



Track Record
LEAP4Peace Consortium

Case study 1: Capacity strengthening for Women's Equal Leverage in (Political) Decision-Making

Since 2008, Consortium partners NIMD and BLTP have collaborated in Burundi to uphold the rights of women and promote their meaningful participation in political and peacebuilding processes, as per UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). The following case demonstrates their expertise and experience on [empowering women](#) and [inducing political actors to remove barriers and create space for women's participation in decision-making bodies and peacebuilding processes](#).

Expertise and Effectiveness

NIMD's participatory gender-sensitive conflict analysis indicates that Burundi has made important strides in increasing women's representation, e.g. through parliamentary quotas within the Arusha Peace Accords and subsequent Constitutions.¹ However, women rarely occupy substantive decision-making positions in the Government or political parties. Where women are present, their voices carry less weight than those of their male counterparts due to cultural barriers that impede women from being seen as leaders and decision-makers.

NIMD's conflict analysis² shows that the history of violence surrounding parties that emerged from the rebellion (such as the ruling CNDD-FDD and opposition CNL) has led to male-dominated leadership structures. The absence of women from political processes threatens the rights and security of women and girls in Burundi, and undermines the sustainability of the Peace Accords. These rights are threatened by democratic backsliding, polarisation and burgeoning (ethnicised) populism, making it especially urgent to ensure women's participation in all political processes, including peacemaking.

NIMD's analysis of women's position in Burundi's peacebuilding environment highlighted that, in civil society and political leadership, women were held back by the lack of opportunities to broaden their skills and knowledge. The analysis also uncovered internal party barriers, such as regulations that undermine women's chances of getting into influential or electable positions,³ and male-dominated structures.⁴

We therefore defined the following objectives:

- (1) Strengthen the capacity of male and female political actors to improve women's participation in high level decision-making, consensus building and conflict mitigation
- (2) Foster the lobby and advocacy skills of these political actors to promote the participation and equal rights of women.

In consultation with political parties and their women's wings; local and national Government institutions; women's rights CSOs; and political observers, NIMD and BLTP created and implemented a 6-month training programme. The programme covered women's rights, masculinity, political and socio-economic developments, conflict resolution and mediation skills. In 2016-2018, BLTP trained a nationwide network of 534 female mediators for peace and dialogue, who are now equipped with the skills to mitigate conflicts and actively contribute to peace. Today, the Women's Mediator Network (WMN) continues to actively lobby for women's involvement in governance and peacebuilding. For example, the network now sits at local government administration meetings. This has reduced conflicts in communities and families, amongst others, on issues related to household conflicts, marital issues and debt. Local administrations and provincial governors now regularly consult with the WMN to address local conflicts.

¹ <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/BI>

² <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NIMD-Analytical-Product-2-Challenges-for-Political-Parties.pdf>

³ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BLTP-Etude-des-femmes-et-jeunes-des-partis-politiques.pdf>

⁴ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NIMD-Analytical-Product-2-Challenges-for-Political-Parties.pdf>

Moreover, through a nationwide “Democracy Schools” programme, NIMD and BLTP trained 840 local community leaders, half of them women, who aim to jointly set up projects and lobby for support from local administration, politicians, and police.⁵

Democracy Schools are a key NIMD capacity strengthening intervention, applying a central curriculum and set-up, contextualised to 11 different countries, including Colombia and Myanmar.⁶ Within the Schools in Burundi, mutual respect, cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution and women’s rights are integral components in the curriculum. This has led to:

- Reduced violence, including violence against women (VAW) in several cities and communities
- A major role for women in community development projects
- Improvement in the rights of second wives in polygamist marriages.⁷

In addition to strengthening women’s capacity to take on leadership roles, NIMD and BLTP empower political parties to reduce barriers to women’s participation through the Gender Roadmap for Inclusive Political Parties (GRIPP).⁸ NIMD and BLTP used GRIPP to facilitate internal review processes with Burundi’s 10 major political parties, resulting in:

1. Increased awareness among both technical cadres and party leadership on barriers for women, based on SWOT analyses and dialogue sessions.
2. Action plans, drafted by all 10 main political parties, to improve women’s participation in party decision-making bodies and preparations for the 2020 elections.
3. Remedial action, taken by three major parties to revise statutes, and institute internal regulations to improve conditions for women party members.

A senior female political party member attests to the impact: “I am so happy to see the steps women have taken in my party. Before the training, women politicians were afraid to be part of decision-making bodies.”⁹

Following the BLTP trainings, the parties set up an eight-woman committee to lobby the national party office to include women in all party organs at national, provincial and municipal levels. The participants said the training strengthened their lobbying abilities, both within their parties and with other politicians: “Through these training workshops [...] my knowledge has been much improved. We learned how to work with members of other political parties, communicate with them, and avoid and manage conflict.”¹⁰

In the current polarised and sometimes violent climate of Burundian politics, interparty cooperation between women politicians is helping keep political space and interparty dialogue alive.¹¹

Flexibility and Learning

In 2018, following the adoption of the national action plans, a national multiparty commission of four women conducted a monitoring mission on the plans’ implementation. They found that provincial party branches lagged behind national counterparts. Consequently, NIMD and BLTP adapted the Theory of Change (ToC) to include provincial party leadership, and BLTP, together with women politicians from the parties’ national organs, supported provincial branches across the country to develop their action plans. Through this change, BLTP and NIMD secured the impact of the action plans, including at the community level.

In addition, during a ToC reflection in 2017, we realised that our approach of working only with experienced political actors would not be sufficient to break the cycle of conflict, polarisation, and exclusion and to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Based on limited results from the formal dialogue process between political actors in the post-2015 political crisis, and increasing

⁵ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Evaluation-programme-ecoles-de-la-democratie-NIMD-BLTP-final-edit-PD-1.pdf>

⁶ <https://nimd.org/democracy-school/>

⁷ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Evaluation-programme-ecoles-de-la-democratie-NIMD-BLTP-final-edit-PD-1.pdf>

⁸ A NIMD methodology for helping parties break down gender barriers, used in multiple NIMD country programmes. <https://nimd.org/videos/roadmap-towards-inclusive-democracies/>

⁹ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Burundi-story-2018.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NIMD-DfS-MTR-Report.pdf>

instrumentalisation of young people in political violence and polarisation,¹² we formulated a new objective. With funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), we started training young politicians, both women and men, in peaceful and democratic governance and leadership.

The training successfully targeted negative stereotypes and perceptions about gender roles held by younger generations. After the training, participants stated that while traditionally politics was for men, these classes had boosted their acceptance that young women have an equal role to play.

Having young and experienced women and men working across party lines to promote women's participation has had a connecting effect. This reduces fear and mistrust between parties in a highly polarised environment, and helps maintain safe political spaces.¹³¹⁴ As one woman from an opposition party attending the interparty-dialogue training commented: "Meeting with members of other parties is very beneficial for us. It dissipates our fear when we see that we can speak, express our opinion, and live together with participants from other parties."¹⁵

Partnership/Stakeholders

In Burundi, NIMD and BLTP work in partnership with other relevant organisations to harness each other's expertise. For example, BLTP cooperates with the Conflict Alert and Prevention Centre (CENAP) and *Initiative et Changement Burundi* (ICB) to regularly exchange information and engage in mutual capacity strengthening. Furthermore, NIMD and BLTP invested in a partnership with the Burundian administration in order to increase the chances of involving women from different political allegiances, increasing the inclusiveness of programme results and maintaining space for political participation. Demonstrating our work to authorities, creating local ownership and negotiating with authorities for the importance of inclusiveness is essential in maintaining and enlarging political and civic space. BLTP has a Partnership Agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, the body responsible for political parties and NGOs, and engages in regular dialogue with provincial and communal authorities. The involvement of local and national government in our projects promotes community ownership, as well as the sustainability of results achieved.

Gender and Inclusion

As well as implementing projects that support women's participation specifically, NIMD and BLTP apply the following principles to ensure gender sensitivity and mainstreaming in all interventions:

1. We aim for at least 50% women's participation in all activities, including from political parties. This applies regardless of whether a party has more male members.¹⁶
2. We ensure all training curricula are gender-sensitive, paying particular attention to the different ways women and men are affected by conflict and exclusion. We pay close attention to negative stereotypes about women's political participation within NIMD and BLTP publications and participants' contributions.
3. NIMD and BLTP strive for gender balance in the appointment of staff, trainers and facilitators. Equal representation sets a good example and ensures sensitivity to gender specificities during gatherings.
4. We design activities to be inclusive and accommodating for all. For example, meetings are held at times when (young) women can easily attend and avoid travelling at night.

Sustainability

Both NIMD and BLTP apply a dedicated fundraising strategy to ensure the sustainability and catalytic effects of projects promoting women's rights and participation. Apart from DfS funding and Dutch

¹² <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NIMD-Analytical-Product-1-Political-Landscape.pdf>

¹³ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NIMD-DfS-MTR-Report.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Burundi-story-2017.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Burundi-story-2016.pdf>

¹⁶ For our youth project, 50% was achieved. For DfS, 38% in 2018. This reflects that when targeting political party leadership, the 50% balance is not achieved due to their present composition.

Embassy funding, NIMD and BLTP have secured funds from the US State Department, USAID, UNDP, UNPBF and the Swiss Human Security Division between 2016 and 2018.

Networks that emerge from our projects, such as WMN and alumni from the Democracy School, support the sustainability of our interventions, as they continue to make an impact beyond the programme cycle. Nonetheless, we are aware that these networks require further support because of the current context and the closed civic space. Women often face criticism and discrimination for 'standing out'. BLTP therefore facilitates contact between members of these networks, so that individuals can build ties and seek each other's support when necessary.

As most training activities in Burundi involve a training-for-trainers scheme, sustainability is also ensured through the establishment of a trainer network, capacitated with knowledge, skills and expertise in promoting women's participation in politics and leadership. Dedicated focal points and the involvement of party leaders in all projects secures programme continuity and the sustainability of results within political parties.

Case Study 2: Lobby and Advocacy for Women's Rights

The following case study demonstrates how the Consortium has been working in Colombia (NIMD) and Myanmar (GEN) to:

1. Ensure a conducive environment for a more democratic culture and systemic reforms through lobby and advocacy.
2. Successfully promote changes in the legal framework enhancing women's rights and addressing VAW.

Expertise and Effectiveness on Gender and Inclusion

Gender and inclusion are inherent to all our work as a Consortium. To ensure women's inclusion in all stages of peacebuilding, we conduct a gender-based needs assessment to feed into the ToC. We continue to update the ToC during implementation. The political awareness and expertise of the Consortium allows us to be flexible and respond to changes in the political situation to further women's rights.

Colombia

Despite gender inclusion being a core principle of Colombia's Peace Agreement, signed between the Colombian Government and the FARC rebels in 2016, women remain largely excluded from the Peace Process. Almost four years since the Agreement's signing, the implementation of most of its 130 gender-specific commitments is yet to even begin.¹⁷

Since 2018, unrest has increased in Colombia. Government policy, corruption, and attacks (even murders) on civic leaders regularly trigger widespread protests. In this polarised context, NIMD works in line with the Peace Agreement towards a more inclusive electoral and party system. A democracy that truly represents the needs and demands of the people is the best way to ensure conflict resolution and uphold women's rights. Unfortunately, in Colombia, but also in Myanmar and Burundi, political systems are exclusive and serve only the elite.

In 2016, NIMD and the UN brought together high-ranking women from all Colombian political parties at the Multiparty Women's Caucus (MWC) to debate political system reform. The Caucus was a chance for these women to discuss their ideas for more equal representation, so as to advance women's rights and inclusion. The women politicians elaborated a proposal, including pro-equality measures such as regulating gender parity and alternation of roles between male and female representatives. The proposal was presented to the Special Electoral Mission (SEM),¹⁸ who decided to include it in their recommendations for political and electoral reforms as part of the Peace Process.

While the members of the SEM were excellent technicians, they lacked the political sensitivity to develop a successful lobby strategy towards political actors to get the recommendations approved. However, the MWC and NIMD were closely following the political events to assess new opportunities

¹⁷ <https://colombia.unwomen.org/es/biblioteca/publicaciones/2019/12/segundo-informe-de-seguimiento>

¹⁸ <https://colombia.nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Libro-Reformma-completo-2017-1-1.pdf>

for the MWC recommendations. When the President announced a National Dialogue in 2018 to address social unrest and violence, NIMD and the MWC lobbied for the inclusion of their recommendations (initially formulated for the SEM in this process. Positive measures for female inclusion, such as parity and alternation now form part of this National Dialogue. NIMD learned that it is important to closely follow the political developments and have a thorough actor analysis, both of which can then be combined with continuous lobby and advocacy for a conducive environment for equal rights. This way, proposals for inclusive democracy can be taken into account when the political environment is ready for it.

Myanmar

Myanmar is ranked 150 of 167 countries on the Georgetown Institute's Women, Peace and Security Index (2019),¹⁹ and 148 of 189 on the 2018 UN Gender Inequality Index.²⁰ Statistics show an upward trend in reports of sexual violence in recent years, and one root cause of sexual violence is gender inequality. Faced with this context, GEN works simultaneously with CSOs and the Government to raise awareness and work towards systemic change. Furthermore, GEN is one of the founders of AGIPP, a network of organisations that works towards:

- More women substantively participating in the peace process including negotiations and implementation arrangements.
- Ensuring gender perspectives and priorities are included across the agenda items of peace talks, agreements and implementation strategies.

In order to achieve systemic change, GEN lobbied authorities during the drafting of a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW). GEN reinforced the importance of a whole-government approach and direct financial commitments to implement the Plan. Thanks to this lobby, the Myanmar National Committee for Women (MNCW)²¹ was reformed in late 2016, its main responsibility being the implementation of NSPAW. GEN also provides technical support to develop and implement the Plan through its role as Co-Chair of two of the MNCW's technical working groups: one on Violence against Women and Girls; and one on Gender Mainstreaming. Co-Chairing gave GEN a unique opportunity to advocate for gender equality across government ministries and stakeholders in states and divisions nationwide. As a result of GEN's awareness raising and capacity building, some key steps were made towards addressing gender inequalities and overcoming structural barriers:

- A gender analysis of three labour laws conducted by GEN: Labour Organisations Law, Labour Dispute Law and Occupational Safety and Health Bill (OSH) (2017).
- Mainstreaming of gender in labour policy and legislation (2018).
- The inclusion of protection for vulnerable women in the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Policy (2018- 2019).
- Inclusion of gender in the national school curriculum.

These examples show that systemic change is possible, but it requires patience, awareness raising, access to reliable data, and dialogue with people who have not given the issue of women's rights much thought – or indeed are actively against it.

Flexibility and Learning

Working towards gender equality and equal rights is a long-term process. Through this process, Consortium partners have revised and adapted their initial ToCs based on new learnings and changes in context.

Colombia

In addition to addressing political system reform, the Multiparty Women's Caucus (MWC) in Colombia urged NIMD to address VAW, which they identified as a blind spot in promoting inclusive politics. To investigate further, NIMD commissioned studies and interviews. Based on the findings,

¹⁹ <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/myanmar/>

²⁰ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

²¹ *The MNCW provides recommendations to the inter-ministerial committee and helps to implement the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) through four Technical Working Groups (TWGs) (i) Women, Peace and Security; (ii) Violence Against Women and Girls; (iii) Women and Participation; and (iv) Gender Mainstreaming*

NIMD and Colombia's Ministry of Interior and the Electoral Authority drafted a manual to prevent and combat VAW in politics.²² To ensure the manual would be effective, NIMD and its partners:

- Provided capacity strengthening for politicians, civil servants and the police on how to implement the manual.
- Promoted measures to address harmful gender norms and stereotypes such as:
 - A prevention roadmap for Gender-based violence (GBV) for national authorities and political party leaders;
 - Measures to monitor the correct financing of women's political campaigns, as defined by Colombian law.

This manual is a ground-breaking joint effort between the Government of Colombia, the Electoral Authority, the High Administrative Court and NIMD to end VAW.

NIMD had initially convened the MWC to discuss political party and electoral reform. Based on the trust NIMD developed over time with the participants of the MWC, they felt confident to share their concerns regarding GBV with NIMD. NIMD responded by facilitating data and analysis, after which the MWC and NIMD jointly developed a programme to overcome VAW in politics.

Myanmar

GEN has been actively promoting a law to prevent VAW, and has contributed to the drafting process with briefing papers and consultation processes. Although the draft law was submitted to the Government in 2015, it stalled on its way to Parliament. GEN learned that negotiations were jeopardised because influential political actors lacked understanding of VAW. In response, GEN doubled its efforts to raise awareness from 2015 onwards - for example, by disseminating VAW cases, strengthening knowledge among political actors, and revealing the failings of the Myanmar justice system for survivors. This has led to more understanding and brings the law's ratification one step closer.

Both in Myanmar and Colombia, the Consortium aims to influence the political environment to allow and enhance women's participation and leadership in peace and dialogue processes. Experience in these countries shows that, even where women are not (or are only partially) taken into account in initial peace negotiations, there is space to lobby for inclusion in subsequent processes, including the implementation of peace agreements. In short, it is never too late to advocate for women's participation in peacebuilding.

Partnership/Stakeholders

In order to advance systemic and culture change, the LEAP4Peace Consortium works with government actors at national and local levels, electoral management bodies, political parties, CSOs, network organisations and women's organisations. Lobby efforts are more likely to be successful if they take place in a coordinated manner. We therefore bring together CSOs to jointly advocate for women's inclusion. Furthermore, the Consortium supports a receptive environment through its work with political and government actors, and facilitates dialogue between political actors and CSOs, so that the voices and recommendations of women are heard and taken into account.

Sustainability

The Consortium can demonstrate lasting results when it comes to addressing VAW in Colombia and Myanmar. In Colombia, the manual to prevent and combat VAW is now incorporated in training for civil servants. This shows results that can go beyond electoral processes. It also shows how working with the national administration can lead to an economy of scale, as it can guarantee the use of training material in all parts of the country and for all levels of government staff for years to come. In Myanmar, GEN managed to get VAW much higher on the political agenda. This makes passing legislation, and therefore a long-term sustainable outcome, much more likely.

²² <https://colombia.nimd.org/publications/guia-para-la-prevencion-atencion-y-seguimiento-a-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres-en-politica/>

The Consortium learns from its track record and shares learnings, both positive and negative, with national and international organisations. Therefore, the lobby of the Consortium for women's inclusion in peace building is evidence-based, and this makes it all the more convincing.

Transparency

The Consortium strives for high transparency to ensure horizontal and vertical accountability. Partners engage regularly with women's organisations, local organisations, political parties, national and local government representatives, and the international community. Partners have their accounts audited annually, and share their annual reports with donors. NIMD, as lead applicant, has been compliant with IATI requirements for MFA grants since 2016. A corporate annual report, including annual accounts, is made public through NIMD's website (<https://nimd.org/publications/>). Additional reports are also published here, including final evaluation reports and executive summaries of mid-term reviews. All Consortium partners publicly communicate their work via social media channels to make it accessible to a broader audience.