



NATIONAL  
DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTE



**Working for Democracy and  
Making Democracy Work**

**[WWW.NDI.ORG](http://WWW.NDI.ORG)**



**Madeleine Albright**

“Democracy is inseparable from human dignity and peace.”

**When NDI opened its doors in 1983, programs to support democratic development essentially did not exist. Given a mission but not a roadmap, the Institute built its practice from scratch, creating a unique international network of political practitioners dedicated to sharing their democratic experiences and ideas with others in nascent democracies.**

NDI has become a leader in the democracy field by prioritizing creativity and innovation, and crafting programs that account for the unique context of each country. NDI promoted democratic reform in the Philippines and Chile in the 1980s; in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall; and across Africa, Asia and Latin America in the 1990s following the end of the Cold War. We began programming on the inclusion of traditionally marginalized populations such as women, youth, LGBTI and individuals with disabilities in the 2000s. More recently, NDI has supported activists whose homegrown efforts inspired the Arab Spring in 2011, the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity in 2014 and other democracy movements in newly formed and fragile states.

We have found over nearly four decades that, whatever its shortfalls, democracy works. While democracy’s success is neither inevitable nor irreversible, NDI has witnessed first-hand that free people in every corner of the world continue to yearn for democracy. We are privileged to work with exceptional individuals whose tireless efforts on behalf of human dignity in their countries – and beyond – seek to make the world a more just, secure and prosperous place.

A century ago, Woodrow Wilson urged us to build a world safe for democracy. Today, we strive for democracy to keep our world safe.



**Derek Mitchell**

“The siren song of autocrats will always find an audience, particularly during times of fear and insecurity...But democracy remains the only viable path to true peace and security.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madeleine Albright".

**Madeleine Albright**  
NDI Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek Mitchell".

**Derek Mitchell**  
NDI President

# Making Democracy Work

## Harnessing Digital Technology

New digital technologies and platforms create both challenges and opportunities for democracy. NDI created **DemTools**, a suite of technology software, to help democracy activists collect and analyze election data, track constituent concerns, manage citizen contacts and organize petition drives. The **Design 4 Democracy Coalition** facilitates collaboration among organizations dedicated to countering disinformation, improving cybersecurity and promoting democracy-friendly technology platforms. Through its **office in Silicon Valley**, NDI has developed partnerships with technology companies in an effort to incorporate democratic values into new software as a design principle and mitigate the harm their digital platforms can cause.

## Promoting Women's Participation

When women participate in politics, the results can be socially and economically transformative. NDI helps women overcome barriers to political involvement through the **Win With Women** campaign, **Women Mayors' Network** and **"Ready-to-Run"** campaign schools. The **#NotTheCost** initiative collects data on threats women face from violence, and the groundbreaking **think10** safety planning tool helps women identify their personal and professional vulnerabilities. Together with the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, NDI is helping women political leaders report instances of violence and build the case for greater global action. NDI is also part of the **DISRUPTHER** initiative to deepen the pool of adolescent girls with the political skills and aspirations to become political leaders.



**Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousufzai (left) participates in an NDI program for women and youth in Pakistan in 2010.**

## Inspiring Youth Leadership

Despite making up more than half the population in many countries, young people are often shut out of mainstream politics and decision-making. NDI helps young people become political leaders and activists by breaking down barriers, developing technical skills and building intergenerational relationships. Through the **Change My Community Toolbox**, NDI helps young people run grassroots advocacy campaigns. The **Youth Leading Debate** program hones skills on the art of policy debate. The **Ana Usharek (I Engage)** program has helped infuse tens of thousands of Jordanian students from universities and public schools with democratic values of civic responsibility and activism so they can become more fully invested in their country's future.



**NDI helps youth find their voice, engage in the political system and make meaningful change in their communities.**



**NDI/IRI joint election observation mission monitors voting process in Abuja, Nigeria.**

## Ensuring Electoral Integrity

A pioneer in advancing electoral integrity, NDI:

- Co-led the development of the **Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation** endorsed by over 50 international organizations.
- Helped found the **Global Network for Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM)**.
- Supported **non-partisan citizen election monitoring** in more than 75 countries.
- Developed new election monitoring methodologies, including the **parallel vote tabulation (PVT)**, a proven statistically-based method for verifying the quality of election-day procedures and the credibility of election results.

## Including Marginalized Communities

A democracy can only thrive when it represents all citizens equally. Yet in new and emerging democracies, large portions of the population are often excluded from politics based on their ethnicity, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation. To ensure no citizen's voice is silenced or democratic rights stifled, NDI helps representatives from these communities run for political office, advocate for legal reforms and pressure governments to implement international agreements protecting their rights, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



*Young elected leaders from nine Bosnian political parties discuss how to spur business, encourage young entrepreneurs and increase professional skills at a NDI-sponsored event.*



*In Libya, with NDI support, eight disability rights organizations advocate to improve accessibility to public buildings and universities.*



*Mayan ceremony at launch of NDI programs to support inclusion and reduce violence in Guatemala.*

## Working in Conflict Zones and Closed Societies

In conflict-affected states, NDI works to include citizens and end grievances. The Institute helps political parties in countries with histories of ethnic conflict develop constituent-driven policies. NDI programs in the Sahel in Africa focus on local security sector reform to end practices that drive extremism. In post-conflict countries, NDI helps citizens engage in reconciliation efforts that reshape political and social relationships away from those that led to violence in the first place. In closed societies, NDI builds the political capacity of democracy activists for the moment when a more open, democratic society becomes possible.

## Renewing Political Parties

Political parties are an essential building block of democracy, providing a forum for citizens to organize around common interests, choose political leaders and influence policy. Yet, in many developing countries, political parties are unable to deliver every day results for their citizens and fail to build trust. NDI's **21st Century Party Renewal Initiative** helps parties modernize internal operations, be responsive to voters and foster greater inclusion of women and youth. The **Cybersecurity Campaign Playbook** provides simple, actionable ways for political parties to address online threats.

## Improving Governance and Accountability

Transparent government builds citizen trust and reduces corruption. NDI collaborates on innovative governance programming through the **Open Government Partnership** to promote global norms of transparency, and **Living Cities** to deepen citizen engagement in urban government. The **Executive Transitions** program promotes smooth, peaceful transfers of power in the wake of democratic elections. NDI, together with the International Republican Institute, supports the **House Democracy Partnership**, a bipartisan commission of the U.S. House of Representatives that facilitates parliamentary exchanges in emerging democracies.

## Encouraging Citizen Participation

NDI helps citizens organize and engage through civic and voter education, advocacy campaigns and oversight of government activities. NDI fosters cross-border dialogue and learning among citizen activists through **Civic Forum** and **Civic Update**. By engaging in collective action, democracy is deepened and citizens learn to hold government accountable as watchdogs and advocates.



## Our Mission

NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all.

## Lessons Learned

### **Democracy takes time**

Credible elections are the foundation, but a democracy's legitimacy depends on more than one election or citizen protest. Every democracy, no matter how developed, is a work in progress that requires determined and engaged citizens who are committed to safeguarding democratic norms.

### **International networks are vital**

While there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies. When democracy activists share their experiences with those undergoing similar challenges, it helps nations in transition recognize they are not alone and that obstacles can be overcome.

### **Inclusion is essential**

Democracy thrives when all segments of society participate equally without bias or reprisal. Dialogue, compromise, inclusion and respect for the rule of law are the foundations for sustainable development, national security and internal stability.

### **Democratic development is cost-effective**

Whether measured in terms of averting war, humanitarian crises, refugee flows or violent extremism, democratic development pays for itself many times over.

### **Democracy must deliver**

Democratic governments must show results - particularly in improving living standards for the people - if democracy is to be successful.

## NDI by the Numbers

Supported the efforts of:

**16,000** civic organizations

**925** political parties

**10,000** legislators

**1,300** women's organizations

Helped partner groups organize more than:

**400** candidate debates in over **35** countries

Field Offices in over:

**50** countries

Worked in more than:

**150** countries and territories around the world

Fielded over:

**250** international election observer delegations in more than **65** countries

Helped over:

**300** citizen election monitoring organizations train and deploy

**4,000,000** election observers in

**350** elections and referenda in over **85** countries

Trained more than:

**600,000** Party poll-watchers in over **50** countries



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