Digni

Digni's Progress report to Norad 2024

Cover-Photo Credit: Deepak Kumar

b4eRRodrirQ-unsplash.jpg

Digni's Progress report to Norad 2024

1. General

1.1 Name of grant recipient:	Digni
1.2 Norad's agreement number:	GLO-3726 QZA-23/0002
1.3 Norad's agreement title:	Together for Just, Inclusive and Sustainable Development 2023-2027
1.4 Total grant amount:	NOK 808 800 000
1.5 Agreement period:	01.05.2023 – 30.04.2027
1.6 Reporting period:	01.01.2024 – 31.12.2024
1.7 Countries of implementation 2024:	Aghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Congo, DR Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, State of Palestine, Uganda, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

2. Progress and results

2.1. Summary

Digni's 2024 progress report outlines the achievements of the second year of the programme *Together for Just, Inclusive and Sustainable Development (2023–2027)*. The programme aims to see *empowered communities and individuals living in dignity* and contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across six thematic goals and four strategic priorities.

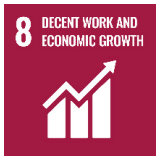
Through various initiatives across all projects, the programme has contributed towards *SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals.* Across geographical boundaries, the project partners have been strengthened to work in strategic partnerships with each other and with other stakeholders, including the government and the private sector. Despite the challenges civil society actors experience in many countries, the programme has kept a strong focus on fundamental human rights and worked to expand spaces to exercise those right. This has contributed towards peaceful and inclusive societies with access to justice for all is in line with *SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.*

The programme contributed to *SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being* by improving healthcare access, reducing maternal and child mortality, combating diseases, to *SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation* by improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation. An increasing number of projects within the Digni-portfolio working to combat gender-based violence have contributed towards *SDG 5 Gender Equality.* The programme has also contributed to eliminating harmful practices and worked towards equal opportunities across all thematic areas. Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB), as well as other fundamental human rights, have contributed towards *SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*.

Contributions towards *SDG 13 Climate Action* and *SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy* have been made by strengthening resilience of local communities through sustainable farming and food security, as well as training

in affordable solutions to improve energy efficiency. The efforts within climate-smart agriculture also contribute towards *SDG 2 Zero Hunger* by promoting sustainable agriculture to ensure everyone has access to sufficient and nutritious food.

Through various education initiatives for language minorities, children with disabilities, disadvantaged girls and illiterate adults, the programme has worked intentionally towards learning opportunities for all, as outlined in *SDG 4 Quality Education*.



Multiple initiatives have contributed towards *SDG 1 No Poverty* and *SDG* 8 *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, by ensuring access to income through trainings, savings, and loaning-groups, as well as business development and job creation. The integration of environmental sustainability, inclusive development, and faith-based engagement has strengthened the programme's ability to address complex challenges and contribute meaningfully to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Overall results are stronger compared to achievements in 2023, with increased coordination and collaboration among partners in the Digni portfolio, as well as with other civil society organisations and local authorities. In summary, Digni's 2024 report reflects a year of strong implementation, strategic collaboration, and measurable impact across multiple thematic areas, in line with the overall goals in *SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals*.

2.2. Progress towards Digni's strategic priorities 2023-2027

In addition to the overall thematic goals, Digni has four strategic priorities that influence the overall direction, the secretariat's budgeting and work, assessment of project funding, and allocation of capacity development resources to Digni, member organisations and partners.

Leaving no one behind

Leaving no one behind is a central part of Digni's vision and strategy. For our partners to maximise their added value as faith-based actors we have an ongoing effort to promote the intersection between diaconal approaches, the SDGs and asset-based community development. As a part of this, we signed an agreement with VID Specialised University in 2024 with the aim of developing practical capacity development opportunities on the topic. Together with VID we developed an 8-week course, which was launched for English speaking partners in Africa in January 2025. A more condensed version of this course is planned for French speaking partners in 2025.

As part of Digni's commitment to promoting inclusion of people with disabilities in Digni-funded projects, we organised thematic online sharing sessions between partners working with this topic. Participants reported on increased knowledge, and they were positive to the expanded network focusing on the topic. At the project level, almost 16 300 out of the 566 500 direct project participants (2.87%) were people with disabilities, reflecting a 0.64% increase from 2023. Over the past years, there has been an upward trend in the involvement of people with disabilities in the projects, which may be attributed to higher awareness of inclusion and improved reporting practices.

More than 97 000 persons from ethnic minorities and Indigenous groups participated in the projects, representing 17% of all project participants. A significant contribution comes from Ethiopia, particularly in the areas where projects focus on mother tongue education and literacy in South Ethiopia. Another notable initiative involving a large number of persons from ethnic minorities focuses on climate adaptation and mitigation in India.

In terms of gender balance, around 325 000 out of the 566 500 project participants in 2024 were female, representing 57% of the total. Although the number of women participants has historically been significantly higher than that of men, there is now a noticeable increase in men's participation. This shift is partly due to a growing awareness of the importance of involving men in projects addressing gender-based violence and other initiatives empowering women.

Strengthening Civil Society

Strengthening civil society within the Digni fellowship happened on many levels, including the mobilisation of people and resources, capacity development, organisational development, advocacy, legal framework, and more general knowledge management.

In 2024, we intensified our efforts to promote collaboration between partners within the Digni fellowship by facilitating capacity development and arenas for mutual exchange of knowledge and experience, both online and in person. We facilitated several global digital webinars and online sharing sessions on different thematic areas like gender-based violence, mental health, Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB), economic empowerment, climate smart agriculture and inclusion of people with disabilities. Most of them were led by highly competent resource persons from the project partners.

Several field trips took place to enhance South-South learning between partners. For instance, a partner in Zimbabwe visited a partner in Eswatini to learn about their experience with gender-based violence. We also see examples of collaboration between multiple organisations at project level yielding significant and positive results, for instance in the project from Ethiopia mentioned under Quality Education.

Digni has actively used the online learning platform Fabo as part of the capacity building of the partners. This includes, learning events and the creation and sharing of resources on topics such as anti-corruption and gender equality. To ensure inclusion of French speaking partners, a French version of the learning hub was launched. Several online learning events have been held in coordination with Digni's sister organisations Swedish Mission Council (SMC) and Center for Kirkeligt Udviklingssamarbejde (CKU) and their partners. During 2024/2025 four partner representatives attended a one-year facilitated online course on Church Based Leadership Development.

The internal development programme, "Impact 2030", launched in 2024, focuses on sharing, learning and exchange to ensure organisational development of the whole Digni fellowship. This programme, also mentioned under Knowledge management, involves project partners in identifying capacity development and knowledge needs, and facilitates a process where the Digni fellowship works together to find ways to increase our impact.

To follow up on the ongoing discourse on locally led development, Digni has undertaken several key initiatives to raise awareness and foster engagement on the issue. In collaboration with the

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Digni co-facilitated a workshop using NCA's "Activist game" to engage Digni's member organisations and stimulate discussions. Digni integrated the topic into its upcoming course on diaconal approaches, the SDGs, and asset-based development together with VID Specialised University. The topic was also included in the agenda for the annual joint meeting with Nordic sister organisations in March 2025, to ensure exchange of insights and strategies.

Climate and Environment

In 2024, Digni strengthened its climate and environmental strategy by launching targeted initiatives for vulnerable communities. In close cooperation with Norwegian University of Life Sciences, the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), a member of Digni, implemented the last year of a Joint Learning project on climate smart agriculture. During 2024, two hybrid workshops were held in Madagascar and Ethiopia, bringing together stakeholders from Africa and India, fostering cross-border collaboration and empowering partners to adopt sustainable agricultural practices. The development of resource sites on the e-learning platform Fabo began to promote climate-resilient development through accessible tools and guidelines.

To further integrate justice and inclusion into environmental action, Digni presented findings from the Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) report *"Climate, Environment and Religious* Actors" during its member days in February 2024. The report emphasised the importance of incorporating religious perspectives to strengthen community engagement and resilience in the face of environmental degradation.

At the regional level, the Francophone Africa meeting in Cotonou, Benin (November 2024), focused on climate-smart agriculture, climate adaptation strategies, and the intersection of environmental sustainability with human rights and inclusion—highlighting the need for intersectional approaches that consider gender, age, disability, and minority status.

Two of the online sharing sessions this year were specifically dedicated to climate and environmental sustainability. This session promoted open and inclusive dialogue among partners, focusing on climate-smart agriculture and contributing to a growing community of practice. It underscored the importance of embedding environmental considerations into programme design and enhancing cross-organisational learning.

Religion and Development, including FORB

Religion is highly relevant to the development discourse for Digni and the Digni Fellowship, based on our identity. Digni participates in the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) and holds the leadership of the Norwegian Network for Religion and Development. These networks explore how religious and faith-based actors represent an important aspect of civil society and can be a strong catalytic actor for social mobilisation, change and development. Digni works together with the networks to strengthen cooperation between faith-based actors, government, academia, and business to enhance sustainable development. In 2024, Digni hosted a seminar on "FORB and Gender" and was also active in a seminar on the topic "One Body – an inclusive Approach to Gender-Based Violence – leaving no one behind". Our experience is that faith identity and convictions are valuable driving forces for fighting injustice, upholding

human dignity, mobilising for change, and ensuring environmental stewardship, equality, and human rights.

We see growing understanding of and interest in FORB across the Digni fellowship after highlighting the topic in learning and sharing events between partners and members the last years. The thematic online sharing sessions on FORB underscored the benefit of bringing partners together facing similar challenges to learn from each other's experiences. Partners independently created a WhatsApp group to enable continued dialogue.

During 2024, resources have been launched and shared and FORB and religious literacy are now included in templates for project applications and Digni's member assessment tool. We expect this to contribute to an increase in projects integrating FORB elements. At the end of the year, Digni entered an agreement with Digni's Danish sister organisation CKU to conduct a joint learning review on FORB projects aiming to gather best practices, improve impact measurement and facilitate the development of localised indicators.

In 2024, five active projects were categorised as FORB-projects, three of which began the same year. Results in these new projects are still emerging with expectations of increased effect. Four projects operate in the MENA region, where traditional human rights training and advocacy is challenging. Instead, partners have leveraged media, online platforms, and networking, generating results not always captured by our current GRF indicators. In addition, security concerns contribute to limiting documentation.

Despite regional instability delaying some activities and imposing changes, such as a planned FORB conference in MENA (see Lebanon, delay in implementation), partners achieved notable outcomes. SAT-7 engaged directly with nearly 2 400 individuals through social media campaigns and broadcasts, reaching almost 10 million Facebook views. Adyan reported 13 000 visits and high user satisfaction of their regional FORB hub and produced six podcasts and two webinars with 78 000 viewers. In Palestine, 31 women and religious leaders began interfaith reconciliation efforts, including FORB as one essential element. A fifth project in Africa focused on groundwork for future FORB and gender trainings and community engagement.

2.3. Thematic results 2024

This section is based on aggregated results from Digni's Global Results Framework[1], as well as narrative reports from project partners. Analysis of projects that are ended, are based on Digni's assessment of what degree the project results reported across the thematic areas are on an output, outcome, or impact level. Outcome results show empowerment and changes on an individual and community level, whereas strong outcome and impact results indicate that there are structural changes among communities and/or at societal level, reaching beyond the project participants.

Civil society in strategic partnership

In 2024, 89 projects reported progress towards the goal of a *society characterised by strong civil society engagement for just, inclusive and sustainable development*, with 22 projects submitting final-year reports.

[1] See Annex B: Digni's Global Results Framework 2023-2026_progress report 2024 for a full report.

The activities involved more than 560 000 project participants, 57% female, 16 300 with disabilities and 97 100 belong to an ethnic minority or Indigenous group.

The more than 7 500 networks and groups that solved local challenges are nearly four times the target of 2 000 for 2024. This significant result can mostly be attributed to the work done by more than 4 100 groups on climate change resilience in Vietnam, but there are also significant numbers of active groups in Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, and Uganda. In 2024 alone, close to 3 100 groups were established and 19 200 project participants, 61 % women, were trained in organisational skills.

More than 43 000 project participants were trained on advocacy and/or human rights in 2024. The effort resulted in 2 200 groups engaged in advocacy work, which is more than twice the target number. Three projects contributed significantly to these positive results. These focused on mother tongue education and literacy in South Ethiopia, FORB in Egypt (see more under Religion and Development, including FORB), and protection of biodiversity and resources among communities surrounding the Mt Elgon National Park in Eastern Uganda.

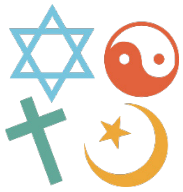
Of the projects that ended in 2024, two projects have achieved impact at societal level, 17 projects show results at a high outcome level, and three projects have results at outcome level.

One project that started in Eswatini in 2021, has shown impact results and has achieved registration and full official accreditation from the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESCHEC), for a Renewable Energy Training Center. This centre is now one out of eight higher education institutions in Eswatini and the sole provider of renewable energy education in the country. One of the factors that made the accreditation possible, was the establishment of strategic partnerships within Eswatini and across borders. The strategic partners include other faith-based actors, the Centre for Research in Energy and Energy Conservation (CREEC) at Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Northwest in South Africa, Junior Achievement Eswatini, the Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund, and the Institute of Waste Management in Eswatini. These collaborations provide complementary expertise and support, enhancing the project's achievements. By the end of the first project period, more than 5 000 people have been sensitised on renewable energy, 76 students have graduated, and 27 have gained income.

In Nepal, there are impact results from a project that has provided other organisations with essential knowledge and tools for effective caregiver support, promoting positive parenting and child development through the International Child Development Program (ICDP) approach. The project has strengthened more than 100 civil society organisations, institutions, and churches, both within and outside Nepal. These entities are now integrating and using caregiver groups as a part of their ongoing work. ICDP facilitators have been trained in nine governmental municipalities, and the project has facilitated a regional network conference with participants from six countries, enhancing synergies between civil society actors and expanding the ICDP program’s reach beyond Nepal. The partner running the Digni-funded project has become the national and regional ICDP hub serving the Nepali society and beyond.

Two projects in Uganda achieved strong results at high outcome level. Together, they supported 280 Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) with 8 000, mostly female, members, improving their income, financial stability, and access to credit. About 220 VSLAs gained legal community-based organisation status, the rest are pending. This legal recognition ensures trust from the government, access to support for business development from both government and financial institutions, as well as a mandate to operate in and beyond the district. The VSLA

methodology in these projects has served as a platform for discussing community initiatives, social issues, and solutions. VSLAs have been fundamental to community development, leading to the formation of other project groups benefiting households and the communities. Ten VSLAs for persons with disabilities were established, and 414 persons with disabilities were linked to government disability grants and other programs.



Faith-based local actors are important agents of change, actively contributing to the development of their communities within the Digni programme. In 2024, around 70% of the projects engaged 4 300 religious or faith-based leaders engaging for social change. In total 1 950 churches, congregations or other religious groups participating in project activities and nearly 1 100 churches or religious buildings were used for project initiatives. The lion's share of the mobilisation of faith actors and assets within the Digni programme took place in sub-Saharan Africa. The existence of large established church networks having long-term historic partnerships with Digni's member organisations contributes to favourable conditions for utilising such assets in project implementation.

In 2024, we see that the projects showing impact and high outcome level results had a strategic approach to involving religious actors and networks. This engagement occurred both within their own countries, such as in Uganda, and internationally, as presented in the projects from Eswatini and Nepal presented above.

Churches and faith-based actors often function as platforms for advocacy and dialogue, promoting cooperation between different actors and fostering a sense of community ownership. Due to their trust, extensive influence and outreach, religious leaders played crucial roles in raising awareness and mobilising efforts around issues such as trafficking in Ethiopia, girl's right to education in Mozambique, harmful traditional practices in Nepal, and gender-based violence across Africa.

Good health

In 2024, 26 projects reported progress towards the goal of project participants and communities being able to positively influence conditions regarding their own health and well-being, with 11 projects submitting final-year reports.

As a result of project interventions, over 145 000 individuals benefited from health services, an 88% increase compared to 2023. A significant contributor to this rise was a new maternal health initiative in Ethiopia, aimed at providing pregnant women and women of reproductive age with access to and utilisation of quality maternal health services.

Furthermore, more than 12 300 individuals received specialised mental health services, compared to around 4 600 in 2023. This significant increase is mainly due to two projects in Afghanistan and Nepal, focusing on community-based mental health services and mainstreaming mental health, respectively. Close to 1 700 individuals with physical or mental illnesses or other disabilities reported reduced stigma in their communities, an increase of 50% from 2023. 13 600 individuals were trained on stigma related to physical and mental health or disabilities. In total, 113 new or rehabilitated health services were established, and 9 700 households adopted water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) principles.

Of the projects that ended in 2024, four achieved results at impact level, four showed results at high outcome level and three projects have results at outcome level.

One of the projects standing out with results at impact level is a community-led initiative in Liberia. Through advocacy initiative of several communities together with the project team, the government provided resources and took responsibility, leading to substantial and sustainable health improvements at community level. Close to 29 000 persons benefited directly from the health interventions initiated by the program. One of the major achievements is construction of a 53-bed health facility, co-funded by the government, with water tower, generator house and waste management tank. The facility is now fully run by the government. With five professional and five support staff it serves a catchment population of approximately 12 000, with a monthly patient volume of around 1 000. Services include maternal and child health, general medical care, laboratory testing, neglected tropical disease management, immunisations, tuberculosis/HIV services, surveillance, and outreach programs. Major renovations have been underway in the beginning of 2025, aiming to establish a comprehensive health centre with an assigned physician and fully functional operating theatres.

In Nepal, one project has achieved impact on the daily lives of people with disabilities, in the form of reduced stigma, increased mobility, greater inclusion in daily and social activities, and access to new and functioning health services. The project has strengthened the official Disability Coordination Committee in each municipality, and disability issues are now more systematically addressed by local governments. Advocacy efforts have resulted in a modified health insurance policy in one municipality. The initiative's success is strongly linked to the strategy of organising rights-holders in small local groups that feed into ward level interest groups. These are in turn organised in interest groups on a municipality level.

In Uganda, two projects have shown impact, and high outcome-level results in adopting and maintaining good health practices within WASH. In one of the project areas, clean water coverage was increased from 60% to 68% through drilling of new boreholes and rehabilitation of old ones. In addition, latrine coverage at household level was increased to 99%, and sanitation was significantly improved for more than 6 300 households. In the same area, more than 10 000 backyard gardens were established and nutritional screening of more than 4 500 children have shown improvements in nutritional status and health at household levels. Reports from local health facilities show a reduced prevalence of waterborne diseases over the project period, from 1 286 cases in 2020 to 570 cases in 2024, a reduction of 56%. We see this improvement as clearly related to the project's focus on latrines and clean drinking water.

In addition, results at high outcome-level from one project working on maternal and infant health services in Ethiopia is worth mentioning specifically. In this project, 58 health services were established or rehabilitated, and eight facilities provided with equipment, from 2020 to 2024. More than 32 000 persons have benefited from these health services in 2024. In 2024, 4 050 child births were attended by skilled health professionals, compared to 1 316 in 2020, and there has been a reduction in neonatal mortality from 18.5% in 2022 to 6.4% by the end of 2024. The project activities have been conducted within existing health systems run by the local government and in collaboration with the health sector. The project report emphasises that sustainability of maternal and infant health interventions depends on several key factors, including the establishment of strong local partnerships, capacity building, and the integration of interventions into existing health systems.

Peaceful relations

In 2024, 26 projects reported progress towards the goal of *project participants and communities enjoying equal rights and live in peace and safety*, with five projects submitting final-year reports.

2 700 persons actively worked with activities related to peace, resilience, conflict prevention and resolution, trauma healing and reconciliation, or addressed situations of violence or conflict in rural communities or slums in urban areas. Close to 5 000 persons participated in peace training, in countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Nepal, Palestine, Liberia and Cambodia. This is a considerable increase compared with 2023, mostly explained by two projects in Kenya. Four projects in the MENA-region and one in regional Africa focused on the right to freedom of religion and belief.

There is an increasing number of projects within the Digni programme working on combating gender-based violence. Close to 1 300 gender-based violence cases were identified and handled in the projects in 2024, compared to 745 in 2023. The main contribution is from long running projects in Eswatini, Ecuador, Madagascar, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Congo-Brazzaville. More than 92 000 persons, of whom 37% men, received awareness training and were engaged in addressing gender-based violence. It is encouraging to note that two local faith-based partners, who have just started working on gender-based violence in 2024 in Liberia and Sierra Leone, have been able to break the silence on gender-based violence in their project contexts and are already reporting cases.

Nearly 4 800 caregivers and parents in 2024 are demonstrating a positive attitudinal change towards child upbringing due to training, awareness raising, and other project activities. Of these, 22% were men. This has resulted in more positive parenting practices, improved family dynamics and communication between caregivers and children. Across multiple African countries, as well as in Ecuador, Bangladesh, and Cambodia, 40 500 children received various training on children's human rights.

Of the projects that ended in 2024, one achieved results at impact level, two showed results at high outcome level and two projects have results at outcome level.

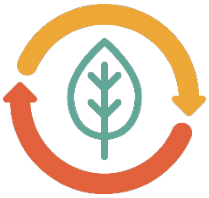
The one project that has achieved impact level results, has been working on children's rights and upbringing using the ICDP methodology in Nepal, project results are described under Civil society in strategic partnership.

In Bangladesh, one project with the strategy of building partner organisations' capacity to run ICDP caregiver groups within their projects, has shown results at high outcome level. The project has reached 1 700 caregivers and 5 600 children through training 250 facilitators and 11 trainers in 12 partner organisations. The ICDP-project in Bangladesh is now independent of foreign trainers and has a solid pool of trainers and facilitators to take ICDP further beyond the project period. Through partnering with UNICEF in Bangladesh, the project has had a wider national outreach than originally planned for. Over 100 staff members from various government sectors have been trained in ICDP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNICEF, in eight separate locations. The project report that caregivers demonstrate a positive change in both attitudes and relations/interaction with the children under their care and that almost all partner organisations now have the capacity to continue to run ICDP caregiver groups.

Although being in its first phase, one project in Nepal showed high outcome results t by documenting a reduction in the incidences of child-marriage and gender-based violence in the project area. Changes include behavioural changes and integration of gender equality into community discourse, empowerment of rights holders to challenge discrimination, and mobilisation of key actors to combat gender-based violence. The multistakeholder approach used has proven successful, equipping men, women, in-laws, religious leaders, local government, and schoolteachers to identify, handle and prevent gender-based violence. Starting in 2025, the second phase of the project will include a comparative study between this site and a new one, focusing on the impact of increased efforts to foster collective voice and strengthen project group engagement.

One large gender-based violence program operating across Madagascar, Ethiopia, and Cameroon, mobilised three large churches to use their own resources against all forms of gender-based violence in the church structures and communities. The project's broad geographical and demographic scope, engaging more than 68 000 persons on gender-based violence, led to new, stronger partnerships between churches, community organisations, and local leaders. Church leadership, communities, and 175 facilitators (85 men) were trained on gender-based violence. Biblical texts that align with human rights principles were one method used for transformation. These collaborations enabled resource-sharing and collective action, resulting in a more unified, supportive network for gender-based violence prevention and survivor support, including handling of gender-based violence cases, with continued impact in all three countries.

Environmental sustainability



In 2024, a total of 22 projects reported progress towards the goal of project participants and communities are resilient to climate change and exercise responsible stewardship of the environment, with six projects submitting final-year reports.

The 2024 results reflect a growing commitment among Digni members and partners to integrate climate and environmental concerns into their work. This is supported by a slight increase in projects with an environmental focus suggesting a more intentional embedment in project planning and implementation. Recorded results show strong improvements across most key areas compared to 2023. The number of farmers adopting climate-smart agricultural methods increased from around 5 200 to more than 7 700, while female participation rose from 34% to 50%. Farmers reporting increased yields increased from around 1 000 to 3 800, and communities implementing environmental action plans doubled from 132 to 266. Trainings in climate-smart agriculture and disaster risk reduction also expanded significantly.

Gender equity remained a key priority within this thematic area in 2024, with female participation increasing by 16 percentage points to reach an average of 50% across gender-disaggregated indicators. This balanced representation reflects ongoing efforts to ensure inclusive engagement in environmental sustainability initiatives. While some of these gains may be due to scaled-up activity level, most of the gains is linked to activities and outreach in a few new projects. On the other hand, there were notable declines in some areas. The number of people benefitting from sustainable energy sources dropped by 2 500 (down 79%), and groups engaged in natural resource management fell by almost 1 600 (down 88%). These decreases are due to one or two large projects that concluded in 2023, leaving out their heavy contribution to these indicators in 2024. Overall, the data reflects a strong shift toward building resilience and capacity, even as some areas saw reduced emphasis.

Of the projects that ended in 2024, four achieved results at high outcome level and two projects had results at outcome level. Typically for the projects rated at high outcome is the ability to demonstrate clear, measurable effects at broader community level.

High outcome-level results from Nepal, reflect strengthened community resources and infrastructure, contributing to greater resilience and food security. Targeted households significantly improved food self-sufficiency, increasing from 6.3 to 9.5 months on average. This progress was driven by enhanced crop productivity, greater dietary diversity, and expanded goat farming as a reliable income source. Technology adoption of tools like maize peelers, grinding mills, and hand tractors reduced daily workloads by 3–4 hours. Small-scale irrigation systems reduced reliance on rainfed farming, boosting drought resilience. A water collection tank now serves 101 households, improving women's health and well-being.

In Cambodia, 3 462 family members from agricultural producer groups now have year-round access to food because of improved farming practices supported by the project. Key gains include enhanced techniques in vegetable cultivation, chicken and fish farming, and crop diversification, which have strengthened both food security and environmental resilience. These improvements have also contributed to better nutritional outcomes. The sustainability of these results is closely tied to the strengthening of Agricultural Cooperatives and Producer Groups, which have been effectively linked to relevant stakeholders. The project report also highlights ongoing challenges in advancing the agricultural value chain and fully realizing the economic empowerment of farmers.

Results from Uganda illustrate how strong implementation and community-level relevance are key drivers of higher outcome ratings. The establishment of 179 Farmer field schools with around 5 200 members led to widespread adoption of climate-smart agriculture and energy-efficient practices, benefiting an estimated 31 155 people. 3 300 persons were trained in use of energy-saving stoves and 2 900 in soil conservation techniques, resulting in almost 1 900 households implementing trenching and 1 300 adopting energy-saving stoves, significantly reducing firewood use. Training in post-harvest handling reached 4 400 people, improving food availability and reducing losses.

Quality education

In 2024, 29 projects reported progress towards the goal of learners in project areas acquiring relevant high-quality education, with 13 projects submitting final-year reports.

Education interventions have different focus areas, including girls' school attendance, functional literacy training for adults, mother-tongue based multilingual education, inclusion of learners with disabilities, and vocational training.

194 educational institutions documented improved student performances, which is almost four times the target, and 4 500 adults completed functional literacy education in 2023. More than 200 000 learners, 50% girls, where enrolled in target educational institutions, the majority in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Vietnam. Twelve of the projects worked specifically on inclusion of children with disabilities. In 2024, facilities in 37 schools have been built or upgraded to meet the needs of children with disabilities, a 32% increase from what was achieved in 2023. In addition, more than 1 400 teachers have been trained in inclusive education. More than 1 700 children with disabilities were enrolled in the targeted schools.

Of the projects that ended in 2024, one achieved results at impact level, four showed results at high outcome level and eight projects have results at outcome level.

One project in Ethiopia stands out with results having lasting impact on access to education for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist children and adults from the Tsemay community. The project contributed to the development of an alphabet, creation of teaching materials, and training of facilitators to provide access to education in the Tsemako language. More than 800 students began reading and writing in their language, 305 students per year have been attending literacy classes, with 80% literacy rates achieved. The number of skilled teachers from the community has almost doubled (from 12 to 21). Through the project interventions, community members have become aware of the benefits of mother-tongue literacy. Although the project has ended, the local government has made a commitment to scale up the literacy programs and develop a formal education curriculum in the Tsemako language. This intervention also demonstrates the value of collaboration between different actors, where specialised organisations (within and outside the Digni fellowship) and government structures have contributed with different resources towards the project goals.

Four more projects showed high outcome-level results. In DRC, two years of project support to Universite Protestante au Congo Nord has had a profound effect on the community, by producing skilled professionals. Graduates now occupy key positions in various sectors such as public health, law, economics, and education, thereby reinforcing the foundations of public institutions, governance, and community services. All these are key drivers of long-term development. Furthermore, the university has been accredited to issue diplomas, meeting the sustainability criteria set by the Congolese state, and has successfully implemented the Bachelor-Masters-Doctorate-system, becoming a reference institution in the province.

In Liberia, collective efforts by community members to plan, implement and maintain educational projects have led to increased access to education (4 154 more students), improved infrastructure, and a strong sense of ownership and empowerment within the communities. The program's success was largely due to the strengthening of community structures and the involvement of local communities from the beginning of the intervention.

In Mozambique, project participants, including trained gender coordinators and girls' club leaders, have demonstrated increased agency by organising and leading girls' clubs, conducting awareness campaigns, and engaging in community dialogues, reaching the broader communities. During the project implementation, dropout rates decreased from 9.16% to 0.37%. Empowered young people, especially girls, became active, responsible citizens and agents of change.

In two provinces in Mongolia, project staff report a cultural shift towards inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, and Local Development Funds of the Provincial Government are now allocated to improve accessibility and inclusion. There has been a steady increase in kindergarten and school attendance for children with disabilities due to project interventions, from 20 children in 2020 to 583 in 2024.

Economic empowerment

In 2024, 21 projects reported progress towards the goal of *economically empowered project participants and communities*, with seven projects submitting final-year reports.

As result of project interventions, almost 11 000 people, 68% women, reported that their income has increased compared to when they joined the project. In 2024 there were in total 4 500 active saving and loaning groups and 13 100 persons were trained in income generating activities. In addition, more than 3 100 persons were trained in entrepreneurship and business development and around 300 small and medium business supported, leading to almost 1 000 new businesses and enterprises and 325 new jobs created in 2024.

Of the projects that ended in 2024, one achieved results at impact level, two showed results at high outcome level and four projects have results at outcome level.

Through a multi-sectoral approach focusing on WASH, food security, and economic empowerment, two projects in Uganda significantly improved the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable households and communities in the project areas. Through project interventions, 280 VSLAs (Village Savings and Loan Associations have been formed. The 4 523 members have been trained in financial literacy and market-oriented skills and have mobilised savings of around 10.3 million NOK and loaned out around 14.6 million NOK. Training and support to VSLAs not only improved members' financial resilience but also catalysed progress in other areas. VSLA platforms were used to promote backyard gardening, nutrition education, and sanitation initiatives, while increased income enabled investments in food security, housing, and education.

One integrated community development project in Indonesia, has shown high outcome level results in increasing community and government participation in village development and planning processes, by improving advocacy skills and building strong networks with local government units. In three villages, the project has worked with 25 income generating groups, that over the course of the project have been approved by the village government and invited to participate in village-level coordination and development planning meetings. The government has provided the groups with equipment and business capital assistance. The project has successfully advocated for the needs of livelihood groups to be included in the village government programme through the Food Security Programme, which was a positive unexpected result. Project participants have received training in entrepreneurship and been able to create their own businesses. Of the participants, 84% report increase of income, 60% an increase of as much as 55%.

Learnings

When analysing the project portfolio, we see overall good and solid results in most projects, with 91% of them progressing according to plan or even better. Digni's strategic efforts on capacity development and the close follow up from Norwegian member organisation have contributed to this.

As in previous years, we see that strengthening civil society can be an effective catalyst for broader impact. Projects that intentionally organise participants into community-based structures, such as village committees, development groups or user groups, consistently demonstrate stronger results at both outcome and impact levels, across thematic areas.

The most successful initiatives combine organising people with advocacy efforts and establishing linkages and cooperation with local authorities, relevant overarching structures in regional and/or national bodies, and other civil society organisations. Participation in organised groups empower individuals, and the groups serve as platforms for advocacy, accountability, mobilisation of local resources, and sustained engagement with local authorities. When the projects expand their focus from change at individual and household level, to organising and equipping participants to engage with and hold duty bearers accountable, the likelihood of achieving sustainable change on a community or system level increases.

Across thematic areas we see that aligning with government priorities and formally cooperating with public institutions lead to more sustainable results. This is particularly visible, when working within the health and education sector, where there are extensive government services in place in many countries. The most successful health projects in the Digni portfolio have worked in an integrated way with the public healthcare system, while they have also engaged with other civil society actors. In education, the most impactful projects reported that a crucial factor in achieving their results, was the alignment of the project goals with government development objectives at both local, regional, and national level.

We see that this kind of cooperation with various stakeholders can create positive ripple effects. For instance, implementing partners can evolve into national or regional resource hubs for expertise, like ICDP Nepal; the renewable energy training centre in Eswatini; and the reference institution for higher education in DRC. We have also observed that the involvement of government actors in several instances has led to them taking own initiatives that were not planned for in the project, e.g. housing for people with disabilities in Nepal.

When working with peacebuilding and social cohesion, projects that use participatory, interactive methodologies and create safe spaces for dialogue around sensitive issues (e.g., gender-based violence, parenting, harmful practices) are more likely to achieve sustained impact. Trust in local partners and the inclusion of youth and men, alongside collaboration with local authorities, are key enablers. Furthermore, involving churches and religious communities, and mobilising people within their structures, enhances sustainability by providing organisational structures and platforms that continue to exist beyond the project period.

In our analysis, we have noted that projects working on changing norms and values often report on spillover effects on other relational aspects of project participants and their communities, for example reduction in caste discrimination in Nepal after interaction between castes in groups on gender-based violence and enhanced communal relations after ICDP care giver groups.

While there has been a growing emphasis on environmental sustainability in the portfolio and we see stronger results in 2024 compared to previous years, most projects remain focused on individual or household-level changes (e.g., improved farming practices or increased household yields). Broader systemic outcomes, such as institutional engagement or governance shifts, are less frequently addressed, indicating a gap and opportunity for future programming.

Similarly to environmental sustainability, we see stronger results from project working with economic empowerment compared to previous years. Success within this thematic area seems to correlate with a broad community participation, both when it comes to identification of needs and during implementation, and coordinated interventions with other thematic areas. The VSLAs in Uganda demonstrate that communities can save and manage financial resources effectively,

challenging the notion that they lack resources. Promoting the formation of associations and community-based organisations increases farmers' bargaining power and improves household income.

Generally weaker results seem to be more common in projects focusing on change on an individual and/or household level. When using change on a structural and systemic level as the indication of success, we must be aware that there is a risk to overlook good results in projects operating in contexts with restricted civic space or addressing thematic areas that governments are hostile towards. For these partners organising elements, advocacy and/or cooperation with authorities might be dangerous or impossible and they naturally have to focus more on empowering rights-holders and achieving change on an individual or communal level through other ways. This has been the case for some projects in the Middle East and China.

In addition, we believe that in some instances weaker results are correlated to low MERL capacity, hindering partners to adequately document and report on the scope of the projects and its results. We have observed an increase in the quality of reported results from the partners we know have participated in capacity development in this area.

2.4. Significant deviations from the latest approved application and/or plan

Two projects were finalised in 2024, before completing their full term. Furthermore, one project has been significantly delayed in project implementation, due to the situation in the Middle East and one project has been taken out of the FORB-portfolio due to a mistake in initial registration.

Deviations at project or country level are often not visible in the Financial report from Digni, due to the aggregated level of our financial reports.

China, termination of ICDP project

The project NLM ICDP China was terminated in March 2024 due to the sudden shutdown of all project activities by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in December 2023. Even if authorities were positive to the results and PSB confirmed that no mismanagement or illegality had taken place, they insisted that the registration of ICDP China was wrong. Due to this, the local partner could not implement any of the planned activities after December 2023 despite efforts towards the authorities to have the decision changed. The partner believes the sudden move of PSB was politically motivated as the word “international” in ICDP might have triggered the authorities. It has not been possible to obtain a new registration. Some funding to the partner was maintained until the end of June 2024 to cover administration and operating costs and final closure of the cooperation.

Due to the strict Covid-19 lockdowns in China, the project's progress initially fell below expectations. However, after the country reopened, progress met or exceeded expectations. In some areas, the number of caregiver groups surged due to high interest, and local governments implemented the ICDP program in public schools within the project area. Even if local partners had to reduce the work and rebrand it as family education due to the shutdown, all local partners in the five ICDP hubs continue with ICDP activities, and many are expanding the program to new caregivers, institutions, and nearby areas. The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) considers the project a success despite the abrupt closure, but the shut-down and confiscation of computers

made it challenging to verify results. Consequently, Digni has removed the project from the 2024 result reporting and instead reports it as a deviation.

The special circumstance around this project's status has led to challenges with the audit report from China in 2024. This situation has been discussed with Digni's auditor and Norad, and is mentioned in the Management letter from PwC, as well as in the cover letter submitted together with the Progress report.

Nepal, withdrawal of mental health project

The project *NOR/HP-Enhancing capacities on Mental Health Promotion and Management Programme* was initially planned as a joint 5-year project between the Digni members Normisjon and HimalPartner. The partners had earmarked funding for mental health in Nepal in 2022/2023, and this new project was initially planned as a continuation and upscaling of that initiative. However, when the earmarked funding was limited to one year of implementation, the project had to be downscaled from the start. Budget priorities led to the decision to phase out the project already in 2024.

Although downscaling and an early phase-out, the project adapted efficiently over 18 months, achieving significant results such as promoting mental health dialogue through 14 support groups and awareness interventions for over 5000 people, referring individuals to mental health services, and developing local health workers' capacity. To end a project early comes with the risk of leaving vulnerable individuals without needed follow-up and harming the partner's reputation and cooperation with local authorities. To mitigate this the local partner secured additional funding to continue some activities and encouraged the local governments to take ownership of services, ensuring continuity of some psychiatric services through a hospital partnership.

The phasing out of this specific project does not affect the total costs of the Digni programme in Nepal, compared to the approved budget, as the downscaling of the project was planned before the financial year started and the budget share was absorbed by other projects in Nepal.

Lebanon, delay in implementation

The volatile situation in the Middle East has especially affected the FORB project run from Lebanon. The conference for 100 FORB activists and religious leaders, first planned to be held in Lebanon 2024, has been postponed and subject to change of locations several times. It was finally held in 2025.

The conference costs were included in the budget for the FORB-project in Lebanon and is the main reason why this budget line in *Annex A: Digni Audited Financial Report 2024*, note 3, Details FORB has a deviation of NOK 1 369 628.

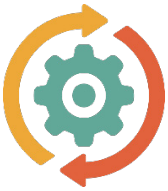
Egypt, change in registration

The project *NMS YES (Current Affairs II)* was by mistake registered as a "faith and belief"-project in Digni's system when it started in 2023, as the first project period had a clear FORB focus. Since Digni has a framework agreement with The Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), Digni was not aware of the project having shifted its focus towards more general human rights and minority issues in this second phase. Digni has now changed the registration in our project management system and no longer track this project as a FORB-project.

In *Annex A: Digni Audited Financial Report 2024*, note 3, Details FORB, there is a deviation of NOK 3 220 493 between approved budget and actual costs under Egypt, due to this change in registration.

2.5. Risks

Overall risk management framework



The objective of Digni's risk management framework is to provide a robust foundation for informed decision-making by leadership at all levels. To this end, a range of tools and procedures have been developed to support risk identification, analysis, and mitigation across multiple levels: within the Digni secretariat, among member organisations, in partner organisations, and at the individual project level.

Risk management at project level

A formal risk analysis is a compulsory requirement for all projects receiving financial support from Digni. This analysis is updated annually and is reviewed by partners, members and finally approved by Digni's advisors. All projects analyse risks and unintended consequences related to Norad's cross cutting issues. However, we will work further to improve the awareness of and the analysis of unintended negative consequences on the cross-cutting issues. We have had capacity building on risk management, both through online courses and in our regional network meetings.

Risk management at partner level

Risk management at the partner level is conducted using Digni's Partner Assessment tool. All member organisations are required to assess all their partners, either when entering a new agreement period, or before a new partnership is established. The risk scores across ten defined risk categories annually be updated for each partner. From 2023 to 2024 the risks have been reduced: the average score increased from 4.26 in 2023 to 4.32 in 2024, compared to a baseline of 4.17 in 2022. The improvements are mainly found in the categories "Sustainability", "Anti-Corruption" and "Financial capacity". This trend suggests that both members and partners are actively using the Partner Assessment follow-up plan as a tool for ongoing risk monitoring and for addressing identified risks through concrete action plans.

Risk management at member organisation level

Digni's Member Assessment tool was launched and deployed in 2024. All Digni's member organisations are scheduled to undergo assessment during 2024 and 2025. Following the identification of risks within each organisation, Digni collaborates with the respective member to develop a follow-up plan that includes targeted mitigating measures. These measures are to be reported on annually. An overview of specific risks affecting the member portfolio as a whole will be available by the end of 2025.

The Partner Assessment tool and the Member Assessment tool will, together with the project specific risk analysis, give the Digni secretariat a much-improved understanding of the risks that are present in the Digni chain and a clearer opinion on strengths and weaknesses of our organisation.

Major changes in the overall risk picture

The current geopolitical situation is marked by ongoing armed conflicts and heightened geopolitical tensions. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered a cascade of consequences, extending far beyond the immediate suffering of the Ukrainian population. Simultaneously, the conflict in the Middle East and in other regions continue to pose substantial challenges to the operational capacity of partner organisations and the well-being of affected communities. Many projects have had to adjust their activities due to conflicts and wars. Despite these adversities, it is noteworthy that 91% of Digni projects have progressed in accordance with, or exceeded, their plans. This suggests that the risk mitigation measures currently in place in projects are proving to be effective.

The political climate in many Western countries have led to cuts in international development aid, posing a challenge for the sector and ultimately for those who are dependent on it. Many of Digni's partner organisations have faced significant reductions in support from other donors. Hence, many of them have had to adjust and reduce the total scale of activities. We see a significant risk that the autumn 2025 elections in Norway may produce a government reluctant to prioritise international development aid, potentially hindering Norway from reaching the 1% GNI aid goal. Digni, in collaboration with other organisations, will actively promote the significance of development initiatives and international cooperation in combating poverty in the coming months.

Potential negative effects on cross-cutting issues

Human rights

The inclusion and non-discrimination of LGBT+ in Digni projects is still an issue of concern and something we continue to follow up with our member and partner organisations. Digni's position paper on SOGIE rights (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression) has been distributed to partners and members, clarifying Digni's expectations in this area. The situation of LGBT+ was also discussed with organisation leaders in the Network meeting held in Benin in November 2024 for French-speaking partners.

Digni has introduced reporting requirements on the number of people with disabilities that participate in our projects. A number of projects working in various thematic areas have increased their focus and reporting on the inclusion of people with disabilities. However, we also see that many projects, for instance in India and Uganda, have refurbished classrooms or other infrastructure to suit the needs of disabled people, but experience that there are other hindrances to their participation, such as the attitude of their communities.

Women's rights and gender equality

There has been an increase in the number of projects addressing gender-based violence. It is especially encouraging to see that some of the big church partners in Africa are engaged in this work and have convened to exchange knowledge and experience. As part of a Do No Harm-approach, but also to mitigate the unintended consequence of increasing the tension between men and women, men and religious leaders have been increasingly involved in many of the gender-based violence projects. Results indicate improvement when men are actively involved, and household plans are made. The percentage of men among project participants has increased from 39% to 43% across all projects in the Digni portfolio during 2024.

Climate and environment

Most Digni projects working on climate and environmental issues also focus on economic empowerment. Despite good results, achieving impact or outcome-level success remains challenging. There is a risk that prioritising poverty reduction and food security might overshadow environmental concerns, such as pesticide use leading to unintended negative impacts. This needs close monitoring and mitigation measures. Digni has addressed the issue of climate adaptation at the Francophone network meeting in Benin in 2024 and run online sharing sessions on climate smart agriculture, based on learnings from the Joint Learning Project on Climate smart agriculture, run by NMS in cooperation with the University of Life Sciences (NMBU).

One of the unintended effects of project follow-up impacting climate and environment is air travel by Digni staff and partners for meetings and experience sharing. The Digni secretariat aims to reduce air travel and increase digital meetings, although it cannot be eliminated completely.

Anti-corruption

There is a risk that our anti-corruption efforts lead us to not partnering with competent local grassroot organisations due to their weak organisational capacity. Digni's tool for Member Assessment is set up to reveal the organisation's capacity and competence to manage partnerships with weaker local partners and fill the gaps. Combined with Partner Assessments, Digni is given a picture of the risks are and where capacity development is needed. In addition, Digni continues discussions with Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about risk sharing in vulnerable contexts.

Another risk is that Digni projects may lead to an increased level of corruption in the local context due to extensive procurement activities. To mitigate this risk, Digni has facilitated experience sharing and promoted learning for members and partners, as well as for other Norwegian civil society organisations working in vulnerable contexts. Digni currently holds the leadership position in the Anti-Corruption network of Norwegian civil society organisations. In 2024, we facilitated seminars for controllers where we shared learning from mismanagement cases, best practices, and preventive measures. Additionally, during a seminar on sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), we disseminated experiences related to the development of Digni's toolkit on addressing sexual harassment and power abuse.

In mid-2024, Digni's grassroot training course on anti-corruption[2] was updated and launched on the e-learning platform Fabo, now available in both French and English.

Both Member and Partner Assessments, and the annual spot-check of one of the partner organisations, work as preventive measures. Through all these processes, the focus is to verify compliance with internal guidelines as well as to assess the internal control of the organisations.

2 https://fabo.org/digni/Digni_grassroot+training_anti-corruption

3. Evaluation/review

3.1. Evaluations and reviews

This section is based on the Revised plan for external evaluations 2024, submitted to Norad on May 8, 2024.

Knowledge management

In 2024, Digni and its members have worked together to revise and adjust the existing project knowledge management systems, to ensure that useful and relevant learnings from project interventions inform planning of new projects/programmes and is shared across the portfolio. The revisions include mandatory knowledge plans to be submitted together with all new applications to Digni.

To facilitate adjustments in ongoing projects and secure learning from projects submitting final reports in 2024, individual meetings have been held between Digni advisors and member organisations, on how to facilitate MERL and Knowledge management in the final phase of the projects. During the year, there have been sessions on how to use technology in data collection and reporting with Digni's member organisations and online orientations with the global project partners to introduce how to work more intentionally with knowledge management at project level. Furthermore, MERL and knowledge management was on the agenda in the Francophone Africa Network meeting in Cotonou, Benin and there has been a MERL workshop with nine African partner organisations in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.

The emphasis on planning for good knowledge management at project level continues into 2025, with operational improvement measures are underway, such as the development of new guidelines and resources, capacity building in the form of regional workshops, and better coordination with other organisations.

The work on effective knowledge management is rooted in the common concern of the Digni fellowship, that as many people as possible, experience the greatest and most positive sustainable change, in the best and most resource-efficient way. In, 2024, Digni launched an internal development programme, "Impact 2030", aimed at strengthening the global impact of the Digni programme. Within this effort, Digni seeks to strengthen the knowledge work within the wider Digni fellowship and facilitate for better synergies between projects.

A review is underway of the Digni community's tools, methods, structures, and resources related to knowledge management. This will have a strong focus in Digni's planned global mid-term evaluation, planned for 2025. The evaluation will culminate in recommendations for structural and system changes in the next programme period. In parallel with this mapping, some operational and more short-term improvement measures are underway, such as the development of new guidelines and resources, capacity building, and better coordination with other organisations.

Digni also sits in the leadership of the MERLiN network, which mobilises most Norwegian aid and humanitarian organisations around the theme of knowledge in development cooperation. In this capacity, Digni staff have participated in and/or been co-organisers for three thematic gatherings as well as a full-day workshop on knowledge planning. Furthermore, Digni also contributed to the

report “Evidence-based Aid: What next” published by the Development Learning Lab at Christian Michelsen Institute. In October, Digni participated in the Impact First Summit, a conference that brings together organisations, technology companies and innovators in digital public goods for aid.

Mid-term evaluation of the Mission Alliance program in Ecuador

The Mission Alliance planned to conduct a mid-term evaluation of their programme in Ecuador in 2024, focusing on learning and extracting experiences and knowledge to be transferred to other programmes and contexts, both within and outside of the Mission Alliance’ portfolio.

Ecuador has seen a huge increase in homicides, extortion, and violence, due to the involvement of the trans-national criminal groups use of Ecuador, and the coastal cities in particular, as the key export location for the cocaine trade. A global study identified Guayaquil as one of the top ten most violent cities in the world in 2023, with the northwest being one of the most violent parts of the city. The massive influx of criminality, weapons and drugs have led to particularly drastic impacts among the most vulnerable and affects the daily lives of the communities the project supports. The risk of violence towards the communities, partners, and country office, has created limitations on travel and strict security measures are required to allow the projects to continue. The Mission Alliance team and their partners are monitoring the impacts of the violence on the projects and activities to mitigate the risks and make adaptions where needed. Due to this severe situation, it was decided to focus on implementation of the programme, rather than bringing in external evaluators to the project areas in 2024. The Ecuador programme will have its final year of implementation in 2026. The final report to be submitted to Digni after the end of program will incorporate learnings and knowledge from the implementation of the Ecuador programme.

Planning and designing shared research project with Strømme Foundation

Throughout 2024, there have been meetings and dialogue between Digni, selected member organisations, and the Strømme Foundation regarding a joint research project related to mental health in Nepal. For various reasons, the process has been delayed, and it is not yet definitively decided whether the research collaboration will take place in the originally intended form. Digni will continue the dialogue with Strømme Foundation on this matter in 2025.

4. Financial report and audit

4.1. Significant deviations from the latest approved budget

Digni’s Grant Agreement with Norad requires a written explanation of variance of more than 20% of a budget line, defined as total yearly amount per member organisation, unless the variance constitute less than 1% of the yearly allocation. The explanation for the variance for the budget line Frelsesarmeen (FA) is provided in Annex A: Digni Audited Financial Report 2024, Note 2 Explanations.

5. Other reporting requirements

5.1. Results achievement, the Civil Society Support

Country	Type of CSOs	Number of CSOs reached	Number of CSOs strengthened
Afghanistan	NGO, organised community groups	4	1
Bangladesh	NGOs, organised community groups	10	2
Burundi	NGOs, organised community groups	34	1
Cambodia	NGOs, organised community groups	15	8
Cameroon	Church	1	1
China	NGO, association	2	2
Congo	Church	1	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Church	1	1
Ecuador	NGO, organised community groups	11	1
Egypt	NGOs, organised community groups	24	2
Eswatini	Church, organised community groups	9	1
Ethiopia	NGOs, churches, organised community groups	40	5
India	NGOs, organised community groups	7	2
Indonesia	NGOs, organised community groups	6	1
Kenya	NGOs, church, organised community groups	7	3
Lebanon	Foundation	1	1
Liberia	NGOs, church, organised community groups	21	3
Madagascar	Church, organised community group	2	1
Mali	NGOs, organised community groups	91	2
Mongolia	NGO, organised community group	2	1
Mozambique	Church, organised community group	3	1
Nepal	NGOs, organised community groups	53	3
Sierra Leone	Church, organised community group	12	1
Somalia	NGO, organised community group	2	1
State of Palestine	NGO, organised community group	2	1
Uganda	NGO	1	1
Viet Nam	NGO	3	1
Zimbabwe	Church	2	1
Africa Regional	NGOs, association, organised community groups	70	3
Global	Organised community groups	28	
Total		**465**	**53**

The number of civil society actors reached are NGOs, many of them faith-based, churches, foundations, and associations, as well as organised community groups that are connected to the project through sub-agreements/MOUs. The number of civil society organisations strengthened, refers to the project partners that Digni's member organisations collaborate with. All these have been assessed utilising Digni's Partner Assessment Tool and are followed up with capacity building and support according to their identified needs.