

DT Institute

ANNUAL REPORT



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DT Institute

A photograph showing four individuals—three men and one child—playing a large wooden xylophone. They are wearing hats and are positioned behind a chain-link fence. The background shows a body of water and some buildings. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Catalyzing Peace in Development. Driving innovation, strengthening communities and leaders, and pursuing excellence in implementation.

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A Letter From Our Chairman

Valued Friends and Supporters,

We founded DT Institute to help build a more stable and prosperous world by creatively addressing the problems of our time as both an implementer of publicly funded programs as well as a donor identifying and investing in opportunities to affect catalytic change. This past year was meaningful in so many ways for DT Institute. We engaged directly with some of the world's most pressing problems on a local level through our expanded footprint of publicly funded programs and philanthropic investments while furthering our research and thought leadership portfolio to share our learnings. Our work contributed positively to international development within the complex fields of conflict resolution, human rights, promoting democratic societies, countering malign influence, hybrid warfare, and more.

We are confident that our efforts have had a positive lasting change on the communities where we work.

DT Institute is unique in our ability to leverage the capabilities of our local partners as well as our donors, including DT Global. By combining expertise and presence with trustworthy stewardship and a deep commitment to our mission and core values, DT Institute can work effectively almost anywhere in the world. This Annual Report and our future reports are more than an archive of DT Institute's expansive reach and achievements, they are a testament to the commitment of our boots-on-the-ground program directors and the values-driven, ambitious thinking of our leadership, staff, and colleagues. Thank you to our partners, implementers, grantees, donors, and colleagues who continue to share our vision for peace and development, and our commitment to improving the human condition.

It's been a great journey, and we are just beginning.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John DeBlasio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

John DeBlasio
CHAIRMAN

A Letter From Our CEO

Friends and colleagues,

In just over two short years, DT Institute grew from a vision statement written on a dry erase board into a 55-person organization, with more than 30 impact grants given under our philanthropic arm and over 15 publicly-funded programs globally, including in Iraq, Syria, Serbia, and Ukraine.

Rapid growth has brought its challenges, especially considering the vulnerable environments in which we work and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But our team has stayed laser-focused on our mission: partnering with communities and their leaders to build and preserve more resilient, equitable, inclusive, and democratic societies.

There are three standout achievements from this year, of which I am particularly proud:

- We funded 17 organizations, think tanks and individuals around the world through private sector donations and through DT Institute's five issue-based funds.
- Working with and through local civil society partner organizations, DT Institute implemented \$6 million in grant-funded, multi-year programs in the war-torn, yet still recovering, region of Northeast Syria, funded by the U.S. Department of State and Global Affairs Canada.
- Through State Department's funded Information Access Fund project, DT Institute supported the work of 15 organizations across Europe to counter Russian disinformation through research, fact-checking, communication campaigns, and innovative media literacy programs.

We also put special emphasis this year on developing internal policies and structures that are critically important at this stage of our growth and for supporting our global programming on behalf of our primary doors and clients, such as the governments of the United States and Canada, DT Global, and others.

Thank you to our collaborators and grantees who have put their trust in us this year. This report and our continuing work are dedicated to you.

Onwards,

Hugh Doyle

Hugh Doyle
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





About DT Institute

DT Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to “doing development differently.” We implement complex global development programs in conflict, fragile, and closed environments. We fund grants and research initiatives through our private sector and philanthropic funds that drive innovation and improve lives through evidence-based programming.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., DT Institute has programs and partnerships in more than 39 countries, as well as offices in Germany (Berlin) and Iraq (Baghdad, Erbil) and representation in Spain (Madrid).



Our mission is to partner with communities and leaders to help build and preserve more resilient, equitable, inclusive, and democratic societies.

Our values reflect our team's hard-won knowledge, wisdom, and our passion for helping those in need. They also reflect our professional and respectful approach to each other, our partners, our donors, and those we serve:

ETHICS

We aim to demonstrate responsibility, integrity, fairness, and respect in all that we do.

INNOVATION

We continually pursue new and better methods, find efficiencies, and seek ways to increase our peace and development impact.

COLLABORATION

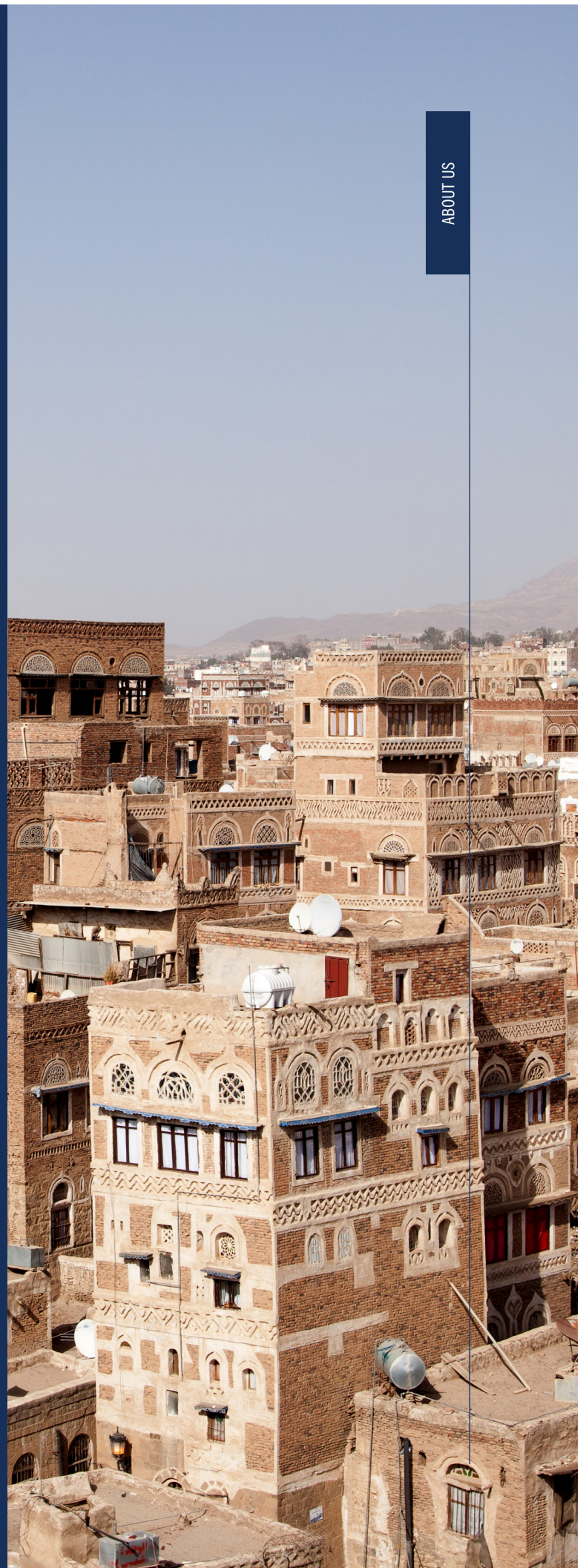
We develop and facilitate long-term partnerships based on mutual trust and respect.

RADICAL TRANSPARENCY

As thought leaders, we commit to sharing our insights with the broader community of experts (within legal, ethical, and regulatory boundaries) to advance peace and development.

International Development, Done Differently

ABOUT US



Update: A Force for Global Change



\$2M+

Philanthropic funds
(distributed / committed)

29.57%

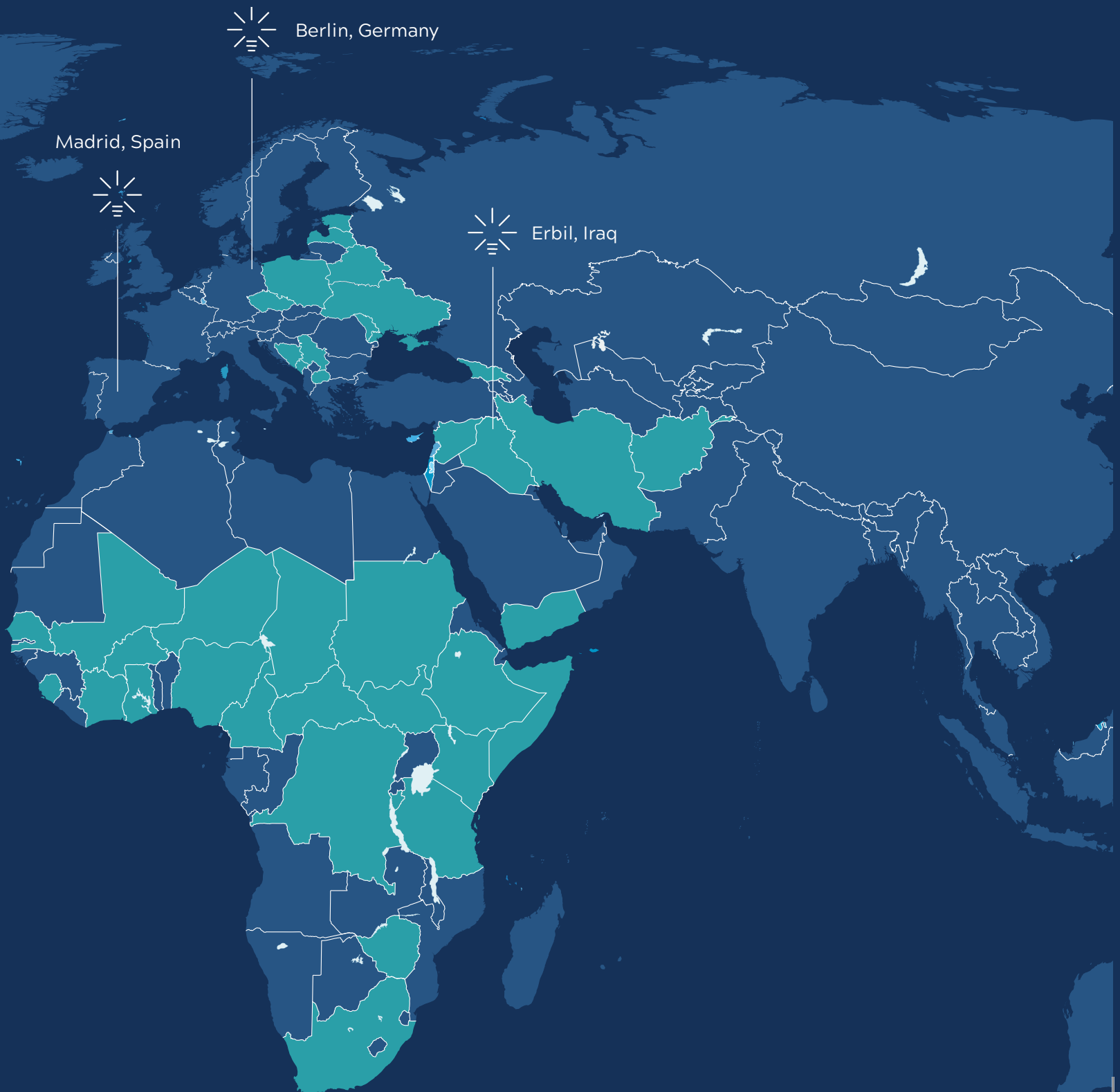
Growth in annual revenue
from 2020 - 2021

17

Major
philanthropic
grantees

39

Countries and
counting



Technical Area Highlights

Part I:

Implementation

As an implementer, DT Institute focuses on strengthening communities and leaders, working with local organizations, and developing new approaches through action-oriented research across two divisions: **Stabilization, Transition, and Peacebuilding and Independent Media, Technology, and Human Rights.**

DT Institute works in complex contexts, closing democratic spaces, and conflict zones around the world, including in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, and Ukraine. It is a trusted implementing partner for the U.S. Department of State, USAID, Global Affairs Canada, and other funders.

By working with and building the capacity of civil society, independent media, social movements, democratic institutions, and government partners, **DT Institute** promotes a whole-of-society approach to empower local actors to advocate for the promotion and protection of democratic values.



Conflict Prevention & Resolution

DT Institute's Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) work focuses on counter-retribution in liberated areas from ISIS in Iraq and Syria, combating drivers for radicalization and spoilers' agendas. Our team brings a trauma-informed approach to mitigate conflict, advocate for social safety, and execute community reconciliation initiatives. CPR projects are data-driven, hyper-local, and build on positive deviance examples (such as the ability of community groups to cope and find better solutions on their own).

The launch of CPR continued the successful expansion of our pilot Preventing Reprisals

Mitigating Violence (PRMV) program in Iraq. We replicated the PRMV model under the Syria Mediators Initiative program funded by DOS and Conflict Resolution in Syria Project funded by GAC. Both these programs empower community members to identify and implement locally-owned solutions.

Through these programs, DT Institute successfully resolved 168 cases focusing on retribution, conflict, land issues, and other disputes, and engaged with 156 community leaders and members. In the last year, PRMV reached 13 district and subdistricts across Anbar, Diyala, and Ninawa.

Stabilization & Early Recovery

Taking a whole of society approach, DT Institute's broad Syria portfolio works from the grassroots to high politics on early recovery, stabilization, and the political peace process. For example, WIAAM II is a project funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination. WIAAM II builds the capacity of and supports Syrian civil society organizations to restore essential services and livelihoods in areas liberated from extremist organizations, and to enhance social cohesion in those communities, including marginalized populations.

DT Institute also implements TAZIZ, funded by the U.S. Department of State. TAZIZ strengthens the capabilities of selected Syrian Political Process Stakeholders (PPS) to participate with the Syrian Constitutional Committee and other UN-convened negotiation sessions in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (UNSCR 2254), which is the internationally-accepted roadmap to peace for resolution of the Syrian conflict. Additionally, the TAZIZ program fosters PPS engagement with Syrian civil society organizations, local governance structures, and Syrian citizens, to include members of the Syrian Diaspora, and enhances the ability of PPS to deliver strategic communications and engage media to advance the Syrian political process.



Rule of Law

DT Institute's Rule of Law portfolio expanded in 2021 to focus on human rights, specifically the broad examination of atrocities in conflict and post-conflict environments. This included a study of the indiscriminate use of weapons on civilian targets, and consequential violations of the rights of children and women to health, education, and life.

Rule of Law programming published a series of research-driven policy recommendations designed to redress human rights violations and atrocities in Yemen. DT Institute produced an analytical report based on ~3,000 verified digital records pertaining to 450+ incidents of violations from armed attacks in Yemen since 2015, assessing quality, quantity, and gaps in open-source data and offering recommendations for human rights defenders, evidence collection, and advocacy.

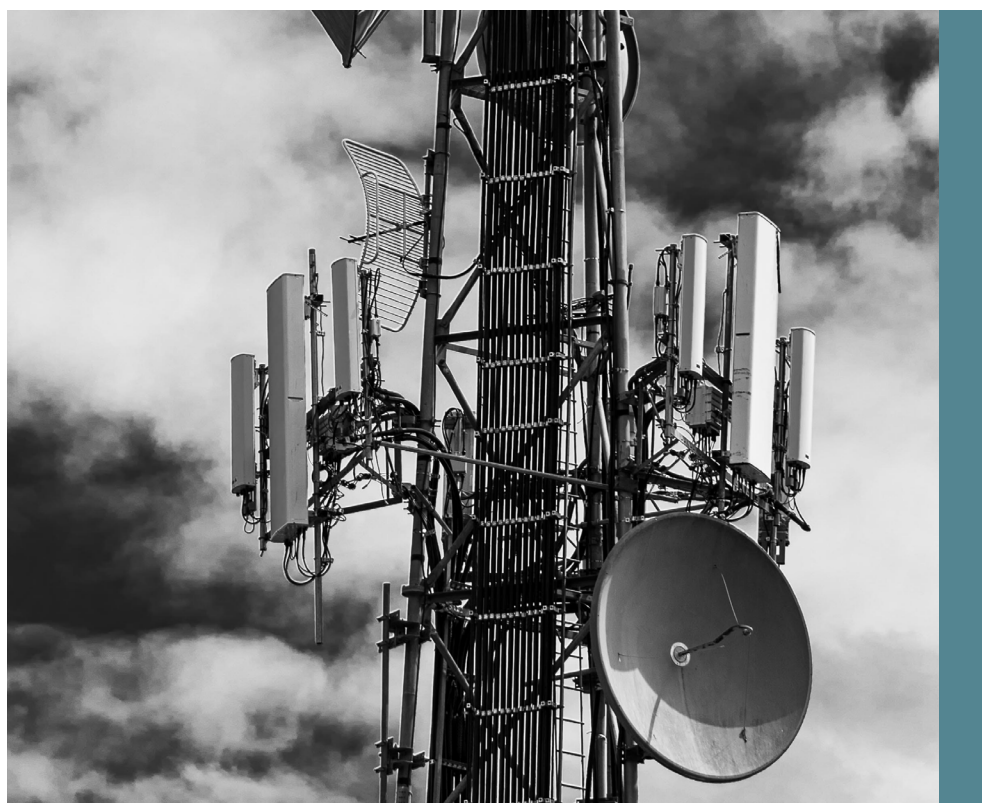
Independent Media & Countering Malign Influence

DT Institute's media and information integrity work supports and sustains independent media and counters instances and effects of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation globally, and builds capacity of local and diaspora media actors to do the same. Our team maps and analyzes authoritarian state information disorder in Latin America, Europe and Eurasia, the Middle and Near East, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

For example, through the Information Access Fund, DT Institute supported the work of 15 organizations and companies in Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Serbia. We provided technical assistance to the VOX Ukraine project, which analyzed and countered disinformation that undermined the perception of democratic reforms in Ukraine, and for Euroradio's "Cringe of the Week" radio program that took a sarcastic perspective on state propaganda. The European Values Center's "Kremlin Watchers" engaged with policymakers about disinformation, while EdVenture Partners worked with army cadets in Ukraine on peer-to-peer

communication campaigns to increase the understanding of disinformation by future army officers.

In 2021, DT Institute's countermalign efforts expanded to nine countries in Central and South America, where we conduct monitoring and analysis. In Colombia, DT Institute works with partners such as the think tank Instituto de Ciencia Política Hernán Echavarría Olózaga (ICP), the newspaper El Bastión, and podcasters Las Opinadoras to strengthen public understanding of foreign malign influence.





Human Rights

Through our human rights work in closed societies, DT Institute designed and provided labor rights advocacy training to civil society activists on how to best leverage internationally-recognized rights to push for reform, while working with members of the International Labor Organization to provide specific recommendations to improve labor rights conditions on the ground.

Our team provided advanced Rule of Law training on internationally-recognized human rights defenders and attorneys in closed societies, providing critical guidance on how to use internationally-recognized rights to defend their clients in local courts. The attorneys were able to put their training into practice by providing pro bono legal aid to marginalized individuals.

Internet Freedom & Civic Technology

DT Institute supports digital literacy, cybersecurity training, and the development of circumvention and privacy-enhancing technologies.

DT Institute also conducts technical censorship measurement and provides cutting-edge solutions to Netizens in closed societies that aggressively block the free flow of information.

Through this work, more than 100,000 daily users have been able to securely access the open web in a country where the organization works.

In addition, DT Institute launched a small grants and technical mentorship program in 2021 that will lead to the development of the next generation of scalable circumvention and secure communication solutions for civil society activists in closed societies.

Part II:

Impact Grants

DT Institute's philanthropic agenda complements our implementation work. We award impact grants to non-profit organizations, think tanks, civil society organizations, and individual researchers to build, test, and advance bold, innovative approaches to development.

DT Institute advances this work through the following five funds: **Peace & Stability Fund, Free & Independent Media Fund, Prosperity for All Fund, Clean World Fund, Leadership Accelerator Fund.**



PEACE & STABILITY FUND

Funds research and programs that identify, prevent, or counter drivers of radicalization, promote stability, and build lasting peace.



FREE & INDEPENDENT MEDIA FUND

Funds research and program activities that improve the quality and availability of news and information to strengthen societies' resilience against disinformation.



PROSPERITY FOR ALL FUND

Advances research and program activities that create economic opportunities for individuals and communities globally.



CLEAN WORLD FUND

Supports activities that address the environmental and climate change-related challenges that threaten global development.



LEADERSHIP ACCELERATOR FUND

Equips emerging and established leaders with the skills to build transformative social, economic, and political movements.

In support of this agenda, we build relationships with funders and philanthropic networks, inviting them to augment our impact through co-investment. Whether leading government or privately-funded programs, backing grantees, expanding our corporate social responsibility and philanthropic work, or augmenting existing donor-funded programming, our approach is the same: We relentlessly create, iterate, and measure our ability to drive innovation in partnership with others.

Grantee Highlights



Peace & Stability Fund

In September 2021, DT Institute supported a pilot activity in Cote d'Ivoire led by The N'Zarama Center for Peacebuilding (NCP): Preventing, and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) to identify and strengthen national prevention capacities to counter violent extremism. The program supports community engagement efforts through initiatives aimed at traditional leaders, government officials, youth, women, and civil society representatives in preventing, and responding to violent extremism.

NCP, in collaboration with The National Chamber of Kings and Traditional Chiefs in Cote d'Ivoire, convened a training on P/CVE using radio, a major source of information in the predominantly-Muslim region. These dialogues hosted intergenerational groups to discuss the threat and mitigation of violent extremism and

encouraged women and youth to engage in civic spaces.

This project serves as a springboard for greater impact in P/CVE interventions in Cote d'Ivoire and other countries in the West Africa region.



Free & Independent Media Fund

Throughout 2021, DT Institute supported and guided media literacy projects for youth, including the DebunkEU.org Civic Resilience Course (CRC). With this pilot project, DebunkEU.org aims to address media literacy challenges and increase resilience to disinformation of the younger population, starting in Lithuania and Montenegro.

There is an urgent need to increase media literacy among young people, especially in the context of widespread misinformation surrounding the global pandemic. CRC uses a three-





step methodology to build skills in recognizing frequent types of disinformation, evaluating sources, checking the origin of images and videos, and understanding social media and search engine algorithms.

More than 1000 students from Lithuania and Montenegro registered and are testing the course. Final data will be presented in 2022.



Clean World Fund

In support of the Democratic Republic of Congo government's market-based sanitation policy guidance towards sustainable sanitation, DT Institute and its local partners conducted a household survey in five regions, notably South-Kivu, North-Kivu, Kasai Oriental, Kasai Central and Lomami.

The findings support the fact that three mutually-supportive ingredients need to be in place for households to acquire, use, and sustain improved sanitation facilities: demand, finance, and supply. The findings also support the premise that the entire sanitation service chain (capture, containment, emptying and transport, treatment, and safe disposal or reuse) needs to be taken into early consideration by any program with the goal of increased access to improved environmentally-safe sanitation.



Prosperity for All Fund

In partnership with the Atlantic Council, DT Institute launched a virtual Northern Triangle Advisory Group: a nonpartisan, multi-national, and multi-sectoral 30- person advisory group to inform policy recommendations and incorporate buy-in from in-region stakeholders to sustainably improve the livelihoods of Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans.

These activities gained significant attention within the Biden administration after dissemination of the issue brief to officials from the National Security Council, U.S. Congress, and U.S. Department of State. The Office of the Vice President implemented the Advisory Group's direct recommendation to address barriers to investment and to promote economic opportunities in the region as a part of a call to action to the private sector.



Leadership Accelerator Fund

The Iraq Leadership Fellows (ILF) Program contributes to the positive transformation of Iraqi politics and governance by equipping young activists and future political leaders with the skills needed to lead positive change. The ILF diminishes ethno-sectarian divisions in Iraq by creating a space for future Iraqi leaders to develop relationships and friendships with peers from different backgrounds based on respect and mutual understanding.

In 2021, ILF conducted three workshops in the areas of Leadership Philosophy, Adaptive Leadership, Conflict Management, Negotiation Skills, Design Thinking, Emotional Intelligence, Immunity to Change, Using Public Narrative in Leadership, and Public Speaking for 39 fellows. Additionally, ILF engaged with a total of ~80 alumni who were able to participate in the multiple stages of the program (curriculum development, trainers evaluation, fellows selection, and workshop organization) and showcase their political and social experience, their own objectives, and their skills and knowledge gained from the program to new fellows in Beirut.



Part III:

Thought Leadership

Research and thought leadership are core to
DT Institute's identity.

We are driven to fill research gaps by continuously improving how we operate, by building teams to approach complex problem sets through academically sound approaches, and by creating new tools and methodologies from which others can benefit. We partner with top academics and universities and convene our peers in virtually and in-person.



Institute for

Comparative and

Regional Studies

ICRS brings together international scholars to explore pressing issues in Africa, Europe, Latin

America, and the Middle East and create new research synergies, elevating the quality and reach of area studies programming and developing new research that has real-world, meaningful impacts.

This year, ICRS convened a research and dialogue initiative, “*Democracy and Governance after COVID-19: Insights from Comparative and Regional Studies*,” to explore the sweeping societal, economic, and political changes wrought by COVID-19 and opportunities to reverse the tide of deteriorating global conditions of democracy and human rights.

Combatting Transnational Crime in the Greater Mekong Subregion Studies



In 2021, DT Institute and DT Global released a two-part series of reports focused on Transnational Crime in the Mekong Region, examining how the direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated vulnerability to human trafficking, increased family and domestic violence, increased unemployment, and under-engaged youth. Each report was made possible through a collaborative partnership between DT Institute and DT Global, as well as Charles Sturt University, Ropes & Gray LLP (Hong Kong Office), and Global Alms.

The first Report, **“Pandemic Impact on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion,”** contained collaborative review and analysis as well as recommendations for additional research regarding the impact of the pandemic on human trafficking, a crime that depends upon exploiting human vulnerabilities and mastering the movement of people and illicit commodities.

The second Report, **“Combatting Transnational Organized Crime in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Government of Australia Policy Response,”** explores Australia’s policy and operational response to drug and human trafficking originating in Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, which severely undermines Australia’s regional stability and social and fiscal security.



Iraq Track II Dialogues, Partnership With Atlantic Council

With support and partnership from Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and DT Institute, the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for Middle East Studies released "Iraq: A Roadmap for Recovery," authored by nonresident Senior Fellow Dr. C. Anthony Pfaffin in February of 2021.

This report reflects on the recently-convened US-Europe-Iraq Track II Dialogues and outlines some of the most important discussions, findings, and recommendations shared by former and current high-level officials and experts from the United States, Europe, and Iraq, who came together to identify key policies to help address Iraq's political, socioeconomic, and security challenges.

Partnership With Club De Madrid

In 2021, DT Institute commenced a partnership with Club De Madrid, the world's largest forum of democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers focused on changing the notion that democratic systems can no longer deliver innovative, creative approaches for our institutions.

In October, DT Institute supported and led discussions at Club de Madrid's Annual Policy Forum, "Rethinking Democracy," which convened international experts from government, academia, business and civil society to produce policy recommendations that will set the course of democratic renewal in 2022. DT Institute led a working group on the New Information Ecosystem that included The Carter Center, the Organization of American States, the European Partnership for Democracy, and the National Democratic Institute, among other esteemed organizations.



The State of Peace and Development in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

In July 2021, DT Institute released "The State of Peace and Development in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, a summary meta-analysis of available research, analysis, and official reports on Cabo Delgado as of early July 2021."

Over 700,000 Mozambicans have been displaced since 2017, when Islamic State's East Africa Province and associated insurgent groups destabilized Cabo Delgado. The confluence of dangerous factors in Cabo Delgado—including violent extremism, endemic poverty, transnational organized crime, human rights abuses, and gender-based violence—demands immediate and collaborative action from the international community. Our report contributed to the international community's understanding of the insurgents' motivations, origins, and intent in northern Mozambique, a topic of ongoing debate.





“I contribute to the DT Institute mission by ensuring that programs can successfully monitor the effectiveness and evaluate the impact of their initiatives.”



Arina Lekht
Senior Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager for Media, Technology and Human Rights Division

“It is wonderful to work for a company that has such a high standard of ethics and professionalism.”



Julia Kern
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Officer

“I feel fortunate to be part of this family and help support local partners in Eastern Europe to counter misinformation and disinformation.”



Ammar Shams Aldin
Deputy Chief of Party, Information Access Fund

“I’m proud and honored to be part of the DT Institute team to bring justice and relief to victims of human rights violations!”



Amal Al-Hakimi
Program Manager, Stabilization, Peacebuilding, and Transition Division

Our Team, in Their Own Words

“As a young girl growing up in a conflict area where war dictated every aspect of my life, I am thrilled to be part of DT Institute implementing programs in conflict, fragile and closed environments where assistance is much needed. After a decade of supporting civil society organizations to build their capacity at the grassroots level to affect political accountability and policy reform in closed societies, I am excited to continue my passion by working at DT Institute.”



Shamila Kohestani
Senior Program Manager

“I stand in awe every day of the seemingly inexhaustible energy, passion, drive, and devotion of my colleagues at DT Institute and our partners on the ground around the world. With this amazing team at this unprecedented moment, I feel there is little we can’t achieve together.”



Cameron Chisholm
Executive Vice President

“As an international development professional, working for a non-profit that empowers people to create a better future is essential.”



Jennifer Lehane
Regional Director, Finance and
Operations, Berlin Office

“Despite the challenging circumstances of a global pandemic in place for most of the organization’s existence, we have accomplished much thanks to the hard and smart work of my incredible colleagues, partners, and other key stakeholders.”



Violet Tsagka
Vice President of Business
Development and Communications

“I came to DT Institute after having founded another organization in the international development space. Working at DT Institute has provided me with the opportunity to exponentially increase that founding vision—taking it to challenging locales and reaching people well outside the reach of most other organizations. Just when I thought my work couldn’t get more rewarding, it did.”



Christina Storm
Director, Rule of Law; Stabilization,
Transition and Peacebuilding Division,
General Counsel



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