



Annual Report 2024



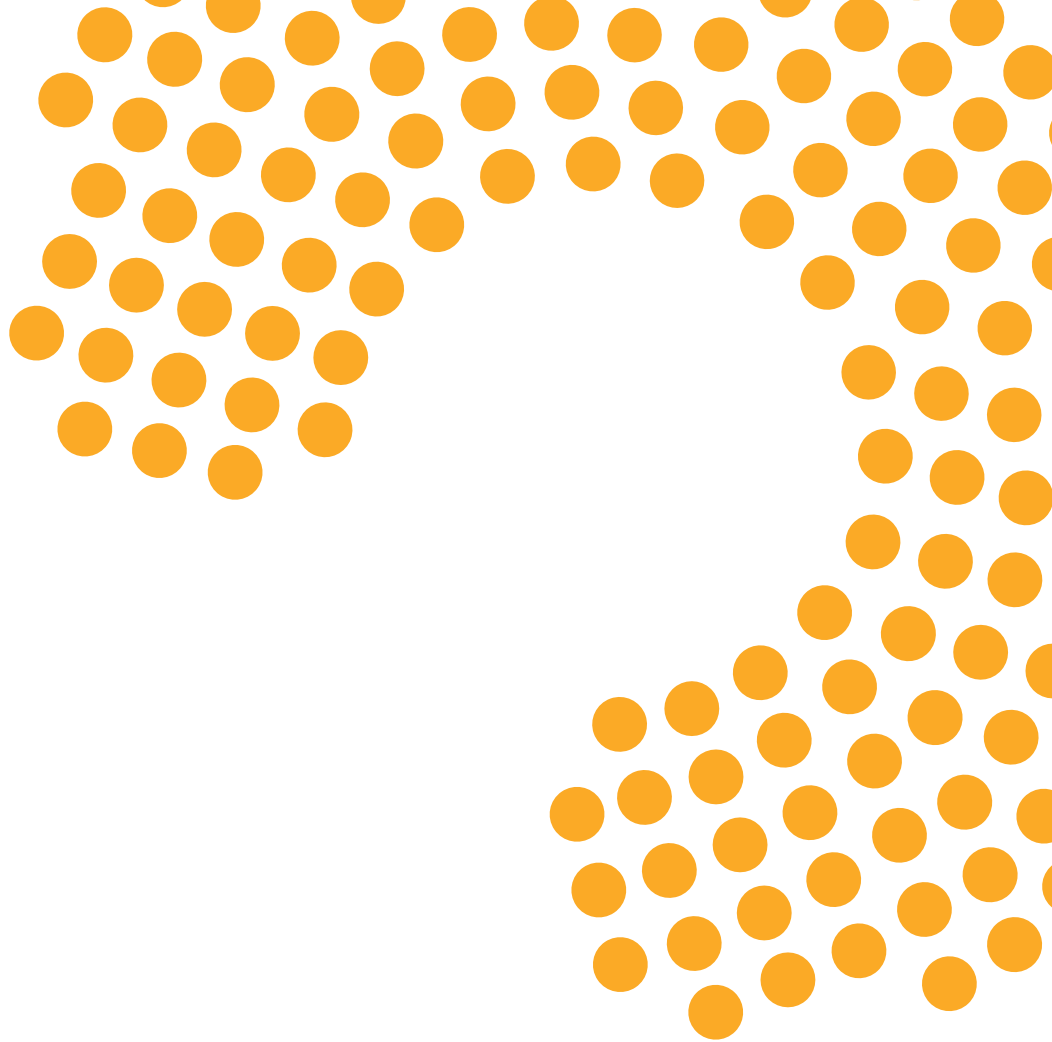
DEMO
FINLAND

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Cover image:

Despite the current restrictive political environment of Tunisia, the Tunisian School of Politics remains a space where young people representing different ideologies can come together for dialogue and peer learning. Photo: CEMI



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Multilateralism and democracy support challenged

2024 saw an amplification of the challenging of multilateralism, as Russia continued its war of aggression against Ukraine and Donald Trump was re-elected as the President of the USA, bringing more uncertainty to world politics. At the same time, the human cost of the war in Gaza as well as of other conflicts – including in Demo Finland’s programme countries – is enormous and poses an additional threat to the international rules-based order.

After the Presidential elections in 2024, Finland defined “value-based realism” as the new foundation of its foreign and security policy, while the actual strategic implementation of democracy, rule of law and human rights work remains to be clearly defined. Finland’s foreign and security policy was shaped by the pressure to raise defence spending in response to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, and trade and development policy were strongly interlinked. Democracy remained a core strength of Finland’s foreign and development policy.

After the European Parliament Elections in June, the new European Commission took office in December. Its focus on democracy-related issues is more on defending democracy in the EU than on promoting democracy externally.

All in all, democracy, human rights and the rule of law remained important values at a rhetorical level, while implementation weakened around the world, as the decline in the state of democracy and the shrinking of civic space continued in 2024.

Democracy support is being carried out in increasingly challenging global conditions and geopolitical instability. Nevertheless, Demo Finland’s work resulted in several positive democracy developments, as is shown in this Annual Report.

In Zambia, a political dialogue network of persons with disabilities submitted a memorandum to the Electoral Commission of Zambia proposing inclusive amendments to the electoral law. The government included the proposals to an ongoing constitutional review process and has proposed inclusivity-related amendments to the constitution. The Myanmar programme has shown significant evidence of the cascading effect of the programme to support the upholding of democratic values. Women, youth and ethnic leaders have shown leadership and taken increasing steps to share their knowledge and skills within their respective networks.

Our work in supporting – and defending – democracy continues. For that, the engagement, participation and knowledge of all the Finnish parliamentary parties is of the essence.

Anu Juvonen
Executive Director

Demo Finland's Theory of Change

Demo Finland's Strategy 2021–2025 was built on the proven strengths of the organisation, taking into consideration its unique mandate. Multi-party dialogue, inclusion of underrepresented groups in politics, and promotion of stronger democracy support policy are the core areas of work. Partnerships are based on long-term commitments, which contribute to the programmatic objectives set out in the Strategy.

Since the founding of Demo Finland, its work has focused on providing support to political parties and rested on two pillars: multi-party dialogue and supporting the political participation of underrepresented groups in politics, in particular women and young people and, more recently, persons with disabilities.

Multi-party democracy requires vibrant, representative, and programmatic parties that can carry out their multifaceted role at the core of the system. Parties play an important role in the identification of the needs and interests of citizens and specifically in channelling those needs into decision-making, in reconciling conflicts of interest between groups of people, and in producing credible political programs to guide the decision-making. In addition, they ensure the functioning of democracy in the longer term by engaging both citizens and political leaders.

When in power, parties bear responsibility for decision-making, and while out of executive power, they should hold decision-makers accountable. Political parties play a key role in democratic systems and are the primary stakeholder groups of Demo Finland's programmes.

The overall Theory of Change of Demo Finland

1 Political parties are more inclusive, programmatic and democratic



We assume that policy-based and inclusive parties contribute to a politics of accountability and more democratic societies.



We assume that inclusive parties reflect better the diversity of societies and contribute to the realization of civil and political rights.

2 Political parties perform strengthened multi-party dialogue



We assume that when political parties practise dialogue, they can enhance the weight, trustworthiness and transparency of political system and decrease polarization and conflicts.



We assume that when political parties reach agreements through dialogue, the decisions are more sustainable and less likely to be reversed with a change of power.

3 Finnish parliamentary parties' commitment to democracy support translates into strengthened policies



We assume that when political parties and government officials have increased knowledge and awareness of the modalities and opportunities for democracy support, it will lead to more effective policies in support of democracy.

Overall goal: Strengthened and inclusive multi-party democracy



Demo Finland's programmes in 2024

Ethiopia

Partners: Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA), Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA)

Demo Finland has co-operated with NEWA since 2019 and EWDNA since 2020 to strengthen women's capacity and their political participation on a multi-party basis. The objective of the programme is that women participate actively in political parties and political processes in the targeted regions, and that women with disabilities get the courage and learn the skills to participate in political decision-making at the local level. The programme is implemented at the national level in Addis Ababa and at regional levels in Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz, and its activities include capacity building training for women politicians, awareness-raising on disability inclusion for a wider group of actors in governance and supporting political parties in better accommodating women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) into their decision-making processes. In 2023–2024, NEWA Ethiopia increased and deepened its co-operation with the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council, which enabled the programme to further enhance multi-party dialogue.

Kenya

Partner: Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

Between 2020 and 2024, Demo Finland and WFD supported the capacity building of Kenyan political parties in the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in political decision-making and strengthened the civil and political rights of PWDs. The programme activities included trainings for representatives of Kenyan political parties on the involvement and importance of the participation of PWDs in democracy and on the challenges faced by PWDs in politics, and training organisations of PWDs in participating in political decision-making and advocating for the inclusion of PWDs in politics. Parties were also supported in mainstreaming disability inclusion in policy issues. In addition, the programme supported civil society organisations, political parties, electoral and equity officials and parliamentary actors to form coalitions to promote disability inclusion at all levels of politics.

Mozambique

Partners: Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD)

Demo Finland and IMD have supported the democratic governance of extractive industries and natural resources in Mozambique since 2017. The aim in the first phases was to enhance the oversight role of the Parliament and six Provincial Assemblies on the extractive industries and to increase their capacity to assess the implementation of the existing legislation on natural resource management. Trainings were organised for relevant parliamentary committees, and members of these committees visited communities affected by the extractive industry in order to interact with

the citizens and to evaluate the effects of the industry. In 2024, a bridging project was carried out to increase the sustainability of the work. The main strategy for ensuring sustainability has been to strengthen the Parliamentary Research and Training Centre and other technical parliamentary staff to act as resource persons and support parliamentarians, many of whom were newly elected in October 2024.

Myanmar

Partner: Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)

Demo Finland and NIMD implemented democracy education programmes and supported multi-party co-operation and capacity building in Myanmar from 2014 to 2021. Following the military coup in February 2021, the activities were halted and new ways to support democratic actors in Myanmar were sought. In 2022, trainings were again launched online or outside the country, focusing on capacity building and supporting democratic dialogue processes at the subnational level. The programme continues to focus on political actors affiliated with political parties, as direct work with political parties has been hampered due to the post-coup context, and the programme's connection with relevant and active CSOs has also been strengthened. Participants for the trainings have been recruited especially from among the alumni network of the previous democracy education programmes. The interest in participating in the trainings has remained strong. At the centre of the work in Myanmar is also the facilitation of dialogue at the sub-national level.

Tunisia

Partners: Centre des Etudes Méditerranéennes et Internationales (CEMI), Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)

Since 2021, the political and civil society environment in Tunisia has been restricted, as the President has centralised power in an authoritarian manner. Demo Finland, together with the NIMD, supports the Tunisian School of Politics (TSoP), run by CEMI and founded in 2012. The objective of the programme is to enable youth leaders to act as influential actors of change and ensure that political parties and civil society collaborate peacefully on a basis of trust. In 2024, CEMI also focused on strengthening the organisational capacity of political and civic youth organisations. In addition to Tunisia, youth from North African, Middle Eastern and French-speaking African countries benefitted from the trainings and networking of the programme.

Zambia

Partners: Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL), Disability Rights Watch (DRW)

In 2020–2024, Demo Finland and its partners strengthened the inclusive multi-party system in Zambia and, in particular, equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in politics. The programme activities focused on building the capacities of political parties on disability inclusive measures and supporting political parties in developing strategies, guidelines or action plans that better reflect the inclusion of PWDs. Besides the training and advocacy activities, the programme

supported the creation of a PWDs political dialogue network (PPDN), which is now advocating for disability inclusion in political decision-making independently of the programme. A majority of PPDN members joined political parties in 2024, and they are preparing for the 2026 general elections.

WYDE / Uganda and Kenya

Partners: NIMD as the cluster-lead, cluster members WFD & Demo Finland

The WYDE Civic Engagement project is a component of the Women and Youth in Democratic Engagement (WYDE) programme of the European Commission. The project is led by the European Partnership for Democracy, and the consortium has a total of 14 democracy organisations working in different countries. Demo Finland participates in the pillar of the project that focuses on capacity building of civil society and youth leaders in East Africa. The objective is to strengthen youth participation at national, regional and global levels. In 2024, Demo Finland participated in the organisation of Democracy Schools in Kenya and Uganda.

Finland

Demo Finland builds the capacity and commitment of Finnish political parties to democracy support and enhances multi-party dialogue. Demo Finland supports, in particular, the inclusivity of Finnish political parties by providing targeted training and offering opportunities for peer exchange with the participants in Demo Finland’s international programmes. Democracy Academy for political youth and student organisations is organised annually to increase the understanding of young politicians on democracy and to create a safe space for dialogue. To increase the awareness and deepen the understanding of democracy issues in Finland, Demo Finland also organises public events and discussions on different aspects of democracy.

Demo Finland’s work in 2024 in numbers:



Main results of the programmes

Outcome 1: Political Parties are more Programmatic, Inclusive, and Democratic

To reflect the diversity of societies and to foster their representational role, political parties must promote access to decision-making by underrepresented groups on various levels. In a functioning multi-party democracy, and according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, every citizen has the right to participate in decision-making, which makes inclusivity an objective. On the other hand, the quality of policy-making and decision-making is improved if more diverse voices and experiences are heard and involved. Demo Finland encourages political parties to develop strategies for the inclusion of women, young people and persons with disabilities and provides support for the competence and empowerment of politicians belonging to these groups.

Political parties need to respond to the interests of their voters and draw up policies that support the realisation of accountability towards the citizens. Demo Finland strengthens political parties in terms of strategic thinking, political programming and good command of the principles of democracy. The internal democracy of political parties is reinforced and their dialogue with civil society is supported.

With Demo Finland's support:

- improvements have been made in the structures of political parties as well as in legislation to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- politicians, political party actors, other leaders and parliamentary staff have strengthened their skills and understanding of democratic governance.

In Ethiopia, the year 2024 saw a significant increase in PWDs using their newly gained skills and confidence : 466 women with disabilities participated in various local, national and international meetings, initiatives and dialogues, mainly in the field of peace and security. This is a dramatic change compared to the previous years. For instance, in 2021–2022, 40 to 50 women with disabilities had the confidence or the capacity to political participation at the local level.

EWDNA published and disseminated a policy-level disability inclusion checklist for political parties in 2024. The checklist was developed following the political parties' request for EWDNA to provide them with support in assessing their documents and practices from a disability inclusive perspective.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) initiated a process of reviewing the Election Law of Ethiopia in 2024. NEBE used the expertise of EWDNA, but also the elected women and the female political party members who have participated in the workshops of the programme. After these negotiations and hearings, NEBE proposed several inclusive amendments to the law, e.g. quotas for women and PWDs in the membership and representation of political parties. In early 2025, elected women who have been part of the programme seconded the amendments, and at the writing of this report, the law is pending in the Parliament.

In Ethiopia, there was a significant increase in persons with disabilities using their newly gained skills and confidence for political participation.

The programme in Ethiopia was externally evaluated in 2024. The evaluation report noted that the programme has made clear progress towards strengthening inclusive multi-party system in Ethiopia and increased

- the self-confidence of women and women with disabilities;
- the general awareness of the political rights of women with disabilities;
- women's active participation in political parties and leadership;
- awareness of politicians at all levels about disability inclusion and the political rights of women with disabilities;
- the participation of women with disabilities in politics.

In Kenya, there was a major advancement in the review of strategies, practices and structures of political parties. Out of the 21 political parties involved with the programme, 17 now have a functioning, institutionalised National Executive Committee (NEC) with 31 persons with disabilities nominated into them. The NECs ensure that the party delivers on its promises on disability inclusion. 19 political parties also have active disability leagues. They recruit PWD members to the party and provide them with a platform to engage the leadership of the party in disability inclusion.

The programme developed a set of concrete tools that CSOs and organisations of persons with disabilities can use to assess the extent to which and how the political parties and the government are fulfilling their promises in disability inclusion. The organisations were trained to use the mechanism, and at the end of 2024, 14 organisations were using the tool.

In Mozambique, a bridging project helped ensure the sustainability of work in 2024. As the elected representatives may change from one electoral period to the next, and the majority of parliamentarians elected in the 2024 elections are newcomers, the staff of the Parliamentary Research and Training Centre is pivotal in maintaining knowledge and skills in order to provide

Case: Ethiopia

Aberash (name has been changed), member of the Prosperity Party in Ethiopia and working in a governmental office, has participated in trainings that focused on women's political participation and political leadership as well as international, national, regional and legal frameworks. Prior to her involvement in the programme, she had limited knowledge and understanding of the topics, and her husband was heavily unsupportive of her being involved in political activities.

After the trainings, Aberash began sharing the knowledge she had gained on the importance of women's political participation as well as training materials with her husband. Over time, they started having discussions and debates on political issues, and her husband became convinced of her involvement in a political party and agreed to support her.

Aberash feels that the trainings enabled her to have a voice in the decision-making processes in her party, to exchange information and experiences with her peers and to raise gender-related issues for discussion and debate.

"The training helped me to express my ideas, to be confident and believe in myself", Aberash says.

support and guidance on various issues to both old and new parliamentarians and ensuring that knowledge and skills are available beyond this programme. 118 staff members of the Centre were trained on extractive industries and other issues relevant to the Parliament.

The programme also supported the Parliamentary Research and Training Centre with website development, enabling the main information products of the IMD and Demo Finland programmes on parliamentary oversight of extractive industries to be easily found on one website. In addition, the programme supported four policy briefs produced by the parliament staff on topics relevant to the programme.

In Myanmar, 2024 saw widespread resistance, both armed and unarmed, against military rule. Throughout the difficult situation, the citizens' hunger for knowledge and education on democracy remains high.

During the year, NIMD and Demo Finland's programme organised three Democracy School trainings for a total of 49 participants, in which the previously developed MyDemocracy School mobile application was used as part of the training programme. The application consists of information on various topics such as the role of political parties, the use of social media, constitutions and gender in politics. The programme reached 1200 people through the mobile application, of which

In 2024, the Myanmar programme has shown significant evidence of the cascading effect of the programme to support the upholding of democratic values in Myanmar.

over 700 were added in 2024. In addition, the programme organised five online learning seminars, each attracting on average 65 participants.

In 2024, the Myanmar programme has shown significant evidence of the cascading effect of the programme to support the upholding of democratic values in Myanmar. Following the trainings and interactive seminars, women, youth and ethnic leaders have taken initiative to use their knowledge and skills within their networks. This is a key purpose of the seminars and shows that the trainings have an impact beyond those attending the trainings. There are a number of cases of alumni forming online media platforms or other types of platforms for dialogue. For example, a youth network was established by seven youth alumni in one state to facilitate cross-ethnic dialogue and youth participation in political processes, particularly the state constitution drafting.

In Tunisia, 107 young political and civic activists who participated in different training activities gained new skills and confidence to participate in decision-making processes. Young leaders have been able to put into use the skills, for example by advancing to leadership positions in their organisations and training other organisations and civic actors. In addition, 48 youth leaders from North African, Middle Eastern and French-speaking African countries were trained to participate in decision-making processes, lobbying and advocacy.

In Tunisia, young leaders have been able to put into use the skills, for example by advancing to leadership positions in their organisations and training other organisations and civic actors.

In 2024, a special emphasis was put on strengthening the capacity of political and civic youth-led organisations, in addition to individuals. 20 organisations from Tunisia and 44 organisations from the wider region gained strengthened organisational capacities. This enables young people to effectively operate and lead change through their organisations.

The programme was able to gain the interest of non-engaged youth who are not active in political or civic organisations. These youth were provided an opportunity to explore democratic values, pluralism and dialogue and learn soft skills in 12 youth council workshops. This is important as



A training session of the Tunisian School of Politics. Photo: CEMI



During a study visit to Nairobi, Finnish youth politicians exchanged experiences with the Kenya Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. Photo: Demo Finland

Tunisian youth's trust in politics is very low, and they are generally discouraged from participating in politics. In addition, over 160 videos containing democratic messages were shared with the general public, especially the youth, through the Freesh YouTube channel.

In Zambia, the seven political parties that were in the programme completed their disability inclusion plans and started implementing them. Six political parties recruited 150 PWDs into their membership, and five political parties nominated 17 PWDs into leadership positions.

The Persons with Disabilities Political Dialogue Network (PPDN), established in the previous project phase and now acting independently, gave the Electoral Reform Technical Committee a memorandum containing recommendations to review the Constitution of Zambia and the Election Act 2016 and to enhance the electoral code of conduct from a disability perspective. As the government was in the process of reviewing the Constitution, PPDN's recommendations were taken into account, and the government proposed to the Parliament that the Constitution would guarantee inclusivity and accessibility of all elections in Zambia. The review process is scheduled to be completed in July 2025.

In Zambia, the Persons with Disabilities Political Dialogue Network's recommendations led the government to propose to the Parliament that the Constitution would guarantee inclusivity and accessibility on all elections in Zambia.

As part of the WYDE Civic Engagement programme in Uganda and Kenya, Demo Finland participated in the organisation of Democracy Academies for young people active in politics, civil society and student associations. The participants increased their democratic skills and participated in dialogue across party lines and between political and civic organisations. Participation in the Democracy Academies encouraged the young political and civic actors to run for elected positions. In addition, participants successfully took up leadership positions in regional and national youth and student organisations.

In Finland, 31 representatives of the youth and student organisations from all nine parliamentary parties took part in the Democracy Academy training programme. The Democracy Academy enhanced young politicians' understanding of democracy-related issues and international democracy support, with a focus on case examples in Kenya and Mozambique, giving them useful knowledge and skills that they could use in their political activities.

Case: Kenya

For a long time, there was no real inclusion of persons with disabilities in political parties, recalls Nickson Kakiri, President of the disability league of Kenya's largest opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). Kakiri joined the party in 2006 and after a successful campaign was elected as the party's Secretary for disability affairs. However, this was only a nominal position, and things did not move forward. Many political parties lacked the will and expertise to support the political participation of persons with disabilities, and organisations of persons with disabilities had limited relations with political parties and their knowledge and experience were not utilised.

Political parties and CSOs have worked together under Demo Finland and WFD's programme to develop minimum standards of inclusion for political parties. The standards are based on data and research, and the document has served as an important lever for the ODM's disability league to convince party leadership of the need for change.

A lot has happened in recent years. The ODM party has recognised the disability league in its constitution and now organises its events in accessible venues and uses sign language interpretation. Persons with disabilities have also been included in the party's decision-making at different levels.

Nickson Kakiri has noticed a change in attitudes and awareness: "The party is becoming more aware of the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities and their needs. They listen to me when I remind them about accessibility."

The programme has also brought political parties together. Before the programme's activities, interaction between different political parties was unheard of. In March 2024, Kenyan political parties set up the National Disability Multi-Party Caucus, which is a platform for dialogue, advocacy, and policy formulation aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities. There have been no similar initiatives bringing together political actors on such a broad scale in Kenya, so the establishment of the Caucus is a milestone for the Kenyan political scene.

"Who would possibly have thought that government and opposition parties sit together like this!" Kakiri says.

Outcome 2: Political Parties Perform Strengthened Inclusive Multi-Party Dialogue

Constructive dialogue between political parties is essential to a functioning multi-party democracy. Dialogue may lead to mutual respect and listening and create space for policies that take different views into account. Constructive and respectful political dialogue improves citizens' confidence in representative democracy as a political system. Demo Finland supports its partners in facilitating dialogue and creates and reinforces safe spaces for an ongoing dialogue between political parties.

Multi-party dialogue is also a tool for building peace and engaging political parties as relevant actors in peace-building processes. This paves the way towards enhanced commitment of such actors, who in post-conflict contexts and within post-peacebuilding time are responsible for transparent and accountable decision-making structures.

With Demo Finland's support:

- new multi-party and multi-stakeholder networks and platforms were established and existing platforms continued to bring together different political parties and political actors for constructive collaboration and dialogue;
- political actors have had safe spaces for dialogue in politically sensitive and restrictive contexts.

In Ethiopia, the programme facilitated the establishment of a network between the Women's Caucus of the Parliament and the Women's Wing of Ethiopian Political Parties' Joint Council (PPJC). The purpose of the network is to discuss barriers to women's political participation in Ethiopia and find practical measures for removing them. The network brings together women from at least 23 political parties. This is the first time in Ethiopia that elected women and female members of political parties collaborate on a multi-party basis.

For the first time in Ethiopia, elected women and female members of political parties collaborate on a multi-party basis.

The evaluation of the programme, carried out in 2024, noted that the programme has increased cross-party peer support and collaboration between women in politics in more than one way. The network is therefore only one example.

In Kenya, the programme established the National Multi-Party Disability Caucus (NMDC) in 2024 to bring together 20 political parties to advocate for disability inclusion in the political sphere of Kenya. The caucus worked very actively, for instance handing the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) a memorandum giving recommendations on how ORPP could amend its structures to better meet the requirements of the Kenyan constitution on disability inclusion and what legal reforms ORPP should initiate to enhance disability inclusion in political parties. The caucus also engaged with the Kenya Disability Parliamentary Association (KEDIPA), organisations of persons



In Kenya, the National Multi-Party Disability Caucus was established in March 2024. Photo: WFD Kenya

with disabilities and CSOs to review the Political Parties Act 2011, leading to the drafting of the Political Parties Amendment Bill 2024.

The programme supported the work of the multi-actor coalitions formed in 2023. Various programme stakeholders like political parties, KEDIPA, organisations of persons with disabilities, CSOs and government institutions met 45 times during the year. Some of these meetings were independent and not facilitated by the programme. The programme also sensitised 46 political parties outside of the programme to disability inclusion by inviting them to a workshop where they were acquainted with the Minimum Standards for Disability Inclusion developed earlier in the programme.

In Kenya , the programme established the National Multi-Party Disability Caucus (NMDC) to bring together 20 political parties to advocate for disability inclusion in the political sphere of Kenya.

In Myanmar, amid ongoing civil conflict, the programme in 2024 has kept up steady co-operation for dialogue in one state and started dialogue engagement in one new state. The hunger of political actors to engage in dialogue is demonstrated by the fact that, despite the political turbulence in Myanmar, this sub-national dialogue forum has met 10 times in 2024, 9 times online and once in person. They have also been offered support and online lectures, for example, on state building on inclusiveness and equality as well as on constitutionalism. A further highlight of the programme's dialogue work has been the entry into another state in 2024 through an in-person training held in Thailand.

In Tunisia, despite the highly restrictive operating environment, three multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms were kept active and 9 dialogue events took place. 11 political parties were reached through the dialogue activities. Dialogues were organised in different formats: between political parties; with political parties and civil society organisations; among Tunisia School of Politics alumni only; and with a wider, multi-generational group of actors. A total of 204 individuals participated in trust-building dialogue, which creates an enabling environment for further collaboration.

In Zambia, the Persons with Disabilities Political Dialogue Network (PPDN), established earlier in the programme, developed into a multi-party platform during 2024, when most of its over 100 active members joined different political parties. Zambia thus now has two multi-party platforms as an outcome of the programme. The other one, the programme's Technical Working Group (TGW), was established in 2023 and it unites representatives of political parties, CSOs and organisations of persons with disabilities into an expert platform that advises all relevant actors in disability inclusion in politics.

In Finland, Demo Finland serves as a unique dialogue platform for Finnish political parties to discuss and collaborate on supporting democracy as part of Finland's foreign and development policy. These dialogue platforms include the Board of Demo Finland, the Democracy Academy training programme and its alumni network.

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In 2024, the Democracy Academy alumni network continued to become more established, and the network successfully supported the planning and launch of Demo Finland's pilot programme in Kosovo and the implementation of the WYDE Civic Engagement programme in Uganda. According to an internal evaluation of the Democracy Academy between 2020–2024, Demo Finland has created new safe spaces for co-operation and interaction between youth representing different political parties. Key tools for achieving this have been the methods used to facilitate dialogue and the opportunities for peer learning and co-operation, such as study visits.

In 2024, Demo Finland began planning **a new programme in Kosovo** together with its local partner, Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS), a non-partisan think-tank that has over 20 years of experience in providing political and leadership education and facilitating platforms for debate and dialogue in an effort to connect various political actors and help them navigate the complex political environment in Kosovo. The planning process included an initial scoping visit and a subsequent visit to Prishtina by members of the Finnish Democracy Academy alumni network, who successfully supported the planning and launch of the new programme in Kosovo. The new programme aims to strengthen the political participation of young people and increase co-operation and dialogue between political parties.



Dialogue between Kosovar and Finnish youth politicians. Photo: PIPS

Case: Myanmar

Myanmar's gradual process of democratisation stalled after the coup d'état in 2021. Despite the ongoing conflict, Demo Finland and the NIMD have searched for ways to support dialogue among Myanmar's political actors. The programme is facilitating a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform, which brings together a diverse group of local stakeholders from various political institutions, providing a safe space for open dialogue in a high-risk context where such conversations are often silenced.

By collaborating across divides, building trust and jointly reflecting on Myanmar's future, the platform helps to keep the democratic culture in Myanmar alive. It enables political stakeholders to continue working and moving towards Myanmar's democratic transition.

The dialogues are an important tool to enhance collaboration and consensus in a multi-ethnic country where division can sometimes dominate politics. Participants have reported a shift in perspective and a deepening understanding of the value of dialogue. They are well aware of the personal and political risks involved, but many of the participants have found renewed purpose and resilience through the dialogue process.

"I've learned from dialogue that we cannot decide for our state just by listening to one side of our stories," says a leader involved in an ethnic organisation. "Being brave enough to listen to the other side of the stories is important for inclusive decision-making and representation too. More dialogue is needed for the whole country, including more key stakeholders, to address the grievances of Myanmar."

Outcome 3: Finnish Parliamentary Parties' Commitment to Democracy Support Translates into Policies

The strengthening of and support for democracy around the world requires strong advocacy and international co-operation. Finland and the European Union have committed to supporting democracy internationally, but a value-based commitment may not be sufficiently evident in the policies being applied. Demo Finland supports the democracy support policies of Finland and the European Union by offering its expertise to governmental actors and decision-makers.

Demo Finland's mandate to work in the field of international democracy support and with political actors is based on the collaboration and commitment to democracy development of all parliamentary parties within Demo Finland. All programme work in Finland is linked to Demo Finland's international programmes via peer-learning as well as experience and knowledge sharing.

In 2024, the Finnish Parliament and ministries consulted Demo Finland in key policy processes, including the parliamentary committee hearings about the state budget and government reports that define the new direction for foreign and development policy. This indicates that Demo Finland's



At the party congresses, Demo Finland met with hundreds of political party members. Photo: Demo Finland

expertise has been recognised. In its statements and consultations, Demo Finland emphasised that supporting democracy should be a key focus across Finland's foreign, security and development policies.

Five of Demo Finland's member parties had party congresses in 2024, and Demo Finland attended all of them with an exhibitor stand. In the party congresses, Demo Finland reached hundreds of party members, distributing materials on democracy and actively discussing the state of democracy globally as well as the role of political parties in international democratic development.

In its statements and consultations, Demo Finland emphasised that supporting democracy should be a key focus across Finland's foreign, security and development policies.

Demo Finland took an active role in the 2024 Summit for Democracy by hosting a side event, organising a youth consultation on the Summit's topics and raising the Summit and the state of democracy in national media. This increased the awareness of the Summit among a wider public and introduced Demo Finland to new stakeholders in the international democracy community. In addition, the youth consultation resulted in an appeal concerning ending online harassment to strengthen democracy and make democratic participation safer for young people. Demo Finland used the appeal to bring young people's voices to the Summit.



Demo Finland's Executive Director Anu Juvonen interviewing Olof Skoog, EU Special Representative for Human Rights, at the EPD Annual Conference. Photo: Daphne Matthys

Advocacy and communications

Demo Finland's advocacy aims to translate value-based commitments to democracy into well-implemented, long-term policies to support democracy. As the global state of democracy is declining, we believe that democracy support should be invested in and developed more strategically. Finland should set democracy as the priority for foreign and security policy, and the EU should take a more prominent role in defending democracy globally.

In 2024, Demo Finland was consulted in 15 policy processes through parliamentary committee hearings, written statements and roundtables. Demo Finland's Board and staff members gave 18 speeches and lectures in events organised by different stakeholders, including political parties. Demo Finland joined three statements released by EPD and global democracy support networks.

The Executive Director of Demo Finland was appointed as the President of the European Partnership for Democracy EPD, significantly strengthening the recognition and influence of Demo Finland's expertise internationally. Demo Finland is a founding member of EPD and actively participated in the umbrella organisation's working groups and meetings, offering its knowledge and expertise to the network of European democracy support organisations and EU decision-makers.

In Finland, Demo Finland highlighted the importance of democracy support as a member of Finland's Development Policy Committee and Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development. Demo Finland was an active member in Finland's Women, Peace and Security Network and Finland's Youth, Peace and Security Monitoring Group, contributing to the implementation of National Action Plans. Additionally, Demo Finland's Executive Director is a member of the Human Rights Centre's Human Rights Delegation in her personal capacity for the second parliamentary cycle, highlighting especially the civic and political rights.

Demo Finland's communications aims to increase awareness about the importance of democracy for sustainable development and of inclusive political parties for a functioning multi-party democracy, and to strengthen Demo Finland's status as an expert organisation of democracy support. The target groups of Demo Finland's communications are mainly political parties and politicians in Finland, donors, as well as democracy experts and practitioners in Finland and abroad.

Demo Finland's stakeholder survey, carried out in early 2024, shows that Demo Finland's profile as a democracy support expert has strengthened considerably, especially among political party actors, which is the main target group of Demo Finland's communications. This indicates that Demo Finland's communications and events have been effective in the long term in raising awareness on global democracy issues and international democracy support.

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There was a slight increase in the number of website visits (103,865), but the number of visitors (60,367) increased by 25% compared to the previous year. The number of newsletter subscribers increased by 7%, but the average opening rate of the newsletters increased by 24% (now being 38%), suggesting that the subscribers have become more engaged, thus Demo Finland's communications reaching them better.

There was a moderate increase in the number of followers on different social media platforms, except for X (formerly Twitter), where the number of followers started to decrease as the changes in the platform have led to many users leaving it. Demo Finland also focused more on the other platforms (Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook) as well as joined Bluesky at the end of the year.



Demo Finland invested in the visibility of the International Day of Democracy in September by launching a social media campaign that highlighted how democracy can bring positive effects to the economy. With almost 185,000 impressions, almost 63,000 unique users reached and a good engagement rate, the campaign raised awareness of the link between democracy and economic growth and reducing corruption.

Demo Finland's International Day of Democracy seminar focused on the same topic, bringing an expert from the V-Dem Institute to speak about the research that shows the correlation between democratisation and economic growth. In addition to this main event of the year, Demo Finland organised altogether 17 public events in 2024, reaching 995 participants.

In 2024, Demo Finland shifted its focus in its public events towards smaller, more targeted events, as well as hosted several events in collaboration with other organisations. This resulted in a better and deeper reach to the main target groups and in reaching new audiences from relevant target groups through collaborative events. The feedback from the events shows that the contents of the events were highly relevant and offered new perspectives on international democracy support to the participants. Democracy Hour webinars, launched in January 2024, were a particularly successful way to bring topical democracy issues to Finnish audiences.

With funding from the Europe Information, Demo Finland implemented a communications project with the aim of raising awareness on the EU's democracy support globally and sparking discussion on the EU's role in promoting democracy and how its own policies are implemented in practice.

Two publications were produced in 2024: The updated version of the research on intra-party democracy in Finnish parliamentary parties, with an English-language summary for the use of Demo Finland's international partners, and a policy brief on the link between democracy and economic growth, drawing on international experiences and research. The latter reinforces the needed business case for international democracy support.



The Global State of Democracy 2024 launch event was organised together with the International IDEA, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. Photo: Demo Finland

Human resources

Demo Finland's most important resource is its expert staff, and their well-being is a top priority for the organisation. Demo Finland is an equal employer.

Demo Finland continued to implement a flexible hybrid work model, which combines working part of the week at the office and part remotely. In March 2024, Demo Finland moved to a new office location, which is more suitable for hybrid working, as well as being more cost-effective.

In HR administration and occupational safety and health, Demo Finland invested in well-being at work in many ways; a well-being survey was conducted for the entire staff, as well as an expert lecture on ergonomics while working at the office and remotely.

In 2024, Demo Finland employed an average of ten people. Two persons were on study and other leave during the first trimester of 2024.

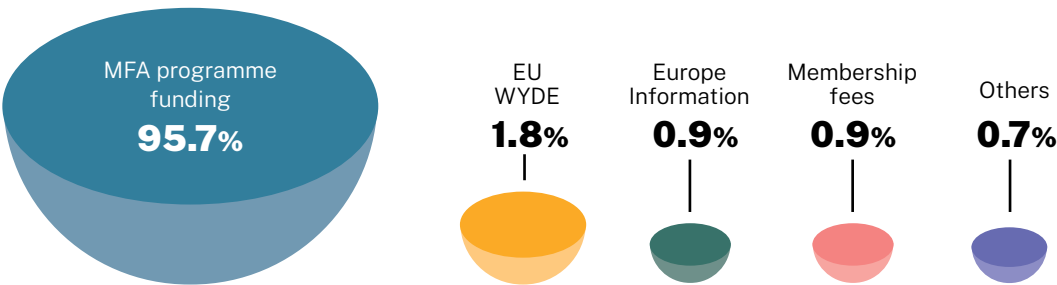
Financial resources

The total revenue in 2024 was EUR 1.76 million, compared to EUR 2.37 million in 2023. The organisation’s total expenses in 2024 were EUR 1.74 million, compared to EUR 2.36 million in 2023. The decrease in revenue was mainly due to the end of Finland’s bilateral programme in Mozambique funded by the Finnish MFA.

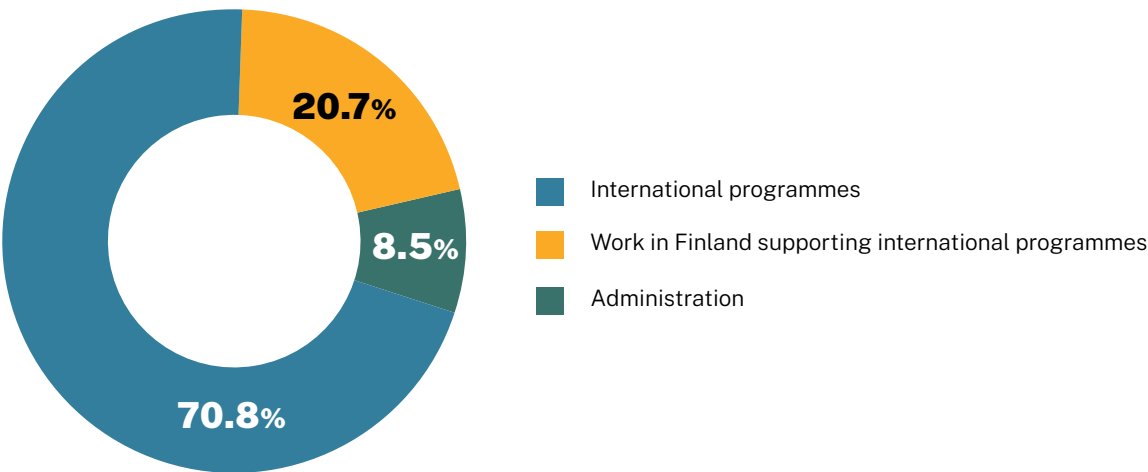
The MFA-funded programmes’ total costs during 2024 were around 1.68 million euros. Demo Finland also received funding from the European Commission for the WYDE Civic Engagement programme, and from Europe Information.

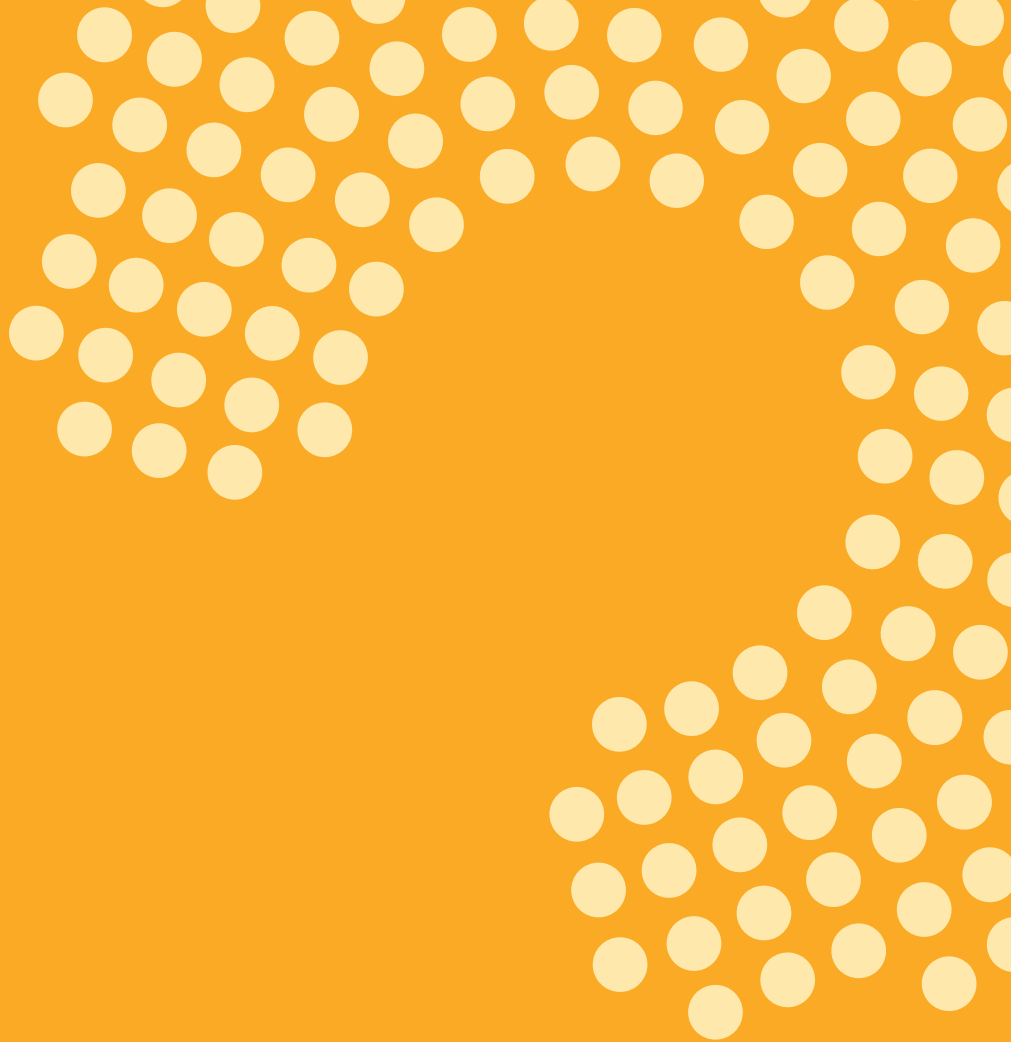
Demo Finland also collected 15,000 euros as membership fees from its Finnish member parties.

Sources of funding



Use of funds





Political Parties of Finland for Democracy – Demo Finland is a co-operative organisation of all Finnish parliamentary parties. It enhances democracy by strengthening the political participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in particular and by supporting dialogue between political parties.

www.demofinland.org