



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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# DEMOCRACY IS UNDER THREAT

There is grave concern about the state of democracy and its regress, which is also happening in stabilised democracies. This is echoed in key reports that aim at assessing the global level of democracy produced by International IDEA, the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) and Freedom House – while the global Covid-19 pandemic regresses it even further. While measuring democracy is notoriously challenging, the reports raise an alarm about the need to speak out for democracy.

In their recent report, International IDEA alerted us that democracy is under threat and its promise needs revival. The report showcases that most hybrid forms of democracy that flirt with authoritarianism and non-democracies have generally neither delivered nor sustained better policy outcomes, with some exceptions. Instead, democracies are more likely to create the conditions necessary for sustainable development compared to non-democracies or hybrid regimes. The choice is thus not between non-democracy (or illiberal or hybrid forms of it) and democracy. The world needs more and better democracy.

Meanwhile, the Economic Intelligence Unit stated that only 45,5% of countries are democracies (either full or flawed democracy). US-based Freedom House also does not paint a rosy picture in its Freedom of the World 2020 report. The key message is that democracy and pluralism are under assault.

The global Covid-19 pandemic and the numerous restrictions on fundamental and human rights, and rule of law have raised numerous concerns about the pandemic's effect on democracy. Trends suggest that there will be a rise in authoritarianism if restrictions are not removed and the pandemic is used as an excuse. Will the surveillance tools used on citizens be in place beyond the pandemic and will they become more socially accepted and part of normalcy post-Covid-19?

Meanwhile, there were successes for Demo Finland in 2019, described in this annual report. Demo Finland also has a stronger position than ever in its 15 years of operating, budgeting guaranteed under the development funding of the MFA – which reinforces Finland's commitment for democracy support – and having increased resources due to the delivered, measurable results.

However, Finland also needs to do more internationally in speaking out for inclusive multiparty democracy. Now is the time to position democracy as a key priority in development, and foreign and security policies. It is not only the time for it, there is also space for Finland to profile itself internationally as a defender of such a key value.



*Anu Juvonen, Executive Director*



Female politicians in a capacity building training in Myanmar (Step Democracy programme).

## OVERVIEW

The overall objective for the Demo Finland programmes is the strengthened pluralistic and inclusive multiparty system in its operating countries. Demo Finland strives for political systems where political parties, which are essential and vital for a functioning democracy, are strong and knowledgeable, but also cooperative, open, diverse and willing to support the democratic system and allow and hear people's participation in their own context.

### **A safe space for dialogue between all relevant political actors exists**

Strengthened trust and dialogue between the political parties enables them to negotiate and act together, giving all the parties the possibility to participate and influence. When parties have improved trust and collaboration, they can jointly deliberate on issues of shared interest and support the multiparty system.

To achieve a safe space for dialogue, Demo Finland, with its partners, supports the creation and facilitation of permanent multiparty platforms in which the political parties may collaborate, discuss and learn from each other. In 2019, multiparty dialogue platforms on different levels were in place in Myanmar, Tunisia and Zambia, and altogether 18 multiparty platform meetings took place. The platforms have been successful in bringing political parties together, and they have produced concrete outcomes in Myanmar and Tunisia, both of which are countries that do not have a long history of cross-party cooperation. In Zambia, the multiparty platforms of female politicians have been able to function in good cooperation although the political situation in the country has been increasingly tense.

**Multiparty dialogue platforms have provided an institutionalized space for cross-party dialogue. 18 multiparty dialogue meetings took place in 3 countries in 2019.**

## **Political actors voice citizens' interests into party policies, through increased capacity**

The accountability of the political parties towards their constituencies and citizens lies at the heart of democracy. When parties and politicians are supported in producing strategic thinking and programming, and the capacity of politicians on inclusive policy-making as well as dialogue is built, they can formulate better policies and influence in policy-making, representing their constituencies.

**Politicians have improved knowledge and skills on issues such as policy formulation, importance of dialogue with civil society and constituencies, oversight role of Parliaments and human rights.**

Demo Finland's programmes have a strong focus on capacity building both of political parties and of individual politicians. Capacity building is done through Schools of Politics -multiparty programmes in Myanmar and Tunisia, while in Zambia, trainings involve female councillors. In Mozambique, the programme concentrates on building the capacity of Parliamentary Committees on the oversight role of the Parliament. Results from 2019 demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained by politicians.

## **Political actors and parties collaborate with each other in a responsive manner and women participate actively in political processes**

Demo Finland strives to create open political interaction and a culture of accommodation between the participant parties. Sustainable peace, stability and development of democracy require a functioning cooperation between politicians despite differences in opinions. Exposing politicians to different norms and contexts can change individual behaviour and create more space for inclusive democracy within and between parties. By learning to cooperate, by listening to others and by discussing, politicians can enhance the weight, trustworthiness and transparency of political parties. At the same time, women, youth and minorities need to have equal opportunities to get their voices heard in the parties and political processes.

In the Demo Finland supported programmes, political actors are trained in democratic and gender-sensitive practices, parties are supported in improving inclusiveness, and the capacities of women and youth are strengthened. The multiparty set-up supports the cross-party collaboration of the participants, which is also visible in the results. For example, the School of Politics programmes in Myanmar and Tunisia have been able to increase the interest of their participants to work together with representatives of other parties through their high-intensity, long and quality core courses and follow-up alumni activities, careful attention to wellbeing and creation of safe environment for all participants.

**Cross-party collaboration has increased, and parties have improved capacity to enhance gender equality within their organisations.**

# HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR RESULTS

In **Mozambique**, oversight over the government on extractive industries has improved as the Parliament's standing committees held more hearings on extractive industry than before, and evidently gained more technical knowledge on the topic.

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In **Myanmar**, the Shan State Multiparty Dialogue Platform, consisting of politicians from 12 political parties, formulated, approved and tabled a joint bill proposal. This was the first multiparty effort on State/Region-level legislation in the country.

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In **Tunisia**, a joint statement on ethical election campaigning for 2019 elections was signed by the Presidents or Secretary Generals of 13 political parties as a result of the work of the high-level Multiparty Dialogue Platform.

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In **Zambia**, participants of different trainings demonstrated an average of 26 percentage point increase in their knowledge and skills on policy formulating and monitoring the implementation of parties' gender equality plans.

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In **Ethiopia**, 58 political parties participated in a ground-breaking training on enhancing women's political participation. This was the first training of the pilot project in the country where multiparty collaboration is very new.

.....

In **Sri Lanka**, a pilot project to create a network for female politicians was launched.

# **SUPPORTING DIALOGUE AND ENHANCING SKILLS – DEMO FINLAND’S PROGRAMMES**

## **MOZAMBIQUE**

In Mozambique, Demo Finland supports the democratic governance of extractive industries and natural resources. The first phase of the programme, implemented by Demo Finland, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD) ended in 2019. The programme, started in 2017, is part of Finland’s bilateral Country Strategy in Mozambique. It aims at enhancing the oversight role of the Parliament and six Provincial Assemblies on the extractive industries and at increasing their capacity to assess the implementation of the existing legislation and management of natural resources.

In the programme, Parliamentary Committees and Provincial Assemblies were trained on the management and effects of the extractive industries and on existing legislation, and collaboration between the National and Provincial Assemblies was supported. Monitoring visits for the Parliamentarians to the mining sites and discussions with local communities were also organised. In addition to the national level, the programme was implemented in the Provinces of Inhambane, Manica, Tete, Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. An important element of the programme has been international exchange on the oversight issues and extractive industries with other countries in the region as well as with Finnish Parliamentarians.

In 2019, 30 MPs were trained, each of the Provincial Assemblies organised a stakeholder event around the topic, and 20 extractive industries companies were visited by the Assemblies. The numbers were a bit lower than in 2018, because general elections were held in the country in October and activities were halted during the election period. Also, the technical staff of the Parliamentary Committees was trained on the oversight processes of extractive industries, especially with the intention of bringing this knowledge over to the next legislature after the elections. This is crucial from the point of view of sustainability. The MPs who participated in the programme reported increased awareness in the Parliament in the extractive industries’ dynamics and in human rights.

Oversight has also improved, which is demonstrated by the increased number and better technical knowledge of the hearings with the government in the Parliament. The added-value of the programme has been the introduction of the rights-based approach, and particularly the guidelines to monitoring human rights in the extractive industries. This contributed to increased awareness on the need to include a rights-based approach not only in the extractive industries, but in the work of the Parliament as well. A common perception among the MPs had been that human rights violations occurred only in the relations between citizens and the state/public entities. The programme contributed to debunk that perception and showed that companies can also pose hazards to human rights.

Awareness about environmental rights improved too, as well as the Parliament’s interventions in this area. It was against this backdrop that MPs received complaints about environmental problems in the communities around two different mining sites. With the support of the programme, representatives were able to visit the sites and interact with companies and communities. The Parliament’s intervention resulted in the temporary closure of the mines. The programme contributed to improve MPs’ sensitiveness to interact with the communities. They have also mapped out issues that must be addressed in the legislation.



The programme also supported peer exchange and collaboration between the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies. The exchange of information between the MPs and the Assemblies increased, which was important especially to Members of the Provincial Assemblies who did not have the well-placed structures to communicate with MPs before. For example, the participating Provincial Assemblies presented 6 position papers during the year, which contained evidence-based, concrete background information for possible legislation proposals on extractive industries. In the third national meeting in 2019, the MPs and MPAs were able to produce joint recommendations for the next legislature.

An external evaluation of the first phase of the programme was conducted in May–July 2019. The overall conclusion of the evaluation was that the programme has been very relevant to Mozambique's context, since democratic natural resources management is vital for the future of the country. The evaluation also recommended continuing the programme, therefore the second phase was prepared and launched in 2020.

## MYANMAR

Demo Finland and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) founded the Myanmar School of Politics (MySoP) in 2014. It has functioned in the five easternmost States/Regions (Tanintharyi, Shan, Mon, Kayin and Kayah), and work with the Yangon Region political parties commenced in 2019. MySoP gathers participants from all parties as well as regional Election Sub-Commission officers within one State or Region at a time. Training includes for example political theory, policy-making, inter-party dialogue, gender equality and best practices in politics. Approximately a third of the participants are women. In addition, MySoP facilitates a multiparty platform, founded in Shan State in 2018. The aim of MySoP is to create safe cooperation between political parties, build the parties' capacities so that they can better represent their constituencies and to increase the political participation of women and youth.

In 2019, three 17-day core courses were organised in MySoP, 50 politicians graduated from the courses, and 173 politicians attended the alumni meetings. The Multiparty Dialogue Platform (MDP) of Shan State held three meetings during the year. Represented in the platform are 12 political parties. All in all, during the years 2015–2019, more than 280 State/Region-level politicians have graduated from MySoP.

In the EU-funded Step Democracy programme, implemented within a larger consortium, Demo Finland supports the capacity building of female politicians and advocates for awareness of gender



50 State/Region-level politicians graduated from the Myanmar School of Politics in 2019.



equality and action plans within the parties. 2019 was the first full year of the programme. Training material for female politicians and a guide on gender equality for political parties were produced, and 54 women were trained using the material. Within the programme, MySoP also trained 33 region-level parties on the importance of programmatic work and practical steps of how to elaborate policy-based politics. Additionally, conflict resolution trainings were offered to parties and the Union Election Commission.

Myanmar's democratic development is still very fragile, but the MySoP has succeeded in fostering trust and cooperation between political parties. A safe space for dialogue has been created in Shan State, where the MDP offers a permanent space for political parties to interact and explore innovative cross-party approaches and solutions to economic, social or political challenges at the State/Region-level. In 2019, the MDP succeeded in setting an agenda of policy issues for dialogue, to prioritize one policy issue out of those, to cooperate on drafting a technical bill and even to undertake joint lobbying for its tabling in the Shan State Parliament and to actually table it. This was the first multiparty effort on State/Region-level legislation in the country. The interest shown by political parties in other regions is also an encouraging sign of sustainability of the MDP mechanism.

Out of 173 MySoP alumni, 35% said they collaborated at least 6 times during the last 6 months with other political actors. The percentage has increased from the previous year and is a positive result, considering the political context and the short history of cross-party collaboration in the country.

Multiparty democracy is still very new in Myanmar. The political party field is quite scattered as there are more than 90 parties, most of which are small and based on ethnic groups. Building trust and facilitating dialogue between political parties is therefore crucial for the peaceful and democratic development of the country. Despite tensions, the political parties seem to be committed to dialogue and collaboration within the MySoP programme. This is promising in the light of the upcoming elections and on the road towards a full transition to democratic governance in the country.

## **TUNISIA**

With its partners Centre des Etudes Méditerranéennes et Internationales (CEMI) and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Demo Finland supports the Tunisian School of Politics (TSoP) that brings young people from the parliamentary parties together and offers them knowledge as well as practical tools for working in politics. TSoP also trains parliamentarians and parliamentary assistants, supports the parties' strategy preparation work and the implementation of already completed party strategies. TSoP has also set up a high-level Multiparty Dialogue Platform that brings together all parliamentary parties with more than three seats in the Parliament.

The platform has established its role in Tunisian politics. Significant indication of its relevance was the joint Charter on "Loyal electoral competition" for 2019 elections, which was a unique process and the first multiparty agreement around these elections, agreed on by the most important political parties of the country.

Many of the activities of TSoP focus on capacity building of young politicians. In 2019, more than 50% of the second level alumni of TSoP stated that their capacities to formulate policies has helped their political party a lot or moderately. Moreover, 39% of new participants of TSoP had been in contact 4–5 times or more within last 6 months with civil society, which shows an increase of 13 percentage points comparing to the situation before the TSoP trainings. These results indicate contribution towards more programmatic work in the parties and better accountability. Also, 53% of TSoP alumni stated having been in contact 4–5 times or more monthly with other political parties, compared to 45% the year before.

Parliamentary elections took place in Tunisia in October 2019.



In addition, out of the 217 newly elected MPs in Tunisian parliamentary elections, 54 have participated in TSoP activities, either as alumni of the School of Politics or participants of the MP trainings or members of the Multiparty Dialogue Platform. Also, several TSoP alumni were campaign members and even leaders during the elections. This result shows that the TSoP-programme has gained a significant role in the field of democracy and political party support in Tunisia. Hopefully it will also have an impact on the practise and quality of collaboration between MPs in the future, since a quarter of the MPs have been trained on its importance. The election results also show that there is still work to be done in supporting the programmatic work of the parties. TSoP advocated for and supported the strategic planning of the parties through the last years: until the election period, all 13 participant parties had developed strategic plans and eight of them were monitoring its use. However, the change towards more strategic programming was not perceived by the voters. This was reflected in the elections as many former government parties were left with a low number of seats in the Parliament.

## ZAMBIA

In Zambia, Demo Finland works to strengthen women's participation in local-level politics. With our local partner Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL), we train female politicians and support their cooperation and networking across party lines. Women's Multiparty Dialogue Platforms have been set up on national level and in three districts (Kaoma, Kapiri Mposhi and Lusaka). Altogether eight multiparty platform meetings took place during 2019.

It is worth noting that the women's wings' representatives have been able to cooperate in the multiparty platforms both at national and at local levels and even supporting a common candidate across party-lines in a local council presidency election despite increasing political tension in the country. This suggests that the female party representatives have been able to create safe spaces where meetings and dialogue between parties are still possible.

Trainings for female local councillors in three districts resulted in more than 30 percentage point increase in the capacity of the participants to monitor the implementation of gender equality plans of the political parties. Local councillors that participated in the trainings of Demo Finland and ZNWL's programme demonstrated more than 20 percentage point increase in their capacity to develop and formulate policy ideas into legislation. Many female councillors have told that they are actively seeking possibilities from the private sector or NGOs to fund small community projects, especially when there is a situation that the government funds were either not enough or never arrived at district level.

This suggests that councillors tried to address citizens' interests, even when there were no resources available at the local council level. It remains a challenge, however, to channel these needs into proposals for the party policies and actions and not to leave the responsibility of action to individual councillors only.

Nine political parties have prepared gender equality plans for their party and currently two parties are commencing the full implementation of the same. ZNWL advocated the parties' leadership on the issue and supported the parties in finalizing feasible plans to be implemented. The process has been slow, and the plans elaborated before were of varying quality. However, there is progress in the awareness of gender equality measures within the parties.

## ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, Demo Finland has started a pilot project in 2019 to strengthen women's capacity and their political participation on a multiparty basis, and to support women's active participation in elections both as voters and as candidates on regional and national levels. The project offers trainings for female politicians and maps out gender plans of different political parties. The local partner in the project is the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA).

The pilot programme took only its initial steps during 2019, but in the context where multiparty collaboration is very new, NEWA managed to bring a significant amount of new and older parties together for the first time to start mapping the challenges of gender equality in politics. More than 90 participants from 58 political parties, civil society and media attended a training organised in October. Two Finnish MPs also participated in the training, sharing their experiences of gender equality in politics.



## SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, Demo Finland started a pilot project in 2019. The work aims to set up a multiparty network of female councillors where young female politicians from six districts can develop their political skills and cooperate. The project also includes advocacy work to increase women's share in the electoral lists of the upcoming elections. The local partner in the project is One-Text Initiative (OTI). The activities of the project will be launched further in 2020.



## **BRINGING DEMOCRACY ON THE AGENDA – DEMO FINLAND'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY**

Demo Finland's development education, communications and advocacy aims at strengthening Finnish political parties' visions on democracy support and development policy by increasing their knowledge of democracy support and providing them with expertise on the theme.

In the 2019 elections, 7 out of 9 Finnish parliamentary parties had commitments to development cooperation in their election manifestos. In addition, two parties mentioned democracy support as a priority of development policy, and five referred to democracy in the context of either development or foreign policy. Demo Finland's contribution is most clearly visible in the commitment in the 2019 Finnish Government Programme(s) to secure funding for democracy support and rule of law, and in the EU Council Conclusions on democracy support adopted in 2019. Demo Finland organised numerous seminars on the need to update the Council Conclusions, organised meetings in both Helsinki and Brussels, wrote policy papers – and was invited as an expert to talk at events, such as at the official EU decision making organ, Member States' COHOM working group.



Around 100 participants attended the Political Party Peer Network Conference 2019 in Helsinki.

A significant milestone towards the EU Council Conclusions was the Political Party Peer Network (PPPeer Network) Conference 2019 which Demo Finland and the Finnish MFA organised in June. The PPSpeer Network consists of democracy support organisations and actors from all around the world. The event hosted around 100 participants from democracy support organisations, academia, international organisations and ministries from around the world. The report of the conference consisted of recommendations to donors and practitioners, political parties, governments and stakeholders, and these were utilised for advocacy related to the Council Conclusions. Additionally, the European Partnership for Democracy launched a report on EU Member States' democracy support policies in the conference.

Demo Finland's panel discussion at SuomiAreena gathered politicians to discuss the future of political parties.



Demo Finland has very good networks both in Finland and internationally. Demo Finland is a member of networks and organisations such as the 1325 Network Finland, Finland's Peace Building Coordination Group, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and the Global Partnership for Multiparty Democracy (GPMD). The Executive Director also joined Finland's official delegation to the annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the Agenda2030 and the GPMD side event on the role of political parties in leading for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Demo Finland also released a publication *Political Parties & Peace Building – the Forgotten Stakeholder in Peace Processes*. The publication explains what kind of role the political parties should play in peace processes and why they are a crucial stakeholder in resolving conflicts.

Demo Finland's communications target especially political parties, experts and other practitioners. The most important channels for communications were Demo Finland's website and different social media channels, where a prominent share of followers are political actors. Demo Finland's website had over 28,000 visits in 2019, and the increase in social media followers varied between 3.83% (Facebook) and 22.16% (LinkedIn).

Events are an integral part of Demo Finland's communications. In July, Demo Finland organised a panel discussion at SuomiAreena, which is part of the international Democracy Festivals network. In addition, Demo Finland organised a seminar on the International Day of Democracy in the Parliament and a discussion for political party actors on artificial intelligence and its impacts on democracy. Panellists, speakers, and participants in the events included Party Chairs, Ministers and MPs from all of Demo Finland's member parties. High-level attendance in the events demonstrate the commitment of the parties and their politicians to Demo Finland and indicates success in reaching political party audiences.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

At the end of the year, Demo Finland's secretariat had 8 staff members. In the joint programme office in Myanmar, Demo Finland shares a staff of 12 persons with NIMD.

As per the rules of Demo Finland, the Board leads the organisation, following the rules and decisions of the General Assembly and oversees that the budget is followed. The Board also has a major role in staff recruitment as well as in the decisions of financial commitments, following the administrative procedures and rules of the organisation. The Board consists of representatives from Demo Finland's member parties, is elected for two years and has a rotating presidency. In 2019, the composition of the Board was as follows: Christian Democrats 1 seat (Chair), Centre Party 2 seats (including 1st Vice-chair), National Coalition Party 2 seats (including 2nd Vice-chair), Social Democratic Party 2 seats, Finns Party 1 seat, Left Alliance 1 seat, Greens 1 seat, Swedish People's Party 1 seat, Blue Reform 1 seat.

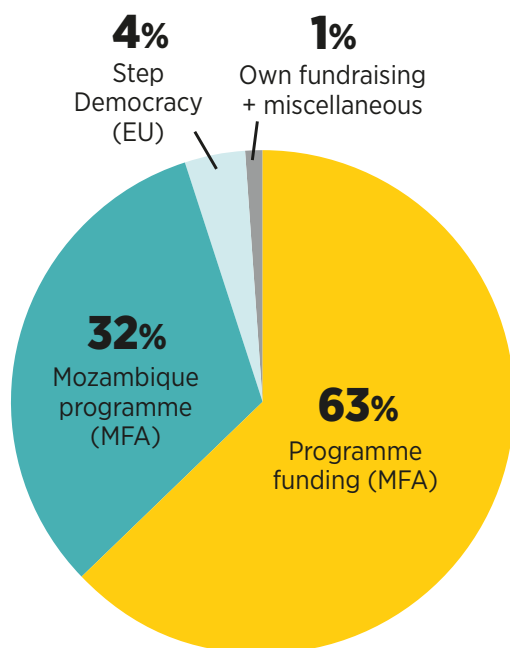


## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

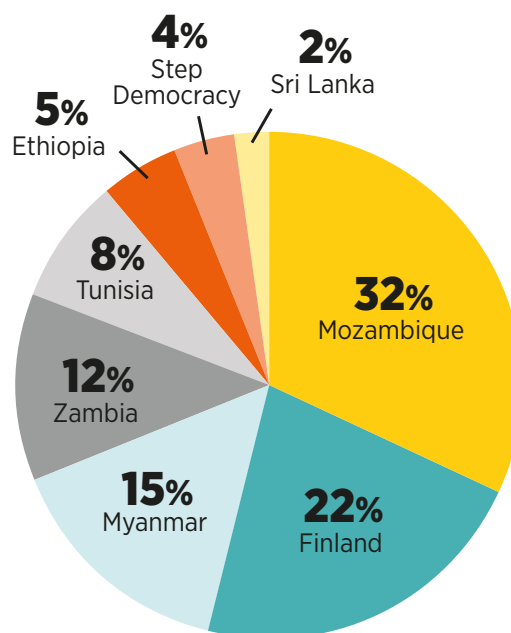
The MFA-funded programme's total costs during 2019 were around 763,000 euros. Demo Finland also received funding from the Finnish MFA for the bilateral Mozambique programme, of which around 60,000 euros were used in Finland, around 320,000 euros in Mozambique and around 20,000 euros in the Netherlands. Together with NIMD, Demo Finland received funding from the European Union for the Step Democracy programme in Myanmar. The budget for the segment of the programme implemented by Demo Finland and NIMD was around 580,000 euros. Around 45,000 euros of these EU funds were used directly by Demo Finland.

Demo Finland's own fundraising and miscellaneous income in 2019 consisted mainly of membership fees from the member parties and of participation fees of the PPPeer Network conference in Helsinki. Altogether, fundraising income was 18,150 euros.

### SOURCES OF FUNDING



### USES OF FUNDS





Political Parties of Finland for Democracy – Demo Finland is a unique cooperative organisation of all Finnish parliamentary parties supporting multiparty democracy in new and developing democracies.

Demo Finland's member parties:

***Centre Party***

***Christian Democrats***

***Finns Party***

***Green League***

***Left Alliance***

***Movement Now***

***National Coalition Party***

***Social Democratic Party***

***Swedish People's Party***

***[www.demofinland.org](http://www.demofinland.org)***

