

ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRACY ACADEMY

ENABLING EMERGING POLITICAL LEADERS

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy

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With the support of the European Union



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1. ABOUT US

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) works to strengthen inclusive, democratic political systems worldwide. To that end, we work with the entire political sector in a country, from aspiring politicians to political leaders, and from national to local level. Our approach is unique and characterized by dialogue. We bring actors from across the political spectrum together. We work on their knowledge and competences, and empower them to cooperate in a constructive manner on issues that affect them, their country as well as the broader region.

Every democracy needs democrats and transparent and accountable leaders. Together, they shape the functioning of the democracy and translate the formal rules and structures into practice and behavior. Because many developing democracies lack an extensive democratic tradition, their politicians – and civil society – often struggle with demonstrating democratic

behavior. That is why democracy education is a core element of our work.

Over the past fifteen years, NIMD has gained a lot of experience in implementing democracy education activities, in particular by setting up Democracy Schools in 14 different countries* (including Ethiopia). In these schools, established politicians, future leaders from different political parties, and civil society leaders come together to build relationships and learn about human rights, equality, ethics in politics, social justice and other democratic principles. What the participants all have in common is their high potential to make a democratic impact on politics in their countries.



*Selamawit Menkir, Ethiopia
Country Director*

** Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Tunisia, and Venezuela.*

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRACY ACADEMY

The Ethiopian Democracy Academy (EDAC) aims to contribute towards the democratization process of the country by training emerging / future generations of Ethiopian politicians on democratic ideas, values and practices that help foster multiparty democracy in the country. By building the capacity of individual leaders and thereby the political parties, EDAC strives to impact the democratic culture and to strengthen the practice of multiparty dialogue among political parties and help them work together. Given the political polarization in Ethiopia, EDAC hopes to become the platform for peaceful resolution of disputes and address misunderstandings among political parties.



Democracy can only take root if there are democrats. Nevertheless democracy and democratization takes time to realize. It needs democratic leaders and institutions. EDAC strives to lay the foundation for democracy by training future leaders. By bringing trainees from across the political spectrum, EDAC promotes transparent and accountable governance and shapes the functioning of democracy. In line with the global NIMD activities on democracy schools, EDAC aims to build the capacity of potential leaders in political parties and political youth movements.

This will ensure that the parties and their representatives in the dialogue process have the skills and knowledge needed to engage effectively in the political reform process and in the process of democratization. EDAC provides a safe space where participants from different, political, social and educational backgrounds can come together to exchange ideas and learn to respect other opinions. By teaching future leaders skills such as how to engage with others, and listen and debate with mutual respect, the school empowers the next generation to put their democratic values into practice in line with the needs of their country.



Motivational speech on 'Mindset' given by well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Mihret Debebe.

2.1. CURRICULUM & LEARNING METHODOLOGY

EDAC employs the adult learning method (also known as the “360-method”). This method builds on what knowledge / experience already exists in the trainee and brings that experience to the table in order for the trainees to be able to learn from each other as much as they learn from the trainers’ insights. In addition, all the training modules and other reference materials are available to the trainees in both English and Amharic.

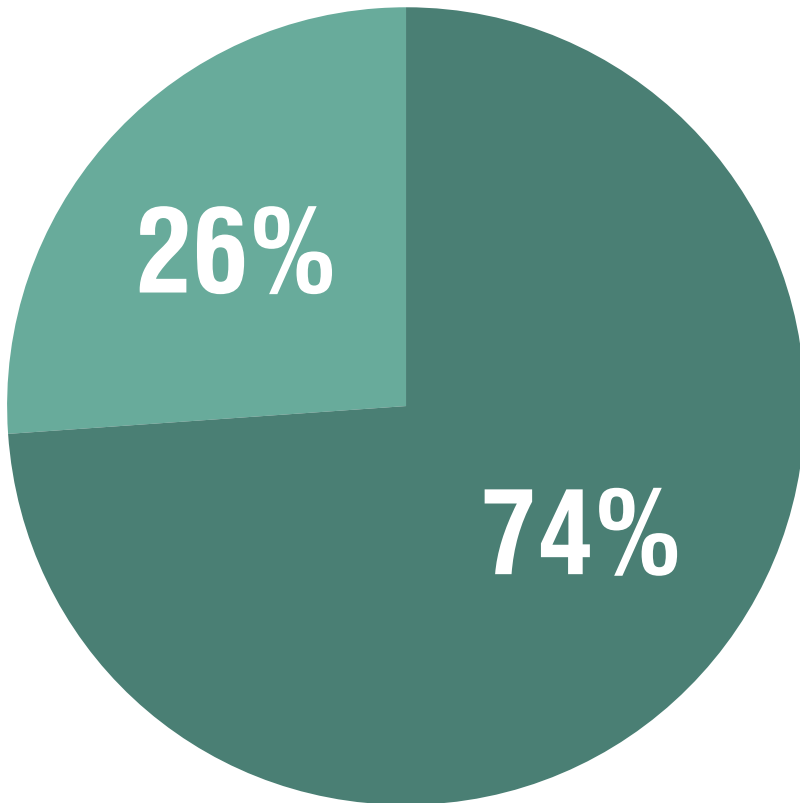
2.2. TARGET GROUP OF THE ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRACY ACADEMY

The EDAC trainees are selected, through an open and transparent process, from major political parties and political youth movements from all regions, including Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The EDAC trainees are proposed by their respective parties or movements based on their leadership potential and their often already shown

influence within their party (as can be seen in the figure on the right). EDAC is constantly consulting with political parties and relevant political youth movements to have them engaged, and ensure that the EDAC training is of utmost relevance and aligned to their knowledge and skills needs. Section 6 consists of the list of political parties and political youth movements that have sent their members to join the EDAC trainings.



The trainees presenting their ideas and learning from each other's perspectives.



Your level of influence on the decision making in your political party / political movement.

■ High level of influence ■ Some level of influence ■ No influence

2.3. LIST OF TRAININGS

EDAC's 20-day training program covers both theoretical knowledge courses and essential skills trainings. In addition to the training sessions and motivational speeches by guest speakers, EDAC organizes out-of-class activities in between the training sessions in order for the trainees to socialize with one another through team sport activities, a cooking competition, and film evenings.

EDAC Training Courses		
No.	Theoretical knowledge courses	Essential skills trainings
1	Political Theory	Leadership Skills
2	Devolution of Power in Federal States	Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation
3	Political Economy	Emotional Intelligence
4	Rule of Law	Communication Skills
5	Democracy, Electoral Systems & Elections	Motivational guest lectures on various topics, including 'Mindset'
6	Geopolitics of the Horn of Africa	
7	Human Rights	
8	Constitutionalism	
9	Gender in Politics	

Overview of EDAC's training courses.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS

Below an overview of the milestones achieved with regard to the EDAC flagship program of NIMD.

Three rounds of EDAC Trainings implemented:

- 1st round: 10 – 29 March 2020
- 2nd round: 14 September – 3 October 2020
- 3rd round: 10 – 29 May 2021
- 104 young politicians trained – *half of them were female politicians!*
- 26 political parties
- 4 political youth movements



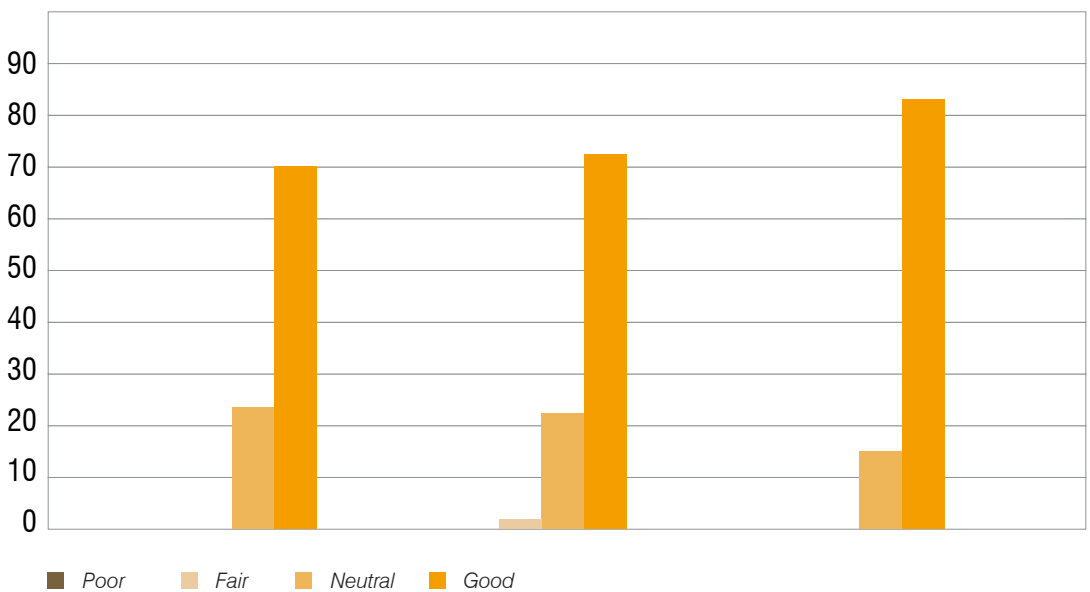
EDAC Alumni Network established

- 3 EDAC Alumni Events held
- 3 different online social media groups where EDAC alumni are connected, sharing personal updates, information on political developments, trainings, and educational resources (e.g. books, magazines, articles)



The majority of the trainees from all the three EDAC training rounds rated the training as excellent. As can be seen in the graph below, this is underlined by the even higher number of EDAC trainees that would recommend this training to a colleague because it helps advancing one's political career.

Rating of the overall training and its positive impact on advancing the political career of all the EDAC trainees



4. EDAC ALUMNI EXCHANGE VISIT TO KENYA

To further support their personal career development towards democratization, NIMD organized an EDAC alumni exchange visit to Kenya to learn and share personal experiences on youth political engagements and the functioning of democratic institutions and party politics in Kenya. A motivational speech writing competition was organized prior to the exchange visit to Kenya whereby the 15 most competent and promising EDAC alumni have been selected to join. These 15 EDAC alumni came from different political parties and political movements. The EDAC alumni together with NIMD Ethiopia staff went to Kenya from 18 – 24 July 2021. With the organizational support of Center for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya) and Mzalendo, the alumni were able to meet with different Kenyan parliamentarians, and political parties (such as ODM, KANU and NARC) and

their youth and women leagues leaders. The EDAC alumni also attended a seminar on youth in politics where they discussed with Kenyan youth politicians and Kenya's youth parliamentary association about the opportunities and challenges of engaging in politics as young leaders. The seminar about the Kenyan constitutional amendment process was another important learning experience for the EDAC alumni. Next to the official meetings and other political activities, a variety of social activities were organized for the EDAC alumni to bond with one another. The EDAC alumni highly appreciated the overall learning experience and admired the Kenyan politicians for their ability to create more of a dialogue culture and openness towards forging coalition. That is a lesson which the EDAC alumni aim to bring back to Ethiopia.



The upper photos show EDAC alumni visiting the KANU Headquarters and exchanging experiences as youth politicians in Ethiopia during the Youth in Politics Seminar. The photo under is a group photo taken together with Kenyan youth politicians.

5. IMPACT STORIES: CHALA KEFALE



Chala Kefale

This is Mr. Chala Kefale, a Mechanical Engineering graduate from the Addis Ababa University, and engaged in

politics for more than 5 years, most of it as a key member and youth organizer of the Qeero Movement.

He joined EDAC's first training round from 10 – 29 March 2020 together with 34 other EDAC trainees. He truly enjoyed EDAC's training sessions, especially the ones on leadership, federalism and geopolitics. However, it was not simply the training sessions that he liked. He expressed that this 20-day EDAC training has changed him from inside irreversibly. In his own words, he said “to bring people together from Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, who have completely different political views, and to see them engaging in dialogue, has

greatly changed me. I realized I should work with and for all types of youth, not only with Qeero. All youth have similar interests. We all want peace. We all want



Chala (second person from the right) taking part in a cooking competition, an activity organized to increase relations and team building among the EDAC trainees.

our rights to be respected. So, if we all have similar interests, I am taking it as my responsibility to bring everyone together”. Mr. Chala also felt that the safe space provided to dialogue with fellow youth with all these different viewpoints improved his communications skills; both in listening and in persuading others.

“...Most of all, EDAC changed me forever.”

Mr. Chala feels a strong purpose to continue working to fight against injustice and unconstitutional acts. He not only wants to stand up for the rights of his Oromo community but aims to mobilize youth across Ethiopia in order to train them on how to

abide by the rule of law, and how to fight the good fight for their own rights and for the rights of others. In line with that, he aspires to become an international human rights activist within 5-10 years from now.



“EDAC showed me how to be tolerant and how to focus on political differences that fellow EDAC trainees have, rather than focusing on their personality.”

- Tigist Workneh, EZEMA Candidate for the Addis Ababa City Administration



“I learnt how to engage in constructive dialogue in which I can discuss and try to understand other political views.”

- Ashenafi Kebede, Wolayta Youth Movement for Justice & Equality a.k.a. YELAGA

5. IMPACT STORIES: NESTIHO ABDI



Nestiho Abdi

This is Ms. Nestiho Abdi, a civil engineer by profession and passionate about travelling and learning new languages (she

speaks already 5 languages and wants to learn more).

She joined EDAC's second training round from 14 September to 3 October 2020 as the Chair of the Women and Youth League of the Prosperity Party's Somali regional branch. After she participated in the EDAC training, she obtained two key insights. First of all, she is even more convinced about the need for all political parties, regardless of their political affiliation, to believe in dialogue rather than being blindly hateful. The second insight she got from EDAC is a greater self-awareness of who she is and how she can use her positive strengths to achieve more. She has shown

her gratefulness for taking part in the EDAC training by translating all the training materials in the Somali language. She then collaborated with the Jijiga University to train the Somali region district-level leaders. On top of that, she feels strong solidarity with the youth as she herself is still in her 20s, and therefore she trained the youth in her region on issues such as attitude, life skills and dialogue.

Despite only 3 years of political experience, her great efforts have been noticed by her senior party colleagues. Within 3 months after her EDAC experience, she has been promoted on 23 November 2020 to the position of Head of Land Development & Management Department in the newly established 11th Sub city of Addis Ababa called 'Lemi Kura'.

Nestiho has high ambitions for herself but her heart is with her own community in the Somali region. When she was asked the question of where she wants to be in 5-10 years, she says that she dreams of

“By taking part in the EDAC training, I started to understand that there are different types of political thinking in this country.”

becoming Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister one day; thereby using the many languages she already speaks. Until that, she continues to work hard to mobilize youth and community members by promoting solidarity and unity as one nation.



“EDAC greatly influenced me to develop an interest to know the individual behind his/her political views, and to be focused on idea-based politics.”

- Tesfatsion Legesse, Ejetto Sidama Youth Movement



“As a lawyer and human rights activist, EDAC has strengthened my motivation to continue fighting injustice through rational idea-based dialogue.”

- Hirowaq Girma, OFC

5. IMPACT STORIES: DESTA TILAHUN



Desta Tilahun

Ms. Desta Tilahun is a nurse and pharmacist by profession. Because of her engagement in politics over the last 10 years, she is highly interested in becoming a political leader who is skilled, competent, and knowledgeable. She joined EDAC's third training round from 10 – 29 May 2020, while also taking part in the national election campaigns as a parliamentary candidate in Addis Ababa for the Ethiopian Social Democratic Party (ESDP). What Desta appreciated most from the EDAC training was the amount of in-depth and applicable political knowledge provided to the EDAC trainees. Especially the training session on the Rule of Law gave her new insights about the gaps between what is written in the law and the reality on the ground due to the often

perceived lack of alignment between the two. EDAC also made her experience that one can indeed be close and supportive towards fellow politicians that are from other political parties. This made her realize that we all need to work together in order for our country to go forward.

As a woman, Desta feels that EDAC strongly encourages her and fellow female EDAC trainees to participate actively, to speak up by taking the lead in activities and by publicly presenting group discussion outcomes.

Because she recently took part in the EDAC training, Desta has not been able to put much of what she has learnt in practice as of yet, but her strategy is to start by changing herself in order to change others. She truly believes that the development of democracy in herself and her surroundings will bring peace and security, and justice for the once mistreated.

“we all need to work together in order for our country to go forward.”

She hopes to do this first as a Member of Parliament and then to move on to become a Minister or Ambassador. Finally, she hopes to become the Prime Minister of Ethiopia.



“I learnt about unity, rule of law, love and compassion, and mutual support. I have an interest to promote our country’s cultures and traditions.”

- Hana Derso, Boro Democratic Party



“I have acquired knowledge about the politics of the Horn of Africa as well as about the internal and external future outlook of our country.”

- Daniel Gumataw, NAMA

6. LIST OF EDAC-TRAINED POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICAL YOUTH MOVEMENTS



“As a political scientist and Chair of my party, I learned how to use emotional intelligence in leadership.”

Musa Adem, Chair of the Afar People’s Party (APP) and former Chair of the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council



“I want to contribute to democracy by building the capacity of our youth to become rational and visionary.”

Markos Mekuria, Sidama Region Communications Director, Prosperity Party



Abraha Desta, Chairman of Arena Tigray for Democracy and Sovereignty



Zahara Seid, Kombolcha Woreda Candidate for the Regional Council, NAMA



Ahmed Mohamed, Executive Committee, ONLF

No.	Political Parties	Political Youth Movements
1	Afar People's Party (APP)	EJETTO Sidama Youth Movement / Ejetima Federalist Party
2	Agew National Shengo	FANO Amhara Nationalist Youth Movement
3	All Ethiopian Unity Party	Oromo Youth Liberation Movement (Qeerroo)
4	Arena Tigray for Democracy and Sovereignty	Youth Movement for Justice and Equality (YELAGA)
5	Balderas for Genuine Democracy	<p>*One Prosperity Party member from each regional branch was chosen to participate in the EDAC training.</p>
6	Boro Democratic Party	
7	Enat Party	
8	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice and Democracy (EZEMA)	
9	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)	
10	Ethiopian Social Democratic Party (ESDP)	
11	Freedom & Equality Party	
12	Gambella Peoples' Liberation Movement	
13	Harari People's Democratic Party	
14	Hiber Ethiopia Democratic Party	
15	Kimant Democratic Party	
16	National Congress of Great Tigray (BAYTONA)	
17	National Movement of Amhara (NAMA)	
18	Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)	
19	Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC)	
20	Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)	
21	Prosperity Party (PP)*	
22	Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM)	
23	Sidama Unity Party (SUP)	
24	Tigray Democratic Party (TDP)	
25	Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF)	
26	Wolayta National Movement (WNM)	

7. IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND PWDs

Central to NIMD's work across the globe is its focus on the political inclusion of the diverse groups in a country's society, including women and people with disabilities (PWDs). Inclusion also continues to be an essential factor in the selection of the EDAC trainees. In that light, besides significant political, regional, religious, and ethnic representation among the EDAC trainees, an equal number of young women and men were trained (52 men / 52 women). Also, one person with a visual impairment was included in the third EDAC training round. Diversity and inclusion will be further emphasized on in the EDAC activities that are still to come, as NIMD strongly believes in democratic systems that allow everyone to voice their needs and participate in political decision-making. Democracies will only thrive when women and other underrepresented groups have an equal opportunity to take a seat

at the table. EDAC has shown to be a vital capacity building mechanism to empower these underrepresented groups of young and promising individuals within their respective political parties.



EDAC strongly focuses on the inclusion of women and people with disabilities. In the picture, our visually impaired EDAC trainee is playing football with his fellow colleagues.

8. PARTNERS SUPPORTING THE EDAC TRAININGS

NIMD could not have implemented the EDAC training successfully without the excellent implementation support from the Center for Governance and Security Studies (CGSS) and the financial support from the European Union's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

8.1. EU INSTRUMENT CONTRIBUTING TO STABILITY AND PEACE (IcSP)

The IcSP is the EU's financial instrument to respond quickly and flexibly to conflicts and crisis. IcSP provides funding for short and mid-term actions on conflict prevention, crisis response and peace building around the world, and longer term assistance to projects linked to global and transregional threats.

8.2. CENTER FOR GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY STUDIES (CGSS)

The three EDAC training rounds were coordinated and facilitated by Dr. Yinebeb

Nigatu. He is the Executive Director of the Consultancy Firm called 'Center for Governance and Security Studies (CGSS)' and works on a consultancy basis for NIMD as a Senior Political Advisor. In this role, he is not only engaged in the project activities, but also supports NIMD in its overall understanding of the political processes in Ethiopia.



Dr. Yinebeb Nigatu, the mastermind behind the concept of EDAC and the main organizer / facilitator of each of the EDAC activities.



EDAC Training Round 1



EDAC Training Round 2



EDAC Training Round 3

DEMOCRACY STARTS WITH DIALOGUE.

Content and graphs development:

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