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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-GLO-08-216: Promoting the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and
Governance in Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra
Leone, South Africa**

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF nor of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

Authors

This report was written by Landis MacKellar.

Michel Leblanc provided editorial and quality assurance with the support of Aurélie Ferreira, Evaluation Manager. Eric Tourres was Project Director at Transtec.

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I. Executive Summary

(i) Project data

The project “Promoting the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance” was implemented by Idasa from 1 November 2009 to 31 December 2011. The total UNDEF grant was US\$ 400,000 -- \$376,000 in new funds and \$24,000 left over from project UDF- SAF-06-110 -- of which the project budget was US\$ 375,000.

The project’s goal was to facilitate the ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, an important instrument for democratic development in Africa that had been signed with enthusiasm but was experiencing delays in the ratification process. At project start, only two countries had ratified out of the fifteen required. The project targeted ten countries that had signed but not ratified.

(ii) Evaluation findings

The project was clearly consistent with UNDEF’s mandate and was **relevant** to needs of the direct beneficiary, which was the Africa development community. At the time the project began, the African Charter ratification process was moribund and there was no international project activity to invigorate it. The project promoted the ability of the African democracy community to mobilize and advocate on behalf of the Charter. As the Charter provides a tool to civil society and individuals to hold governments to account, the project ultimately benefited the people of Africa. Another clear indirect beneficiary was the African Union.

Effectiveness in the technical sense was debatable, as what the Project Document promised and what the project actually did differed widely. However, this was a question more of flexibility than one of poor project performance. As documented in the project Final Report, there were valid reasons for the many changes of plan, re-allocations of funds, etc. Project management did an excellent job of responding to the shifting landscape. It is clear that this project was, given the allocation of funds, essentially a network-strengthening and coordination project that dedicated funds to financing meetings of democracy community members (and, in the wrap-up series of meetings, Parliamentarians). Thanks to leveraging of UNDEF funds and combining events, the project wrap-up activity became a significant platform for future work.

Efficiency was reduced by the fact that, given the high travel and meeting budget, the amounts of money expended in-country for advocacy activities were low ... which may account for the high number of planned in-country activities that were not implemented. Additional funds spent in-country would have leveraged what the project achieved and, by increasing impact, would have increased efficiency as well. Reporting, financial management, and logistics were excellent.

Assessing the **impact** of the project is not easy, but it assuredly made a significant contribution to progress towards coming into force of the Charter. The intended direct beneficiaries were members of the African democracy community, whose network and ability to advocate for the Charter were strengthened. It is not possible, based on the timetable of ratifications and project activities, to convincingly demonstrate that the project greatly accelerated the coming into force of the Charter. Only three countries in which activities were implemented actually ratified the Charter. The project objective, it should be stressed, was not ratification itself but rather strengthening the advocacy community and facilitating ratification. However, achieving actual ratification in target countries was an implicit objective of the project.

The **sustainability** aspect of the project must be considered in light of the fact that the intended impact was to facilitate ratification, and the number of ratifications necessary for the Charter to come into force has been achieved. As evidenced by the Minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting, the African network was strengthened to identify and take next steps. However, there does not appear to have been much follow up to maintain support for the Charter and to move on to consider implementation issues. We make concrete suggestions here, specifically for Idasa, but also generally for UNDEF. Ultimately, sustainability will also be a function of political will, ultimately on the part of Governments, but indirectly on the part of the African Union to put in place monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Unless steps are taken relatively quickly, some of the achievements of this project will dissipate and opportunities created by the project will be lost.

(iii) Conclusions

- Based on our findings regarding **effectiveness** and **impact**, the success of the project was largely due to two factors: the strength of the grantee, Idasa, and the depth and prestige of the networks in which it worked, namely the Africa Democracy Forum and, by implication, the World Movement for Democracy. National partner NGOs were already members of this network, so the infrastructure of the campaign was already in place at project start. Coordination and international meetings probably contributed more to impact than in-country workshops. The main contribution of the latter was to building bridges between civil society and government and among civil society organizations.

- The Idasa, African Democracy Forum, and UN brands contributed to strengthening the voice of civil society organisations in promoting the African Charter. UNDEF support was **effective** in the sense that the UN brand contributed to helping Idasa mobilize significant financial support from Canada, which in turn financed the ambitious end-of-project series of meetings.

- The shifting project foci, including changes in target countries, were both a strong and a weak point of the project from the standpoints of **effectiveness** and **impact**. Flexibility allowed the project to respond to changing circumstances and priorities and, in the end, paid off. All in all, the project was an example of how a closely related bundle of activities can function as well as a logically-structured project, however, it needs to be remembered that the implementing partner had very high capacity and the network infrastructure relating the players was already in place.

- Participant civil society organisations were empowered by the project to better engage with governments to promote ratification of the Charter. However, the project appears to have empowered individuals more than institutions. Much of this empowerment occurred in the context of international travel and meetings financed by the project (including CIDA funding). It is likely that impacts would have been greater had there been more funds available to finance in-country activities. This conclusion follows from all the findings above.

- Based on findings related to **relevance**, **effectiveness**, and **impact**, one of the important roles of the project was in building bridges between civil society and governments as well as between civil society organizations (in-country activities may have played an important role here). The importance of the former is increased by the fact that the African Union is an inter-governmental organization in which civil society plays a limited role. In promulgating the Charter, the AU has, whether knowingly or unknowingly, given civil society and ordinary citizens an instrument for holding governments to account. This will require the organization to deal with new interlocutors.

- Based on all the findings above, the project highlights the benefit to UNDEF from working with first-class partners who can produce first-class outputs on schedule. There is a role for field-based, local NGO implemented projects, often in very challenging circumstances, but there is a role, as well, for global project implemented in partnership with known global players: This project, which could attract criticism from some quarters for being self-serving (the democracy community spending money on its own behalf) was not, save in the most delusional constructions, a waste of the international taxpayers' money. That said, this observation must be conditioned on the fact that the project strategy was sound, the research design was appropriate, and the researchers chosen to implement it were of excellent quality. The project was born of policy elites, implemented by policy elites, delivered results of direct relevance only to policy elites, yet promises substantial benefits to all the people of Africa, who will benefit from democracy.

(iv) Recommendations

For Idasa

- **Consider a collaborative study on implementation.** There has been no systematic assessment of how they might work and whether some consolidated system might be feasible. Since many of the approaches may be sub-regional, Idasa would be well placed to convene an expert group to write on this subject. This would be low-cost, it would be prestigious, it could serve as a “carrot” for a handful of the best-performing network members and, most important, it would fill a real gap. Idasa could consider, as well, trying to initiate a discussion between AU and the Council of Europe on implementation of international commitments regarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The CoE is already engaged in democracy advisory work in North Africa, so the idea of a CoE-AU dialogue is not entirely far-fetched.

- **Follow up with the network.** Based on the rather pessimistic assessment of sustainability in Conclusion (vi), Idasa should re-contact the network to check on the status of activities. In an exchange of emails, brief country notes could be compiled and published on a (revitalized) web site, or even just emailed to members of the network. It is practically zero-cost, the email contact list is there, and the replies could form the basis of a deeper, less broad, effort. This could also serve as the impetus for a renewed search for funding in order to continue supporting the Charter.

For UNDEF

- **Continue to fund strong partners and give them their head and tap into existing networks to increase chances of project success..** Based on Conclusions (i) and (iii), the hands-off approach works well when the implementing partner is strong and, as in this case, the network of sub-partners is well in place. One implication is that UNDEF should stress strong partnership strategies in its funding application process. Working with strong partners is also important given UNDEF's light touch in project monitoring and supervision, which in turn reflects its very small secretariat staff.

- **Initiate a post-project follow-up procedure.** Even with limited staff resources, it should be possible to carry out something in the nature of a follow-up one year after project closure. This could be in the form of a questionnaire to be filled out by the grantee. As an alternative, the format of these evaluations could be modified to include a standard section on follow-up actions being taken.

(v) Overall assessment and closing thoughts

This project was a sound investment of UNDEF resources since it supported a functioning and effective network of democracy advocates in a region undergoing rapid democratic change. It benefitted from UNDEF's flexibility and light managerial hand. However, it underscored the fact that end-of-workshop enthusiasm often has limited staying power, not as regards goals (here, effective implementation of the Charter as a tool for democratic development), but as regards practicalities as participants settle back into their busy lives. The evaluation has identified the need for post-project follow up and has made a concrete, low-cost suggestion for how to implement this. The evaluation found, as others have, the value added in supporting the building of bridges between civil society organisations and between civil society and government. It also validated the selection of regional and global campaigns as grantees.,

II. Introduction and development context

(i) The project and evaluation objective

This report evaluates the project "Promoting the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance" implemented by Idasa from 1 November 2009 to 31 December 2011. The total UNDEF grant was US\$ 400,000 -- \$376,000 in new funds and \$24,000 left over from project UDF- SAF-06-110 -- of which the project budget was US\$ 375,000, and US\$ 25,000 was reserved by UNDEF for monitoring and evaluation. The target population consisted of civil society representatives, academics and policy makers in ten African countries that are members of the African Democracy Forum: Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and South Africa. As described in the section on effectiveness below, the list of target countries changed significantly during the project, some being dropped and others added.

The essential objective was to strengthen these actors to build a constituency for the signing, by Executives, and ratification, by Legislatures, of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, adopted by the African Union in January 2007. At the time the project was proposed, 15 ratifications were needed to bring the Charter into force, two countries (Ethiopia and Mauritania) had ratified the Charter and twenty-five had signed it, thus indicating their intention to ratify. Awareness and understanding of the terms and significance of the Charter was held by the designers of the project to be weak.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to *"undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved"*.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The methodology for this evaluation, agreed upon by Transtec and UNDEF, was detailed in a *Launch Note*. This evaluation was a desk exercise given the impracticality of visiting a reasonable sub-set of countries involved and the excellent state of telecommunications with

South Africa. Out of 10 countries involved (see project description below), six were selected, in consultation with the grantee, for review.

The evaluation was organized around a series of Evaluation Questions (Annex 1) which cover the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, plus the criterion of UNDEF value added. In the Launch Note, the evaluator proposed and UNDEF approved) that the evaluation should examine:

- To what extent, in this project, did UNDEF's minimal attitude to project implementation represented value added; i.e. allowed results to be achieved that could not have been achieved given the tighter control exercised by alternative donors?
- Can a significant impact on the ratification process can, in fact, be attributed to the project?
- What role did partnerships, including with the Africa Democracy Forum, play in the project?

(iii) Development context

A look back at the decade preceding this project shows that democracy has been progressing on the African continent, a trend which has continued. As evidenced by reactions to the recent unconstitutional changes of government in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, attitudes are changing. Further evidence is to be found in the increasing criticism of constitutional modifications designed to perpetuate current leadership.

Reflective of this tendency, in January 2007, the African Union (AU) adopted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Despite the obvious dependence on political will of governments and the need for better defined effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, the Charter is perhaps the most detailed instrument of the AU as regards implementation. It provides an instrument with potential to give civil society organizations and, more important, ordinary citizens a tool with which to hold governments to account. A flurry of signatures (25) indicating intention to ratify immediately followed. Then, stasis set in. By September 2007, only two countries (Ethiopia and Mauritania) had actually ratified. Fifteen ratifications were needed for the Charter to come into force. Knowledge of the Charter outside a small elite was poor; appreciation of its importance and potential worse. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in African democracy had limited awareness of the importance and promise of the Charter and limited capacity to promote it.

III. Project strategy

(i) **Project approach and strategy**

The grantee / implementing partners. The project was implemented by Idasa (www.idasa.org), the direct UNDEF grantee. Idasa, an African democracy institute with headquarters in Pretoria, is a leading governance and democratic development think tank working throughout the sub-Saharan region. Recent areas of activity have included economic governance, community and citizen empowerment, governance and AIDS, leadership and democracy, political governance and others. It is closely associated with the World Movement for Democracy (Art Kaufman and Larry Diamond of WMD are both Friends of the Board) and serves as a repository of democratic expertise.

The most important partners was the Africa Democracy Forum (www.africademocracyforum.org), a regional network of civil society organisations (CSOs) and individuals dedicated to democracy, human rights, and governance. It is a regional affiliate of the WMD. Quoting from its website, the objectives of ADF are monitoring democracy in Africa, working to protect democrats; providing support for the development of information technology in Africa; sharing advocacy skills; training network members; establishing and maintaining dialogue with state leaders and empowering people at the grass-roots; and encouraging civil society in countries of conflict to use the ADF to seek support, especially in repressive regimes. The Executive Director of Idasa participates in ADF governance.

Through ADF, Idasa was able to identify partners in the countries where the project worked. In effect, the partnership consisted of Idasa providing expertise and logistical support and ADF providing the network. This was a sound partnership strategy. It was not formalized (say, in a Memorandum of Understanding) but it is not clear, given the already close relationship between the organizations, that this was necessary.

As the UNDEF-Idasa project was essentially the only African Charter-related activity at the time, there was considerable interest from a wide range of international partners. Playing a particular role was the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), which had already been involved in the 2010 kickoff meeting through their regional office in Malawi. The tie was strengthened by the fact that country partners in Kenya and Ghana were part of the NIMD funded Centre for Multiparty Democracy network.

Financing.

The grant amount was US\$ 400,000. Of this, approximately US\$ 24,000 was left over from a previous project, UNDEF-06-110 "School for Democracy." Idasa's institutional memory was unsure of the reason for the leftover funds. US\$ 25,000 was reserved for evaluation. At the end of the project, \$34,000 remained unspent.

In October 2010, co-financing from Canadian CIDA was obtained, and the grantee explicitly credited the UNDEF "brand" for making possible the additional funds. With these funds, activities of the UNDEF project were increased and two additional countries were added. In particular the Canadian funding allowed holding a 4-day meeting in Pretoria in March 2011 (described below).

Targeted beneficiaries. The project's targeted direct beneficiaries were civil society organisations, government agencies, and academics who are actively involved in promoting democracy in Africa. In short, the **direct beneficiaries were members of the African democracy community**. These were, for the most part, civil society organisations active in

the democracy movement through the WMD and ADF. Some, as previously mentioned, had a relationship with NIMD. Indirect beneficiaries were all those who benefit from democratic governance when it is in place. Prominence should be given to governments which, having signed the Charter, required information and awareness of precisely what they had signed up to, the importance of the commitment, and what further steps were required to make good on their signature. The heavy workload of government officials and parliamentarians in Africa, responding to multiple demands, both internal and donor-driven, is well known. The involvement of parliamentarians is testified to by the joint MPs-CSOs meeting held in South Africa as part of March 2011 end-of-project activities. **Indirect beneficiaries were the people of Africa, who stand to benefit from the strengthening of democratic rule. Finally, an obvious indirect beneficiary was the African Union itself.**

Project strategy. The project strategy was conservative, but based on sound logic; cautious, but with good reason. The objective was given as strengthening the constituency for the Charter in order to facilitate signing by the Executive and ratification by the Legislature. In fact, the project document and decisions made during the project launch event show a clear focus on ratification. According to the responsible officer at Idasa, setting the objective as strengthening the ratification process, not ratification itself, was deliberate. This explicit targeting of process strengthening rather than outcome achievement is to be saluted in a world where there is a tendency for grant applicants to promise to over-deliver. The strategy to achieve the objective consisted of strengthening and broadening the constituency for the Charter in ten selected countries by means of awareness raising and capacity building for advocacy. “Stakeholders” to be included were those identified above. Seven activities were identified in the project document:

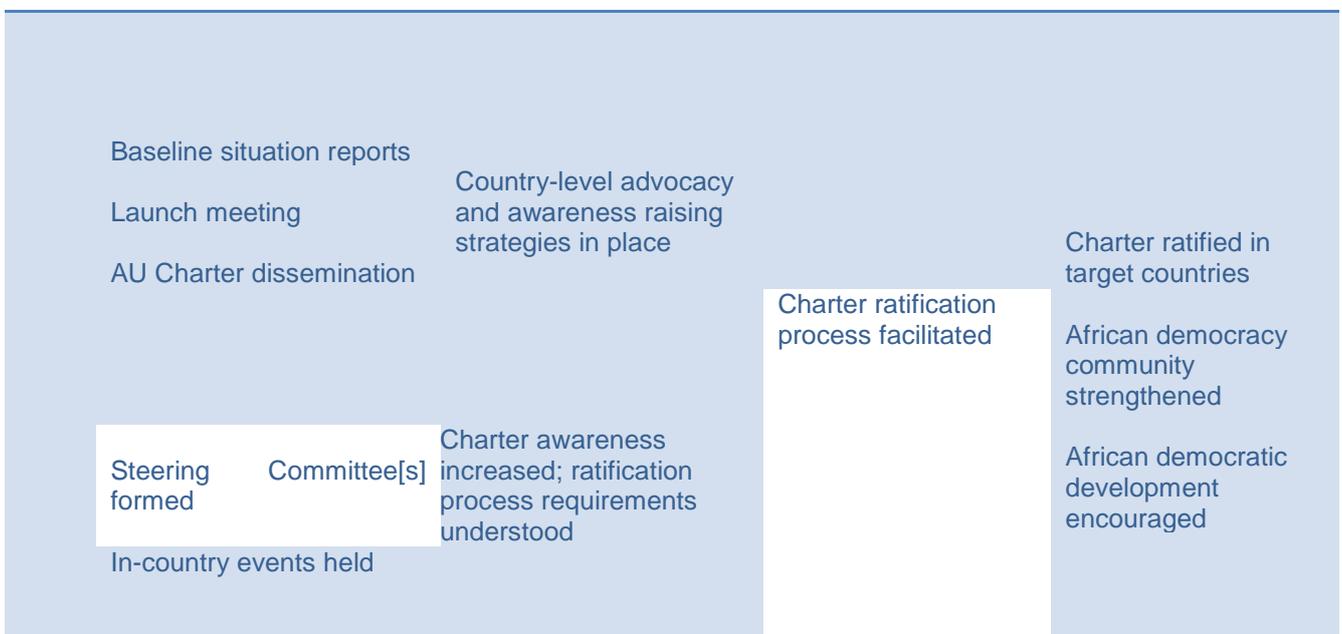
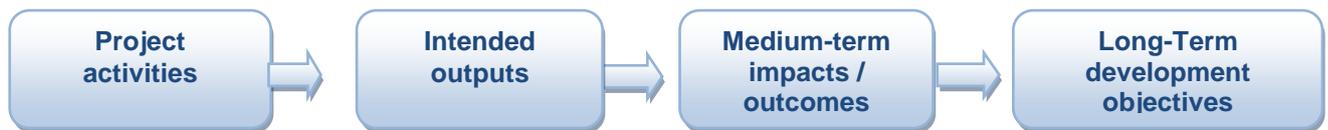
- Production and dissemination of 2,500 copied of the Charter in English, French, and Portuguese.
- A mapping exercise, literally an institutional and political analysis setting forth the roadmap for ratifying the Charter in ten target countries. The ten countries selected are given above. The project document gives several criteria, but in practice, the two most important appear to have been (i) the presence of groups affiliated with the WMD with the scale and scope to be able to operate at the national level and (ii) a reasonable likelihood that ratification could, in fact, be achieved.
- Baseline surveys to determine the level of awareness of the Charter. End-of-project surveys to assess project impact were also foreseen.
- Promoting petitions, letters of support, etc. to be sent to governments requesting them to make good the intention to ratify following signature of the Charter.
- An ambitious project launch event, to follow the baseline surveys, in Johannesburg. Attendance by 2-3 civil society representatives from each of the ten countries was anticipated. Outputs from the launch conference, based on analysis of baseline survey results, would include country and regional-level strategic plans, the formation and first meeting of a Steering Committee, and a Commitment Petition (whose nature remained obscure in the Project Document).
- Two workshops per year per country (a total of 40) for academics, policy makers, and civil society representatives to spread awareness of the Charter, and set the stage for an advocacy process. Somewhat jarring, baseline and end-of project surveys re-appear in this activity, but this is probably an editorial lapse.
- National advocacy campaigns to be carried out by workshop participants.

(ii) Logical framework

An approximation of the project logical framework, drawn from the project document, is given below. The figure maps the logical path from activities/outputs through intended outcomes/objectives to anticipated impacts. The mapping of activities and intended outcomes to medium and long-term impacts is not one-to-one: an individual intended

outcome may give rise to various impacts through the influence of particular activities, and multiple intended outcomes are likely to have similar impacts.

RAF-08-216 is a good example of a project where the logical impact, Results-based Management approach adds little value. The project was not conceived as a logical chain, it was conceived as a bundle of related activities contributing to a common goal: facilitating the Charter ratification process. The grantee was prudent, perhaps also shrewd, in not identifying ratification itself as a project objective, but this was the implicit goal. In a nutshell, this was not a project so much as the coordination of a set of national campaigns. The proposed activities clearly contributed to the ultimate goal of the campaign. There is no need to weigh the strategic approach to a nicety.



IV. Evaluation findings

(i) Relevance

Relevance has to do primarily with the appropriateness of project objectives to beneficiary needs, as well as to some extent with the appropriateness of implementation approaches to context and circumstance. Relevance is rarely a weak evaluation point these days, and so is the case in this evaluation. When the project was proposed, the Charter was languishing, the initial stage of enthusiasm after signature had been replaced by one of torpor as governments who had signed had little appreciation of what came next and why it was important to take steps. There were no international project initiatives to promote the Charter.

As at several points in this evaluation, comparison with the post-1989 accession of Eastern, European, Baltic, and CIS states to the European Charter on Human Rights is apposite: there was an initial bustle of reform activity followed by stagnation. In one important sense, preparatory work for the African Charter was weak when compared to the preparations for the wave of CoE accession post-1989. CoE membership was preceded by an intense programme of high-level political dialogue, monitoring missions to identify likely compliance problem areas, and expert technical assistance. Explicit, time-limited commitment documents were drawn up and signed, with the CoE promising to provide cooperation (subject to funding) to address compliance problems. The CoE was, and is, regarded as a repository of moral authority and technical expertise related to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The CoE's institutional cycle of standard setting, compliance monitoring, and cooperation to address identified weaknesses has proven to be a durable process for having an impact, even in difficult contexts.

The African Union does not have such impressive institutional depth. Yet, the Charter was and is an instrument with significant potential for promoting African democracy and, as important, discouraging backsliding from the significant accomplishments to date. To have allowed the instrument to languish would have been an opportunity missed, and the project represented a sound effort to re-vitalize it. Moreover, various avenues for implementation and enforcement of the Charter exist – notably the African Court of Human Rights and organisms of the sub-regional international organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

A challenge for the African Union, as an inter-governmental organization, is how to improve its engagement with NGOs. This project served as a bridge-builder by including civil society organizations as lead players, bringing them squarely into the policy arena as promoters of the AU instrument.



Group photo from the kickoff meeting, Pretoria, 2009. Source: Idasa

This was a project that directly benefited the African democracy community, an elite. Would the money have been better spent at the village level on promoting the basics of survival? Nothing could be less clear. The people of Africa will benefit substantially from the strengthening of democratic rule on the continent. In this broadest of senses, the project was a sound investment of resources and relevant to the needs of the people of Africa, not just the small elite who were the direct beneficiaries. By promoting ratification and the coming in force of the Charter, the project also indirectly benefited the African Union.

(ii) Effectiveness

Effectiveness has to do with whether the project delivered the expected results (not yet impacts) and that these were of good quality.

It would be easy to technically criticize this project on effectiveness, if it were not for the candor with which the Final Narrative Report spells out the deviations from original plans and the reasons for them. A summary table will help to focus the discussion.

Planned	Actual	Comment
Undertake trips to ten targeted countries	Implemented	
Select partners in ten target countries	Implemented	The relations were informal, with no ToRs or MoUs. The planned output, a mapping exercise, was never produced. In agreement with UNDEF, it was agreed that a general lessons learnt document would be produced. This is still in progress.
Print AU Charter booklets	Implemented	
Hold campaign launch conference event in South Africa	Implemented	The launch event was successful beyond original expectations. A Launch Conference report was printed and disseminated.
Form Steering Committee	Implemented	
Sign ToRs with country	Not	Two reasons are given for deciding that ToRs

partners	implemented	were unnecessary: (i) the amount of money per country was small (see section on efficiency below) and (ii) country partners were enthusiastic and committed (a matter of the quality of partnerships, discussed in the main text).
Distribute first tranche of funds to target countries	Implemented with modifications	Cape Verde was dropped from the list of target countries because in-country priorities changed. Following the Launch Conference, Rwanda was dropped because it was learned that it had completed the ratification process, and a decision had been made at the Conference to concentrate on promoting ratification. Funds re-distributed to remaining eight countries.
Hold strategy development first-round workshops in target countries	Implemented in the eight remaining countries	Workshops were held with a high degree of participation and enthusiasm. Country workshop reports were produced in all cases by local partners. Intended “Country Campaign Committees” were formed to devise advocacy strategies, but engaged in minimal activity. Planned baseline awareness surveys were completed in six of the eight countries, the other two having failed to do so due to “human error.”
Hold Steering Committee meeting	Implemented	At the Launch Conference, participants from West Africa suggested that a Steering Committee for that region should be formed, as well. Moreover, due to the availability of Canadian CIDA funds (see section on Finance in main body of text), Mali and Benin had been added to the list of target countries. The West Africa Steering Committee, a sub-set of the Steering Committee, met for two days following the meeting of the whole. Two reports, one of the Steering Committee and one of the West Africa Steering Committee, were produced.
Distribute second tranche of funds to target countries	Implemented with significant modifications. Only three second-tranche disbursements were made (Senegal, Burundi, Kenya).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South Africa, Ghana, and Sierra Leone had completed the ratification process subsequent to the first tranche, and were accordingly dropped from the list of target countries. At the suggestion of the West Africa Steering Committee, Liberia was added to the list of target countries. In the event, preparations for the election in Liberia competed for attention, as a result of which, no activities were planned and the disbursement never took place. - The partners in Namibia had conflicting time commitments, as a result of which, no activities were planned and the disbursement never took place. - The principal partner in Botswana underwent restructuring, leadership change, and attendant high staff turnover, as a result of which, no activities were planned and the disbursement never took place.
Second-round country workshops	Implemented in Senegal, Burundi, Kenya.	The Senegal workshop was a four-day regional conference on the Charter and a Model Law on Access to Information attended by 100 participants from 13 countries. The Kenya workshop was a small strategic meeting implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Justice. Three workshop reports were prepared.

	The Comparative Baseline Charter Awareness Survey planned to be produced at this stage was not implemented.
Second Steering Committee meeting Implemented	Canadian CIDA funding allowed a four-day follow-up to the Launch Conference event to be held almost exactly a year later. Participants from the two remaining new countries—Benin and Mali – attended. The SC meeting was held on Day Five. A report of the five-day meeting was produced and disseminated.

A few themes emerge from this comprehensive inventory of what was planned and what was done. One is that the project was very effective in delivering Steering Committee formations, Steering Committee reports, meetings, minutes, etc., including some of major international dimension and potential impact (e.g., the launch event and Senegal workshop; the Nairobi workshop made up in high level government participation what it lacked in size and international participation). These were up to high quality and effectiveness standards. The failure to establish ToRs and MoUs can be justified on the logic “It turned out we didn’t have to.” This was, in turn, due to the pre-existing quality of the partnerships because Idasa and the country NGOs were part of the same network, as well as the fact that the amount of money involved in-country was small.

The willingness, and ability, of the project to shift funds between countries and adjust activities to meet changing perceptions of need is striking. Few donors would tolerate this.



National strategy workshop, Kenya. Source: Idasa.

UNDEF did so and, overall, the flexibility added to project impact, even if it may have interfered with effectiveness technically defined. Overall, the impression left is of a project that, thanks in part to UNDEF’s light hand, was able flexibly to re-define activities in pursuit of the basic objective. The flexibility is also related to the point, discussed above, that this was less a project in the Results-based Management sense than a bundle of related activities.

Meetings were at the core of the project. The kickoff meeting in

February 2010 was important for harmonizing objectives and approaches among participating civil society organizations, and the participation of senior UNDEF staff reinforced the importance placed on ratifying the African Charter and the keen interest of UNDEF. The Senegal workshop was a significant international event and county-level strategy development workshops were successful. More documentation on these would, however, have been useful for the evaluation.



National strategy workshop, Ghana. Source:Idasa.

The most impressive project event was, however, the 14-19 March 2011 meeting in South Africa, essentially three meetings in one.

The first two days, sponsored by Idasa, the ADF, and NIMD, brought together civil society organizations from participating countries (the original ten invited to the 2010 kickoff meeting plus Mali and Benin, who had joined with Canadian CIDA funding). This ensured continuity. Following this, there was a meeting 16-17 March bringing together

two MPs from each of the 13 countries and one CSO from each country (the latter staying on for these two days). Finally, there was a second Steering Committee meeting on 19 March. Technically speaking, only the last day was financed by the UNDEF budget, but in fact, by combining the three events into one week, Idasa leveraged the UNDEF contribution. Branding was a challenge given the fact that some partners were paying for different events, but common sense prevailed. The UNDEF logo was, for example, displayed, along with that of the Government of Canada, Idasa, and the NIMD, on the agenda covering 14-17 March.

The three meetings were organized with exemplary skill. High level representation, including the High Commissioner of Canada and the Ambassador of Mali, was assured. Both the 14-15 March CSO meetings and the 16-17 March MP meetings were minuted, as naturally was the Steering Committee meeting, which also identified and assigned tasks. The 14-15 CSO meeting resulted in a communiqué and the 16-17 MP-CSO meeting resulted in a statement. At this stage, nine countries had ratified the Charter, and it is possible that the meetings and associated output had an impact on obtaining the remaining ratifications.

(iii) Efficiency

The main fact that emerges from the budget is that international meetings and Idasa travel to national strategy development workshops really were the heart of the project: the travel budget accounted for US\$ 148,000 out of the UNDEF contribution of US\$ 375,000. Most of the subsequent Canadian CIDA funding went to finance the March 2011 end-of-project event. Salaries, at US\$ 54,000 were reasonable. However, this left only US\$90,000 for in-country advocacy activities, which given the number of countries meant that activities were modest. The low level of in-country activities documented in the table above is symptomatic of this. It has to be assumed that this resulted in weakened in-country impacts, perhaps regarding in particular the platform for future advocacy work once the Charter was ratified. If complementary funds had been raised for in-country advocacy expenditure, or if project funds had been modestly reallocated, country impact would have been greater (perhaps more ratifications would have been achieved) and efficiency would have been better as a result.

(iv) Impact

An implicit impact of RAF-216 on Charter ratification is easy to identify. It strengthened the advocacy network and served an advocacy coordination function at a time when the ratification process was languishing. Through the strengthening of the democracy network,

the country strategy workshops, and the discussions of strategies in South Africa and Senegal, participating NGOs were empowered to better promote ratification of the Charter. For an example of this, see the accompanying text boxes experiences in Namibia and Kenya.

The grantee deliberately chose facilitation of process, not ultimate ratification, as the project objective, and impact on facilitation has been established. However, finding an explicit impact on actual ratification (an implicit, if not explicit, project objective) is harder. Again, a table will help to focus the text.

In the months following the commencement of the project, the Charter was **signed in nine countries**: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Gabon, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa; Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia. Of these, only South Africa was a target country.

In the months following the commencement of the project, the Charter was **ratified in thirteen countries**: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Lesotho, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia. Of these, Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa were target countries. No activities were implemented in Rwanda. **So, of the thirteen countries which ratified, only three benefited directly from project activities, and only two from in-country activities.**

Facilitating the ratification process: impact of the project in Namibia

For example, in Namibia, before the campaign, only the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the local project partner, had publicly made reference to the Charter in its work (relying on the clauses on media coverage to campaign for fair and equitable coverage of parties prior to the 2009 elections). As a result of the campaign, other the knowledge capacity of civil society activists in the democracy, governance, and human rights sectors was increased and awareness was created among some MPs. Although, we didn't achieve ratification by Namibia within the timeframe of the campaign, certainly the IPPR is looking at raising the issue again in work we are doing on parliament and foreign policy. The IPPR will continue to raise the benchmarks set out in the Charter in debates on elections and democracy here. Namibia is currently undergoing a legal reform process in terms of our electoral laws and the IPPR has cited the Charter in terms on aspects like media coverage, registration of voters, speedy resolution of election disputes etc. during consultations on the legal reform process. As stated we will seek to raise the issue of ratification through our parliamentary work later this year.

Source: Interview with Graham Hopwood, Executive Director, IPPR Namibia, 08.06.2012

Country (bold if targeted; italics if added mid-project)	Signed? Bold if after project start.	Ratified? Bold if after project start.	Comments
Algeria			
Angola	27.01.2007		
<i>Benin</i>	11.07.2007		As a result of additional funds being raised from Canadian CIDA, added as a target country at end of 2010.
Botswana			Relations with partner collapsed due to re-structuring
Burkina Faso	02.08.2007	26.05.2010	
Burundi	20.06.2007		Workshop / conference on Charter held
Cameroon	16.01.2012	24.08.2011	
Central African Rep.	28.06.2008		
Cape Verde			No activities took place, dropped as target country
Chad	22.01.2009	11.07.2011	
Côte d'Ivoire	11.06.2009		
Comoros	02.02.2010		
Congo	18.06.2007		
Djibouti	15.06.2007		
DRC	29.06.2008		
Egypt			
Equatorial Guinea	30.08.2008		
Eritrea			
Ethiopia	28.12.2007	05.08.2008	
Gabon	02.02.2010		
Gambia	29.01.2008		
Ghana	15.01.2008	06.09.2010	Following ratification, funds re-allocated elsewhere. No second round National Campaign Support Grant made.
Guinea-Bissau	17.06.2008	23.12.2011	
Guinea	29.05.2007	17.06.2011	
Kenya	28.06.2008		
Libya			
Lesotho	17.03.2010	30.06.2010	
<i>Liberia</i>	18.06.2008		Added April 2011 at suggestion of West Africa Steering Committee following the dropping of Cape Verde. Impossible to organize any activities due to election cycle. Funds never disbursed
Madagascar			
<i>Mali</i>	29.06.2007		As a result of additional funds being raised from Canadian CIDA, added as a target country at end of 2010.
Malawi			
Mozambique	27.05.2010		
Mauritania	29.01.2008	07.07.2008	
Mauritius	14.12.2007		
Namibia	10.05.2007		
Nigeria	02.07.2007	01.12.2011	
Niger	17.06.2008	04.10.2011	
Rwanda	29.06.2007	09.07.2010	Following ratification, funds re-allocated elsewhere. No second round National Campaign Support Grant made. Essentially no project activities took place in Rwanda.
South Africa	01.02.2010	24.12.2010	Following ratification, funds re-allocated elsewhere. No second round National Campaign Support Grant made.
Sahrawi ADR	25.07.2010		
Senegal	15.12.2008		
Seychelles			
Sierra Leone	17.06.2008	17.02.2009	Following ratification, funds re-allocated elsewhere. No second round National Campaign Support Grant made.
Somalia			
Sao Tome and Principe	01.02.2010		
Sudan	03.06.2008		
Swaziland	29.01.2008		
Tanzania			
Togo	31.10.2007		
Tunisia			
Uganda	16.12.2008		
Zambia	31.01.2010	31.05.2011	
Zimbabwe			

Countries which were **targeted but in which there was no step taken towards signature or ratification** were Benin (added mid-project), Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde (dropped early on), Kenya, Liberia (added mid-project, but where circumstances did not permit any activities), Mali (added mid-project), Sierra Leone (dropped, Charter apparently ratified prior to project start) and Senegal.

Facilitating the ratification process: impact of the project in Kenya

As in Namibia, ratification has not yet been achieved, and yet the project has contributed significantly to facilitating eventual ratification.

Through advocacy activities including the high level strategy workshop involving civil society, parliamentarians and the Ministry of Justice, the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) was able to raise awareness of the importance of the Charter. With its focus on elections and its relatively international outlook, IED was well positioned to understand the potential of the instrument, especially with post-2007 election violence fresh in memory.

In addition to simply advocating for the Charter, however, IED had to work along a more complicated constitutional track. Following the 2010 constitutional reform, a new law was needed to deal with the domestication of regional and international commitments. IED was able to use project activities to work on the passage of such a law, albeit with no success to date, which explains the continuing non-ratification of the Charter.

Source: Interview with Peter Aling'o, Executive Director, IED Kenya, 11.06.2012

In seven of ten countries originally targeted, there were no steps taken towards ratification: Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mali, and Senegal. Sierra Leone appears to be an outlying case; it participated in early project activities, but apparently the Charter had already been ratified. However, as the Idasa program manager reported, the authorities failed to realize that a faxed signature was not sufficient, and it was only as a result of his visit to Freetown that the ratification was clinched.

The impact of the project in the form of solidification of the Africa democracy community was significant. As discussed under Effectiveness, the wrap-up series of meetings was high-

profile, resulted in outputs that may have accelerated ratification, and helped to lay a groundwork for future activities. In-country activities built bridges between civil society and government. Yet to identify concrete cases in which the project led to ratification is practically impossible.

(v) Sustainability

Participants interviewed reported that the project empowered democracy advocates to press for ratification of the Charter. The strengthening of the Africa democracy network through the project is a sustainable impact, although most of the NGOs will continue to depend on external sources of financial support. One indicator that the project has left a lasting footprint would be evidence that participants are continuing to follow up on the African Charter agenda that was defined in the Steering Committee meeting of March 2011.

Interviews with participants suggest that they are. However, evidence from the web shows no signs of this. A thorough inventory of the websites of six participating national NGOs was disappointing. Only one referred to the project, and then only in a brief summary identifying UNDEF as the funder. More worrisome, none of the websites made reference to the African Charter at all. This suggests that the empowerment that undoubtedly occurred was more an empowerment of individuals than an empowerment of institutions. It also underscores the point that most (not all) African democracy NGOs are focused on national issues.

Idasa was well-positioned to continue to play a coordinating role. Again judging by the project website (<http://www.aucharter.org/>), consulted on 07.03.2012 and again on 13.06.2012, there is no evidence that it has:

- The most recent update seen was October 2011, indicating that it had fallen out of date.
- There was no acknowledgment, in the “About” section, that UNDEF had financed the project. The UNDEF logo appeared nowhere on the website.
- “Links” included no link to the funder UNDEF.
- The flagship “We stand at ...” counter on signatures and ratifications did not agree with text on the same page.
- The link to “Ratification list” was broken.
- The March 2011 wrap-up series of meetings was described in the future tense.

There was no central repository of project materials, such as workshop reports, baseline situation surveys, etc. An explicit decision was made not to put such material on the web, and the decision can be questioned. Brief summaries of country events were, however, posted.

These and other weaknesses suggest that the project website was never an effectively functioning tool. It would not at present be helpful to anyone trying to keep track of the status of the African Charter or strengthen its application.

A highly effective Africa Charter Newsletter was published in April, July, and October 2010 but did not re-appear in 2011.

Idasa does not, of course, bear all the blame for what appears to be a sputtering-out. The project went “broad” – many countries – rather than “deep.” As a result the financial benefits for any given country were small (although, as Idasa well put it, at least the NGOs involved were not in it for the money – a comment that may be as perceptive as it is witty). This may help to explain the low web-presence. Idasa did attempt to raise funds to implement the last Steering Committee agenda, but without success. The problem of interruption of funding is endemic to development and is unlikely to be solved anytime soon.

More generally, the question is what comes next. A process has been set in motion, but it will stand or fall on the commitment of governments (questionable) and the robustness of civil society (debatable). The wrap-up meeting in South Africa, including the Steering Committee meeting, was well designed to promote sustainability. Much will depend on follow up regarding the mechanics of implementation. How standards be set and compliance be monitored? What will be the enforcement mechanism? While these subjects have been raised, the answers are not yet clear.

V. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here represent a synthesis of the answers to the Evaluation Questions presented in the previous section.

(i) Based on our findings regarding **effectiveness** and **impact**, the success of the project was largely due to two factors: the strength of the grantee, Idasa, and the depth and prestige of the networks in which it worked, namely the Africa Democracy Forum and, by implication, the World Democracy Movement. National partner NGOs were already members of this network, so the infrastructure of the campaign was in place at project start. What the project contributed was coordination (starting from the kickoff meeting at which strategies were harmonized) and strengthening of the nodes through in-country strategy workshops. Positive country reports indicate that there was significant local impact. Some of this came, of course, from participation in international meetings, not from in-country activities. We have expressed the view that a bit less spending on international coordination meetings and a bit more on in-country activities would have increased overall project impact...

(ii) The Idasa, African Democracy Forum, and UN brands contributed to strengthening the voice of civil society organisations in promoting the African Charter. UNDEF support was **effective** and **added value** in the sense that the UN brand contributed to helping Idasa mobilize significant financial support from Canada, which in turn financed the ambitious end-of-project series of meetings.

(iii) The shifting project country foci and activity plans, including changes in target countries and outputs, were both a strong and a weak point of the project from the standpoints of **effectiveness** and **impact**. On the one hand, this allowed the funds to be allocated flexibly. It reflected the hands-off attitude of UNDEF (another source of value added when it works well).. Given the inclusive nature of the network benefiting from the project, flexibility worked well. At the same time, it made it difficult to determine exactly what had and had not been accomplished due to the project. All in all, the project was an example of how a closely related bundle of activities can function as well as a traditional Results-based Management logically-structured project, however, it needs to be remembered that the implementing partner had very high capacity and the network infrastructure relating the players was already in place.

(iv) Participant civil society organisations were empowered by the project to better engage with governments to promote ratification of the Charter. However, the tiny web footprint left by the project suggests that it is individuals, more than institutions, that were empowered. Much of this empowerment occurred in the context of international travel and meetings financed by the project (including CIDA funding). This conclusion is based on all the findings above, especially that relating to **sustainability**.

(v) Based on findings related to **relevance**, **effectiveness**, and **impact**, one of the important roles of the project was in building bridges between civil society and governments as well as between civil society organizations (in-country activities may have played an important role here). The importance of the former is increased by the fact that the African Union is an inter-governmental organization in which civil society plays a limited role. In promulgating the Charter, the AU has, whether knowingly or unknowingly, given civil society and ordinary citizens an instrument for holding governments to account. This will require the organization to deal with new interlocutors. It is to be hoped that it will have more

success in this than the Council of Europe, which has become a constant focus of civil society criticism.

(vi) Based on our findings related to **sustainability**, there was need for more actions to guarantee continuity of effort following ratification. It is not too late to take steps in this direction, but the window of opportunity will not remain open indefinitely.

VI. Recommendations

For Idasa

(i) Consider a collaborative study on implementation. The emphasis on ratification, rather than implementation (standard-setting, monitoring, and ultimately adjudication and enforcement) has left the long-term Africa Charter project in a bit of a lurch. While various mechanisms exist, there has been no systematic assessment of how they might work and whether some consolidated system might be feasible. Since many of the approaches may be sub-regional, Idasa would be well placed to convene an expert group to write on this subject. This would be low-cost, it would be prestigious, it could serve as a “carrot” for a handful of the best-performing network members and, most important, it would fill a real gap. Consider, as well, trying to initiate a discussion between AU and the Council of Europe on implementation of international commitments regarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The CoE is already (under European Union pressure) engaged in advisory work in Morocco, Unisia, and Egypt, so the idea of a CoE-AU dialogue is not entirely far-fetched.

(ii) Follow up with the network. Based on the rather pessimistic assessment of sustainability in Conclusion (vi), Idasa should re-contact the network, somewhat in the spirit of Recommendation (iv) above, to check on the status of activities. A series of brief country notes, no more than a page or two in length (they could be supplied in form of emails), could be compiled and published on a (revitalized) web site, or even just emailed to members of the network. It is practically zero-cost, the email contact list is there, and the replies could form the basis of a deeper, less broad, effort. This could also serve as the impetus for a renewed search for funding in order to continue supporting the Charter.

For UNDEF

(i) Continue to fund strong partners and give them their head, and tap into existing networks to increase chances of project success. Based on Conclusions (i) and (iii), the hands-off approach works well when the implementing partner is strong and, as in this case, the network of sub-partners is well in place. One implication is that UNDEF should stress strong partnership strategies in its funding application process. This will tend to favor proposals that can point to existing, known networks and partnerships over proposals that suggest new ones, but this bias is not out of place given the small amounts of money being provided. Working with strong partners is also important given UNDEF’s light touch in project monitoring and supervision, which in turn reflects its very small secretariat staff.

(ii)

(iii) Initiate a post-project follow-up procedure. Even with limited staff resources, it should be possible to carry out something in the nature of a follow-up one year after project closure. This could be in the form of a questionnaire to be filled out by the grantee. As an alternative, the format of these evaluations could be modified to include a standard section on follow-up actions being taken. UNDEF regards its grants as one-off, but it would not be amiss to consider ways of injecting some continuing support into African Charter efforts.

VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts

This project was a sound investment of UNDEF resources since it supported a functioning and effective network of democracy advocates in a region undergoing rapid democratic change. It benefitted from UNDEF's flexibility and light managerial hand. However, it underscored the fact that end-of-workshop enthusiasm often has limited staying power, not as regards goals (here, effective implementation of the Charter as a tool for democratic development), but as regards practicalities as participants settle back into their busy lives. The evaluation has identified the need for post-project follow up and has made a concrete, low-cost suggestion for how to implement this.

This evaluation, like several others in this series, has identified building bridges between civil society and government, as well as between different segments of civil society, as one of the most important needs. While it has achieved successes in some very difficult circumstances, UNDEF is not particularly well suited to directly supporting NGOs that are in open conflict with government. It is very well placed, by contrast to promoting dialogue and the search for common ground, especially given the low costs associated. Another point to emerge is that regional (or global) campaigns have as strong a claim on resources as impact-oriented projects. Based on all the Conclusions, there is no need to limit support to traditional Results-based Management projects promising tangible improvements in the lives of direct beneficiaries. Campaigns are likely to be network.-based and solidify relations between network members while building on existing infrastructure.

VIII. Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Project document

Project final narrative report

Project steering committee minutes, 19.03.2011

Africa Charter Newsletter, April, July, October 2010.

Agenda. African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance 'Shared Learning' Workshop and Conference for CSO's and MP's, Helderfontein Estate, Midrand, 14-17 March 2011.

Minutes, African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance Civil Society Campaign Meeting, Helderfontein Estate, Midrand, South Africa, 16 March 2011.

Minutes, African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance MPs Meeting, Helderfontein Estate, Midrand, South Africa, 16 March 2011.

CSO communiqué, 15 March

Joint CSO-MP statement, 17 March

Annex 3: People interviewed

Peter Aling'o	Executive Director, Institute for Education in Democracy, Kenya
Stefan Gilbert	Idasa, governance specialist and project coordinators
Graham Hopwood	Executive Director, Institute for Public Policy Research, Namibia
Jean Mensa	Executive Director, Institute of Economic Affairs, Ghana
Eugene Rwibasira	Executive Director, Rwanda Development Organization, Rwanda

Annex 4: Acronyms

ADF	Africa Democracy Forum
AU	African Union
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
IED	Institute for Education on Democracy
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-government Organization
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund