She focused particularly on the fight against corruption, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

She was able to use the knowledge and skills she learned in the Academy in various phases of the electoral process, from planning her campaign, to formulating and communicating her messages, taking part in multiparty debates and

becoming a fierce advocate for women in politics. This experience allowed her to profile herself as one of the most important political leaders of her party and region. At the age of 31, she was elected to Congress, with the second highest number of votes of any Congressperson in her Constituency, and with the most votes ever won by a woman from an emerging political party.

In her position, she was able to put another learning from the Candidates' Academy into practice. Besides increasing her skills, the Academy had also made her realize the importance of multiparty cooperation. So, as a Secretary of the Committee on Equality and Gender, she helped woman parliamentarians from different political parties to coordinate their efforts to put gender equality on the agenda of parliament and promote women's political and economic rights.

## Barriers to growth

Fátima's pioneering role was not always easy. She recognizes that *"Being a woman, being young and being part of a political party against corruption is a big challenge, especially in a society whose culture is both machista and caudillista"*.

Indeed, after a short time in Parliament, internal problems in her political party and being in the spotlight took their toll on Fátima as Chair. Media coverage questioned her professional capacity and integrity rather than reporting on her performance as a politician and Member of Congress. In addition, the party underwent a crisis in 2017 which led to a permanent split and the forced resignation of the party leadership.

This series of events, far from demotivating Fátima, drove her to participate in a series of projects to promote the rights of women and young people. She put together a parliamentary group to support the fight against corruption and continued her work in the Equality and Gender Committee, handling initiatives and reforms in favour of Honduras's women and girls. In November 2017, Fátima was elected as a councillor in San Pedro Sula, one of Honduras's largest cities.

Throughout her political development, NIMD continued to support Fátima. The organization was proud to provide tools to help Fátima overcome the gender barriers and stereotypes that she faced. The example of Fátima's empowerment and the recognition of her tireless work to promote women's rights, have positioned her as a leader. And these efforts pave the way for other women to participate actively in politics and break down the cultural and social barriers that obstruct their political work.





NIMD first opened its country office in Mozambique at the turn of this century. We initiated the Mozambique programme in an effort to reduce tensions between two parties previously at war with each other and to create a safe space for dialogue and collaboration. Now, over 15 years later, we are delighted to announce that our office has become an independent organization. The Institute for Multiparty Democracy Mozambique (IMD Mozambique) is a strong local organization that can now use its experience to further build its relationship with political actors and other relevant stakeholders in Mozambique to promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy in the country.

Hermenegildo Mulhovo, Executive Director of the newly established IMD Mozambique and former Executive Director of NIMD Country Office in Mozambique, played an important role in the transition process.

## OUR WORK IN MOZAMBIQUE

# LEAVING A LEGACY A NEW INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

### New opportunities

There were several reasons that led to the creation of IMD Mozambique. Firstly, the NIMD country office had had to work with heavily diminished budgets for the previous few years, mainly due to budget cuts in development cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This led to reflections on the sustainability of the office.

At the same time, Hermenegildo also saw a lot of opportunities surrounding the creation of a new organization. These included opportunities for fundraising. As a Dutch organization, the country office did not qualify for many locally contracted funds from international organizations, like the European Union. Accessing these funding opportunities was essential to achieving the potential of the NIMD Mozambique programme and to supporting the Mozambique office's sustainability and even helping it grow.

So the chance to increase impact by working with several reputed international organizations and the practical opportunity to diversify the office's funding made Hermenegildo reflect on creating a local Mozambican organization. This idea was compounded by calls for long-term support from Mozambique's political parties. The trust and relationships that the country office had been building were paying off.

## A little forethought goes a long way

These reflections led Hermenegildo to initiate the transition process. As a representative of both organizations during this process, Hermenegildo was in a unique position to make sure that the new institutional set up would serve the interests of both NIMD and the future IMD. Predictably, this role came with its own set of challenges. *"Initially it was not easy to get a buy-in from all the people concerned,"* he explains.

*"There was a lot of pressure, both from NIMD's Headquarters in The Hague and from my own staff. But, like in our daily work with the parties, you can achieve a lot through dialogue. So I invested in talking and negotiating, reassuring everyone that the new model would be better and accommodate all their interests. We even conducted a study to see if we could follow a different model where we could still be a part of NIMD and still be independent. But it was not legally viable. We had to become completely independent."*

The process of becoming independent was supported by NIMD. One of the outputs of NIMD's programmes is to strengthen the local organizations that we work with. So there was already a results framework in place that provided the opportunity to support this process. Both NIMD and IMD clearly wanted the same thing: for the Mozambique programme to reach its full potential. This greatly helped the discussions. *"No matter how tricky it got, NIMD remained open and kept looking for solutions"* says Hermenegildo. *"For instance, after becoming an independent organization, we set up an independent Mozambican Board to oversee IMD's work. This brought up issues of power relations. What role should NIMD have on that Board, if any? We were able to manage the tensions and agreed that, from now on, IMD would be fully independent and operate as NIMD's implementing partner in Mozambique."*



## A solid basis for the future

Once IMD Mozambique was created, many previously unexplored avenues opened up for the organization.

*"The commercial name, IMD Mozambique, demonstrates NIMD's legacy and the historical connection. It is this legacy that makes international organizations, like the EU, keen to partner with us. At the same time, we are now viewed as a completely local organization, which means that political parties in Mozambique are more open to us. Our partners have the best of both worlds"* explains Hermenegildo.

*"We know that most of this trust our partners have in us is because NIMD has paved the way for us"* says Hermenegildo. *"Since the office was established in 2000, NIMD has initiated a reform in the country's democratic institutions, particularly in reforming electoral laws. And during the elections of 2014, NIMD was very keen on facilitating dialogue and consensus-building between the three political parties in parliament. There were many contentious issues at the time. But NIMD created a non-partisan space and encouraged a solution-oriented discussion. There is no other organization that has gained the trust of political parties for their solution-oriented approach like NIMD has in Mozambique"*.

The first thing IMD Mozambique is looking forward to doing as an independent organization is creating and consolidating knowledge and expertise. *"We want to invest more in knowledge production, like developing policy briefs"* says Hermenegildo.

Although the process was hard at times, it has been a learning experience for Hermenegildo, who was the Executive Director of the NIMD country office for many years .

*"I'm going to miss NIMD's support. It's like a child growing up and leaving home. But on the other hand, we can move on to another level of support - a more expertise-oriented support, rather than an administrative one."*

*"I am proud that IMD Mozambique is a product of NIMD"* he concludes.

And we, at NIMD, are proud to be able to continue working with Hermenegildo and IMD Mozambique. For us, the establishment of new organization is a major achievement, not just because it opens new doors for our work in Mozambique, but also because it underlines our efforts to build strong local institutions that have ownership over political development efforts in their country. We are very much looking forward to our future with IMD Mozambique as partners as we grow stronger together.

