

Annual Report 2021



INDEPENDENT DIPLOMAT

THE DIPLOMATIC ADVISORY GROUP

Independent Diplomat (ID) conducted its work in 2021 across the range of projects described below.

Refugees

Objectives

- To ensure refugees have the diplomatic and public space to advocate for their interests.
- To ensure refugees have the skills, expertise and institutional capacity to exert an effective and sustained voice in policymaking.

Context

ID has helped to create, evolve and advise a global network of refugees, the Global Refugee-led Network (GRN). The impetus was our observation that refugee policy was missing any input from refugees themselves. The impact of GRN has been significant.

In 2021, the work supported Refugee-led Organizations (RLOs) around the world to influence refugee policy at international, regional and local levels. Project activities focused on providing information to RLOs on and access to key decision-making bodies and individuals; building skills (diplomatic, negotiation, communications) so that refugee representatives are equipped to transform access into policy change; and providing information, advice and analysis to ensure that refugees have the substantive advice that any policymaker should expect to be furnished with if they are to be effective (the kind of service that states have through their bureaucracies, but that RLOs do not).

Activities and Outputs

ID launched Refugee Skill Up a series of train-the-trainer workshops designed in partnership with refugee leaders to ensure refugees have an effective and sustained voice in policymaking. By the end of 2021, ID, in partnership with the Global Refugee-led Network (GRN) had conducted 7 trainings on issues selected by refugees themselves: Refugee Rights and Policies, the Basics of Diplomacy, Strategic Communication, Leadership and Organizing for Advocacy, Refugee Access to Decent Work, Fundraising and Campaign Strategies, and Train the Trainer Techniques.

Mali

Objective

- The implementation of the Mali Peace Agreement through the provision of professional diplomatic advice and services to the Coordination of Movements of the Azawad (CMA).

Context

In 2021, appetite for the international community to play an active role in supporting implementation of the Peace Agreement decreased as focus shifted towards the transition and holding of elections. However, a relatively positive visit by the UN Security Council to Mali took place during the year and CMA leadership as well as women representatives continued their efforts to seek support from the

international community to unblock issues particularly around Security Sector Reform and development issues of the Agreement.

Activities and Outputs

- The CMA continued to show positive and effective commitment towards the Peace Agreement despite the lack of concrete results on the ground and the government's efforts to undermine progress around key aspects such as Security Sector Reform, territorial police, return of teachers to the North and development projects in the North.
- ID provided analysis on MINUSMA mandate renewal as well as prospects for constitutional reform.
- ID liaised with MINUSMA/ UNICEF to reset the relationship with CMA on the Action Plan which is now moving forward to ensure more effective implementation of the Action Plan to fight child recruitment.
- ID provided analysis on the recommendations of the latest Independent Observer's report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement.
- ID provided advice to CMA female representatives to the CSA ahead of meeting with Norway's Special Envoy for the Sahel.
- ID provided advice to CMA women ahead of their meeting with SRSG/Head of MINUSMA to discuss progress on implementation of the Agreement and issues related to women's inclusion in the sub-committees.

Climate Change / Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) / High Ambition Coalition

Objective

- To support the Marshall Islands and the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) in its diplomatic efforts to avoid devastating climate impacts.

Context

In 2021, ID's climate change work focused on preparation for the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow, where ID had a team embedded with RMI and in order to operationalise the High Ambition Coalition. By the time of the COP, we had put the diplomacy in place to be able to orchestrate a significant push on ambition.

Activities and Outputs

- ID helped facilitate a statement through the HAC at Head of State / Leader level that set the tone for the entire COP. The HAC Leaders' Statement brought together from the very start almost a quarter of participating states behind a statement of commitment to the most ambitious parts of the final outcome – cementing of the 1.5C temperature target, doubling of adaptation finance, funding for loss and damage, and an expectation of annual improvements in nationally-determined commitments to name but a few.

- The impact of the RMI and the HAC and the direct correlation between their efforts on which ID worked and the final outcome of COP26 was clear (just was the case during the Paris Climate Change Agreement) – without RMI and the HAC, the outcome would have been significantly weaker and would have pushed 1.5C out of reach. As former US President, Barak Obama, said during the COP: “what the High Ambition Coalition is attempting to accomplish – is vital”, and noting the Coalition’s role to secure a 1.5C temperature limit in 2015, he added, “the science has made clear... that we cross that line at our peril...Once again...it falls on the High Ambition Coalition to make that case....You’ve come together once again to speak to not only the need to get to 1.5, but also to provide the adaptation funding that’s necessary for those who may end up paying the steepest price for actions that they themselves did not take.”

Yemen

Objectives

- Southern Transitional Council (STC): Advise the STC and enhance its diplomatic engagement within the UN-led political process towards a solution for the South Yemen issue;
- Yemeni women: Support South Yemeni women to shape international policymaking on the South issue and broader Yemeni crisis.

Context

The Riyadh Agreement signed on 5 November 2019 remains a key focus of policymaking on the Southern issue, including its link to the UN-led political process in Yemen. ID’s focus in 2021 centred on advice to the Southern Transitional Council (STC) to navigate the short-term challenges and identify movement forward with the Riyadh Agreement, while in parallel ensured the STC hit the ground running on a positive and constructive relationship with the UN Envoy. In light of COVID-19, the humanitarian situation became even more of an acute a priority in the South. Alongside ID’s advice to support the STC’s diplomatic and international engagement, ID intensified its support on the humanitarian and human rights fronts for the STC’s various teams on the ground and abroad.

Activities and Outputs

- Engagement plan for STC with UN Envoy, including setting up best practices / process of engagement by the STC.
- Talking points for STC President’s meetings with international Ambassadors/Envoys and officials.
- Workshops on how to influence UNSC and Human Rights Council.
- Facilitated and advised STC female officials’ international engagement.
- Capacity building workshops on international engagement and diplomacy for STC female officials.
- Needs assessment study with STC women.
- Advice on importance and relevance of women’s political participation to STC leadership.

Western Sahara (Frente POLISARIO)

Objectives

- To achieve progress towards a negotiated political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with international law;

Context

The year was marked by continued low level conflict on the ground following the collapse of the ceasefire in November 2020. The weak response from the UN Security Council to the return of conflict, characterised by an attitude of ‘business as usual’, has caused the Saharawi people to lose faith in the UN-led process following years of political inaction.

Activities and Outputs

- ID visited the refugee camps in October 2021 to discuss developments with the POLISARIO’s leadership and with a wide range of representatives on the ground.
- ID provided diplomatic briefings to UNSC members on the situation on the ground following the visit during negotiations on the MINURSO mandate [October 2021].

Women’s Political Participation in Peacebuilding

Objectives

- Track I peace processes are more inclusive of women, and female political leaders are well-prepared to participate assertively in political negotiations; peace agreements forged are gender sensitive.

Context

ID continued its work to advance women’s participation in peace processes, providing technical support and capacity building to female activists and political leaders in Libya, Yemen, Mali, and Myanmar. In mid-2021, ID also launched a new project on Venezuela, fully funded by the Government of Canada, that is directly complementary and in line with ID’s other work on women’s political participation. Collectively, these efforts work to put women at the forefront of diplomacy, ensuring they have access to the tools, resources, advice and networks needed to effectively engage in peace processes.

Activities and outputs

- Training and Capacity Building: ID provided tailored trainings to Libyan, Malian and Venezuelan women focused on diplomatic outreach, goal setting, and strategy building. These trainings took place virtually and in-person, and were designed to build participants capacity to engage effectively in international outreach.
- Women’s Movement Launch: In October, ID hosted a launch conference in Geneva for Women for Democracy in Venezuela, an inclusive movement of Venezuelan women from

across Venezuelan political and civil society. The two-day conference was followed by a high-level briefing hosted by the Mission of Canada in Geneva in which Venezuelan women briefed diplomats on the situation in Venezuela, the efforts being undertaken by Venezuelan women and the need for greater attention to the situation in Venezuela to ensure an inclusive solution.

- Diplomatic Outreach: ID facilitated dozens of meetings between women political and civil society leaders in Yemen, Myanmar, Venezuela, Mali, and Libya and diplomats. This included meetings with UN Security Council members, the EEAS, the UN Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, etc. ID provided talking points and worked to develop key messages to ensure partners were well prepared to articulate joint positions and key asks.

Rohingya / Myanmar

Objective

- To assist an emerging group of Rohingya representatives to play a greater role in influencing the diplomatic response to the crisis, with a particular focus on accountability.

Context

In 2021, ID supported our Rohingya partners in engagement that ensured the Rohingya issue remained on the diplomatic agenda, and that its solution was viewed through the same lens as a democratic transition for Myanmar. This was delivered through the standard package of support ID provides, including analysis, strategic advice, facilitating meetings, drafting talking points, and arranging media opportunities for our Rohingya partners.

Activities and Outputs

- Developed new strategy and engagement plan for 2022 with Rohingya partners.
- Facilitated over 10 bilateral meetings for Rohingya partners with European member states.
- Prepared engagement plan for Rohingya partners ahead of 49th HRC Session in Geneva.
- Outreach to other ethnic representatives, with initial meetings held with Karen National Union (KNU) and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO).

Meet the Parties (MTP)

Objectives

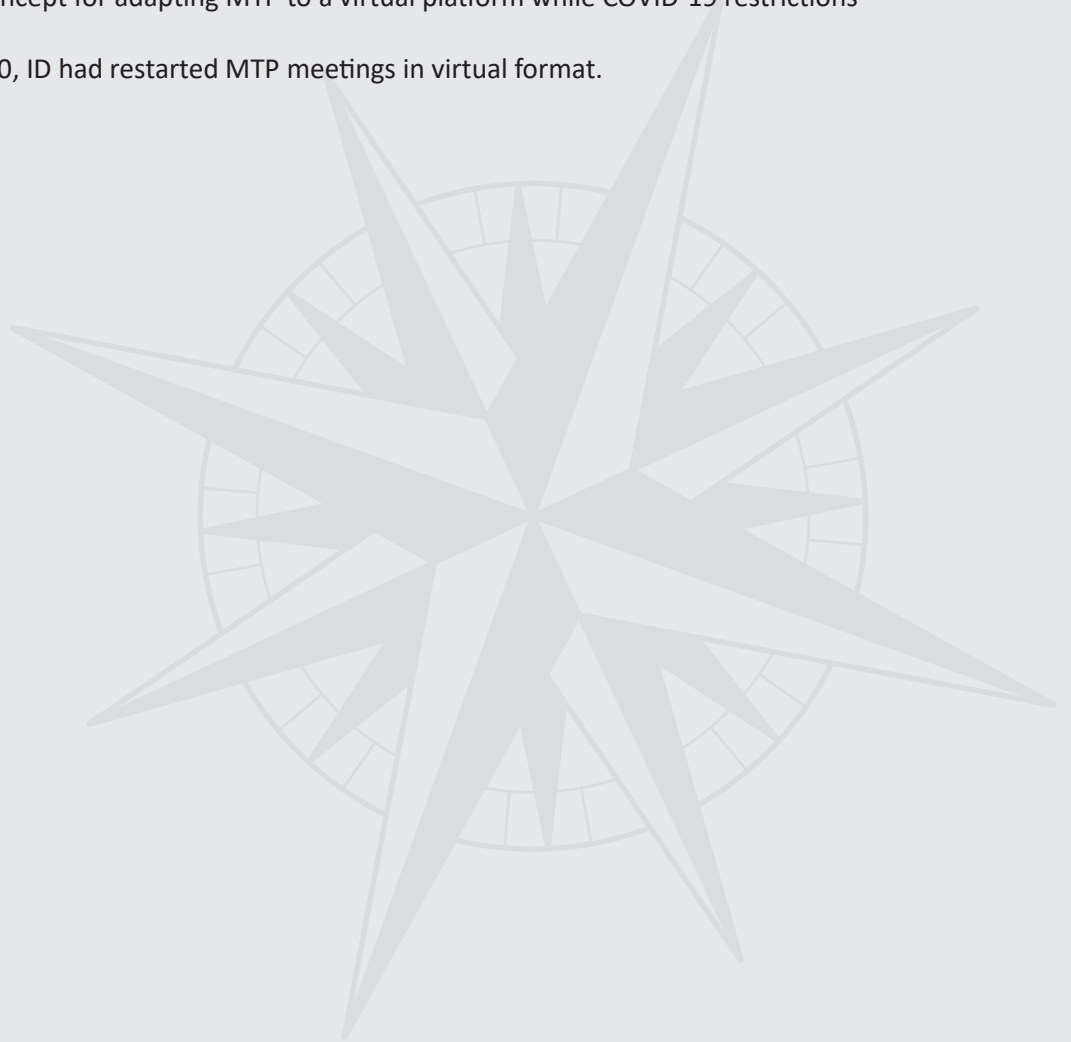
- Meet the Parties (MTP) initiative contributes to more inclusive decision-making and sustainable outcomes at the UN Security Council (UNSC), Human Rights Council (HRC), and EU.

Context

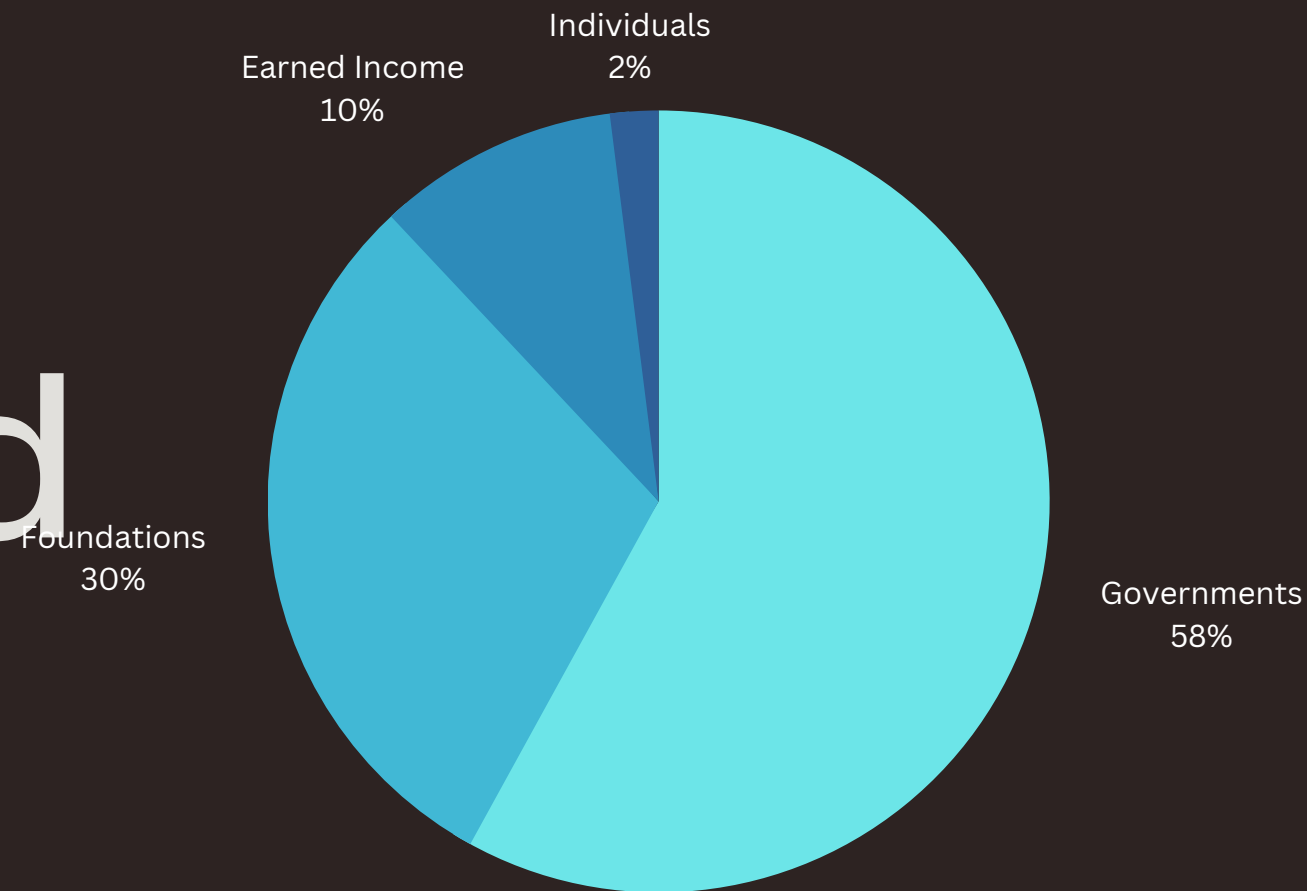
As part of its commitment to preventive diplomacy and the use of dialogue to build trust and avoid a descent into conflict, ID's Meet the Parties initiative continued to provide a platform for multilateral institutions to engage non-state actors on matters critical to international peace and security. During late 2021, ID held two Meet the Parties meetings at the UN Security Council and European Union on Colombia and Myanmar, respectively. ID also worked with the Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN to further systematize the initiative at the UN Security Council, agreeing to co-host a meeting among UN Member States aimed at further garnering Member State interest and support.

Activities and Outputs

- UNSC MTP on Colombia: On 15 December, Independent Diplomat organized and cohosted a virtual Meet the Parties on the implementation of the Colombian Ethnic Chapter.
- EU MTP on Myanmar: On November 24, ID organized and hosted an MTP between the National Unity Government (Myanmar) and the COASI Working Group.
- ID developed a concept for adapting MTP to a virtual platform while COVID-19 restrictions were in place.
- By the end of 2020, ID had restarted MTP meetings in virtual format.

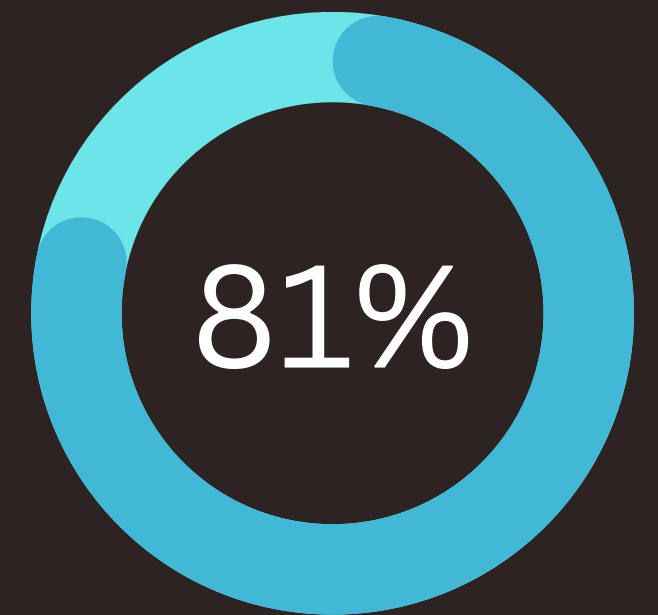


2021 Consolidated Financials



Total Revenue
\$2.820m

Total Expenditure
\$2.694m



Expenditure
to Program
Services

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