

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

**Evaluation of the NIMD South
Caucasus - Georgia Programme,
2011–2014**

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Final Report



Contents

Executive summary	2
Acronyms	7
1. Introduction	8
2. Background	9
2.1 Country context	9
2.2 Political context	9
2.3 International assistance context	10
2.4 NIMD country programme overview	10
3. NIMD country programme impacts	13
3.1 Multiparty dialogue	13
3.2 Legitimate political parties	14
3.3 Political-civil society interaction	17
3.4 Gender and diversity	19
4. Relevance	22
4.1 Is NIMD a flexible organization that responds to local context?	22
4.2 Is NIMD's political party assistance niche relevant?	23
4.3 Is NIMD a learning organization?	24
5. Effectiveness and efficiency	26
5.1 Is the country programme strategic and coherent?	26
5.2 What is the country programme's niche and comparative advantage?	26
5.3 What are the most effective and efficient approaches to delivering its objectives? ...	28
5.4 Does the country programme have sufficient organizational capacity to deliver its objectives?	28
5.5 Does the country programme have sufficient and flexible resources to deliver its objectives?	30
5.6 Does the country programme have good monitoring and evaluation systems for monitoring and adjusting its objectives?	30
5.7 Is the country programme efficient in its use of resources?	30
6. Sustainability of NIMD country interventions	31
6.1 How sustainable is the multiparty platform?	31
6.2 How sustainable are the political party and parliamentary assistance?	31
6.3 How sustainable are civil society-political society interventions?	31
6.4 How sustainable are efforts to integrate gender and diversity?	31
6.5 Overall, how sustainable is the country programme?	32
7. Main findings and recommendations	33
7.1 Main findings	33
7.2 Main recommendations	35
List of interviewees and documents reviewed	39



Executive summary

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) commissioned an independent evaluation of three of its country programmes to assess the extent to which it achieves results. The evaluation focused on NIMD's three main areas of intervention and on a single cross-cutting theme:

- multiparty dialogue;
- legitimate political parties;
- interaction between civil society and political society; and
- the integration of gender and diversity across its work.

This country report examines the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NIMD Georgia country programme in 2011–2014, including the extent to which the *NIMD Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* (MAP) and accompanying institutional reforms led to increased effectiveness.

Country context

Georgia is a small country located on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. It is approximately the size of the Netherlands. The most recent census estimates Georgia's population at 3.7 million, 52.3 per cent of which is female. Georgia, like most post-Communist countries, has an aging population relative to most of the developing world. A quarter to one-third of the population is over 55 years old, while approximately 30 per cent is under the age of 24.¹ Roughly 85 per cent of Georgia's people are ethnic Georgians. Armenians, who make up 5.7 of the population, and Azeris, 6.8 per cent, are the two largest minorities.

In the October 2012 parliamentary elections, the ruling United National Movement (UNM) was defeated by a new, broad opposition coalition known as the Georgian Dream (GD). The election ushered in a period of greater freedom and pluralism, and created an opening for a genuinely multiparty Georgia. It brought an end to a decade of one-party rule, which was characterized by rapid reform and significant reductions in corruption, but also a shrinking democratic space.

Country programme

In 2011–2014, NIMD Georgia's programme focused on four broad programme areas in line with the NIMD MAP: three priority interventions, functioning multiparty dialogue, legitimate political parties and improved civil-political society interactions; and an additional regional programme.

The Multiparty Programme facilitates dialogue on key issues between several political parties in Georgia. The primary focus of this activity is to bring more women and national minorities into politics. However, this activity also included other dialogues between parties and several workshops during the evaluation period.

The Political Party Assistance (PPA) programme supports partner political parties with strategic planning and aims to help them strengthen their organizational capacity, institutionalization and internal democracy. By supporting the institutional development of

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>



political parties, NIMD contributes to the emergence of strong, sustainable political institutions that are fundamental to the emergence and consolidation of multiparty democracies.

The Democracy Education Programme aims to increase the demand for democracy at the grassroots level, support the professional development and training of grassroots democracy activists and strengthen the basis for political pluralism in the regions. NIMD Georgia operates Democracy Schools in four major cities: Telavi, Gori, Kutaisi and Batumi. The study programme employs a tailored curriculum, designed by a prominent group of experts, to provide relevant knowledge and skills for effective civic participation in the regions. The five-month in-depth educational programme focuses on democratic governance, democratic policy and political action issues and is independent of any formal institutions of higher education.

The Regional Programme seeks to implement activities at the regional/multilateral level by organizing an annual 'Forum of Young Politicians of the South Caucasus', which aims to facilitate regional political dialogue, identify possible areas of cooperation and contribute to the establishment of professional ties between the young leaders of the region.

Main findings

NIMD programmes were generally viewed very positively. Almost all the people interviewed indicated that they were pleased with their work with NIMD. Similarly, political party representatives valued their interactions with NIMD, found NIMD easy to work with and enjoyed ongoing benefits from their cooperation with NIMD. The donor for the regional dialogue expressed a similar level of satisfaction with NIMD's efforts to bring political party activists from the three South Caucasus countries together for fruitful discussions.

NIMD enjoys a good reputation among stakeholders. NIMD's ability to deliver strong programmes is built on its solid reputation among all stakeholders, including political parties, political experts, Democracy School alumni and donors. Central to this reputation is the widespread perception that NIMD is politically impartial. Several interviewees implied that NIMD's neutrality was different from other party support organizations, which, at times, most notably during the 2012 parliamentary election campaign, were not seen as neutral.

NIMD is in a unique position because it has local leadership. It is heavily identified with its leadership, however, which raises challenges regarding long-term institutionalization. Local leadership has helped make NIMD highly cost-effective and programmatically nimble, and helped to develop the trust of political parties. However, the organization is perhaps too heavily identified with its leader.

There is an occasional disconnect between NIMD programmes in Georgia and the bigger picture NIMD goals. NIMD's programmes were effective, and there was some synergy between them, most notably between the party assistance and the multiparty dialogue, but there was also an occasional disconnect between the programmes and the overall NIMD goals. This was most apparent with regard to the democracy schools and the regional programme. Both of these were good stand-alone programmes, but had few direct ties to either the rest of NIMD Georgia's portfolio or the broader NIMD goals.



NIMD has substantial convening power and is able to bring diverse parties together. Successful implementation of a multiparty dialogue rests on the ability to bring a range of parties together in a context of trust and neutrality. Parties will not participate in a multiparty dialogue if they believe the convener has already chosen a side. While NIMD multiparty programmes did not include all parties, NIMD was able to bring the GD and the UNM together regularly for dialogues that several people told us would not have been possible anywhere else, including in the national legislature. A similar dynamic existed with regard to the regional dialogue, where parties were brought together from across much of the political spectrum from three different countries.

The regional programme could become even more important given developments in the rest of the region. NIMD's regional programme has brought together young party activists from the three South Caucasus countries. It has recently begun to include participants from Ukraine as well. Although not a primary focus of this evaluation, interviewees and donors indicated that this was an excellent, well thought out and well implemented programme.

NIMD's PPA occurs in a crowded assistance environment, but parties did not perceive any overlap. The political party assistance environment in Georgia is crowded with regard to the number of organizations offering such assistance, and it is also a country where there is a long history of political party assistance. This creates two potential areas for overlap. The team noticed some areas, such as internal party communication or internal party democracy, that have been part of political party assistance in Georgia for several years, but such instances were relatively limited. For the most part, NIMD did not engage in the kinds of training, polling or campaign-focused work long carried out by the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute. This helped minimize the overlap between the work of the different party assistance organizations.

Partners liked PPA but the impact differed from party to party. The range in size and competence of Georgian political parties was reflected in the impact PPA had on the different parties.

Democracy Schools have an impact in their cities. Democracy School alumni are among the most active citizens in Batumi, Gori, Kutaisi and Telavi.

Discussions and task forces on issues such as women and national minorities were seen as helpful. The task forces were effective structures in which political parties could discuss ideas and proposals about women and national minorities. These discussions have contributed to the national political debate.

The 2012–2015 MAP indirectly informed the work of NIMD Georgia. NIMD Georgia had read and understood the plan, but did not cite it in discussions of their programmes. The Georgia team did not raise the reduction in Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) funding. The team has been able to fundraise and diversify funding effectively.

Summary of main recommendations

Clarify the criteria for determining the political parties with which NIMD will work. These criteria are currently too subjective and informed by big picture geopolitical questions, such as orientation towards the West or Russia. Continued efforts should be made to include parties that have previously declined to participate in the multiparty platform.



Do more work on internal party democracy. Parties in Georgia remain dominated by individual leaders based in Tbilisi. Party structures in the regions remain relatively weak, and have little input into party decision-making. Given that NIMD works closely with individual parties and tailors its assistance programme to the needs of each, it is well positioned to help strengthen internal party democracy.

Institutionalize the relationship with the Georgian Dream. NIMD has begun to build a relationship with the GD and, based on the evaluation team's conversations with the GD, appears to have been more successful in this effort than other party assistance organizations. Nonetheless, the GD was less enthusiastic about cooperation with NIMD than other political parties, and did not see the potential benefits as clearly of working with NIMD.

The unit of analysis should be the party system not political parties. A more strategically appropriate approach would be for NIMD to think of the party system, rather than individual political parties, as the unit of analysis and point of intervention (see also Carothers, 2006). The goal of establishing a multiparty system built around parties with distinct and competing visions, rather than just distinct and competing leaderships, for example, would lead to different kinds of programmes and engagement with individual parties, and would be better for Georgia's long-term development.

Expand Democracy Schools to new cities or rotate cities, possibly to include cities with large minority ethnic populations, and admit more non-conventional applicants. Because the Democracy Schools have been conducted in four relatively small cities for several years, saturation point is approaching with regard to applicants. The Democracy Schools, however, have had a substantial impact on those cities. Accordingly, expanding the programme to different cities would have a bigger impact on Georgia's national democratic development. There are several ways this could be done. NIMD could conduct Democracy Schools in four different cities, including some, such as Marneuli or Akhalkalaki, that are located in areas with large minority ethnic populations. Alternatively, NIMD could rotate cities, conducting Democracy Schools in four new cities one year and the four original cities the next. This would ensure continuity in the original cities. Expanding the pool of participants to include more non-traditional applicants, such as, for example, hair stylists or other working people who encounter substantial numbers of average citizens over the course of their day, would increase the impact of the Democracy Schools and deepen the strengthening of civil society, allowing it to reach the parts of society where it is most needed.

Create more forums for Democracy School alumni and political parties to come together. The Democracy Schools are conducted as part of NIMD's goal of bringing political parties and civil society together in a dialogue, but they have not yet accomplished this task. Instead, the Democracy Schools have built civil society capacity in four cities and had a direct impact on the lives, skills and education of hundreds of Georgians. However, there is ample potential to use the Democracy Schools to strengthen the link between civil society and political parties.

Develop next steps for task forces, including bringing minority parliamentarians more into the process. The multiparty task forces for women and minorities helped build a valuable foundation for this important work, but more work is needed in this area. NIMD should develop a phase two for this programme. With regard to women in politics, this might



include solidifying party policies on quotas for the list as well as other internal structures for bringing women more fully into political life. It could also include developing a battery of legislation that would grow out of the task force and enjoy multiparty support, and supporting parties in their efforts to pass this legislation.

Build NIMD's institutional strength. NIMD Georgia has a solid reputation among a range of stakeholders in Georgia. This puts NIMD in a good position to lay the groundwork for any contingency should its current director leave. Although there is no reason to think this will happen in the immediate future, it cannot be assumed that the Executive Director will serve in his current capacity indefinitely. NIMD has already begun some preparatory work in this regard by highlighting the staff as a whole and giving more responsibility to a number of staff members.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation. NIMD's monitoring and evaluation is currently based on informal mechanisms, such as efforts to seek feedback from Democracy School alumni, and periodical approaches, such as external reviews by NIMD headquarters. Neither of these approaches is particularly thorough. Stronger monitoring and evaluation would help NIMD get a better sense of the areas in which they could improve, as well as of the overall effectiveness of their work.



Acronyms

DPA	Direct Party Assistance
GD	Georgia Dream
IRI	International Republican Institute
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Netherlands)
MAP	Multi-annual Plan
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
PPA	Political Party Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNM	United National Movement



1. Introduction

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) commissioned an independent evaluation of three of its country programmes to assess the extent to which it achieves results. The evaluation focused on NIMD's three main areas of intervention and on a single cross-cutting theme:

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This country report examines the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the NIMD Georgia country programme in 2011–2014, including the extent to which the *NIMD Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* (MAP) and accompanying institutional reforms led to increased effectiveness. The two other case studies are available separately.

This final country report incorporates feedback from the NIMD country team and the internal steering committee, as well as from an external peer reviewer and the external steering committee. A synthesis evaluation report, which brings together the findings and recommendations that emerged from all three country case studies and the inception report, is available separately.

The Georgia case study draws on extensive desk-based research based on programme and other documents that were brought to the attention of the evaluation team at various points in the process. In addition, the team carried out interviews in Georgia from 17 July to 1 August 2015.



2. Background

2.1 Country context

Georgia is a small country located on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. It is approximately the size of the Netherlands. The most recent census estimates Georgia's population at 3.7 million, 52.3 per cent of which is female. Georgia, like most post-Communist countries, has an aging population compared to most of the developing world. A quarter to one-third of the population is over 55 years old, while approximately 30 per cent is under the age of 24.² Roughly 85 per cent of Georgia's people are ethnic Georgians. Armenians, who make up 5.7 of the population, and Azeris, 6.8 per cent, are the two largest minorities.

Georgia was ranked 79th of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index in 2013, placing it in the 'high human development' category.³ According to the UNDP, 18 per cent of Georgians live below the poverty line but only 0.1 per cent in 'intense poverty'.

2.2 Political context

The period 2011–2014 was one of substantial political change in Georgia. In the October 2012 parliamentary elections, the ruling United National Movement (UNM) was defeated by a new, broad opposition coalition known as the Georgian Dream (GD). The election brought an end to almost a decade of one-party rule, which was characterized by rapid reforms and significant reductions in corruption, but also a shrinking democratic space. The GD did not exist when the period being evaluated began, but by late 2012 it was governing Georgia.

The 2012 election was a political earthquake that dramatically changed the political party environment, ushered in a period of greater freedom and pluralism, and created an opening for a genuinely multiparty Georgia. Currently, the GD and the UNM share the political stage with several other political parties. National elections are due in the autumn of 2016.

Georgia is therefore emerging from a period of one-party, semi-authoritarian rule, which was preceded by almost seventy years of Communist rule that began in the 1920s. This partially explains the relative weakness of organic civil society and the absence of a tradition of multiparty politics. In the first years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia was torn by civil strife and conflict, but that period ended in the mid-1990s when Eduard Shevardnadze consolidated his rule. The Shevardnadze years, which lasted until 2003, were characterized by widespread corruption, a weak state and a floundering economy, but more political freedom than in many post-Soviet states. The Rose Revolution, which occurred in late 2003, ushered in a period of reform, fighting corruption and state building. There was also, however, declining democratic space, particularly in the period 2008–2012.

The years immediately following the Rose Revolution brought about rapid economic reforms and the promise of democratic reforms. However, the government quickly adopted policies that reduced media freedom, vilified all opposition as pro-Russian, and conflated the state and the ruling party. During these years, the ruling UNM consolidated a system of one-party

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>

³ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/GEO.pdf



rule that minimized the role and impact of all other parties. That one-party system collapsed in 2012 when the GD was elected to power.

The occupations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as ongoing Russian threats to expand its influence in Georgia, remain central to the political life of the country. However, there has been a slight cooling of tensions between the countries compared to the 2008–2012 period. Tourism and trade with Russia have increased, while martial rhetoric from Tbilisi has declined as the current government, while holding fast to Georgia’s position on Abkhazia and South Ossetia, has pursued a policy that is less confrontational towards Moscow.

2.3 International assistance context

Political party assistance and democracy assistance in general in Georgia are crowded fields in which international actors have been active for two decades. US party foundations, such as the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), have been the most visible players in this field, providing assistance to political parties in Georgia since the mid-1990s. Their programmes have ranged from assisting political parties with planning election campaigns and constituency outreach, to training candidates, including targeted training for women candidates. The NDI currently works with five parliamentary parties while the IRI focuses its efforts on helping parties to build better communication with their membership at the local level.

German party foundations have also been active in Georgia. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Friedrich Neumann Foundation and Konrad Adenauer Foundation all have offices in Tbilisi, and work with parties aligned with their respective political ideologies. Their activities have included organizing conferences on topics central to their ideological platforms and conducting study tours in Germany for political party leaders and youth wings. Dutch party foundations, such as the Max van de Stoel Foundation and the Liberal Party Foundation, have also worked with parties on ideology and electoral programme development, and have occasionally engaged with party youth wings.

2.4 NIMD country programme overview

NIMD established its current office in Georgia in 2009, although it had been implementing programmes there since 2004. The programme started as a collaboration between the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD). It published a book in 2006, *The Political Landscapes of Georgia*, which provided a useful overview of the Georgian political environment following the Rose Revolution.

In the years 2008–2010, NIMD Georgia focused on multiparty dialogue, direct party assistance (DPA) and determining mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating political party development. These programmes took place in a more difficult political environment, but helped lay the foundations for current NIMD Georgia programmes.

The Dutch Government restructured its development cooperation in 2011, reducing its number of priority countries. Georgia was no longer a Dutch Government priority, which placed NIMD’s ability to maintain its Georgia programme under



threat. However, NIMD was eventually able to maintain some government support, and diversify its funding effectively. The Georgia programme increased in size over the evaluation period. The period of uncertainty was not mentioned by the country team during the evaluation mission and only raised by the NIMD Director of Programme.

The new programme began in a polarized environment. The governing party aroused fierce loyalty in some and angry opposition from others. Building trust with political parties was therefore a challenge. From the beginning, NIMD Georgia worked with many parties and involved regions beyond Tbilisi. NIMD Georgia has pursued activities that seek to strengthen multiparty democracy in Georgia, while also acting as a regional hub for programmes that bring together representatives from the three South Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Recently, representatives from Ukraine have also been included in these activities. Although NIMD Georgia has formed partnerships with various individuals and organizations to develop and shape its programmes, it has primarily delivered programmes on its own.

In 2011–2014 NIMD Georgia’s programme focused on four broad programme areas:

1. The Multiparty Programme facilitates dialogue on key issues between several political parties in Georgia. The primary focus of this activity is to bring more women and national minorities into politics. However, this activity also included other dialogues between parties and workshops during the evaluation period.
2. The Political Party Assistance (PPA) programme supports partner political parties with strategic planning and aims to help them to strengthen their organizational capacity, institutionalization and internal democracy. By supporting the institutional development of political parties, NIMD contributes to the emergence of strong, sustainable political institutions that are fundamental to the emergence and consolidation of multiparty democracies.
3. The Democracy Education Programme aims to increase the demand for democracy at the grassroots level, support the professional development and training of grassroots democracy activists and strengthen the basis for political pluralism in the regions. NIMD Georgia operates Democracy Schools in four major cities: Telavi, Gori, Kutaisi and Batumi. The study programme employs a tailored curriculum designed by a prominent group of experts to provide relevant knowledge and skills for effective civic participation in the regions. The five-month, in-depth educational programme focuses on democratic governance, democratic policy and political action issues and is independent of any formal institutions of higher education.
4. The Regional Programme seeks to implement activities at the regional/multilateral level by organizing an annual regional political dialogue, identifying possible areas of potential cooperation and contributing to the establishment of professional ties between the young leaders of the region.



These programme areas grow out of NIMD’s three major goals and the intervention logic in NIMD’s MAP:

1. A functioning multiparty dialogue;
2. Legitimate political parties; and
3. Fruitful interaction between political and civil society.

The relationship between the programme areas and the major goals is not directly linear, with one programme area aligned with each goal. Instead, the programme areas grow out of an attempt to pursue the goals in the context of Georgia’s complex and frequently changing political environment. For example, the PPA has sought to address the first two goals through various activities, such as inter-party dialogues, strategic planning for individual parties, and youth and women in politics programmes. Similarly, the democracy education programme, which includes the Democracy Schools NIMD Georgia has conducted in several cities, and efforts to democratize parties constitute attempts to achieve the third goal.

To help implement its programmes, NIMD has formed partnerships with national public institutions such as the Georgian Parliament, the Central Elections Commission and the Ombudsman, as well as with local experts from academia and think tanks. NIMD Georgia has occasionally drawn on the expertise of other organizations to help design and shape its programmes and specific outputs, such as training, publications, conferences and study programme curricula. For example, NIMD worked with the Heinrich Boell Foundation on designing the course on environmental issues that forms part of the Democracy School curriculum.

In 2015, the NIMD annual budget was roughly € 540,000. The main donor was the Dutch MFA. However, other donors such as the Dutch Embassy, the British Embassy, the European Partnership for Democracy and the Canadian Government provided project funding that constituted half of NIMD Georgia’s annual budget. Table 1 shows NIMD Georgia’s total annual budget (not its actual spending).

Table 1 NIMD Georgia annual budget (in €)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total number of staff on payroll (year end)	2	5	5	6	8
Local office costs (Staff + office running costs)	65,000	71,280	83,965	141,521	177,425
Programme budget	66,550	132,750	316,035	276,013	364,799
Total budget	131,550	204, 030	400,000	417,534	542,224

Source: NIMD HQ



3. NIMD country programme impacts

3.1 Multiparty dialogue

3.1.1 What is the programme logic?

NIMD Georgia's efforts to generate and support multiparty dialogue have grown out of an effort to make Georgian politics less polarized and centred around a government-opposition tensions, and more focused on issues, substance and possible common ground between parties. Even though this programme builds on some of the key themes in the 2012–2015 MAP, that document was not central to planning the multiparty dialogue, or to its implementation.

The *Georgia Context Analysis* (2010) describes the programme goals: 'In general terms, the NIMD programme in Georgia aims to contribute to the strengthening of a more pluriform political society. Making use of existing incentives for democratic reforms in Georgia, the programme aims to contribute to strengthening political parties as drivers of national reform processes. The focus will be on improving political parties' capacities to reach down into society and translate people's concerns and interests into policies'. This is a reflection of the big picture goals and logic of NIMD programmes in Georgia.

3.1.2 What is the available evidence of change?

NIMD's work with political parties in the multiparty dialogue has helped to create a space for discussion between parties with opposing political platforms and opinions. NIMD convenes two multiparty task forces: the task force on gender includes representatives of ten political parties, while the task force on national minorities consists of eight political party representatives. Two parties from the gender task force were not interested in working on issues related to national minorities. NIMD's multiparty dialogues have been exceptionally successful in the Georgian context, but similar programmes have been pursued by NDI at various times over the past 10–15 years. There is no direct competition at the moment as NIMD is the only organization currently undertaking this kind of work in Georgia.

Multiparty dialogue has contributed to greater consensus on two critical issues in Georgia's political life: the underrepresentation of women in politics and exclusion of national minorities from political life. As one party representative pointed out, the task forces have helped minimize radical political statements. The political discourse in Georgia is characterized by frequent inappropriate statements about women and minorities. These meetings help set minimum standards for communication on such issues.

A tangible result of the multiparty dialogue on gender issues is that ten parties have jointly adopted and signed a resolution on the need to use legal measures to increase women's representation in political party structures. Dialogue on this topic continues and it helps to keep the issue on the political agenda. This has led to some parties introducing internal policies on quotas for women on party lists, and so on. These policies will be put to the test in the 2016 elections. Thus far, little legislative change has come from these dialogues, suggesting that multiparty dialogue has not yet had as much of an impact as many might have hoped.



In the framework of the OSCE funded project, NIMD organized four meetings of eight political parties in the task force on national minority communities. The meetings highlighted the most urgent and highest priority issues for national minorities, and NIMD has committed, with support from its network of experts, to produce policy papers to help parties form their positions on these priority issues.

One goal of this task force is to have more members of national minorities included in the party lists for the 2016 elections. Due to this task force, political parties have started to talk about the problems faced by members of national minorities. NIMD's work in this area has been essential in helping Georgian political parties to make this modest but not insignificant progress. Few parties would have had any interest in or incentive to address these issues without encouragement and the establishment of a forum in which to do so.

Discussions held in the multiparty platform as well as consensus or jointly adopted policy statements by the parties seem to be gaining some traction within parties. This is helped by the fact that the political parties in these task forces are represented by individuals in leadership positions. The work of these task forces has been useful in terms of raising awareness of these issues and affecting the thinking of the leadership. For example, parties have made efforts to strengthen their women's wings and some parties have formally announced proposals to introduce internal party quotas for women, while some support an incentives-based system attached to funding. However, there is no firm evidence to suggest that this has translated into concrete changes in the policy or practices of political parties.

NIMD Georgia's regional programme brought together young leaders in political parties from the three South Caucasus countries, and in 2014 from Ukraine as well. These meetings included discussions with and lectures by European diplomats, politicians and other experts. Perhaps more significantly, it gave these young politicians an opportunity to conduct informal discussions across both party lines and national boundaries. This activity is not a major focus of this evaluation, largely due to issues of logistics and time, but donors and others spoke very highly of it, indicating that they believed it was helping to develop the next generation of leaders across the country.

3.1.3 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

Multiparty task forces have facilitated a strong dialogue among parties that consider themselves to be fierce political rivals, sitting together to discuss some common goals such as increasing women's political participation and political inclusion of national minorities. In this way, multiparty dialogue has helped to foster the type of inter-party dialogue and cooperation that should typically occur in the legislative chamber, but has not been possible in the tense political environment in Georgia.

3.2 Legitimate political parties

3.2.1 What is the programme logic?

NIMD Georgia's efforts to engender legitimate political parties is focused heavily on offering technical support to individual political parties. This is a natural but ultimately limited approach. The idea that helping individual parties to become stronger will lead to a political system based on legitimate political parties is appealing and intuitive, but it is not always



correct. This is particularly true when working with smaller political parties. For example, helping New Rights, a small party that has not been in parliament since the 2008 elections, increase its support or ability to function will do little to help Georgia develop a political system based on legitimate parties. It may even undermine that goal, as the presence of parties with some support, but not enough to get into parliament can sometimes be destabilizing in party list systems. New Rights boycotted the 2008 parliamentary elections after serving in the first post-Rose Revolution parliament. However, this decision undermined its relevance. By 2012 it was very much a minor party whose actions had little bearing on the broader political picture in Georgia. As with the rest of NIMD Georgia's programmes, the MAP was of only peripheral relevance to the programme logic.

The *Georgia Context Analysis*, a report written in 2010, accurately describes Georgia's political environment: 'The ruling party enjoys a much stronger organizational powerbase as well as policy developing capacities and is therefore able to deliver more to the voters. Yet, in this context one can debate to what extent the playing field for political parties is even in Georgia'. This understanding was essential to the programme logic and effective programming from in 2009–2012, but by late 2012 it was no longer relevant.

3.2.2 What is the available evidence of change?

Although almost all the parties interviewed had positive experiences of NIMD Georgia, the impact on individual parties varied. NIMD Georgia's direct party assistance programmes had the most significant impact on smaller parties such as New Rights, the Free Democrats and the Republicans. These parties are small enough to need a lot of help, but also have competent West-leaning leaderships that are open and receptive to help from the West.

The impact of NIMD Georgia's work on the major parties, the UNM and the GD, was less substantial. In the case of the UNM this was largely because the party has benefited from years of political party assistance from top private sector consultants. The UNM valued its relationship with NIMD Georgia, but while in power believed that NIMD Georgia had less to offer it. This changed when the UNM went into opposition following the 2012 election.

NIMD Georgia's impact on the GD was also more modest. This was due to a combination of the GD's lingering reluctance to embrace foreign assistance and, despite being a large party, its sometimes limited absorptive capacity. For NIMD Georgia, however, the GD is extremely important. As the ruling party, it will play a unique role in Georgia's future democratic development. NIMD Georgia has begun work to strengthen this relationship, and begun working with GD on ideology and platform development in advance of the 2016 elections.

Overall, NIMD's work with political parties has contributed to an increasingly multiparty political environment in Georgia. NIMD worked closely with most major, and some relatively minor, political parties throughout most of the evaluation period. This involved some particular challenges because while some Georgian political parties endure for many years, others come and go relatively quickly. For example, the GD emerged very quickly in late 2011 and has remained a highly significant party. The Christian Democrats, on the other hand, was, at least according to some, a significant political party in Georgia in 2011 and early 2012, but has all but disappeared since. NIMD has negotiated this complex setting well. For example, NIMD Georgia, drawing on its own knowledge of Georgian politics, quickly understood the importance of the GD and sought to work with it, despite the fact that the party was not in parliament until after the 2012 election.



Georgia's political parties also represent a broad range of capacity. The UNM, for example, has a great deal of political experience and expertise. Similarly, the Republican Party, despite the fact that it is a relatively small party, has a politically sophisticated and experienced leadership. The Conservative Party, by contrast, is a small party with very little political expertise. NIMD Georgia designed its programmes to give each party what it needed and could absorb, through a collaborative series of discussions with representatives from the parties. For some parties this meant working with NIMD Georgia to craft membership plans or to rethink their position following the 2012 election. For others it meant more quotidian, but nonetheless valuable, tasks such as compiling a booklet of contact information for regional offices and leaders. For NIMD Georgia, being able to craft programmes that reflected both the needs of individual parties and the political conditions in the country was essential to its success.

A significant thrust of NIMD Georgia's work involved ideology and efforts to help political parties understand ideological and political positions, as well as terms such as left, right, socialist and liberal more clearly. This is particularly relevant in Georgia where parties have, with a few exceptions, been based around personalities, patronage and a simple government-opposition dynamic. Helping parties to understand ideology, and therefore vision and policy, more clearly will help rationalize Georgia's political party system and link it more to interest representation.

Although there have been many years of political party assistance in Georgia, basic issues such as the meaning behind political ideology remain unclear to some parties. One expert who had worked with NIMD Georgia on this subject described working with a self-proclaimed right wing party that came up with a policy platform that in his words 'would have been accepted by any socialist party in Europe'. There was, however, evidence of progress too. The GD told us they were working with NIMD to build ties to other social democratic parties in Europe. The GD had previously not been able to identify itself with such ideological clarity, and had not needed to while leading a broad opposition coalition in 2012.

This approach is a reflection of a first generation approach to PPA—one that would benefit from being updated. The question of why, after so many years, programmes that are so similar to those of the past are still needed in Georgia remains unanswered. NIMD Georgia's programmes are sufficiently similar to previously implemented party assistance programmes that this question should be considered. It is a reflection of both the stagnancy (or perhaps the periodic rebooting) of Georgia's democratic development and the relatively limited options open to political party assistance organizations.

In general, NIMD Georgia's efforts to bolster legitimate political parties would be assisted by a clearer vision of what NIMD is seeking to accomplish with regard to multiparty democracy in Georgia and how this links to NIMD's intervention logic. A stronger and clearer definition of what is meant by both 'legitimate political parties' and a 'meaningful multiparty system' would help in this area. Similarly, an approach that recognized the deeply political nature of this work and engaged with parties through guidance and advice rather than technical support would also be of assistance. At this moment in Georgia's political development, when nascent links between interests, parties and a functioning pluralist system are beginning to emerge, this is particularly important.



3.2.3 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

NIMD Georgia has incorporated gender into much of its programming with political parties. Several parties reported that NIMD had helped them establish women's wings, while others indicated that NIMD had worked with them to develop an internal party position regarding quotas for women on the parliamentary lists. Less progress, however, was made with regard to ethnic diversity. This is partially due to the later start of that component of the programme, which began in 2014. It is also, however, evidence of the challenges that bringing ethnic minorities into political life face in Georgia. Political parties remain dominated by ethnic Georgians. Several party representatives, and other observers, mentioned that they expect the vote in ethnic minority regions to be more competitive in 2016 than in previous elections, but few parties had a programme, or any proposals, other than increasing the teaching of Georgian to help bring minorities more fully into Georgian political life.

3.3 Political-civil society interaction

3.3.1 What is the programme logic?

Democracy Schools are the primary programmatic attempt to improve the interaction between civil society and political parties. These Democracy Schools were generally well regarded, competition for entry was impressive and alumni spoke highly of the experience. Around 500 alumni of Democracy Schools continue to play an important role in the civic life of their respective cities, while a significantly smaller number are active in political parties. NIMD remains in close contact with these alumni, provides mini-grants to some of them and holds regular alumni events. This allows NIMD to monitor the progress and impact of the Democracy School alumni.

The programmatic logic behind the Democracy Schools is less clear. NIMD's work in Georgia, in the bigger picture, is focused largely on political parties. NIMD Georgia engaged extensively, and effectively, with most political parties during the evaluation period, building valuable relationships and winning their trust. The Democracy Schools, by contrast, were largely a civil society activity and had been designed as stand-alone programmes. Although some participants in these programmes came from political parties, a large majority did not.

This could have provided an opportunity for civil society activists to expand their skills and further interact with political parties, but that did not occur often enough. NIMD Georgia did not bring its strong ties with political parties sufficiently to bear on the Democracy School project. The political party representatives interviewed in Tbilisi knew about the schools, but most of them were not familiar with the programme. Some said they hoped to send more of their people to the schools in future, but did not speak about the subject with any great knowledge.

However, beginning in 2014 NIMD Georgia started to make efforts to build connections between political parties and the Democracy Schools. For example, in an effort to recruit more political party representatives, NIMD has approached and encouraged parties' central offices to distribute the call for applicants among their regional branches and memberships.

In addition, in recent years, NIMD Georgia has organized joint seminars with leaders of political parties and the Democracy School representatives to discuss urban development



issues. The main objective behind these meetings was to create a space and process in which political parties and politically active citizens could engage in policy discussions, establish contacts and explore opportunities for cooperation. NIMD Georgia plans to hold more of such meetings at the local level to support more interaction and dialogue among local civil society and political parties. In total, sixteen alumni of four Democracy Schools (two selected participants from each school for each event) and sixteen politicians from four political parties (the United National Movement, the Free Democrats, the Conservative Party of Georgia and the Republican Party of Georgia) participated in the event together with the NIMD Georgia team.

Throughout 2011–2014, NIMD Georgia’s work with political parties rarely addressed issues that were specific to working with civil society or changing the culture, habits and behaviour of political parties. Most of the direct political party assistance offered by NIMD Georgia was technical in nature, helping parties to develop strategic plans and fundraising plans, sharpen their ideologies or otherwise function more effectively. Few if any efforts were made to change the more fundamental culture surrounding political parties in Georgia. This would have been particularly valuable given the contempt with which, at least based on the public statements of the current⁴ and former prime minister,⁵ the GD appears to hold civil society. This contempt is based in no small part on ignorance of the kind that could be reduced by NIMD Georgia’s interventions.

Much of NIMD Georgia’s work with political parties was aimed specifically at strengthening political parties, but some included engagement with civil society. The multiparty task forces on both women and minorities, for example, brought political parties into contact with civil society leaders and organizations, but this was a peripheral effect rather than central goal of the project.

Nonetheless, NIMD’s work with both political parties and civil society activists, the latter through the Democracy Schools, has contributed to a changing tone in Georgian politics. Many political party representatives noted that the multiparty events organized by NIMD represented the best, and in some cases the only, multiparty dialogues in Georgia, which were conducted in a constructive and non-confrontational manner. While this reflects the degree of trust and confidence all the parties have in NIMD Georgia, it also provides an opportunity to conduct dialogue of a more civil and democratic nature. This would be a significant contribution to the changing political environment in Georgia. Like NIMD Georgia’s other programmes, the MAP was not directly drawn on in crafting the programme.

3.3.2 What is the available evidence of change and coherence?

The evaluation team conducted focus groups with Democracy School alumni in Telavi and Gori. A theme that came across very clearly from these focus groups was that Democracy School alumni use the skills and knowledge from the Democracy School to improve their civic engagement, and that these individuals remain involved in the civic life of their cities. As one participant put it: ‘Democracy School alumni are in the middle of everything that happens here [in Gori]’. Moreover, because the Democracy Schools were held outside of Tbilisi, they have substantially increased the overall level of civic engagement in those cities, thus helping spread democratic norms, civil society and activism beyond the capital. In

⁴ <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27556>

⁵ <http://www.eurasianet.org/taxonomy/term/4345>



addition, NIMD's grants programme offered to the Democracy School alumni has allowed several alumni groups to implement small projects at the local level and test out the ideas and skills acquired during the programme.

Democracy School alumni described their experience as having a highly significant, almost life changing, impact. They indicated that in their cities, Democracy Schools have no real equal in terms of the length of the programme, quality of the teaching and excellent pool of experienced trainers with whom they could interact. Given the shortage of quality civic education and comprehensive soft skills training in the regions of Georgia, Democracy Schools offer a clear advantage to active citizens in these cities.

3.3.3 How have gender and diversity been incorporated?

Gender was incorporated into this programme by establishing a good gender balance in each Democracy School. Both gender and ethnic diversity were topics of discussion during the Democracy Schools and in dialogues between Democracy Schools and political parties. However, the participants in the Democracy Schools are still almost all ethnic Georgians. NIMD Georgia has discussed addressing this by either establishing a Democracy School in an ethnic minority area, or seeking more aggressively to recruit ethnic minorities to participate in the Democracy Schools.

3.4 Gender and diversity

3.4.1 How have gender, ethnicity and youth been incorporated into the country strategy and planning?

Gender and diversity have rarely been explicitly incorporated into NIMD's country strategy and programme planning. Monitoring and evaluation-related documents do not track these aspects specifically either, although they do provide data on the gender of participants in various NIMD Georgia activities. Nonetheless, an examination of programme activities and anecdotal evidence show that gender considerations do form part of the NIMD programmes.

3.4.2 How has gender been incorporated into activities?

Women currently constitute more than 53 per cent of the Georgian population, but remain heavily underrepresented in politics. The proportion of women in parliament is only 11 per cent, which places Georgia 106th out of 190 countries.

In addition, only one of the fifteen parliamentary committees is chaired by a woman, while five committees have a woman as their deputy chair. Just three of the twenty government ministers are women. According to the Georgian Women's Movement, women comprise only 11 per cent of local council members across Georgia, and this number has not changed in decades. In many big cities and municipalities there is not a single woman on the local municipal assembly. In only one municipality out of 59, Tianeti, is there a woman administrative head. There is not a single woman mayor or governor in Georgia.⁶

⁶ See DFT watch: <http://dfwatch.net/activists-rally-in-tbilisi-to-demand-womens-quotas-in-politics-34174>



NIMD documents on programme activities show that gender has been incorporated into country level activities through public events and programme-specific actions. There is a good gender balance among Democracy School students, as approximately half the participants are women and the schools' educational programme includes a module to raise awareness of gender issues as part of the human rights curriculum.

In the past five years, there have been more discussions around the role of women in politics, including topics such as quotas or other means to ensure that more women are placed on party lists. This cannot all be attributed to NIMD's multiparty task force on women in politics, but that task force has contributed somewhat. Parties reported that NIMD had not only encouraged more discussion about women in politics, but also helped them craft their own internal strategies and positions to increase the involvement of women in political life. For some parties this meant support from NIMD to create a women's wing; for others it meant strategies for appointing more women to leadership positions in the regions.

Given the momentum on gender issues and the increased activism of the women's movement, but at the same time increased levels of violence against women in Georgian society, NIMD is reactivating its multiparty task force on gender and, in combination with its publications and public events, helping to build a consensus on women's political participation.

Given the new political agenda, and that 2015 was made the Year of Women in Georgia, the task force was refreshed with more senior delegates from the political parties. As a follow-up, NIMD Georgia carried out an informal mapping of the positions of political parties on gender, and published a gender index measuring political parties' performance on gender at the institutional level, programmatic level and while campaigning during elections. The index has provided a baseline for gender data and created incentives for parties to improve their standing. The study was of 20 parties along two different dimensions. The presentation of the findings to all parties helped to start a dialogue about women's representation in parties, as some big parties received zero points in certain areas. NIMD Georgia plans to repeat the exercise in 2016 in order to offer a comparative picture of whether parties have improved their standing on women's representation. On 8 March, all parties agreed to implement some measures to increase women's participation.

NIMD Georgia is viewed externally by stakeholders in the field as a gender sensitive organization that strives to promote women's participation in politics as an integral part of developing democratic culture in Georgia. Several high profile events on women's political participation organized by NIMD Georgia seem to have contributed to raising the bar on the quality of public debate and inter-party dialogue on this topic.

3.4.3 How has ethnicity been incorporated into activities?

The issue of national minority representation in politics is addressed by the multiparty task force on national minorities, which includes representatives of eight parties. It aims to increase the representation of national minorities in political parties and, more specifically, on parties' electoral lists. As part of the ongoing OSCE funded project, which commenced in 2014, each party in the task force has committed to devise action plans on increasing national minority representation. For its part, NIMD Georgia is planning to fund two interns in each party—one each from the largely Armenian region of Samtskhe-Javakheti and the heavily Azeri region of Kvemo Kartli. The idea is to help parties identify leaders at the local



level and potentially include these individuals on their party lists. The overall goal is to help political parties develop their policies on national minority inclusion.

Parties expressed satisfaction with the NIMD-led task force on ethnic minorities in politics, but less progress has been made in this area. The task force started some useful conversations, but there is still a great deal to be done. Party leaderships and parliamentary representation continue to be dominated by ethnic Georgians. Other than calls to teach the Georgian language to ethnic minorities, there have been few policy proposals for expanding the opportunities for ethnic Azeris or Armenians to become more involved in Georgia's political life. This remains an important next phase in Georgia's democratic development. There are no ethnic political parties in Georgia. Instead, ethnic minorities have generally supported the governing party in large numbers, although several interviewees told the team they expect this to change in 2016. Generally, the major parties will offer a few seats on the party list to members of ethnic minorities, but the people elected have limited influence on the party or in the legislature

3.4.4 How have youth been incorporated into activities?

NIMD Georgia's programmes have only rarely been focused explicitly on youth. However, the regional programme has a youth focus and has helped bring young party activists into dialogue with each other. Democracy School participation is somewhat skewed towards the young, but also represented a broad age range. This is significant in Georgia where many civil society programmes do not pay sufficient attention to older citizens, who make up a significant proportion of the population.



4. Relevance

4.1 Is NIMD a flexible organization that responds to local context?

NIMD has generally demonstrated a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the local context. This has been a central ingredient of its success. NIMD started operating in Georgia in a polarized environment as the governing UNM enjoyed strong support but also faced an angry and vocal opposition. Initially, NIMD worked with seven political parties in Georgia, six of which were in opposition. As in many countries, there are dozens of political parties in Georgia, so working with all of them would have been extremely ineffective. NIMD had to choose which parties to work with, initially based on criteria of size and relevance. Over time, and particularly since the 2012 election, these criteria have expanded and changed.

In 2011 NIMD started to work with political parties on strategic planning, using the new NIMD methodology first tried out in Georgia, and worked with a handful of opposition parties to develop their strategies, programmes and brands.

The political landscape has changed dramatically since 2012, creating new political realities and needs. Two of the seven parties with which NIMD worked have disappeared; two opposition parties came to power under the umbrella of a broad coalition; and the ruling UNM went into opposition confronting the loss of large parts of its support base, the erosion of its previously wide membership, including the youth wing, and new fundraising needs.

NIMD has adapted well to this change and has realigned its PPA programme goals and targets accordingly. NIMD is fortunate to be led by somebody who is viewed, with reason, as a savvy political analyst. This has been essential to NIMD's ability to navigate the complex political environment in Georgia. After the 2012 elections, NIMD started to renew its plans, based on the new realities and the needs of the parties. After the new coalition was formed in the autumn of 2012, NIMD convened a meeting with the new ruling coalition partners to discuss how to work together. The coalition partners showed an interest in learning and were open about the existing challenges. It was a highly successful one-off event but a repeat was not a priority for the rest of the programme.

Shortly after the elections, NIMD Georgia started strategic planning with a ruling coalition partner, the Republican Party, after which the strategic plan of the Republicans was renewed. In 2014, NIMD Georgia started to work with another partner in the governing coalition, the Conservative Party, to help it strengthen its youth wing and conduct a full strategic planning exercise. NIMD Georgia has also renewed its cooperation with the UNM and, based on the needs of the party, conducted workshops with it on fundraising and supporter outreach.

Until now, there has been no strong bilateral cooperation with the GD. The party has not paid much attention to party development, as until recently it was mainly operating in electoral mode contesting presidential elections in 2013 and local elections in 2014. NIMD Georgia however, has plans to work with the GD on developing an ideological platform.

All the political parties and experts interviewed pointed out that NIMD Georgia has managed to stay neutral in a highly polarized environment. This has been possible to achieve by



maintaining relations with all political players and consistently nurturing dialogue. At the moment PPA works mainly with parliamentary parties, but the multiparty format also includes non-parliamentary parties. The multiparty format has helped to bring all parties on board and to maintain trust.

In general, NIMD's political party support in Georgia is reflected in the findings from the 2014 NIMD DPA evaluation. In general terms: 'The NIMD programme in Georgia aims to contribute to the strengthening of a more pluriform political society. Making use of existing incentives for democratic reforms in Georgia, the programme aims to contribute to strengthening political parties as drivers of national reform processes. The focus will be on improving political parties' capacities to reach down into society and translate people's concerns and interests into policies'.

4.2 Is NIMD's political party assistance niche relevant?

Broadly speaking, NIMD has worked very effectively with political parties in an environment that is both crowded, as other organizations such as NDI and IRI continue to work with political parties, and challenging, because political party assistance, in one form or another, has occurred continuously in Georgia for the past two decades. Most of the political parties interviewed indicated they were able to work effectively with several different assistance providers because they understood which niche each organization occupied. For example, one party representative told us that his party understood that NDI worked with parties in parliament, IRI focused more on training and NIMD was more oriented around strategic guidance and planning.

Although the field of political party assistance was crowded in 2011–2014, and remains so today, NIMD Georgia has created a niche defined by three characteristics. First, NIMD Georgia was viewed as the most neutral of the party support organizations, as it is not seen as having supported either the GD or the UNM at any point in the past four years. While NIMD Georgia was viewed as not favouring either of the major blocs that currently dominate Georgian political life, it was generally viewed as favouring pro-West parties while disdaining parties more sympathetic to Moscow. This was confirmed not just by party representatives across the political spectrum, but by other observers, ranging from trainers to civil society activists.

Second, NIMD focused more on the ideological side of political parties, helping self-proclaimed right- or left-leaning parties understand what those categories mean and what a platform based on such an ideology might look like.

Third, NIMD was more nimble and flexible than other party assistance organizations. It was able to adapt its programming to developments such as the emergence of the GD, the impact of the political earthquake of the 2012 elections on virtually every party in Georgia or the current rise of new parties in advance of the 2016 election.

NIMD currently works with most, but not all political parties in Georgia. The two notable exceptions are Democratic Movement-United Georgia, led by Nino Burjanadze and viewed as sympathetic to Russia, and the socially conservative Alliance of Patriots, which is also seen as sympathetic to Russia. Both parties are also believed to receive funding from Moscow. NIMD explained this by saying that it only works with democratic parties in its direct



assistance programme, but some observers asserted that, based on its record, the UNM might not be considered democratic either.

The problem for NIMD is that criteria such as whether a party is democratic are heavily subjective. This has not yet become a major problem, but it is easy to see it becoming more of a problem as the 2016 election approaches. The Democratic Movement and Alliance of Patriots could pick up strength and represent a non-trivial number of voters. NIMD could find itself in the difficult position of working with peripheral parties such as New Rights while ignoring, on relatively subjective and flimsy grounds, much bigger parties. This would begin to make the inter-party dialogues less effective and limit NIMD's impact on the development of multiparty democracy. The Patriots have been invited to events but have not participated. This creates a conundrum for NIMD because the Patriots may have little interest in working with a West-funded party assistance organization, but they are increasingly pertinent to political life in Georgia.

By not working with parties viewed as pro-Russia, NIMD creates two additional problems. First, in Georgia many parties are called pro-Russia and viewed that way by some of the electorate. For example, the ruling GD party is regularly described as pro-Russia by the UNM opposition. Second, real multiparty pluralism in Georgia must include representation for pro-Russian ideas and socially conservative opinions. If these views exist among the electorate, they need to be reflected in the political system. Without this, meaningful pluralism cannot occur.

4.3 Is NIMD a learning organization?

NIMD Georgia is a learning-based organization to a degree. Based on interviews with the NIMD Georgia team, as well as with various partners and stakeholders in Georgia, it is apparent that NIMD seeks feedback from its partners as well as participants in the Democracy School, and views such feedback as important.

NIMD Georgia draws less on previous evaluations of either its work specifically or NIMD's work more globally. This is partially due to the relative paucity of Georgia-specific evaluations of NIMD. Broader organization-wide evaluations were rarely mentioned during the evaluation. Nonetheless, NIMD Georgia seems to have a solid understanding of the goals, approaches and strategies of NIMD globally.

NIMD has its own formal and informal mechanisms for learning, getting feedback about its programmes and otherwise improving its work. Because NIMD is in close contact with the alumni of the Democracy Schools, it receives frequent feedback about the programme as well as suggestions about how to improve it. Similarly, the nature of the bilateral relationship between NIMD and the political parties lends itself to frequent comments from the parties. It was clear from the interviews that the parties are very comfortable indicating what they want from NIMD and letting it know when something is either working or not working.

Although NIMD Georgia staff did not cite or allude to specific documents or evaluations, it was apparent that staff members had learned from their engagement with NIMD headquarters. Interviewees at NIMD Georgia alluded to internal reviews by headquarters, and to participating in similar reviews of NIMD projects in other countries. This process



allowed the NIMD Georgia staff to get a better sense of what NIMD does around the world, and of how they might learn from that.

NIMD's Evaluation of Direct Party Assistance appears to have had an influence on NIMD Georgia's programming. While NIMD staff did not refer to the document directly, it was clear that some of the guidelines offered around balancing inter-party work and direct party assistance, the need to address causes rather than simply symptoms of party dysfunction, and so on, have helped frame NIMD Georgia's approach. This is not surprising, given that Georgia was one of the case study countries in the report. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that NIMD Georgia is thinking about its work in a holistic and comparative context.



5. Effectiveness and efficiency

5.1 Is the country programme strategic and coherent?

NIMD Georgia has demonstrated itself to be both strategic and flexible. This was most notable in the way that it was able to respond to the dramatic change in Georgia's political party environment following the GD's defeat of the UNM in the 2012 election. That election made some parties that had been exploring the ramifications of a long period in opposition suddenly part of the ruling coalition, turned a ruling party that had expected to rule for decades into an opposition party, and saw a new ruling party emerge from almost nowhere in less than a year.

These developments not only changed the nature of the assistance that it was appropriate to offer each party, but also had strong implications for multiparty dialogue. The election and its aftermath also created intense competition between the victorious GD and the defeated UNM.

NIMD's ability to adapt to changes in political circumstances, some of which were unexpected, has helped it remain relevant and respected across the partisan spectrum. This was made clear in the formal interview with the GD and through informal conversations with members of the GD in Georgia. NIMD immediately recognized the significance of the GD, a party that was not in parliament and had initially not polled particularly well, in late 2011. This made it possible to build a relationship with the party and work more closely with it than any of the other party institutes were able to. Difficulties remain, as the GD is more suspicious of cooperation with Western organizations than most other parties, but NIMD is in a better position to overcome these than other political party assistance organizations in Georgia.

NIMD's work is more guided by the three big picture goals of expanding inter-party dialogue, increasing the legitimacy of political parties and building more links between civil society and political parties, than by a deep analysis of the theory of change itself. However, the former are clearly component parts of the latter. Thus, while the theory of change was not mentioned by the NIMD staff, staff members were aware of the framework and demonstrated this in their programme designs.

NIMD's ability to navigate the complex and changing political waters of Georgia reflects obvious political sophistication, but in other respects NIMD lacked a big picture strategic perspective. For example, NIMD was not able to articulate a vision of what a truly multiparty Georgia might look like, or of how to get from there to here. This is obviously a difficult challenge, but a vision, at least in broad strokes, is necessary to guide NIMD's programming. Thus, while NIMD was able to respond to change and political developments strategically, in some cases it lacked a broader strategic vision.

5.2 What is the country programme's niche and comparative advantage?

In the context of the support provided to political parties in Georgia over the decades, NIMD has a distinct and effective approach. NIMD's approach to party assistance is characterized by less of an emphasis on teaching and directly imparting knowledge. Instead, NIMD offers



guidance and advice to political parties based on the needs of each. In addition, NIMD is less dependent on international staff than other party assistance organizations. Unlike NDI or IRI, NIMD's Executive Director is Georgian, it uses mostly Georgian experts in its Democracy Schools, and implements its programmes using its own staff—so it is not dependent on a large coterie of foreign or domestic experts.

Together, these characteristics of NIMD programming give it a comparative advantage and constructively reflect the current attitudes of political parties in Georgia to capacity building. After decades and millions of dollars' worth of assistance, Georgian parties no longer see themselves as needing the kind of teaching-based training that they have experienced for so many years. This is particularly true of the UNM, which remains the most sophisticated party in Georgia as well as the one with the greatest capacity. The leadership of other smaller parties, most notably the Republicans and the Free Democrats, have also been exposed to many hours of Western trainers showing them how to do things and have a diminished appetite for this approach. The GD, while lacking the political skill and capacity of some of the other parties, is generally reluctant to embrace a foreign trainer paradigm for reasons of politics as well as style.

The Democracy Schools, of course, are an exception as they have continued to rely heavily on a teaching and training model. However, the Democracy Schools targeted civil society activists in the regions who told us that they were anxious, even 'starving', for the kind of information NIMD Georgia provides in a Democracy School.

NIMD Georgia also emphasized building relationships with political parties and maintaining neutrality. Relationship building is essential for the kind of strategic guidance that NIMD Georgia has sought to offer political parties. This kind of sophisticated, and valuable, support cannot be delivered if relationships exist simply on the surface and are not based on mutual trust. Similarly, the inter-party dialogues rested on the presumption that NIMD Georgia would be resolutely neutral. This stance was not easy for many in Georgia's civil society sector to maintain, whether Georgian or not, particularly in the tumultuous and polarizing election year of 2012.

The extent to which gender and diversity were mainstreamed in this programme was mixed. The Democracy School had roughly equal numbers of male and female participants, and there were female trainers and guest speakers. Similarly, the women's task force was an important and, perhaps indirectly, effective multiparty forum. Gender played a less significant role in the bilateral party support work, however, and issues of ethnic diversity remain on the periphery of Georgian politics in a way that is no longer true of gender issues.

NIMD's comparative advantage stems from the fact that it is a local organization that does not have foreign leadership, has veered away from a strong training paradigm and is able to respond nimbly to changes in Georgia's frequently evolving political environment. While NIMD's programmes and strategic assumptions are unique, many of its activities and types of support are of the kind that have been offered to Georgian political parties for well over a decade.

The evidence that was gathered from the interviews with representatives of political parties suggests that these types of intervention are still valued. Nonetheless, the question of how many times a workshop on inter-party democracy or communication between the centre and the regions needs to be repeated for a particular party cannot be ignored. The resilience



of these challenges suggests that NIMD may be treating the symptoms rather than the causes of problems, a concern that was raised in NIMD's global DPA evaluation.

Because NIMD Georgia enjoys very strong relationships with political parties and is trusted, at least across the spectrum of political parties with which NIMD chooses to work, NIMD Georgia may have a comparative advantage in determining what is behind the resilience of these problems. This could help NIMD Georgia take a leading role in designing the next iteration of political party support in the country.

This approach would play to NIMD Georgia's strengths and allow it to add value in ways that would be more difficult for other political party support organizations. NIMD Georgia has already demonstrated that it is more nimble than other organizations in its ability to respond to changes in Georgia's political environment. This flexibility could allow NIMD to explore programmes that are less bound by the bureaucratic logic of other organizations and more based on NIMD Georgia's deeper understanding of party politics in Georgia.

5.3 What are the most effective and efficient approaches to delivering its objectives?

It also remains the case that NIMD, like the other political party assistance providers in Georgia, continues to take a largely technical approach to working with political parties. Thus, its work has succeeded in helping individual parties become stronger, more effective and more knowledgeable, but has done less to move Georgia towards a more rational political party system or to engender strong representation-based parties.

There is still an opportunity to do this in Georgia—particularly as multiparty democracy, rather than either one-party rule or a simple government-opposition dynamic, the two most common paradigms of the previous decades—has begun to characterize Georgian politics. A focus on interest representation and on the relationships between parties and the interests they seek to represent is a logical next step for NIMD, and one that it is well poised to take. For example, as parties begin to clarify the meaning of their ideological identifications, a logical next step would be to develop and implement strategies for building ties to organizations and individuals that support that ideological inclination. This would help parties view themselves, and their place in Georgia's political party system, in a more disciplined and consistent way.

5.4 Does the country programme have sufficient organizational capacity to deliver its objectives?

The NIMD country office has the capacity to run multiple programmes and deliver specific results. Donors interviewed during the evaluation pointed out that NIMD is a highly functioning organization with a good project management track record. According to the donors, NIMD proposals and reports are always of high quality. This is particularly impressive given that many small and medium-sized NGOs find it onerous to report to different donors on different programmes, as this requires different kinds of financial and other reporting. This was the impression of the evaluation team too, based on reviewing NIMD reports and comparing them to similar documents from other organizations evaluated by the authors.



A high implementation rate keeps the office busy with ongoing projects and everyday activities. This raises a question about the extent to which staff members have time to reflect collectively on the theory of change and evaluate their work priorities strategically. NIMD Georgia currently does not have staff dedicated to monitoring, evaluation and learning who could systematize the learning processes within the organization, bring all the project intervention logic, results and outputs under a single holistic umbrella and evaluate the extent to which these reflect NIMD’s theory of change.

Staff interviewed during the evaluation pointed out that changes at the headquarters level did not have much impact on the functioning of the NIMD Georgia office. All the activities continued to function as planned.

Because NIMD Georgia is led by a Georgian, the dynamic between NIMD Georgia and the political parties is different to that of other party assistance organizations. Having Georgian leadership makes interactions with parties easier, smoother and quicker because of the obvious issues linked to language and logistics. However, there is a political dynamic to this as well. Political parties see NIMD Georgia more as a peer organization offering guidance and advice than an outside organization trying to teach them something.

NIMD Georgia’s local leadership and strong local staff have helped make it possible to work more deeply in Georgia’s political life. For example, NIMD Georgia’s efforts to recruit applicants for the Democracy Schools have been extremely thorough. NIMD Georgia’s staff and leadership have travelled to many of the surrounding areas of the Democracy School cities.

NIMD Georgia is highly identified with its leadership, however, specifically with its Executive Director who has been with NIMD Georgia since late 2009 and is extremely well thought of by political parties, donors and others. While this is a tremendous asset for NIMD, it could have a more mixed impact in future. Being too strongly linked to an individual leader can raise potential problems if something happens to that leader. NIMD Georgia has a strong team that includes more than just its Executive Director, so this potential problem is resolvable, but it should be considered.

Table 2 NIMD Georgia budget by source (in €)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total budget (all donors)	116,668	208,269	424,648	498,625	539,435
MFA share of total budget	100%	100%	67%	50%	57%
Number of grants	N / A	N / A	5	6	5

Source: NIMD HQ



5.5 Does the country programme have sufficient and flexible resources to deliver its objectives?

NIMD Georgia was effective in fundraising during the evaluation period. Table 2 shows a significant reduction in Dutch MFA funding and an increasing number of grants. Fundraising for diversified funds continues, and grant management and reporting tasks multiply as new projects with different donors increase the administrative burden on staff. NIMD Georgia has competent, respected and dedicated staff members who take their responsibilities seriously, but the range of new activities has increased their workload. The staff already seems to be overstretched and increasingly has to work extra hours.

5.6 Does the country programme have good monitoring and evaluation systems for monitoring and adjusting its objectives?

NIMD's monitoring and evaluation is currently based on informal mechanisms. The organization occasionally has meetings with the experts involved in their programmes and seeks their feedback. Feedback is also sought from Democracy School alumni and the local coordinators in the four cities where schools operate. Alumni pointed out during the focus group meetings in Telavi and Gori that their opinions are heard and they see their suggestions reflected in the improvements made to the programme from year to year.

Political parties also mentioned that they have informal exchanges of feedback with NIMD Georgia and feel that their views are taken into consideration. One of the parties mentioned during the interview with the evaluation team that they view cooperation with NIMD Georgia as a 'two-way process where NIMD supports the party in SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats] analysis and strategic planning and the party provides NIMD with its views on the applicability of this methodology in the Georgian context'.

Although useful, neither of these approaches seems to be particularly thorough. The evaluation team did not come across any documentation on baseline data or systematic tracking and evaluation of results. Similarly, the NIMD Georgia team made no mention of the Baseline and Review Toolkit methodology. Stronger monitoring and evaluation would help NIMD get a better sense of areas where they can improve, and of the overall effectiveness of their work.

5.7 Is the country programme efficient in its use of resources?

NIMD Georgia's annual budget increased every year from € 116,668 in 2010 to €539,435 in 2014. In 2012, 67 per cent of NIMD Georgia's budget came from the Dutch MFA. By 2014 this had declined to 57 per cent, indicating that NIMD Georgia is achieving some success in its efforts to diversify its funding. In addition, based on available data from annual reports for 2012–2014, eleven of NIMD Georgia's progress milestones went according to plan while only one did not. It also completed 24 milestones. Full data are available in Table 4 of the synthesis report.

NIMD Georgia has a local Executive Director and uses local expertise, which makes it a highly cost-effective organization. The range of programming it is able to provide for less than €600,000 is impressive. Other political party organizations frequently have annual budgets of 1.5–2 times this amount and do not accomplish significantly more.



6. Sustainability of NIMD country interventions

6.1 How sustainable is the multiparty platform?

If NIMD Georgia were to lose its funding for the multiparty platform, that work would be picked up by NDI and IRI. This might be in the form of donors providing resources to the US organizations to continue the work, or it might happen more informally. In the latter scenario, NDI or IRI would simply begin taking on more direct multiparty dialogue work if NIMD Georgia's presence decreased. There is almost no chance that the funding for this project would be taken over by a domestic source. There is very little funding from domestic sources for democracy work in Georgia. The primary sources of philanthropy of this kind stem from highly politicized entities that would be inappropriate funders for a programme of this kind.

6.2 How sustainable are the political party and parliamentary assistance?

The sustainability challenges are the same for the political party assistance programme as for the multiparty platform. It is also unlikely, based on informal conversations with the US party institutes and USAID, that USAID would expand its political party support in the foreseeable future, regardless of the fate of NIMD. Thus, if NIMD Georgia were to lose its funding, it is unlikely that all of its work would be absorbed by NDI or IRI. It is likely that political party assistance will be needed in Georgia for several years to come. The current climate is one from which multiparty democracy could emerge, but it will require interventions of the kind offered by NIMD.

6.3 How sustainable are civil society-political society interventions?

If funding for NIMD programmes were to cease or be dramatically reduced, the Democracy Schools would be affected the most. The Democracy Schools are entirely dependent on NIMD support, including financial support. Moreover, they are multifaceted programmes that could not be replicated cheaply or easily. While there are many civic education programmes in Georgia, none are as comprehensive and specifically focused on democracy-related questions. The loss of the Democracy Schools would also be a very unfortunate development, and it is the sense of the evaluation team that the Democracy Schools should be slightly modified and expanded if possible.

The Democracy Schools, however, are the component of NIMD's programming that is most independent and easy to package to a potential donor as a single, discrete activity. Thus, the possibility of finding alternative, albeit foreign, funding for the Democracy School should not be ruled out.

6.4 How sustainable are efforts to integrate gender and diversity?

Efforts to integrate gender and diversity are contingent on continuing to receive funding. If that were to change, these efforts would be difficult to maintain.



6.5 Overall, how sustainable is the country programme?

NIMD faces a similar challenge regarding sustainability as that of many NGOs in Georgia. While it would certainly be possible for NIMD to continue to diversify its funding, it will remain dependent on foreign funding for the foreseeable future. There is very little interest from the Georgian Government or from other domestic donors in supporting democracy assistance organizations in Georgia. Thus, NIMD's sustainability is contingent on an enduring international commitment to support political party work in Georgia.



7. Main findings and recommendations

7.1 Main findings

7.1.1 Overall country programme findings

The NIMD Georgia programmes were generally viewed very positively. Almost all the people interviewed indicated that they were pleased with their work with NIMD. Similarly, political party representatives all told the evaluation team that they valued their interactions with NIMD, found NIMD easy to work with and enjoyed ongoing benefits from their cooperation with NIMD. The donor for the regional dialogue expressed a similar level of satisfaction with NIMD's efforts to bring political party activists from the three South Caucasus countries together for fruitful discussions.

One expert with whom the team spoke indicated that (s)he had worked with all of the major party assistance organizations in Georgia and that: 'NIMD was by far the best'. This assertion was supported by a description of the depth of interaction between NIMD and political parties and of the relationship of mutual trust between NIMD and the parties.

NIMD enjoys a good reputation among stakeholders. NIMD's ability to deliver strong programmes is built on its solid reputation among all stakeholders, including political parties, political experts, Democracy School alumni and donors. Central to this reputation is the widespread perception that NIMD is politically neutral. Several interviewees implied that NIMD's neutrality was different to other party support organizations, which at times, most notably the 2012 parliamentary election campaign, were not seen in that way.

In addition to neutrality, NIMD was viewed as competent, engaged and willing to listen closely, particularly to political parties, to craft and implement appropriate programmes. Donors interviewed indicated that they believe NIMD's reputation with political parties, and the perception of NIMD as neutral, was very important too.

NIMD is in a unique position because it has local leadership, but it is highly identified by that leadership which raises challenges regarding institutionalization in the longer term. Local leadership has helped to make NIMD highly cost-effective and programmatically nimble, and helped develop the trust of political parties. However, the organization is perhaps too heavily identified with its leader.

There is an occasional disconnect between NIMD programmes and bigger picture NIMD goals. NIMD's programmes were effective and there was some synergy between the programmes, most notably between the party assistance and the multiparty dialogue. There was also an occasional disconnect, however, between the programmes and NIMD's overall goals. This was most apparent with regard to the Democracy Schools and the regional programmes, both of which were good stand-alone programmes but had few direct ties to either the rest of NIMD's portfolio or its broader goals.

The Democracy Schools, for example, were very successful but are largely a civil society programme. This could be changed by slightly modifying the programme, but this has not yet been done. The Democracy Schools have resulted in a significantly strengthened civil



society in four key cities, but no stronger ties or increased dialogue between civil society and political parties. The regional programme is also a very strong stand-alone programme, but one that exists outside of the broader NIMD portfolio or goals. It is focused on creating relationships and dialogue among the next generation of leaders in the region. This is important in its own right, but is somewhat disconnected from building a functioning political party system in Georgia.

7.1.2 To what extent did NIMD achieve its multiparty dialogue results?

NIMD has substantial convening power and is able to bring diverse parties together. Successful implementation of a multiparty dialogue rests on the ability to bring a range of parties together in a context of trust and neutrality. Parties will not participate in a multiparty dialogue if they believe the convener has already chosen a side. Although NIMD multiparty programmes did not include all parties, NIMD was able to bring the GD and the UNM together regularly for dialogues that several people told us would not have been possible elsewhere, including in the national legislature. A similar dynamic existed with regard to the regional dialogue, where parties were brought together from across much of the political spectrum from three different countries.

This convening power extended not only to bringing together a range of political parties, but also to raising issues with which Georgian political parties are not always comfortable. The multiparty task forces on women and minorities are examples of this. Fully incorporating women and non-Georgians into the political life of Georgia is a crucial next step for Georgia's democratic development, but not one that Georgian politicians are comfortable discussing at all times. NIMD's convening power created a space where this was possible.

Regional programmes could become even more important, given developments in the rest of the region. NIMD's regional programme has brought together young party activists from the three South Caucasus countries. It has recently begun to include participants from Ukraine too. Although not a primary focus of this evaluation, the interviewees with whom the team discussed this project, including donors, indicated that it was an excellent, well thought out and well implemented programme. Nonetheless, the direct connection between this programme and NIMD's broader goals is not entirely clear.

Given developments in the wider region, such as Azerbaijan slipping into an increasingly nasty authoritarian form of government and the ongoing efforts in Ukraine to build a multiparty democracy while combating Russian aggression, Georgia could become an even more important centre for regional dialogue. The good work NIMD has already done in this regard could become a foundation for greater efforts to bring party leaders from these countries together and to engender relationships between young leaders that could have a direct impact for decades to come.

7.1.3 To what extent did NIMD achieve its political party/parliamentary assistance results?

NIMD's PPA occurs in a crowded assistance environment but parties did not think there was any overlap. The political party assistance environment in Georgia is crowded, but it is also a country in which there is a long history of political party assistance, which creates two areas for potential overlap. The team noticed some areas, such as internal party communication or internal party democracy, that have been part of political party assistance in Georgia for



many years, but such instances were relatively few. For the most part, NIMD Georgia did not engage in the kinds of training, polling and campaign-focused work that has long been carried out by NDI and IRI. This helped to minimize the overlap between the work of the different party assistance organizations. Partners liked PPA but its impact varied from party to party. The range in size and competence of Georgian political parties was reflected in the impact PPA had on different parties.

7.1.4 To what extent did NIMD achieve its civil-political interaction results?

Democracy Schools have had an impact in their cities: Democracy School alumni are among the most active citizens in Batumi, Gori, Kutaisi and Telavi. The team was told on many occasions by alumni themselves, as well as journalists and other observers, that these alumni are involved in almost all the civil society activities in their cities. Democracy School alumni were active in the media, organizing around local political issues and, in some cases, working with political parties at the local level.

7.1.5 To what extent did NIMD achieve its gender and diversity results?

Discussions and task forces on issues such as women and national minorities were seen as helpful. The task forces were seen as effective structures for political parties to discuss ideas and proposals about women and national minorities. These discussions have contributed to the national political debate on these topics as they have led parties to adapt policies on gender-related issues and, according to participants, been the forums in which these issues are discussed most extensively among parties.

7.1.6 What was the influence of the *Multi-annual Plan, 2012–2015* and the accompanying institutional reforms?

The 2012–2015 MAP only indirectly informed NIMD Georgia. Staff had read and understood the plan, but did not cite it in any discussions of the programmes. As is described in the DPA evaluation document, the NIMD Georgia programme was substantially crafted by analysing the local political environment and developing programmes accordingly. Overall, this was a successful approach as NIMD Georgia had a sharp analytical understanding of politics in the country and the ability to work closely with individual parties, for example, to build agreement around programmes and activities.

7.2 Main recommendations

These recommendations are largely consistent with, or at least not contrary to, the general guidelines in NIMD Georgia's proposal for funding from the Dutch MFA for 2016–2020 (the PP3 document).

7.2.1 Recommendations on multiparty platform

Clarify criteria for determining with which political parties NIMD will work. The current criteria used by NIMD Georgia appear to be whether parties are sufficiently democratic and, less formally, their relationship with Moscow. These, however, are too subjective and informed by big picture geopolitical questions such as orientation towards the West and/or Russia. Moreover, criteria such as these could end up making NIMD less successful by leaving important players out of the programmes. At the very least, continued efforts should



be made to include parties that have previously declined to participate in the multiparty platform.

7.2.2 Recommendations on political party and parliamentary assistance

Do more work on internal party democracy. Parties in Georgia remain dominated by individual leaders based in Tbilisi. Party structures in the regions remain relatively weak and have little input into party decision-making. Given that NIMD works closely with individual parties and tailors its assistance programmes to the needs of each, it is well placed to help strengthen internal party democracy. Work on internal democracy plays to NIMD's comparative advantage relative to other party assistance organizations. Building genuine internal democracy requires a deep knowledge of the parties in question and deep trust in the assistance provider on the part of the political party. That is the context in which NIMD Georgia functions. It should be kept in mind, however, that efforts to strengthen party democracy in Georgia have been part of party assistance portfolios intermittently for many years. To succeed in this endeavour, NIMD will need a more in-depth approach that is built around a paradigm of consulting and advising rather than training or teaching.

NIMD should institutionalize its relationship with the GD. NIMD has begun to build a relationship with the GD and, based on conversations with the GD, it appears to have been more successful in this effort than any other party assistance organization. Nonetheless, the GD was less enthusiastic about its cooperation with NIMD than other political parties, and did not see the potential benefits of working with NIMD as clearly. NIMD Georgia has, for the most part, had a thoughtful approach to working with the GD. NIMD Georgia recognized its importance shortly after the GD was formed and worked with it before the 2012 election. However, the GD does not embrace foreign assistance as much as many other parties in Georgia. The NIMD-GD dynamic is particularly important to NIMD for several reasons. As the ruling party, the GD will play a huge role in Georgia's political development in the next few years. If it is engaged with NIMD, it will make it much easier for NIMD Georgia to have an impact. On the other hand, if NIMD does not institutionalize a good relationship with the GD, organizing multiparty dialogues, task forces, and so on, will be extremely difficult. Currently, the relationship is not in bad shape, but NIMD should be extremely vigilant about ensuring that the relationship continues to improve.

The unit of analysis should be party system not political parties. NIMD Georgia's approach to providing party assistance was built around a bilateral strategy, working closely with many different political parties. NIMD Georgia has helped these parties plan more strategically, communicate more effectively and generally increase their capacity. A more strategically appropriate approach would be for NIMD Georgia to think of the party system, rather than individual parties, as the unit of analysis and point of intervention. The goal of a multiparty system built around parties with distinct and competing visions, rather than just distinct and competing leaderships, would require different kinds of programmes and types of engagement with individual parties, but might be better for Georgia's longer term development.

7.2.3 Recommendations on civil-political society interaction

Expand Democracy Schools to new cities or rotate locations, possibly to include cities in minority ethnic areas, and admit more non-conventional applicants. Because the Democracy Schools have been conducted in four relatively small cities for several years, saturation point



is approaching with regard to applicants. The Democracy Schools, however, have had a substantial impact on those cities. Expanding the programme to different cities would have a bigger impact on Georgia's national democratic development. There are several ways this could be done. NIMD could conduct Democracy Schools in four different cities, including some, such as Marneuli or Akhalkalaki, that are located in areas with large minority ethnic populations. Alternatively, NIMD could rotate cities, conducting Democracy Schools in four new cities one year and the four original cities the next. This would ensure continuity in the original cities. Expanding the pool of participants to include more non-traditional applicants, such as, for example, hair stylists and other working people who encounter substantial numbers of average citizens over the course of their day, would increase the impact of Democracy Schools and deepen the strengthening of civil society, allowing NIMD to reach the parts of society where it is most needed.

Create more forums in which Democracy School alumni and political parties can come together. The Democracy Schools have been conducted as part of NIMD's goal of bringing political parties and civil society into dialogue together, but have not yet accomplished this. Instead, the Democracy Schools have built civil society capacity in four cities and had a direct impact on the lives, skills and education of hundreds of Georgians. However, there is ample potential to use the Democracy Schools to make the link between civil society and political parties stronger. One relatively direct way to do this would be to create more forums for meetings between political parties and Democracy School students or alumni in each of the four Democracy School cities. This could be done through structured discussion around a given issue in more general, town hall-style meetings or in various kinds of pre-election events. These events would make it possible for the Democracy School students and alumni to use their skills and knowledge to gain a better understanding of political parties and to build relationships.

7.2.4 Recommendations on gender/diversity

Develop next steps for task forces, including bringing parliamentarians from minority ethnic backgrounds more into the process. The multiparty task forces for women and minorities helped build a valuable foundation for this important work, but more work is needed in this area. NIMD should develop a phase two of this programme. With regard to women in politics, this might include solidifying party policies on quotas for the party list as well as other internal structures for bringing women more fully into political life. It could also include developing a battery of legislation that would grow out of the task force but enjoy multiparty support, and supporting parties in their efforts to pass this legislation.

The task force on national minorities should try to expand the role of parliamentarians from minority ethnic backgrounds in the task force, and create a more aggressive plan to address the issue of minority involvement in Georgian political life. Although this has been a problem in Georgia for many years, there are some indications that this could be changing. For example, it seems likely that in 2016, unlike in previous years, the vote in minority areas will not be delivered to the ruling party, but fought over by several parties. This is an opportunity for minorities to articulate their demands and for parties to listen to these demands as they court those votes. NIMD task forces could help facilitate this process.



7.2.5 Recommendations on improving NIMD's efficiency and effectiveness

Build NIMD's institutional strength. NIMD Georgia has a solid reputation with a range of stakeholders. This puts it in a good position to lay the groundwork for when its current director leaves. Although there is no reason to think that this will happen in the immediate future, it cannot be assumed that the Executive Director will serve in his current capacity indefinitely. NIMD has already begun some preparatory work in this regard by highlighting the staff team as a whole and giving more responsibility to a number of staff members. Many of the interviewees attributed much of NIMD's current status to its leader. Highlighting the work of other NIMD staff, and developing a cadre of experts who are visibly involved in NIMD's work will begin to deepen its institutional strength and make it less identified with its highly respected leader. The dynamic of an NGO being strongly identified with an individual leader is quite common in political development. While this identification can be very helpful for as long as it lasts, it frequently leads to a difficult transition when that leader leaves. NIMD must strive to avoid such an outcome.

7.2.6 Recommendations to further strengthen NIMD internal reforms

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation. NIMD's monitoring and evaluation is currently based on informal mechanisms, such as efforts to seek feedback from Democracy School alumni, and periodically applied approaches, such as external reviews commissioned by NIMD headquarters. Neither of these approaches is particularly thorough. Stronger monitoring and evaluation would help NIMD get a better sense of the areas in which they can improve, and of the overall effectiveness of its work. Grounding this monitoring and evaluation in the work done by NIMD outside of Georgia on aspects such as theories of change would also be helpful.

Some approaches to monitoring and evaluation would be relatively easy to implement. For example, a questionnaire measuring incoming Democracy School students' familiarity with the various concepts taught at the Schools and existing levels of civic engagement would provide good baseline data that would make it possible to measure the impact of the Democracy Schools. In addition, periodic surveys of or even focus groups with participants in DPA or multiparty dialogues would make it easier for NIMD to measure their impact.



List of interviewees and documents reviewed

Interviewees

Political parties

Pikria Chikhradze, Chairperson of New Rights, 28 July 2015
Irakli Kobakhidze, Secretary General of the Georgian Dream, 28 July 2015
Paata Kvizhinadze, Regional Coordinator, Conservative Party 30 July 2015
Manana Nachkebia, Political Secretary of New Rights, 28 July 2015
Buka Petriashvili, Free Democrats, 29 July 2015
Khatuna Samnidze, Chairperson of the Republican Party, 28 July 2015
Zurab Tchiaberashvili, United National Movement, 29 July 2015
Dimitri Tskitishvili, Head of International Relations, Georgian Dream, 28 July 2015
Temur Tsurtsunia, Secretary General of the Conservative Party, 30 July 2015

Experts

Giorgi Abashishvili, Deputy Head of the President's Administration, former trainer for NIMD, 23 July 2015
Karolina O Beachain Stefanzek, Expert/trainer for NIMD, 28 July 2015
Kornely Kakachia, Expert/trainer for NIMD, 27 July 2015
Bakur Kvashilava, Dean of School of Law and Politics, GIPA, trainer for NIMD, 29 July 2015
Baia Pataraiia, Women's Movement, 31 July 2015

International organizations

Florian Feyerabend, Regional Programmes Officer, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 23 July 2015
Teona Kupunia, NDI Georgia, 23 July 2015
Nermin Nisic, Chief of Party, IFES Georgia, 29 July 2015
Lado Razmadze, IRI Georgia, 27 July 2015
Malkhaz Saldadze, Heinrich Boell Foundation, 22 July 2015

Donors

Sophie Berishvili, Projects Manager, British Embassy, 29 July 2015
Ken Godfrey, Executive Director, European Partnership for Democracy, 29 July 2015
Chris Goff, Second Political Secretary, British Embassy, 29 July 2015
Nino Gogoladze, National Programme Manager, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, 22 July 2015
Hans PPM Horbach, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 30 July 2015
Lela Lomia, Political Adviser, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 30 July 2015
Floor Nuieten-Elzinga, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 30 July 2015



NIMD

Lizzy Beekman, Georgia Programme Manager, NIMD Headquarters, 21 July 2015
Mariam Chikhladze, Programme Officer, Democracy Education Programme, NIMD Georgia, 27 July 2015
Salome Mukhuradze, Programme Officer, Political Party Assistance Programme, NIMD Georgia, 22 July 2015
Levan Tsutskiridze, Representative in the South Caucasus, 27 July 2015

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NIMD (2015) Democracy Education Programme Activity Report, 2015. NIMD South Caucasus

NIMD (2015) South Caucasus regional programme proposal for PP3, 28 May

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<http://www.nimd.ge/index.php?page=11&news_id=173&lang=eng>.

Linking grassroots and political parties: Second Joint Seminar of Political Parties and Democracy School, <http://nimd.ge/index.php?page=11&news_id=168&lang=eng>.

Multiparty conference on increasing women's political participation,
<http://nimd.ge/index.php?page=11&news_id=163&lang=eng>.

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<http://nimd.ge/index.php?page=11&news_id=149&lang=eng>.

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<http://nimd.ge/index.php?page=11&news_id=105&lang=eng>.

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