



Annual Report

2021



DEMOCRACY
REPORTING
INTERNATIONAL

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Foreword



Ilkka Uusitalo,

*Chairman of the Supervisory Board
Democracy Reporting International (DRI)*

The year 2021 was not a good one for democracy and rule of law globally. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued through a second year, and as new variants of the virus appeared, many governments resorted to strict emergency regimes, raising serious concerns about the legality of these measures, the way they were adopted, and their impact on the fundamental rights of people.

At the same time, democracy continued backsliding, due to military coups or autocratic governments undermining basic principles of democracy and the rule of law. This affected many of the countries where DRI has been active, adversely affecting our activities. In Myanmar, the military coup overthrew the democratically elected government and demolished the earlier positive developments to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In Tunisia, which had been seen as the main positive example of democratic progress after the “Arab Spring”, the president sidelined the parliament. In Lebanon, the economic and political crisis deepened. In Sri Lanka, growing public protests against political nepotism, mismanagement of the economy and corruption were met by further repressive measures by the government and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, reducing the space for civil society. Unfortunately, concerns about the state of democracy also continued to be raised in countries like Hungary, Poland and the United States. Towards the end of the year, we could already see signs of Russian aggression, as the government started amassing troops on Ukraine’s borders.

These negative developments have highlighted the importance and relevance of DRI’s work. In this changing operational environment, DRI has shown its flexibility in responding to new challenges. We have closely monitored the responses to the global health crisis, drawing attention to the need for democratic checks and balances when emergency measures are put in place, and highlighting the detrimental effects of these measures on specific groups, including women and the poor. DRI has been at the forefront of developing new tools for monitoring disinformation, which has become increasingly important both in crisis situations and during elections. We have also made clear that disinformation is not just an issue in developing countries or countries outside of Europe. In 2021, DRI monitored online discourse ahead of the German federal elections. Despite seeing space for civil society shrinking, DRI has developed new ways to support its local partners in working in these situations by providing training and new tools.

DRI’s work would not have been possible without its highly motivated and dedicated professional staff, both in the headquarters and in the country offices, as well as our network of partners in many countries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues for the extremely important work they do in these difficult circumstances.

I would also like to thank our funding partners, including governments, international organisations, and foundations, (see page 50 for a full list), who have continued to support us. Without you, our work would not have been possible.

About DRI

Democracy Reporting International (DRI) is an independent organisation dedicated to promoting democracy worldwide. We believe that people are active participants in public life, not subjects of their governments.

Our vision

We work towards a world that empowers informed people, irrespective of their social status, gender, religious belief, ethnicity, age or ability, to elect their governments. Our support is grounded in globally agreed democratic principles that are enshrined in international law.

People participate actively in politics; they are vigilant in the defence and creation of open, accountable, constitutional and representative institutions that work for the common good. These institutions can anchor democratic change and renewal. We aim to bridge the gap between civil society, citizens and governments at the municipal, provincial and national levels.

Our mission

We make this vision a reality in many ways:

- We help build democracy, through facilitating public debates, increasing widespread civic participation, and promoting accountable governance.
- We support political transformations towards democracy, strengthen democratic processes and institutions, and defend democracy and its institutions against attacks.
- We help preserve and expand the democratic space we all share in this polarised world, independent of our political opinions, religious beliefs or personal preferences.
- We provide independent factual analysis and expertise as a basis for decision-making.
- We do all of this by working closely with civil society and parliamentarians, as well as with local and national authorities.

What we do

Our work centres on analysis and reporting, training and raising public awareness. For this, we are guided by the democratic and human rights obligations enshrined in international law. We work to promote democratic elections, independent judiciaries, transparent government and public institutions, and fundamental freedoms for all.

We work across countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and to strengthen the following five pillars of any democratic society:



Elections: We help defend the heart of democracy through social media monitoring to ensure authentic online debates, through analysis and supporting legal reforms and voter education, and by involving citizens in election observation.



Justice: Beyond supporting the writing and implementation of new constitutions, we work with courts and lawmakers to help strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence. We also help include civil society and the public in debates on improving and ensuring justice.



Human rights: We work with people and institutions to make sure that everyone can participate equally in public and political life, without fear or facing repression.



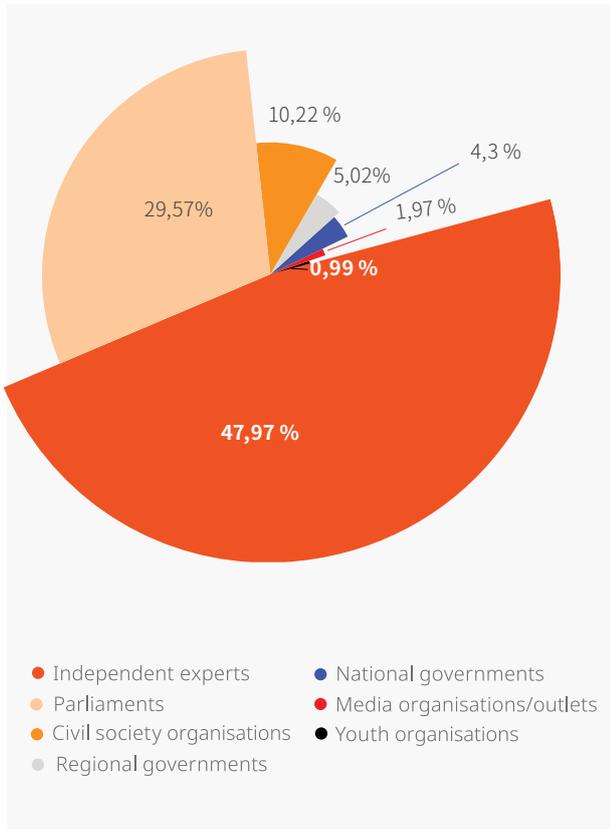
Local governance: We work on decentralisation reforms, strengthening how local governments operate and increasing civic participation, to bring democracy closer to people.



Democratic discourse: We work to make sure that everyone can access public debate, online and offline, regardless of political opinions or personal beliefs. We do this by countering disinformation and political polarisation, and by engaging citizen groups in monitoring online content.

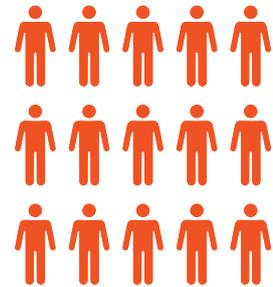
DRI at a glance

Mixed target group

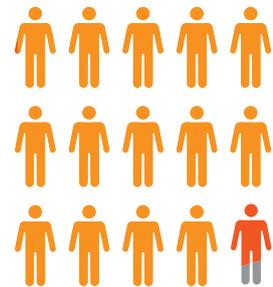


Gender balance among participants in DRI activities

Male
3,751
51,26%



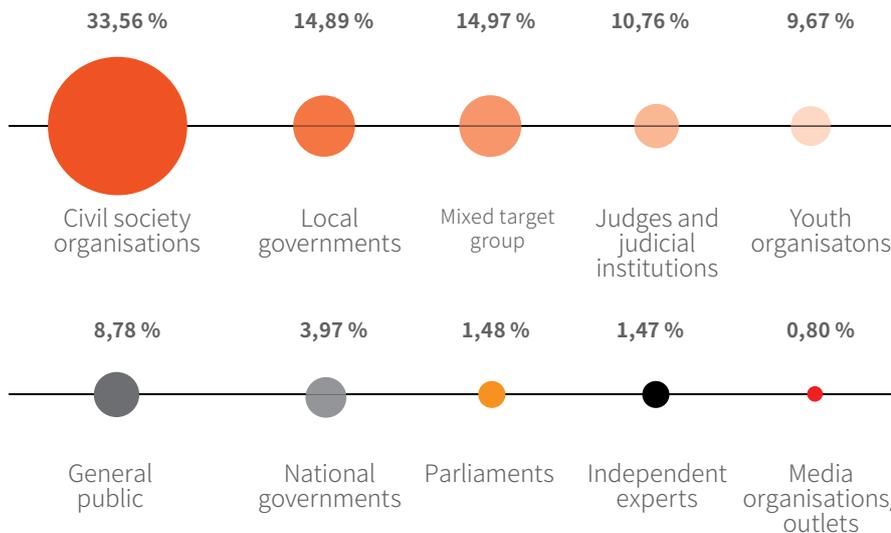
Female
3,948
48,70%



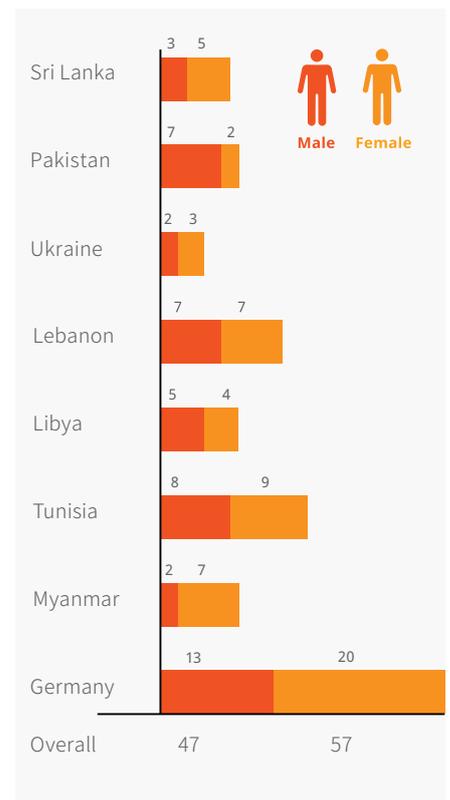
Diverse
3
0,03%



Who we worked with



Staff breakdown by gender





Events



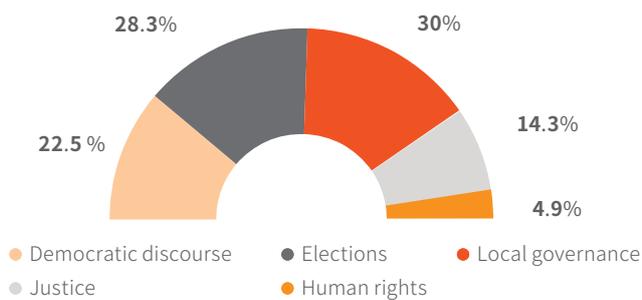
Publications



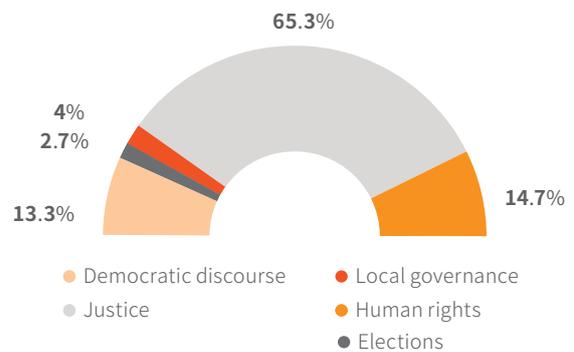
Germany (headquarters), Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Ukraine.

European Union, Belarus, Jordan and Sudan.

Our events in 2021



Our publications and articles in 2021



Total numbers



Our work in the European Union



The year began with most of the EU under lockdown, dealing with the second wave of COVID-19, accompanied by an intense public debate on the appropriateness and legality of related government measures.

Paul Zoubkov, Manager Europe Programmes, DRI Berlin

Backsliding on the rule of law continued, with the most severe deterioration in Poland and Hungary, including an open challenge to the primacy of EU law by Poland. In response, the EU launched court cases and withheld pandemic recovery funds, but did not apply other, more powerful means. Increased use of social media intensified the challenges of disinformation and hate speech online, underscoring the importance of work on the proposed new EU Digital Services Act (DSA). The EU also launched EU-wide citizen-consultation series of debates and discussions – the “Conference on the Future of Europe”.

To help protect the rule of law, DRI analysed ongoing developments, produced engaging commentary, and built the capacity of the media to report on this complex issue. Over the course of the year, DRI worked with dozens of journalists across the EU, and our analysis featured in over 50 media

outlets. DRI also held public events and convened key players to discuss priority actions, and engaged with EU institutions and other policymakers for stronger actions and reforms. Special attention was also paid to the new annual EC Rule of Law Report process.

DRI continued its social media monitoring (SMM) in the EU. With federal elections in Germany being a particular disinformation risk, DRI monitored key social media platforms to examine electoral discourse, and developed a series of related recommendations for both Germany and the EU. In other work, DRI developed a toolkit to aid civil society in understanding the challenges of monitoring visual disinformation, and trained a number of groups on its use. We have also provided input towards the strengthening of the DSA, and presented the results of our deepfakes research to the Council of the EU.





Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **re:Constitution: Exchange and analysis on democracy and the rule of law in Europe:** DRI works to ensure a more informed and fact-based public debate on the rule of law in the EU, through targeted work with journalists and policymakers.

→ **Preparing civil society for new disinformation threats:** DRI built the capacity of EU civil society to detect visual disinformation online, through the development of a toolkit and related training.

→ **German federal elections 2021 – risk assessment:** DRI analysed the vulnerability of German Federal Elections to online disinformation threats and initiated a multi-stakeholder collaboration for action.

→ **German federal elections 2021 – monitoring online integrity:** DRI monitored the social media discourse around the German federal elections, identifying trends and ensuring voter awareness and informed policymaking.

→ **Implementing the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP):** DRI supports the implementation of the EU EDAP commitments through network building, targeted advocacy and inclusive policy analysis.

Funding partners

Civitates, Stiftung Mercator, Reset (Luminate).

Online discourse under scrutiny: Social media monitoring of the 2021 German elections



The 2021 German elections were widely considered to be a milestone: Angela Merkel did not to run for chancellor again, and one of the EU's major countries ultimately formed a new government.

Michael Meyer-Resende, Executive Director of Democracy Reporting International

We were excited, therefore, about the opportunity to apply our signature social media monitoring methods, which we have employed with many partners in other elections. Our focus was not to identify limited instances of problematic content (an "emergency room" approach) but, rather, to provide an overview of the social media dynamics around the elections (a "health check" approach).

Well before the event, we gathered stakeholders, such as representatives of media regulators and platforms, as well as researchers, to assess the online risks to the election campaign, and published a report with our findings.

In the next stage, we did a systematic big data analysis of electoral discourse on major platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. With the help of the programming language Python and artificial intelligence, we collected and analysed more than 3 million pieces of textual content from public profiles, both posts and, when allowed by the platform, comments. We found that the elections were

characterised by more active party and candidate social media activity than in 2017.

We looked at key discourses, the topics that users discussed online, and the presence of toxic commentary and personal attacks against candidates and parties, as well as the spread of false narratives. Most of the problematic content lay in the grey zone of half-truths and hyper-aggressive language about the main issues in the campaign and about the candidates. It is unclear whether this had any electoral impact.

We found only a few attempts at systematic, organised manipulation, and where these occurred, they failed to gain traction.

YouTube was central for cross-platform sharing of content, specifically on Facebook and Twitter. Instagram was somewhat isolated from the content-sharing environment. Regarding niche platforms, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland party frequently attempted to drive traffic from Facebook to its Telegram channel.

"I found your report 'Taking stock of the German election discourse online' very interesting, because you differentiated between toxic commentary and personal attacks vs. disinformation and more subtle information manipulation."

Sabrina Spieleder, Information and Communication Expert at the European External Action Service

While we lack comparable data from previous elections, there appeared to be much more negative campaign in these 2021 elections. Campaigns were about negative messaging against the other parties and opposing candidates, rather than positive messaging for their own. The two candidates whose numbers dropped most compared to polls in the spring – Annalena Baerbock of the Green Party and Armin Laschet from the Christian Democratic Union – were mentioned most in social media, the majority of this content being negative.

🐦 **“This is a brilliant tool by *Der Tagesspiegel* that looks at German politicians’ activity and reach on social media platforms”**

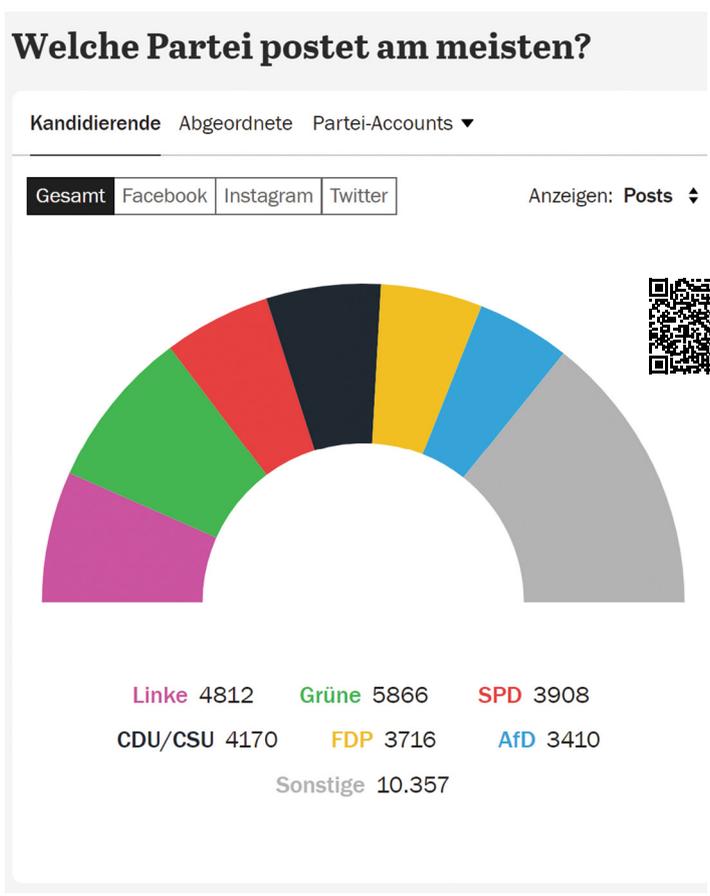
Ulrike Franke, Senior Fellow at European Council on Foreign Elections

educators, who included the data in their materials.

After the elections, we discussed our findings and outlook with other expert groups and with members of parliament. The German context was characterised by many civil society

STATS
Posts analysed: 3 million

Platforms:

Online discourse

Social media analysis can be very technical. For a wider publication of the results, we teamed up with the data team of the *Der Tagesspiegel* newspaper to create a pioneering dashboard, which showed the campaigning of candidates and parties in real time and illustrated how social media users discussed the election campaign. The dashboard, which was recognised in the European Newspaper Awards, and related articles using its data were visited by more than 500,000 users, including political party analysts and

organizations monitoring different aspects of the elections. The transparency of online campaigning was higher, therefore, than in previous elections. The challenge now is to maintain the same level of transparency ahead of the next elections.

Our work in Tunisia



The democratic process in Tunisia reached a turning point in 2021. The president of the republic, Kais Saied, declared a state of emergency on 25 July and introduced a series of measures undermining democratic safeguards, including the suspension of the parliament.

Wassim B'Chir, Office Director, DRI Tunisia

Tunisia's democratic transition, which began in 2011 and brought about a new constitution for the country in 2014, seems to be coming full circle. By the end of 2021, Tunisian politics were marked by a lack of transparency, which partly impacted DRI Tunisia's efforts to support the strengthening of democratic institutions, democratic processes and active political participation.

DRI Tunisia reoriented its approach in view of the new context. Legal institutions that provide protection to citizens and Tunisian civil society will play an important role in countering the president's new political powers. This is why DRI focused specifically on further supporting the safeguarding of Tunisia's democracy in areas such as access to justice, the strengthening of the justice sector, the protection of human rights and the provision of impartial legal analysis.

One of DRI Tunisia's main successes for 2021 was a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign on access to administrative justice, which reached an estimated 890,000 Tunisians. Citizens continued to approach DRI and its partners with questions related to administrative justice after the campaign ended.

Looking ahead, DRI wants to continue providing support to safeguarding the democratic path in Tunisia. We plan to strengthen young people's informed political participation, with a specific focus on enhancing awareness around the referendum and elections scheduled for 2022, as well as on the resulting changes to the country's political, legal and institutional framework. We also envisage continuing our work on improving access to justice in the country, and on fostering democratic discourse online.

58



Events

1,251



→ Participants

23



Publications

8



Articles



Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **JEDI - Justice Reform, Enhance the Rule of Law, Develop Human Rights and Strengthen Institutions:** DRI Tunisia seeks to strengthen the rule of law in the country, by supporting critical judicial reforms and effective human rights protection. We also promote inclusive, accessible institutions, by working with civil society.

Funding partners

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Know your rights: Raising awareness about administrative justice in Tunisia

Ever since the revolution, Tunisia has moved towards decentralisation. But most of its citizens still lack knowledge about how the administrative justice system works. DRI Tunisia organised a campaign to raise awareness, so that citizens know their rights.

Amanda Siddharta, Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student

Mohammed Yassine Jamali carefully laid out the brochures and leaflets on the table at a stand in Kairouan, Tunisia, on 10 October last year. People started to approach him and asked questions. One visitor asked: "What do you mean by administrative justice?"

Mohammed, a young volunteer from Mourakiboun, a Tunisian civil society organisation, showed the visitor a colourful guidebook in Arabic. Administrative justice refers to the protection of citizens' rights when it comes to state administration. As Mohammed explained, another visitor asked a few more questions. Satisfied with the answers, they left the stand armed with new information.

"During the exchanges with people, it was clear that many of them are currently in situations that they need to take to the administrative court, and they don't have much information on administrative justice," Mohammed said.

The Campaign on Administrative Justice was



launched by DRI Tunisia in June 2021, along with its partners, Mourakiboun and Tunisian Alternative Media (ATMA). The campaign aimed at increasing people's awareness of their rights as citizens, and of the use of fair and effective justice systems.

Launched in October 2021, the campaign was carried out on three different levels: in the field, online and on traditional media. It covers five different regions in Tunisia: Sousse, Sfax, Kairouan, Kasserine and

Sidi Bouzid. The programme was designed based on a large-scale quantitative study conducted by a research company, One to One, in the five regions to assess citizens' knowledge about administrative justice.

"The survey shows that **95.7** per cent of the respondents **are not sufficiently informed about administrative justice**, while nearly 50 per cent don't even know about the

existence of administrative courts,” said Haifa Mansouri, DRI Tunisia Project Officer.

Tunisia began the process towards decentralisation after the 2011 revolution. The current constitution, drafted in 2014, guarantees comprehensive decentralisation. Since then, citizens have to deal with administrative, judiciary and financial courts. The administrative court deals with administrative matters from social security to taxation, while the judiciary court deals with legal disputes between individuals. “But most people don’t even know the difference between the two,” Haifa said.

“The campaign has reached the rural areas, where people have never heard about administrative tribunals. People there are the most vulnerable groups, who might be deprived of their rights and in urgent need of access to justice”

According to Rahma Bouhali, Mourakiboun Project Manager, in addition to the quantitative study, they consulted with members of the public to gauge common information gaps and plan a more targeted campaign. “Then we moved on with the field campaigns. We chose spaces with high visibility, where there are crowds, for example, in the market or downtown,” Rahma explained.

DRI Tunisia and its partners designed flyers and guidebooks on administrative justice, with information that is easy for the general public to understand.



Meanwhile, DRI Tunisia worked with ATMA to implement the digital and media campaign. Mouna Trabelsi, the director of ATMA, said that they produced 12

raising awareness of citizens’ administrative rights. “I think that’s the first most important thing, that we have transformed a difficult issue that primarily concerns the



weekly radio programmes, covering a different topic related to administrative justice in each edition.

She said that ATMA has platforms on social media and local radio stations. They also posted videos on Facebook and received a lot of views and reactions from their followers.

Haifa said the campaign has been successful so far in



legal elites and simplified it for the public,” she explained.

“Secondly, the campaign has reached the rural areas, far from the city centres, where people have never heard about administrative tribunals. And people from these areas are the most vulnerable groups, who might be deprived of their rights and in urgent need of access to justice,” Haifa said.

Our work in Libya



Politics in Libya remained uncertain and fast-changing as presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2021 were postponed.

Asma Dekna and Wedad Ibrahim, Project Managers, DRI Libya

Marred by changing alliances and different levels of governance stepping on each other's toes, the failed electoral process intensified citizens' mistrust of politics. As they lose interest in democratic politics, Libyans are also losing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of political actors at different levels of government.

Throughout the year, DRI Libya empowered Libyan women through the Fa'ela and FG4W projects, by providing them with the necessary skills and tools to effectively participate in politics.

DRI Libya also supported citizens' engagement with local government, by fostering more participatory and accountable governance. We pioneered the introduction of city charters, strengthening the capacity of city councils to hold large-scale consultations with their communities. DRI Libya also

supported research on good practices for civil society engagement in local governance.

DRI Libya led the drafting and supported the adoption of three city charters in Libya, the first such legal texts in the country, leading to improved service delivery and citizen engagement at the municipal level. We also supported the engagement of women in Bedouin communities with the municipal councils, and connected 20 local female activists with women organisations from other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Through developing a unique capacity-strengthening methodology for civil society organisations and holding targeted workshops, DRI Libya inspired and supported them in reflecting on their current strategies and on developing future plans.

89



Events

1,006



→ Participants

3



Publications

2



Articles



Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **ISAL-: Governance in Libya, Improved Service Delivery and Accountability at the Local Level (EU PAF III):** Through training and knowledge-sharing with key actors, DRI strengthened governance at the national and local levels in the areas of rule of law, decentralisation, conflict prevention, participation and local service delivery.

→ **Fa'ela - Tapping into Women's Full Potential in Shaping Libya's State-Building Efforts:** DRI seeks to enhance women's role in decision making and effective participation in public life in Libya, working together with civil society and female leaders.

→ **FG4W - Firmer Ground for Advancing Women's Participation in Libya:** FG4W complements the Fa'ela project in providing Women's rights organisations in Libya the tools to facilitate an enabling environment for women who wish to engage in the public sphere.

Funding partners

The European Union, Global Affairs Canada, The United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

Libya: Solving problems through local governance in Libya

So far, civil society efforts to improve local governance in Libya have been scattered. After working with DRI Libya, a group of public policy experts set up their own NGO to help solve the country's problems.

Amanda Siddharta, Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student

Hatim Amir remembers 2014 well, when the second civil war broke out in Libya. At the time, he had just been elected as mayor of Sabratha, an ancient city 70 kilometres west of Tripoli, where he still lives. The conflict was fought between different armed groups, the country was in turmoil, and many lives were lost in the clashes.

"The situation was unstable and difficult and, as mayor,

I wanted to do more. I wanted to contribute to the stability of my country," Hatim said.

One year after taking up the post in Sabratha, Hatim decided to step down. The 46-year-old, who used to be a professor at Zawla University, realised he could achieve more by working with multiple municipalities



instead of focusing on only one city. He joined the Libyan Municipalities Organisation and started training different municipalities in the country on local governance.

In October 2020, Hatim was recruited by Democracy Reporting International Libya as part of a group of eight researchers to work on public policy planning in Libya. The initiative was part of DRI

Libya's Improved Service Delivery at the Local Level (ISAL) project.

Asma Dekna, Project Manager at DRI Libya, explained that the group was designed to include experts and practitioners that represent different regions and minority groups in the country.

After a year of working together, in June 2021, the project ended. The group



published two studies: a theoretical framework for public policy – a report on the field research they conducted in 15 municipalities – and a paper with recommendations.

“If you look at the problems in Libya, they seem like big issues that are impossible to solve. But if we try to tackle the smaller problems one at a time, starting with local governance in the municipalities, I believe that we can do it,”

But Hatim and his peers realised that they could provide much-needed support to municipalities and the national government on topics related to local governance,

so they decided to set up their own NGO.

“We already worked together with DRI Libya on project planning and public policy, and we thought it important to continue our work as a civil society organisation,” said Abeir Imneina, another member of the group and a lecturer at the University of Benghazi.

“If we talk about local governance, the main problem is corruption, and there is also a lack of human resources and expertise,” she said. “But there is no political will to improve the situation. It is better than in the past, but there are still so many things that we can do.”

The group is now in the last stage of registering the NGO, which will be named Libyan Organisation for Local Governance. They have already signed an agreement with the network of mayors — a network that has also been

supported by DRI Libya as part of the ISAL project.

DRI Libya is currently working on securing funds to support the group in its advocacy work. “We want to ensure the sustainability of this project, and, with funding, we can help them to organise meetings with councils and push for recommendations on local governance,” Asma said.

Abeir said they want to focus on introducing budget transparency in municipalities and addressing the shortage of human resources in local governments, as well as on starting to include a gender-sensitive approach in local governance.

“If you look at the problems in Libya, they seem like big issues that are impossible to solve. But if we try to tackle the smaller problems one at a time, starting with local governance in the municipalities, I believe that we can do it,” Hatim said.

Our work in Lebanon



Throughout 2021, Lebanon grappled with the worst financial crisis of its modern history, following decades of policy failures and mismanagement.

André Sleiman, Country Representative, Lebanon

The hyperinflation and the economic recession undermined the legitimacy of the government and led to a gradual shutdown of public institutions and services. The crisis placed radical reforms for greater accountability and better governance high on the agenda. Much remains to be done, however, to fix the broken link between citizens and their representatives.

DRI Lebanon played a leading role in advancing the anti-corruption agenda, contributing to a public procurement law, which was adopted in July 2021. We also provided input to several decrees that paved the way for its full implementation. Similarly, DRI actively contributed to the parliamentary discussions to modernise municipal laws. In the field of anti-corruption, DRI Lebanon also advocated for a law to strengthen the independence and transparency of the judiciary.

DRI also worked with youth and women's groups to engage them in politics and bring out their potential as agents of accountability and change. To that end, we strengthened municipal youth council structures and trained female activists to play a greater role in municipal and parliamentary politics.

Our work with municipalities gained traction. In addition to supporting local community initiatives to improve public service provision, we facilitated a policy dialogue among mayors to support them in advocating with the central government for their rights.

Finally, DRI launched its very own online political talk show, "Nafas Jdeed", to amplify civil society voices in media and help young media professionals shape the democratic discourse.





Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

- **Enhancement of Municipal Police Service to Local Populations:** DRI implemented the concept of community policing in five municipalities and municipal unions across the country, in accordance with rule-of-law and human rights principles. The project aims at building trust and facilitating collaboration between local authorities and their communities.
- **MASAR for Local Governments - Policy Advocacy for Municipal Service Improvement in Lebanon:** DRI developed participatory policy frameworks for inclusive municipal service provision in three sectors: local economic development (LED); strategic planning; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).
- **Social Participation and Social Engagement of Young People:** DRI strengthened the social and political participation of youth and improved social cohesion by supporting local youth councils, in partnership with Lebanese municipalities.
- **Resilience in Local Governance(Reslog):** DRI worked with two municipal unions and the Akkar governorate administration to enhance the effectiveness of local authorities in providing public services.
- **Lebanon Municipal Private-Public Partnerships (PPP):** DRI assessed the challenges and prospects of municipal PPPs in Lebanon, and drew a comparison with peer countries to identify better ways to establish these and move them forward.
- **#LebanonTalks: Expanding the Democratic Space for Political Change in Lebanon:** DRI trained 11 young media professionals, and worked with them to produce an online political talk-show called "Nafas Jdeed" ("A New Breath/Spirit"), to discuss political reform and accountability in Lebanon.

Our work in Lebanon





Projects

→ **Review of the Directorate General of Local Administration and Councils (DGLAC):**

With support from the Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project, DRI assessed the efficiency of the Directorate General of Local Administration and Councils at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, and the coordination between central and local government authorities.

→ **Supporting Decentralisation Phase III: Accountable, Inclusive, and Democratic Governance in Lebanon:**

DRI supported civil and public actors in engaging in accountable, inclusive and effective decentralisation reform, providing capacity development and guidance, as well as organising peer-to-peer exchanges and public awareness campaigns.

→ **Municipal Know-how for Host Communities in the Middle East Programme:**

DRI is coordinating a decentralised cooperation programme among 19 Lebanese and German municipalities to improve public service provision in various sectors.

→ **Corruption Risk Index 2021:**

DRI contributed to the first Lebanese toolkit to measure corruption in the country. We developed anti-corruption benchmarks to measure corruption in public procurement, in line with international standards, based on a case study of several ministries.

Funding partners

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Engagement Global, Expertise France, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies, Porticus, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank.

Lebanon: Sharpening women's skills in the fight for equality

More and more women are stepping forward in the lead-up to the 2022 municipal elections in Lebanon. They worked with DRI Lebanon to build their ability to fight for gender equality and greater political participation.

Amanda Siddharta, *Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student*

The bell rang at a school in the village of Ras El-Matn, tucked within the mountains of central Lebanon. Rouba Makarem, a French language teacher, had prepared some materials for her students for the day – a small project to teach them about gender equality.

“We are still facing discrimination because of outdated traditions that limit the roles of women. But we have a responsibility to contribute, by spreading societal awareness of the need to involve women in public life, based on equality and social justice”

Rouba is committed to teaching all of her students, ages 5 to 12, to believe in equality and justice. The 38-year-old is not only a teacher, but also an activist and a member of the Union for Progressive Women, a local NGO that works on women's rights.



From April to September 2021, Rouba took part in a series of training events offered by DRI Lebanon on how to better empower women, and on the role women can play in Lebanon's municipalities.

“As an activist, I've always been interested in learning more to help me promote women's role in society. And as a teacher, I believe proper education is the main driver of change,” she said.

The training programme was created to cover a broad range of topics related to gender equality and women's

participation in politics. Gulnar Wakim, a gender expert who worked closely with DRI Lebanon to design the training, said that it was not meant to be a one-time workshop that covers one topic.

“Instead, we surveyed the women, asking them about their level of knowledge on gender and municipalities and what they needed from the training. We also held the events online, so those who could not travel to Beirut could participate,” she explained.



Gulnar saw a progression in the exchanges among participants. According to her, most women in Lebanon have the misconception that feminists are only radicals. At the beginning of the training, Gulnar asked the participants whether they are feminists, and none of them dared to raise their hands. But, as they started to understand the concept better as promoting the equality between men and women, more and more of the women started to identify as feminists.

During the first session, participants learned about why women are marginalised. After that, the training moved on to cover more technical information on the laws and practices within Lebanese municipalities.

“They were unaware that, as elected representatives working in the municipality, they can stop the budget if they see something wrong with it. Many of those who never considered running in elections are interested now,” Gulnar said.

Gaelle Youssef, Project Coordinator for DRI Lebanon, highlighted that it is important to continue to encourage women to take leadership positions, especially within Lebanese politics.

“The mass protests in 2019 had an impact on Lebanese democracy, and women and youths were the key players

during the demonstrations,” she said. However, women are still underrepresented in the political system, because of a patriarchal culture. Only 5.4 per cent of municipal council members are women, while women made up only 21 per cent of municipal employees.



Christiane Chidiac, an accountant who works for the Ashqout municipality, has always felt the pressure of being a woman in a

government office. “Politics in Lebanon don’t approve of women. We are always excluded,” she said.

But for Christiane, learning about law and gender equality during the training made her realise that she has the right to participate and offer her opinion in the municipal office. She now helps other women in her area be more independent, by passing on the knowledge that she has gained on political and economic empowerment.

Gaelle said that the goal of the training is to increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions at the local level, by providing them with the skills to run for office in the 2022 municipal elections and to continue pushing for gender equality.

The training is still ongoing, and participants like Rouba and Christiane are now exploring their options to run in elections in 2022.

“We are still facing discrimination because of outdated traditions that limit the roles of women. But we have a responsibility to contribute, by spreading societal awareness of the need to involve women in public life, based on equality and social justice,” Rouba said.

Our work in Ukraine



It is impossible to talk about DRI's work in Ukraine without first referring to the ongoing war that put an abrupt halt to our work. On 24 February 2022, Russia launched its invasion – an assault on democracy and international law – causing unspeakable suffering and forcing millions of Ukrainians to flee.

Christoph Reinke, Programme Officer, DRI Berlin

Our office in Kyiv is closed, but we have been in touch and worked with many Ukrainian colleagues, while our activities inside Ukraine are currently on hold.

Before the 2022 full-fledged war (Russia attacked and has been, de facto, in conflict with Ukraine since 2014), our work had gone well. As an official international technical assistance partner of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, DRI continued to support democratic processes by enhancing civic agency, with a special focus on youth participation. Through the "Youth in Politics" schools and the related financial and mentoring support to local initiatives, advocacy training and study programmes in local government, DRI Ukraine facilitated practical experiences making democracy more tangible. We also engaged hundreds of people in discussions on topics such as the

role of local media in shaping public opinion and countering disinformation, approaches to participatory budgeting or regional health-care reforms, and integrating people's voices into decision-making processes, thereby strengthening societal cohesion.

The way Ukrainian society stands together today, and the way it organises itself in the provision of mutual support is truly impressive – a leading example of citizen action that deserves all of our respect and solidarity, and only more international assistance.

DRI stands by Ukraine and pledges to support to the country's democratic trajectory as a free and independent country. DRI currently continues its work for Ukrainian democracy and political participation from its Berlin office.





Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **Tangible Democracy – Engaging Youth and Civil Society in the Political Process across Ukraine:** The project contributed to strengthening democratic participatory processes in Ukraine. The first pillar addressed the demand for educating youth around democratic processes, EU integration and active political engagement. The second pillar advised civil society organisations on ways to integrate their demands strongly into the political process.

Funding partners

The German Federal Foreign Office.

Ukraine: Learning the ropes of politics - Ukraine's next generation of political leaders

Young leaders are having an impact in their communities after a one-week summer school hosted by DRI Ukraine.

Amanda Siddharta, Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student

! *This story was written before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It reflects a very different context. We hope that we can resume our work in the country and support its efforts to remain a free, independent and democratic nation.*

Chatters of excitement were heard in the well-decorated conference room at a hotel in Odesa, Ukraine. The room was full of different groups of well-dressed participants in their early twenties. It was early in the morning, but Sophia Podkolzina was excited on the first day of a fully packed week.

The 22-year-old was one of 67 participants, ages 18 to 35, selected to participate in the one-week summer training programme "Youth School in Politics", held by DRI Ukraine, in cooperation with Vostok SOS, from 5 to 11 July 2021.

Sophia and her peers had the opportunity to learn more about politics in Ukraine in an in-person event. The programme covered both the theoretical and practical side of a topic that most youths in the country are not very involved with. But, according to Sophia, things are starting to change for her generation.



"We can see more young people are interested in politics now.

They started to wonder about the elections, and they want to know what's going on in their own city or region. They want to be a part of it, and they're starting to understand that they can change something," she said.

Increasing awareness among youths that they can be involved in politics was one of the main goals

of the event. Roman Koval, a representative from DRI Ukraine, said that most people in their late teens or early twenties have a common misconception about politics.

"We always felt that politics is only associated with the highest level of decision-making. Through this programme, what we try to do is explain that their everyday actions, no matter how small, have political elements," he said.

“Where I come from, we have a lot of disinformation going on, especially during political campaigns. And people here don’t know how to cope with so many misleading messages on social media. I want to create a small project that can prepare them and give them the tools to counter this”

The programme invited 16 trainers and speakers with different backgrounds to cover a comprehensive module for the students. Roman added that there were not only political scientists and politicians, but also legal experts and human rights activists.

One of them was Oleksandra Dvoretzka, a human rights activist and board member of Vostok SOS, who stressed the importance of the next generation being exposed to political discussions.

This helps counter the fact, according to Oleksandra, that youths are often isolated in their own regional bubbles and are not exposed to different points of view.

“The fact that the school brings together young people from almost all regions of Ukraine

allows the participants to expand the scope of their experience through interregional cooperation,” she said.

“So, it’s a very well-designed summer school, covering a broad range of themes and different aspects of politics. We cover topics like strategic communication in politics, as



well as how to fight and filter fake news,” Roman added.



policy recommendations can be made to improve the state of things,” he said. Ihor is currently working on a project to help people in his hometown in Brovary, an eastern suburb of Kyiv, battle disinformation and fake news.

“Where I come from, we have a lot of disinformation going on, especially during political campaigns. And people here don’t know how to cope with so many misleading messages on social media. I want to create a small project that can prepare them and give them the tools to counter this,” he said.

Following up on the success of the event, DRI is planning another “Youth school in politics” programme in September this year.

The latter topic caught the attention of Ihor Makarov, another participant. The 22-year-old political science student has been focusing his academic interest on disinformation and the post-truth era.

“The trainers taught us how they uncover disinformation and which

Our work in Pakistan

The months after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan witnessed a lack of effective parliamentary oversight, raising questions about the parliament's ability to maintain its relevance and deliver in times of emergencies.

Anam Akram, Programme Coordinator, DRI Pakistan

During these challenging times, civic space and the rights of vulnerable communities were compromised.

To address this, DRI Pakistan engaged democratic institutions, particularly relevant parliamentary committees dealing with the issues of public health, education, economy, social protection, human rights and the law. DRI Pakistan contributed to improved policies by generating robust, evidence-based policy insights with a sectoral approach, by providing specific policy recommendations that spoke to federal and provincial authorities, and by adapting, integrating and aligning research on COVID-19 issues with the parliamentarians' political interests. In addition, DRI Pakistan established coalitions of civil society organisations, to raise a collective voice for the protection of rights of vulnerable communities, and engaged parliamentarians in discussions around the research and recommendations from civil society.

DRI Pakistan advocated for these recommendations being included in ongoing policy conversations. For instance, during a meeting of the Standing Committee of Federal Education and Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture, we highlighted the potential learning losses arising from poor internet connectivity in remote areas. A few days later, the prime minister announced high-speed internet services in the newly merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Regular engagement of civil society coalitions with policymakers also led to the establishment of a technical advisory committee to protect children's rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.





Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **Consolidating Democratic Stability in Pakistan:** The project aims to increase the capacity of key human rights actors and institutions to improve human rights advocacy and protection in Pakistan. Paying special attention to rights protection, the project enhances the effectiveness of political stakeholders and civil society actors to drive forward the reform process on decentralised governance.

→ **Improving the Parliamentary Oversight of the Government's COVID-19 Responses:** The project helped improve parliamentary oversight of COVID-19 responses at the federal and provincial levels. To achieve this, DRI Pakistan engaged parliamentary committees, government departments and ministries working on COVID-19 responses, to help improve parliamentary systems and structures to ensure business continuity during the pandemic.

Funding partners

The German Federal Foreign Office, The United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

Progress and setbacks: Celebrating a decade of human rights work in Pakistan

Since DRI Pakistan first opened its office in 2010, human rights issues have been at the centre of its work. Over ten years later, we look back at how the country has changed.

Amanda Siddharta, Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student

“With DRI’s support, we successfully passed the first resolution on transgender voting rights in the province,”

For an activist like Sana Ahmed, advocating on human rights issues in Pakistan seems like an uphill battle. The programme officer at Blue Veins, a Peshawar-based organisation that works on women’s and transgender rights, believes there is still much work to be done, although there have already been major improvements in the country.

In 2016, Blue Veins joined a working group set up by DRI Pakistan in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to lead meetings with parliamentarians to monitor and report on human rights violations, as well as to advocate for policy changes on human rights.

“Since then, we have made a lot of progress. With DRI’s support, we successfully passed the first resolution on



transgender voting rights in the province,” she said.

Since DRI opened its office in Islamabad in 2010, human rights have been one of its main areas of focus. Muhammad Rafique, DRI Pakistan’s Senior Human Rights and Advocacy Expert, described the human rights situation in a country of more than 220 million people as complex.

In 2014, Pakistan entered into a GSP+ trade scheme – a beneficial trade agreement in exchange for the country’s

respect of international conventions on human rights and labour standards – with the European Union. During the first few years, Pakistan followed through with many of the compliance commitments, and established its first national human rights commission in 2016.

With this in mind, DRI Pakistan was able to provide a platform to bring together the government, business actors and civil society organisations to cooperate and take action towards better compliance.

“The Human Rights Action Plan is a milestone achievement of the provincial government, and DRI’s engagement with the human rights bodies and women parliamentary caucus was extremely helpful,”

Shamsher Shams, Project Coordinator at The Awakening, a Pakistani organisation dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights, said that they have managed to raise awareness about the GSP+ status and to advocate for the government to comply with many of the international human rights conventions with the help of programmes organised by DRI Pakistan.

In 2019, DRI Pakistan, along with local civil society organisations, assisted the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in developing a human rights action plan. The situation in the province, which borders Afghanistan, has long been undermined by ongoing armed conflict between Pakistan and Islamist militant groups. Working with local activists and civil society, they assessed the human rights situation in the area and turned policy into a concrete action plan.

“The Human Rights Action Plan is a milestone achievement of the provincial government, and DRI’s engagement with the human rights bodies and women parliamentary caucus was extremely helpful,” said Maliha Ali Asghar Khan, Chairperson of the Woman Parliamentary Caucus and member of the Standing Committee on Law,



Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

DRI Pakistan also worked with the provincial governments of Punjab and Sindh to provide technical support to human rights bodies and organise workshops to help local governments with compliance with international human rights standards.

While the adoption of concrete action plans is an important step forward in protecting human rights, there is still much room for improvement, especially for organisations like The Awakening working on human rights advocacy. “There are policies that limit the freedom of expression, of association and of assembly for civil society organisations. The government needs to address this issue,” Shamsher said.

While problems with human rights persist, especially related to women’s and minority rights, and to freedom of expression

and opinion, according to Rafique, the country has made commendable progress in establishing better human rights policies and action plans.

“Pakistan signed seven human rights treaties and eight labour rights treaties. They also established treaty implementation at the provincial and national level,” he said.

DRI Pakistan will continue its work on human rights and on assisting local governments it has partnered with in the past to implement this new action plan.

“We still have a lot of work to do, and there are some setbacks on human rights issues, but we are making progress,” Rafique said.

Our work in Sri Lanka

Over 2021, the government of Sri Lanka clamped down on fundamental freedoms of association, assembly and expression. As a result, civic space shrunk considerably.

Shafaq Kiani, *Manager of Asia Programme, DRI Berlin*

On the grounds of protecting national security, combatting terrorism, preventing fraud and stopping foreign interference, the government started to draft legislation to regulate civil society organisations and media, including social networks. The country is also facing growing resentment of existing policies to guarantee women's participation in politics, such as a women's quota in local government.

DRI Sri Lanka addressed the issue of shrinking civic space by focusing on safeguarding freedom of expression online. Working with civil society organisations experienced in social media and election monitoring, DRI Sri Lanka identified harmful developments that may lead to restrictions on social media, and published analyses and recommendations for government, civil society and social media platforms.

Regarding women's participation in politics, DRI Sri Lanka built the capacity of grassroots organisations, by strengthening awareness of the importance of women's participation, by openly discussing the barriers that women face in politics and by mobilising activists. As a result, a women-led organisation taking part in the programme engaged in a consultation with other actors, such as union activists, local politicians and academics, to detect policy gaps thwarting female access to politics. The report resulting from this consultation process is being studied by the committee in charge of electoral reform in Sri Lanka's national parliament.





Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ **Strengthening the Integrity of the Public Discourse and Related Democratic Reforms in Sri Lanka:** The project helps safeguard and advance critical democratic frameworks, processes and discourses in Sri Lanka, conducting and sharing research, holding workshops and carrying out public awareness campaigns.

→ **Strengthening Reconciliation in Sri Lanka by Supporting Regulatory Framework Reforms on Disinformation and Hate Speech Online and Monitoring Social Media:** Through this project, DRI provided analyses and raised awareness of threats to democratic discourse on social media, focusing on reconciliation and promoting dialogue on legislative issues.

Funding partners

The German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), the German Federal Foreign Office.

Breaking the glass ceiling: Increasing women’s representation in Sri Lanka

In February, DRI Sri Lanka and the Rural Women’s Front conducted training for women politicians and activists in a bid to encourage and strengthen women’s political participation in local government.

Amanda Siddharta, Journalist and DRI Communications Working Student

“I know they will interrupt me when I speak,” she said. “I used to not be able to control the room when I was first elected, in 2018, but now I can handle them.”

For Nishanthi Pradeepika, the monthly municipal council meeting in the Galle District in southern Sri Lanka was an opportunity for her as a representative to push forward her agenda. One month, she had written a request for budgetary funding to improve the women’s restroom facilities in the public library in the Galle Municipal Council Building.

The 48-year-old prepared her presentation the night before, and was confident about speaking in front of her colleagues, most of whom are men.

“I know they will interrupt me when I speak,” she said. “I used to not be able to control the room when I was first elected, in 2018, but now I can handle them,” Nishanthi said with pride in her voice.



Nishanthi said with pride in her voice.

In February 2021, she participated in a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme hosted by DRI Sri Lanka, in cooperation with its local partner, the Rural Women’s Front.

Nishanthi and nine other women learnt more about electoral reforms in the country

and how to pass this knowledge on to other elected officials.

Armed only with a passion to change her community, Nishanthi ran for the Galle Municipal election in 2018, saying she was only elected because of the mandatory 25-per cent quota for women in local government.

“But I didn’t know much about the electoral system; all I knew was I could make a change if I became a representative,” she said.

She also did not know that being elected was only the beginning of an uphill battle. Nishanthi realised the Galle



Municipal Council is still very male-dominated, and her input as a woman is often overlooked.

“I also pushed for a proposal to fix the drainage system in one area in Galle back in 2018, but it wasn’t approved,” she said. “Not long after, a male representative submitted the same proposal, and then it was approved.”

Hailing from a small town in Sri Lanka, Nishanthi completed her secondary education, but did not pursue a university degree. She later worked at a shoe factory, and then quit to raise her three children. Nishanthi started to become more politically active in 2015, when she joined a political party.

According to Jehan Jegatheesan, DRI Sri Lanka’s Programme Director, the training programme in Galle District is important for developing a pool of experts — particularly women — on electoral reforms, so as to encourage more women to be active in politics.

“The perception of a woman’s role is still largely relegated to being a mother, wife, etc. When women try to move away from these roles, they are often criticised, attacked and stigmatized,” Jehan said.

“We support each other to bring forward important issues in our district and fight for our proposals,”

Jagath Liyana Arachchi, a programme trainer who is an activist and researcher on electoral reforms, said that, by understanding the system and knowing its limitations, the participants can improve the quality of their work.

“This is particularly so when it comes to Sri Lanka’s efforts to promote women’s political participation through more meaningful engagement with women representatives,” he said.

Participants discussed things such as the country’s electoral process, campaign financing and the need for regulations, voting systems, effective session planning to conduct training, and presentation skills. Jagath added that they also took part in a session on gender equality and talked about the challenges that women in politics are facing.

“The patriarchal values of Sri Lanka promote the idea that

women cannot take charge of affairs or cannot make important decisions,” Jagath added. “This narrative also prevents some women from believing they can make a difference in politics.”

Nishanthi, who almost gave up her career as a politician because of pressure from her male counterparts, now realizes how important it is to have a female representative in the government.

“I didn’t want to run again. It was stressful not having my voice heard and being called names because I’m a woman,” she said. “But the ToT programme has equipped me with the knowledge and skills to continue.”

She now works with eight other women representatives in the Galle Municipal Council, and passes her knowledge on to them. “We support each other to bring forward important issues in our district and fight for our proposals,” she said.

Our work in Myanmar

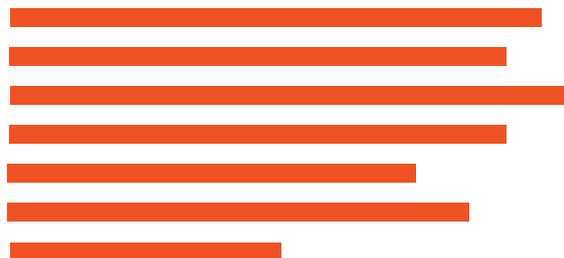


As a result of the military coup that took place on 1 February 2021 in Myanmar, we have not been able to include all the information that this section would require under normal circumstances. The decision has been made to protect our colleagues and donors.

DRI Myanmar

On 1 February 2021 Myanmar's military staged a coup, taking back full control of the state apparatus and extinguishing the country's recent democratic gains. Since that time, it has been reported at that time of writing this report that 1,600 protestors and bystanders have been killed, over 10,000 people have been arbitrarily detained by the regime, and over 500,000 people have been displaced. Throughout 2021, the Junta perpetrated human rights abuses and drastically reduced the operating space for civil society and NGOs working for pro-democracy goals. While the coup effectively and dramatically ended the public democratic efforts in Myanmar, a diverse pro-democracy movement has developed both within and outside the country, espousing democratic goals through both violent and non-violent means.

DRI is still operational in Myanmar. Under a new project, DRI Myanmar is tangibly able to promote democratic resilience by supporting networking and training on pluralism, as well as dialogue and mediation to a variety of groups. Building on projects implemented prior to the coup, DRI also supports women in playing a leadership role in this period.



For the reasons expressed above, DRI Myanmar has been implementing all activities with a low-to-no-visibility approach, to ensure the principle of do no harm. Therefore, no details are provided in this section.



Events



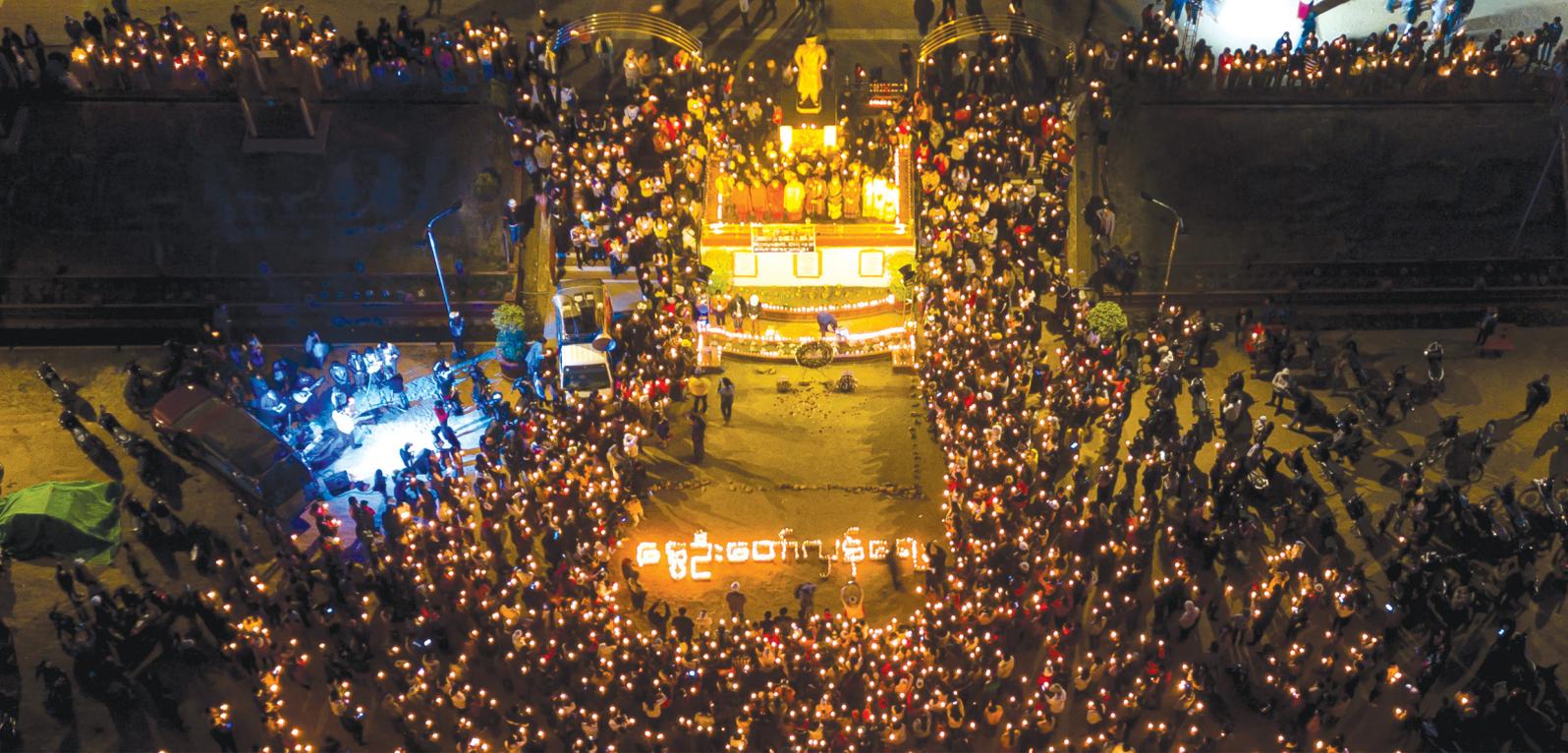
→ Participants



Publications



Articles



Thematic areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Projects

→ STEP-II to Democracy – Support to Electoral Processes and Democracy:

This project, funded by the EU, supported inclusive, peaceful and credible electoral processes, strengthening Myanmar’s democratic transition. Its objectives were twofold: to increase the adherence to democratic values and principles in legislation by the electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society, and to increase inclusive participation in electoral processes and democratic reforms. The project could not continue after the coup.

→ Support to the Implementation of the European Union Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership with Civil Society in Myanmar:

This project aimed to establish a structured dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations to enhance strategic partnership and cooperation. This brought two main results: strengthened civil society dialogue with the EU, and cooperation in key areas of common interest – human rights, democratic and development outcomes. The project could not continue after the coup.



The below information does not include information on our current project, which is being implemented with a low-to-no-visibility approach.

Funding partners

European Union, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Beyond our country offices

Countering Disinformation and Hate Speech in the MENA Region: DRI launched a regional social media monitoring project in February 2021, to strengthen the resilience of civil society in the MENA region to online disinformation, hate speech and overall manipulation. This region, whose population is widely connected through social platforms, suffers from a lack of investment by these platforms in adequate moderation of Arabic content. The project covers Tunisia, Lebanon, Sudan and Jordan, and seeks to produce policies and recommendations relevant to the whole region.

It aims to:

- build the capacity of project partners to effectively monitor disinformation and hate speech online, and to document their impact on civic or political participation and human rights;
- advocate, by engaging different actors in the region, for improved and consistent regulations and practices to combat online disinformation and hate speech in the various forms of the Arabic language;
- improve the awareness and resilience of civic target groups and the concrete actions of decision makers to transparently combat online hate speech and disinformation.

In 2021, DRI designed an Arabic version of its social media monitoring toolkit, freely available online, and presented it in several online fora. DRI also established partnerships with civil society organisations in all four countries, provided them with training, and signed subgrants to support their efforts. Their initial focus will be on the democratic processes expected in 2022, such as elections, referenda and consultations.



Access social media monitoring toolkit

4



Events

29



→ Participants

0



Publications

2



Articles

Funding partners

The German Federal Foreign Office

Projects

→ **EODS III - Election Observation and Democratic Support** The project contributes enhancing the quality of EU electoral missions, including their follow-up, and the capacity of the EU in electoral processes. The project's goal is to ensure a comprehensive and coherent assessment of elections against recognised international and regional standards. DRI's contribution is to further develop the EU Election Observation Methodology on Social Media Monitoring.

Funding partners

The European Union

→ **Power and the COVID-19 Pandemic:** Given the substantial impact of the pandemic on democracy and human rights, together with Verfassungsblog and the RECONNECT project, DRI co-organised a global online symposium, bringing together top experts to reflect on how the legal and political systems in over 60 countries adapted to the governance challenge of the pandemic, and to offer recommendations. Overall, the symposium ran for almost 3 months, involving over 100 contributors, and resulted in over 70 articles and a webinar series covering such aspects as democracy and disruption; the interplay between science and the rule of law; and emergency measures and their impact on minorities and conflict-affected states.

Funding partners

Stiftung Mercator

→ **Summit for Democracy** In early 2021, the incoming Presidential Administration in the United States announced a new global collective action initiative to spur democratic renewal and tackle the challenges to democracy worldwide. To help support this, DRI developed a series of implementing recommendations, shared with the White House and, together with the German Marshall Fund, convened two cross-Atlantic dialogues between European and EU diplomats and the Presidential Administration on how to best advance the initiative.

→ **Belarus** After the discredited presidential election of August 2020, Belarus saw a protest movement that was unprecedented in its history. One central demand of the opposition was to hold new presidential elections that meet basic criteria for electoral integrity. In 2020, therefore, DRI organised consultation meetings on potential electoral law quick fixes, bringing together Belarussian and international experts. The results of these exchanges were published in a briefing paper in January 2021. Another example of our engagement on Belarus was a high-level conference in June 2021 that discussed democratic elections as the way forward to resolve the political crisis. DRI co-organised this event together with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the team of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the main opposition candidate to President Aleksandr Lukashenka in the 2020 election, believed by many to have received the majority of votes cast. Over the course of 2021, however, severe state repression led to the destruction of most of Belarusian civil society (many NGOs have been criminalised, several organisations and activists have been searched, accounts have been frozen and office equipment confiscated, etc.), forcing many activists to leave the country. With the regime having consolidated its power, democratic elections are not to be expected in the near future.

In the media

POLITICO

14/07/2021

Battle of the courts: Contradictory rulings in Poland, EU raise specter of 'Polexit'

By Wojciech Kosci, Lili Bayer



The Guardian

07/09/2021

Poland's government risks fines for flouting European court order

By Jennifer Rankin



07/09/2021

Can the municipalities of Lebanon organize the process of mobilizing fuel for citizens and protect the public interest?

The New York Times

07/10/2021

Poland's top court rules its constitution trumps E.U. law

By Andrew Higgins, Anatol Magdziarz, Monika Pronczuk

euronews.

14/10/2021

Legal row could see Poland become a second-class member of EU | View

By Jakub Jaraczewski



15/01/2021

MNAs call for enhancing parliamentary oversight of
govt's COVID-19 response



22/03/2021

If the price is right...

By Andre Sleiman, Sabine El Hayek



18/05/2021

European leaders seized more power during the
pandemic. Few have 'exit plans' to hand it back

By Luke McGee, Saskya Vandoorne



26/05/2021

Deepfakes' - a political problem already hitting the EU

By Michael Meyer-Resende, Madeline Brady



29/06/2021

Coup d'envoi de la campagne national pour l'accès
à la justice administrative

By Nadia Dejoui

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- **Nino Tsereteli**, Research Officer – Rule of Law
- **Allison Tucker**, Fundraising and Communications Intern
- **Inge Ullrich**, Finance and Administration Officer
- **Dennis Wenzl**, Outreach Officer
- **Gerrit Zauke**, Programme Finance Officer
- **Zhihao Zhong**, Communications Intern
- **Paul Zoubkov**, Manager – Europe Programme

DRI Supervisory Board

- **Gabriele Geertz**
- **Urdur Gunnarsdottir**
- **Ghassan E. Moukheiber**
- **Ilkka Uusitalo**

Ukraine & Myanmar

** We thank all members of our teams in Ukraine and Myanmar for their hard work. Their names have not been included here for their own protection, but we carry their achievements with us every day.*

Lebanon

- **Lamis Abdayem**, Project and Digital Media Officer
- **Dory Abou Jaoude**, Programme Manager
- **Sara Audi**, Finance and Administration Manager
- **André Sleiman**, Country Representative
- **Sabine El Hayek**, Legal Research Officer
- **Jocelyne El Khoury**, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer
- **Emile Fakhoury**, Project and Digital Media Intern
- **Elie Haddad**, Procurement and Logistic Coordinator
- **Pamela Hanna**, Social Media Intern
- **Youssef Jaber**, Finance and Administration Assistant
- **Marwan Kotob**, Project Coordinator
- **Peter Moussa**, Project and Digital Media Assistant
- **Mostapha Raad**, Communications Coordinator
- **Gaëlle Youssef**, Programme Coordinator
- **Leya Zgheib**, Research and Field Coordinator

Tunisia

- **Seifallah Aissa**, Logistics Officer
- **Bilel Ayari**, Operations Coordinator
- **Mohamed Wassim B'chir**, Office Director
- **Rania Ben Farhat**, Project Officer
- **Moez Ben Rouha**, MEL Coordinator
- **Mohamed Abderahim Ben Salem**, Finance Coordinator
- **Ferdaous Ben Sassi**, Project Manager
- **Yasmine Chaouch**, Communications Officer
- **Hervé De Baillenx**, MENA Representative
- **Marwa Ferchichi**, Senior Officer Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- **Mehdi Foudhaili**, Legal and Political Expert
- **Mansouri Haifa**, Project Officer
- **Yasmine Hamrouni**, Communications Officer
- **Amel Hanchi**, Finance Coordinator
- **Amira Kridagh**, Project Coordinator
- **Manel Lahrabi**, Finance and Administration Officer
- **Josselin Leon**, Programme Director
- **Mohamed Anis Letaief**, Project Officer
- **Emna Mouelhi**, Project Coordinator
- **Ilhem Saadi**, Human Resources Officer
- **Mejda Souissi**, Project Officer
- **Amine Thabet**, Legal Liaison Officer

MENA Region

- **Makram Dhifali** – Data Analyst
- **Wafaa Heikal** – Social Media Analyst

Pakistan

- **Javed Ahmed**, Country Representative
- **Anam Akram**, Programme Coordinator
- **Muhammad Farman**, Driver
- **Touseef Ahmad Jan**, Logistics, Procurement and Administrative Officer
- **Nazeer Mahar**, Country Representative
- **Muhammad Nasir**, Head of Finance and Administration
- **Muhammad Rafique**, Senior Human Rights and Advocacy Expert / Technical Advisor
- **Muhammad Riaz**, Office Support Assistant
- **Muhammad Imran Saeed**, Finance Officer
- **Shaheera Syed**, Programme Officer

Libya

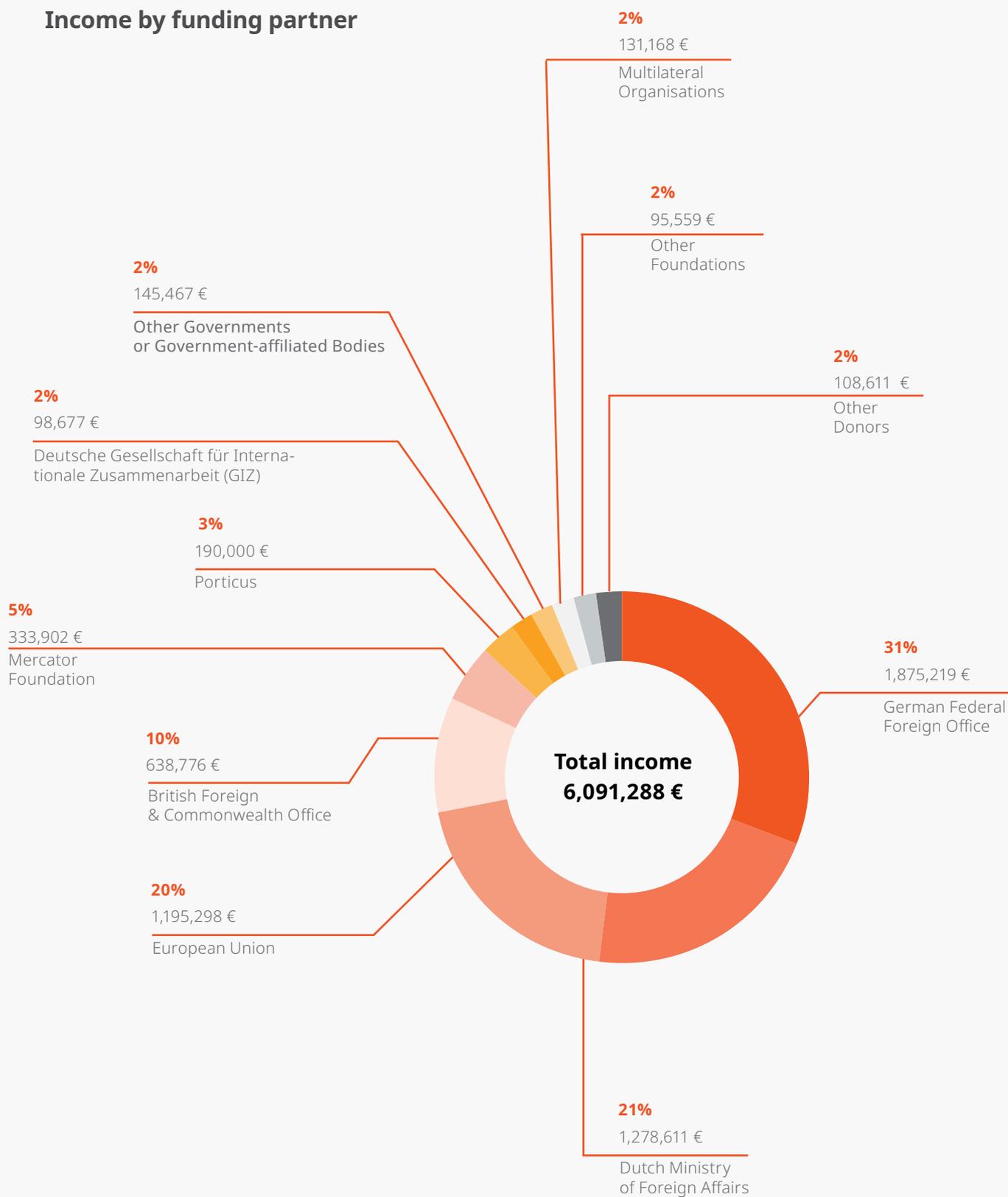
- **Khawla Ben Aicha**, Senior Communications Coordinator
- **Taha Almsallati**, Community Outreach Coordinator
- **Mariam Ben Mosbah**, Project Assistant
- **Zoubeir Daly**, Senior Manager Decentralisation
- **Asma Dekna**, Project Manager
- **Rawya Elkekli**, Project Coordinator
- **Othman Elmabrouk**, Finance and Administration Officer
- **Walid Elrageiag**, Finance and Admin Manager
- **Dina Fazane**, Project Coordinator
- **Wedad Ibrahim**, Project Manager
- **Tanyel Taysi**, Country Director
- **Mohamed Zouaoui**, Project Assistant

Sri Lanka

- **Rebeka Alexander**, Finance Officer
- **Shageetha Balachandran**, Project Assistant
- **Soorya Balendra**, Research Officer – Digital Democracy
- **Damitha Berugodaarachchi**, Finance and Administration Coordinator
- **Upeksha de Silva**, Procurement and Logistic Assistant
- **Sajani Ekanayake**, Human Resources and Administration Associate – Sri Lanka
- **Jayantha Gunasekera**, Strategic Management Adviser
- **Ashfath Bafika Ifham**, Social Media Analyst
- **Jegachelvam Jegatheesan**, Programme Director
- **Pawan Kalugala**, Communications Officer
- **Prageeth Liyanaarachchi**, Programme Officer, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- **Nalika Priyangani**, Finance and Administration Coordinator
- **Ganidhu Weerasinha**, Programme Associate
- **Fatima Sabra Zahid**, Programme Support Expert

Our finances

Income by funding partner



Expenditure by programme

Tunisia	19%	1,174,913 €
Libya	12%	743,363 €
Pakistan	10%	609,864 €
Myanmar	5%	320,114 €
Lebanon	14%	869,335 €
Global	<1%	28,048 €
Digital Democracy	4%	279,505 €
Sri Lanka	6%	399,022 €
Ukraine	6%	389,681 €
Cross-country MENA	6%	404,838 €
Cross-country Europe	3%	188,902 €
Other	1%	52,865 €
Administrative Costs	13%	811,972 €

Total: 6,272,422 €

Turnover



2021

Grants: **5,625,837 €**

Service contracts: **465,451 €**

Our partners

Funding partners

- The Association of Netherlands Municipalities;
- Civitates;
- Engagement Global
- the European Union;
- Expertise France;
- the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ);
- the German Federal Foreign Office;
- Global Affairs Canada;
- the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies;
- Luminate;
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands;
- Porticus;
- Stiftung Mercator;
- the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions;
- the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office;
- the United Nations Development Programme;
- UN-Habitat;
- the World Bank;

Other partners

Headquarters

- German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
- European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)
- European Implementation Network (EIN)
- Forum of Transregional Studies (FTS)
- German Marshall Fund (GMF)
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- International IDEA
- Meijers Committee
- RECONNECT
- Tagesspiegel
- Verfassungsblog
- Internews Ukraine
- Kyiv School of Economics
- Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv
- Democratic Initiatives Foundation
- Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation
- StopFake initiative
- Office of Simple Solutions and Results
- RMA digital agency
- School of Policy Analysis
- Center for Civil Liberties
- Ukrainian Women's Fund
- Synergy Academy
- VoxUkraine/VoxCheck
- YouControl
- Texty.org
- Institute of Mass Information
- Ukraine Crisis Media Centre
- Media Development Foundation
- Truth Hounds
- 100% Life
- Fight for Rights
- Digital Agency "Postmen"
- Ukrainian Civic Platform Nova Kraina (New Country)
- Ukrainian Media and Communications Institute
- Ukrainian Bar Association
- Anticorruption Action Centre

Ukraine

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports (DRI's international technical assistance [ITA] beneficiary partner [2020-2021])
 - All-Ukrainian Youth Center
 - Association of Youth Centers of Ukraine
 - Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine
 - Association of Youth Councils of Ukraine
 - Youth Platform
 - The Right of Youth
 - Student Control in Action
 - The Expert Committee on AI Development under the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine
 - Vostok-SOS
 - Amnesty International Ukraine
 - East Europe Foundation
 - Institute of Political Education
 - Institute Respublica
 - Suspilne TV
- ### Myanmar
- International IDEA
 - Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
- * Due to security concerns, we cannot list our local partners in Myanmar.*

Sri Lanka

- People's Action for Free & Fair Elections (PAFFREL)
- Centre for Monitoring Election Violations (CMEV)
- Hashtag Generation
- Rural Women's Front (RWF)
- National Collaboration Development Foundation (NCDF)

Lebanon

- The Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace (LFPCP)
- Leadership for Sustainable Development (LSD)
- Youth Energy for Development (YED)
- Youth Council of Jabal El-Sheikh
- Youth Council of Koura
- Lebanese Parliament
- Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
- Municipalities of Bechmezzine, Btorram, Kfarhazir, and Batroumin
- Ministry of Finance
- Municipality of Tripoli
- Municipality of Dekwaneh
- Municipality of Kfarshima
- Municipality of Tyre
- Union of Municipalities of Jabal El-Sheikh
- Municipality of Chouaifet El Aamroussieh
- Union of Municipalities of Jurd el Qayteh
- Union of Municipalities of Dreib El Awsat
- Governorate of Akkar
- Municipality of Rachiine
- Municipality of Bkeftine
- Municipality of Ghazze
- Municipality of Chekka
- Municipality of Menjez
- Union of Municipalities of Bouhaira
- Union of Municipalities of Chouf Souayjani
- Municipality of El Qaa
- Municipality of Hebbarieh
- Municipality of Zgharta
- Municipality of Bwareg
- Municipality of Mouhammara
- Union of Municipalities of Jezzine
- Municipality of Bkarzla
- Municipality of Qrayyeh

Libya

- Jusoor Center for Studies and Development
- UN Women

Pakistan

- National Assembly of Pakistan
- Provincial Assembly of Punjab province
- Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights
- Punjab Assembly's Standing Committee on Human Rights and Minority Affairs
- Department of Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Human Rights and Minority Affairs Department, Punjab
- Charity Commissions of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Pakistan Civil Society Forum (PCSF)
- Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA)
- Tabadlab

MENA Regional

- Maharat Foundation (*Lebanon*)
- Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development (*Jordan*)
- Mourakiboun (*Tunisia*)
- IPSI - Institut de presse et des sciences de l'information (*Tunisia*)
- SUDIA - Sudanese Development Initiative (*Sudan*)

Tunisia

- Ordre national des avocats de Tunisie (ONAT) Administrative Tribunal
- Audit Court
- High Authority of Local Finance
- Instance national d'accès à l'information (INAI)
- Assemblée des représentants du peuple (ARP)
- Mourakiboun
- Association tunisienne des médias alternatifs (ATMA)
- Munathara
- Mobdi'un
- Association Tunisienne des Conseillers Parlementaires (ATCP)
- Al Bawsala
- Institut Tunisien de formation des Elus (ITFE)
- Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center

