

EVALUATION OF THE UDF-ECU-08-275 PROJECT

“STRENGTHENING ETHICS, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY IN ECUADOR”

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FINAL EVALUATION OF THE UDF-ECU-08-275 PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This evaluation was requested by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Peru and Ecuador. This office had overseen a project executed in Ecuador, and the evaluator was requested to conduct an independent general evaluation of the project.

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and synergies, as well as any impact on gender and human rights in the context of whether the project had achieved its overall objective. As per discussions with UNODC, the evaluation is aimed at assisting, where possible, in identifying good practices and lessons learned for consideration by stakeholders in the development of future similar projects, and to measure, where possible, the value of the work performed by UNODC and NGO ESQUEL under this particular project.

The work performed under this evaluation included a review and analysis of the extensive documentation on the project. There were also coordinating communications with personnel responsible for the project, as well as intended beneficiaries. This was complemented by questionnaires for counterparts, principally intended beneficiaries, to receive more detailed, and systematic feedback.

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

As highlighted in project documents, corruption must be addressed jointly by the State with the participation of the all public institutions and the society. Corruption not only entails damage to citizens but risks where values are at stake, as well as credibility of institutions and human ethics, social capital and public well-being. The history of Ecuador has always been marked also by a significant degree of corruption; influence peddling for public positions, mismanagement of State resources, public contracts awarded not based on merit, scandals caused by governors, politicians, government officials and numerous reports of embezzlement; nearly all of the individuals interviewed during this evaluation indicated that, at the time of commencement of the project, corruption was widespread.

In this respect, Ecuador presented particular challenges for a project aimed at fighting corruption and promoting government transparency. As explained to the evaluator, the project, while not expected to address all issues, was developed taking into account good practices to confront some of the above-mentioned entrenched dynamics. Project staff indicated that the project was built around the success of a similar United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) project, carried out in the neighboring country of Peru; that project included specialized training (with hypothetical case scenarios) for police, district attorneys and other officials with respect to improving investigations into acts of corruption, as well as the training of

non-justice-sector actors (such as journalists) on how to exercise their roles in a professional manner to reveal possible acts of corruption.

This project, while including such training, was also complemented by other components, such as an advertising campaign urging citizens to demand transparency from the government, and ethical conduct from the citizenry as well; as with the Peruvian-based project, this project included a component to develop and incorporate modules on ethics, democracy and good governance in the curriculum of public schools in Ecuador.

Interviews conducted, and information gathered during the evaluation highlighted some differences in the dynamics between the two countries. In Ecuador, the President of Ecuador had won a lawsuit against a newspaper of wide circulation for having reported on acts of corruption; the lawsuit produced a chilling effect on other entities (not only journalists) who might report and/or comment on possible acts of corruption within the current administration. According to project staff, this affected, to some degree, the nature of the originally planned advertising campaign of the project. Whilst traditional messages against corruption in an advertising campaign might show a judge or other public official receiving a bribe (and this form of publicity was originally considered as part of the campaign), the above-mentioned dynamic within the country forced the project to adjust the campaign toward one based principally on promoting ethical conduct for all citizens.

Individuals within the implementing NGO indicated that the project ran a risk of angering the government, and not being constructive for UN-Ecuador relations, had the project followed the originally planned traditional anti-corruption publicity campaign. The themes of the campaign were therefore adjusted, and during this process, it was decided to take more advantage of modern, social communication media. Ironically, the chilling effect on the reporting of potential acts of corruption in Ecuador – highlighting the need to be cautious in pointing out that no particular public official or institution should be stressed as particularly corrupt – appeared to produce an opportunity for reflection within the project to explore new and innovative ways to promote ethical conduct. This was confirmed through interviews held during the evaluation and was made evident after review of the actual advertising spots produced by the project and which were found on YouTube.

The purpose of this project was to develop practical results-oriented mechanisms to assist Ecuador in fighting corruption and in promoting transparency. The project aimed to carry out extensive training of 500 public officials and key members of civil society, parallel to a broad-based public awareness campaign; the project also included the development and incorporation of ethics modules into the Ecuadorian educational system, to ensure some degree of long term impact.

The Project was executed by the Non-Governmental Organization *Fundación ESQUEL*, a private non-profit organization oriented toward strengthening human development.

Based on interviews conducted, ESQUEL appeared to have strong project management capacity, as well as good knowledge of the local context; ESQUEL has a positive reputation among public and private Ecuadorian institutions, of international cooperation organizations and has participated in projects funded by the United States of America, as well as several European governments.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A. Evaluation questions

This evaluation focuses on the principal and common criteria for such projects: Relevance, Efficiency, Efficacy, Sustainability, Gender and Human Rights, and development of Synergies. Below are the questions developed for each thematic area of this evaluation, as well as the principal sources consulted.

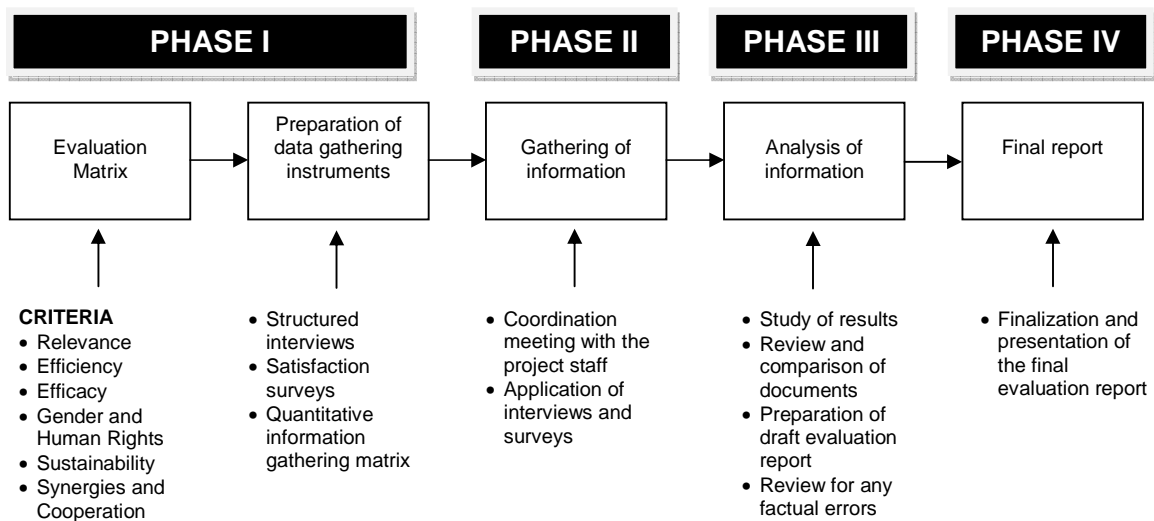
CRITERIA	QUESTION	SOURCE
Relevance	How relevant is the project for principal or intended beneficiaries, including the Government of Ecuador, based on identified needs and priorities?	Project documents. Interviews.
	How relevant is the project for other key actors (executing agencies, civil society, other UN agencies) and their needs and priorities?	Project documents. Interviews.
	How relevant is the Project to UNODC’s strategy country, regional and thematic strategies and programmes?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Is the Project in accordance with general UN and other strategies and objectives, such as UNDAF, MDGs and other aspects of the UN agenda? What specific areas is it contributing to?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn as relevant?	Project documents. Interviews.
Efficiency	Were project resources delivered in a timely and cost effective manner?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Was the Regional Office for UNODC supported in a timely and cost effective manner by UNODC HQ?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Did UNODC perform adequate administrative and financial processes to manage the project?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn in relation to timely obtainment of anticipated products of the project?	Project documents. Interviews.
Efficacy	Were the expected objectives and results achieved?	Project documents. Interviews.

	What are the results, if any, beyond the logic framework?	Project documents. Interviews.
	Were the approaches and strategies adequate to the needs identified?	Interviews.
	To what extent did project results contribute to the country and the regional and thematic programmes?	Interviews.
	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn with regard to improving efficacy?	Interviews.
Sustainability	To what extent are results likely to be sustainable after project completion?	Interviews.
	Is it probable for it to continue, to be extended, reproduced or institutionalized after external funding committed by the interested parties is completed?	Interviews.
Gender and Human Rights	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn, particularly as to gender?	Document review and interviews.
	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn regarding human rights in particular?	Interviews
	To what extent did the project contribute to improving gender equality?	Interviews
	To what extent did the project contribute to improving human rights?	Documents, statistics and interviews.
Synergies and cooperation	To what extent have alliances been sought (including with other UN agencies) and synergy generated for the provision of assistance?	Cooperation agreement minutes.
	Have effective cooperation agreements been made?	Interviews
	Did all key partners involved meet their responsibilities fully and effectively?	Project documents. Interviews
	Does the project contribute to UNDAF and other coordination mechanisms across the United Nations system? If so, how did this synergy assist UNODC and others facilitate the outcome of the project?	Interviews
	Are there any general lessons applicable to UNODC that may be drawn regarding synergy and cooperation mechanisms established in this project?	Interviews

B. Evaluative approaches

APPROACH	DETAIL
Participative	Evaluation is applied to actors connected with the project.
Estimative	The opinion of the different project actors has been evaluated, hearing their concerns, needs, appraisals and recommendations regarding the project.
Knowledge generation	The intention of the evaluation is to generate learning, incorporating recommendations and lessons learned by all project-related actors. Recommendations are generated to facilitate the proper development of any future projects, principally those aimed at fighting corruption and promoting transparency.

C. Methodological process



- **PHASE I:** This first phase corresponded to the evaluation planning. An evaluation matrix was prepared, defining the criteria, based on the questions stated above. Also, the necessary instruments were designed in order to gather the project information. Project-related documents made available by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) were reviewed. In addition, coordination meetings were held with the project staff concerning evaluation planning.
- **PHASE II:** Interviews and surveys were applied to the different project-related actors, particularly to key members of each participating institution. Also meetings were held with the project members to obtain information regarding scheduled activities.

- **PHASE III:** In this phase, the all the information gathered was systematized. The results of the analyses made of the documents were compared to those expressed by the project-related actors, as well as to results obtained from beneficiary institutions. The final evaluation draft report was submitted to UNODC (for review and correction of any possible factual errors).
- **PHASE IV:** This last phase corresponds to the dissemination of the evaluation results to the different members of the project. It is hoped that new projects will be generated, as a result of the evaluation, to better address the fight against corruption and foster cultures of ethical conduct and transparency.

D. Data gathering instruments

Interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for this evaluation, aimed at the project actors in order to learn their point of view regarding the development of different activities of the project under evaluation. A matrix was also developed to gather quantitative document information constituting part of the project.

E. Sampling strategy

A screening criterion was defined for the evaluation sample in order to select the key actors participating in the project activities. Interviews were then carried out with direct project-related actors.

F. Evaluation restrictions

Given the distance from the project implementation agency, there was a delay in completing the surveys. Also, in some instances, officials trained were no longer part of the relevant institution (had been transferred to another position or institution and/or had voluntarily left their work).

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. RELEVANCE

Based on discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries, the activities carried out under the project – which included a combination of training for public officials and civil society actors, a broad-based publicity campaign and, among other activities, the development and insertion of modules on ethics and good governance into the education system – appear to have addressed a number of priority concerns of government officials as well as civil society actors. Prior to the Project, the Government of Ecuador has specifically requested activities of this nature, principally training, and the project design incorporated such training into the project development, but broadened the activities to address some of the concerns raised by civil society actors. The Ministry of Education had also been consulted during project development, and its concerns, in terms of including activities to inculcate long-term education on ethics, were also included into the project to make it as relevant and responsive as possible to these needs.

By all accounts from those interviewed, any project aimed at reducing corruption and promoting transparency and ethical behavior in Ecuador – while a significant challenge – would be highly relevant so as to maintain these issues in public discussion, as well as within the priorities of the targeted public institutions and other beneficiaries. The significant challenges confronted by any anti-corruption project in Ecuador did not make the project any less relevant; the challenges, however, did indicate that the project might have more difficulty in achieving anticipated impact. While the challenges identified, at the time of project initiation (and which arose during project implementation), might have impacted the efficacy and/or sustainability of the project’s activities, they did not affect the issue of relevance.¹

Based on interviews and feedback from beneficiaries, the project and its training contributed to dialogue within institutions, among civil society organizations, and in classrooms, on ethics, transparency and the rule of law in general. By breeding discussion on issues beyond the strict issue of corruption, it appears the project provided a degree of added value (although it is currently unknown how sustainable this added value will be) beyond that originally contemplated in the project design. It is not unreasonable to state that the targeted relevance of the planned and executed activities added (though at this point in no known quantitative amount) to the project’s impact by fostering such dialogue in the difficult Ecuadorian context.

¹ It is a separate, but noteworthy, issue as to whether or not donors in the future may wish to consider supporting anti-corruption projects in countries where a broad culture of corruption is considered to exist. In this context, it might be considered “relevant” or not to support such projects. However, the above thematic area is limited to whether or not the activities and project design was relevant to the respond to the needs identified by stakeholders; in the scenario of this particular project, the activities developed were clearly relevant.

Based on review of UNODC's Thematic Programme against Transnational Organized Crime, in which this particular project might have possessed some overlap with Outcomes 2.2 and 2.3 of the Strategy, the project does not appear to be inconsistent with that Thematic Programme. Based on review of the Convention against Corruption, the project appears to have been relevant to facilitating implementation of Articles 5, 7, 10, 13 and 38 of the Convention.

B. EFFICIENCY

Project activities were originally scheduled to be carried out within a specified period according to the logical framework. Based on interviews with project personnel and counterparts involved in (or scheduled to benefit from) the project, a number of these planned activities had to be rescheduled (many from 2010 to 2011) as a result of a police uprising which took place in Ecuador on 30 September 2010.²



Police uprising on 30 September 2010

Photo courtesy of globalwarp.wordpress.com

After this uprising subsided, project personnel engaged in discussions with the National Police to explain why training activities would be postponed (mainly because it was unsure that the police to be trained could have been involved in the uprising and/or the concern of the project that that the consequences of the uprising might bring about a rotation of police and related officials to be trained). Based on these discussions and commitments communicated by the National Police and other officials, the project re-scheduled training and related activities to ensure that project funds would be well-invested, and to avoid inefficiency in the timing of execution of originally planned activities.

As to the activities carried out, please see the following pages, as a brief compilation gathered by this evaluator, of some of the training activities:

² See, for example, the following news reports:
http://www.economist.com/blogs/americasview/2010/10/ecuadors_police_uprising and
<http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2010/10/ecua-o02.html>

LOCATION OF KEY TRAINING EVENT, AND BENEFICIARIES, UNDER THE PROJECT

Workshop
 Subject: Efficient, practical and preventive measures to promote transparency and reduce corruption
 Target public: 150 public officials.

Workshop
 Subject: How to investigate process and Judge acts of corruption.
 Target public: 600 policemen, district attorneys and judges

Workshop
 Subject: Discussion on the role of democratic process observers and the importance of quality investigation journalism in discovering acts of corruption.
 Target public: 100 members of the Communications media.

Workshop
 Subject: Training of elementary, middle and high school teachers to ensure the efficient and successful use of the modules in classroom.
 Target public: 75 officials of the Ministry of Education



Workshop
 Subject: Role in the supervision, prevention and reporting of corruption acts.
 Target public: 150 members of the civil society.

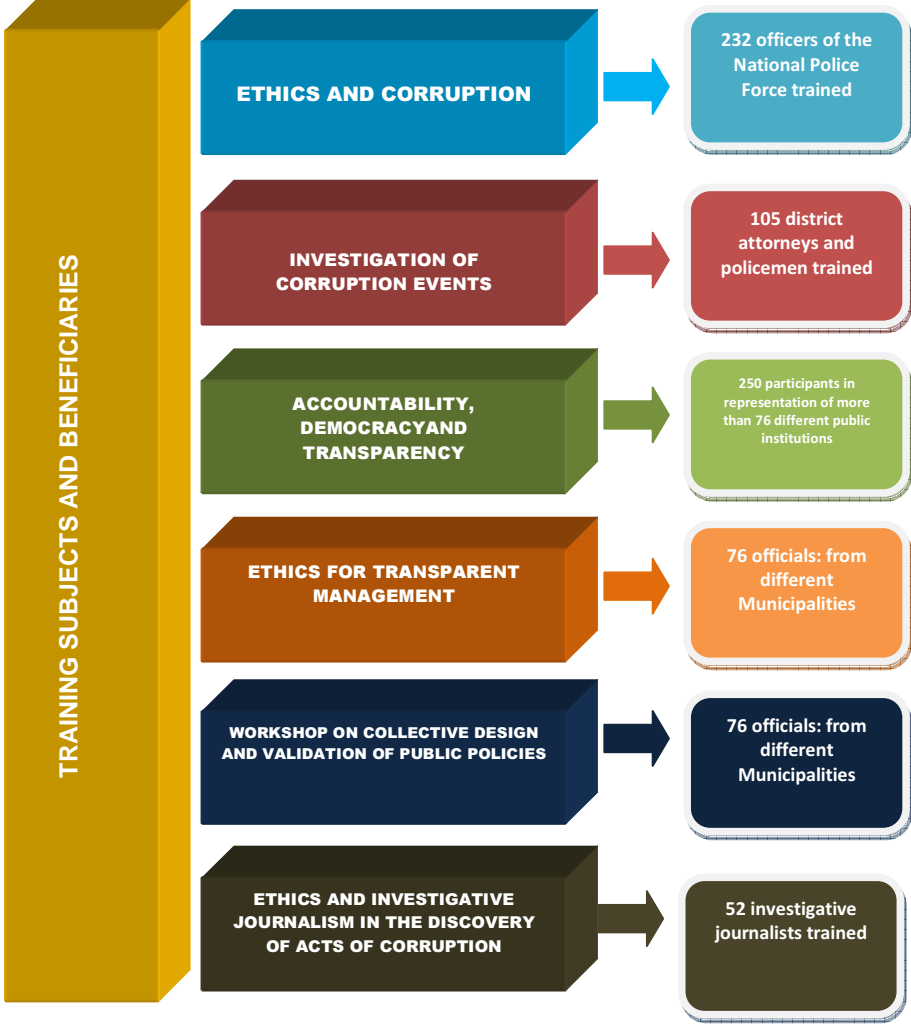
Workshop
 Subject: Best practices regarding the role to reduce corruption acts and promotion of transparency.
 Target public: 90 members of the Citizen Supervision Committees.

Workshop
 Subject: Offer technical assistance for the design of action plans to be executed by the CSSCs.
 Target public: 90 members of the Citizen Supervision Committees.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY (NOT ALL) TRAINING ACTIVITIES

KEY TRAINING ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANTS	HOURS
Training in efficient, practical and preventive measures to promote transparency and reduce corruption.	45	144
Training aimed at 300 police, district attorneys and judges on how to actively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate acts of corruption.	45	192
Training aimed at members of the media to discuss their role as observers of the democratic process and the importance of investigative journalism to search for acts of corruption and other conduct that may undermine the democratic process.	45	96
Training aimed at key members of the civil society on their role in terms of public oversight in the prevention and reporting of possible acts of corruption.	45	144
Training aimed at Supervision Committees of the Civil Society on best practices regarding their role in the reduction of corruption acts and promotion of transparency.	45	72
Technical assistant to design plans of action to be executed by each Supervision Committee of the Civil Society and to ensure continuity and sustainability of such plans of action and obtain information from the committees concerning the <u>lessons learned</u> .	50	72
Training workshops for the Ministry of Education instructors that will train elementary, middle and high school teachers to ensure the efficient and successful use of the modules in the classrooms.	45	72
Training on best practices regarding design of public policies to ensure channeling of the recovered illegal assets to poverty reduction programs, and technical assistance to contribute to the development of public policies for the channeling of recovered illegal assets to poverty reduction programs.	56	72

**TRAINING (BY SUB-THEMATIC AREA) THROUGH PROJECT,
AND FUNCTIONS, ROLES OF INDIVIDUALS TRAINED**



Based on discussions with project personnel, beneficiaries of training and other counterparts – as well as review of feedback from participants in the training – there appears to have been no notable dissatisfaction with the timeliness or efficiency of the training carried out.

With respect to the publicity campaign, project personnel explained to this evaluator that the original radio and TV campaign was adjusted to make use of modern social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), to reach a broader, and younger, audience. The evaluator reviewed the material developed and placed on the internet (see, for example, the following):

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psyal7xM3vU>
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HMqv4IUaKo>
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ3M0iDjltE>

These spots either encourage avoidance of corruption or the promotion of ethical and fair conduct within society in general. They are different from traditional anti-corruption spots aimed at illustrating an official of the police, Public Ministry or Judiciary taking a bribe, but in light of the political climate in Ecuador, in which the President of the country had won a lawsuit against a national newspaper for printing articles about reported acts of corruption, the reorientation of the focus of the spots, the fact that the project managed to produce a total of 15 spots (instead of only a few radio or TV spots), and distribute them across mass social media, appeared to be an efficient use of resources.

There were no noted indications of delay in producing or distribution of the spots, or in the timely implementation of the publicity campaign. Nor were there any indications of delay in backstopping support, when requested, from UNODC HQ, to support the timely cost-efficient implementation of the publicity campaign.

With respect to another principal area of focus of the project – the development, in concert with the Ministry of Education, of modules on ethics, good governance and democracy – interviews with counterparts, as well as with personnel in Fundación ESQUEL, showed that ESQUEL had improved on an idea that was originally developed under the previously-funded UNDEF project in Peru, which had formed the basis for this project. While the project in Peru developed a single guide, in Spanish, which covered several grade levels, staff under this project decided to develop separate modules for each grade level (these are found on the website for UNODC Peru and Ecuador), and provided some added value by translating part of the modules into the indigenous Kichwa language, to allow for use of the modules in interior parts of the country where this is the predominant language. No significant delays were reported by any counterparts, or project staff, in the development or launch of the modules. In this context, this component appears to have been executed with efficiency. It should be noted, however, that (as mentioned in the sustainability section below), the project was not able to establish a strong mechanism for follow-up on the implementation of

the modules throughout the Ecuadorian education system, something might have contributed to both the sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of this aspect of the project.

With respect to UNODC providing efficient administrative and financial processes to the project, discussions with project staff and counterparts suggest that there were some difficulties in the administrative process to sub-contract the advertising agency in charge of developing the publicity campaign spots – this caused delay and was, in part, one of the reasons (albeit not the principal reason) the Project Manager had to ask for a six-month extension of the project duration. At the initiation of the project, UNODC needed to adjust its means of transferring funds to ESQUEL, so that ESQUEL could pay consultants and other relevant entities (e.g., vendors and experts linked to training) – as explained to the evaluator, the UNODC office in Lima (responsible for both Peru and Ecuador) needed to enter into an agreement with ESQUEL, with the advice of UNDP Ecuador, to arrange for periodic lump-sum payments to be made to ESQUEL, upon reaching particular milestones in project execution. This was in contrast to UNODC’s modality of working directly with vendors. According to project personnel within UNODC and with ESQUEL, the agreement to make lump sum payments to the implementing agency (ESQUEL) facilitated improved efficiency in terms of timely execution of the project’s activities.

C. EFFICACY (EFFECTIVENESS)

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the fight against corruption and promote transparency in Ecuador; and the anticipated results included the following:

1. Key Ecuadorian public institutions and civil society parties have a sustained capacity to fight corruption and promote transparency;
2. Ecuadorians are educated and more informed about the value of ethics, integrity, governance and the importance of the democratic process as well as encouraged to report acts of corruption;
3. Public policy project aimed at channeling the recovery of illicit assets to programs of poverty reduction.

It is too soon to determine whether or not key counterparts of the project have a sustained capacity to fight corruption and promote transparency. The Project, as most, did not have a mechanism in place for post-project monitoring of results. The Project did indeed carry out multiple and varied activities aimed at strengthening the fight against corruption, including specialized training for police, prosecutors, judges and other related officials. This training did indeed appear to provide a basic framework for both the National Police and the Public Ministry to investigate and prosecute acts of corruption.

Based on discussions with officials within the Ministry of Education, including teachers, the education system does appear to have benefitted from the incorporation of modules on ethics, good governance and democracy – whether students who have been the “beneficiaries” of these training modules, again, will, in the long term, benefit from such education – e.g., hold themselves and others to higher ethical standards (and tolerate less corruption) is not something that this evaluator can determine at this point. The fact, however, that the project achieved the inclusion of modules on ethics and good governance into the education system is a significant step in this direction.

In terms of efficacy, the publicity campaign seems to have been the strongest pillar of the Project, having used social media to reach large groups of younger people, through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – the YouTube videos will likely remain on that sight and be available for a long period of time, and this facts lends itself to improving the probable effectiveness of this aspect of the project – it would be hard to say the project did not achieve the second above-mentioned anticipated result. In this context, the decision to use social media and internet, instead of TV or radio ads that are of short and fairly finite duration, as modalities for the publicity campaign to promote ethical conduct and transparency was one that probably increased the efficacy of the project. Notwithstanding the above, it would difficult to conclude (positively or negatively) that, at this point, the publicity campaign (or other aspects of the project) produced a reduction in acts of corruption within Ecuador – based on discussions with project staff and counterparts, there were few available measurable indicators of corruption within Ecuador both at the beginning and at the end of the Project – this should be considered a lesson learned for this particular project.

Interviews and feedback from the women’s committee that had been given a policy proposal by project staff, with the aim of producing a law or laws to reduce corruption and to channel illicit assets to poverty reduction programmes, suggest that – in light of the fact that the policy proposal had not yet been converted into law – the project did not, at the time of the conclusion of the project, achieve its third anticipated result – the interviews held with the counterparts on this matter, however, did indicate that the women’s committee would be moving forward with the proposal and would be submitting a draft law to the National Assembly. Given these discussions, the evaluator cannot make a final conclusion with respect to the efficacy of the project in achieving the above-mentioned third anticipated result.

The above comments should take into context that the project did face a number of obstacles in terms (some of which could not be anticipated, such as the police uprising of 30 September 2010) which affected smooth implementation and the fluidity of effectiveness of the project in achieving its overall anticipated results, and overall objective.

With respect to issues beyond the logical framework, it should be noted that, according to several individuals interviewed for this evaluation, including beneficiaries

within the National Police, the project's activities and its staff facilitated a resuscitation of the community police service in Ecuador, as a means of preventing and reducing crime in general – this was an unanticipated and unexpectedly significant result of the project, and points to the issue of the project's capacity to provide some degree of sustainability in addressing what could be termed a sub-thematic or related issue to the overall objective.

The evaluator notes that there likely no other more reasonable approaches or strategies that likely could have been used to try to achieve the project's overall objective in light of the resources available and the understood dynamic at the initiation of the project.

The project did contribute to the 4th Area of Concentration for the United Nations UNDAF 2010-2014 plan, in Ecuador, in which UNODC had pledged to support Ecuador in improving knowledge about, and application of, international obligations in human rights, particularly in the justice sector. According to those interviewed, almost all training provided highlighted the importance of the ethical conduct of public officials and of the citizenry in general. Project work in the development of training modules for primary and secondary school students on issues of ethics, good governance and democracy appears to have contributed as well to this important aspect of the UNDAF Plan for Ecuador.

With respect to lessons learned in terms of effectiveness, the evaluator has noted two areas; one positive, another constructive. Projects of this nature, which include a publicity campaign, should make good use, as this project did, of modern social media frameworks, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to strengthen the reach of such campaigns, particularly on issues in which all citizens can play a role, such as preventing or combating corruption and/or demanding transparency within public institutions. The second lesson learned in terms of effectiveness is in the need for such projects to strengthen their baseline and final data to more accurately measure whether or not, as in the case of this project, there was a measurable reduction in the amount of corruption, at least within certain institutions of the State; or a measurable increase in public demand by the citizenry for transparency within public institutions in Ecuador; this second lesson learned comes with the caveat that UNODC and other key counterparts – in this case the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) should probably not enter into such projects with the understanding or belief that significantly measurable reductions in corruption will occur within any particular country within the time period covered by this project, although there could have been better indicators that a reduction in corruption might be underway.³

³ Based on discussions with counterparts and beneficiaries, as well as project personnel, the challenges in effectively achieving the anticipated results under this project were, probably negatively impacted by what many perceived to be an increasingly difficult culture in which the current Government appeared to be intolerant of reports of any culture of corruption within the State. This made the idea, according to those interviewed, of discussing corruption with public officials and promoting greater transparency within the State slightly more challenging and more delicate, thus presenting a potentially greater impact on the ability of the project to be effective.

D. SUSTAINABILITY

In the context of sustainability, the project's strongest asset may have been its work with the Ministry of Education to develop, and incorporate into the education system, modules on ethics, good governance and democracy. This was a concept borrowed from an earlier UNDEF project in Peru. Discussions with counterparts and beneficiaries indicate that the modules have indeed been included into the education curriculum (levels 3 through 7), and that during the first school year, some 2,800 students received education using these modules; education officials indicated that another 4,000 students would receive education on the modules during the year 2013. There was no indication to suggest that education officials had any plan to remove or reduce the use of the modules, and this bodes well for their sustainability.

Discussions and feedback from officials within the National Police and the Public Ministry, in relation to the anti-corruption training they received through the project, indicate that some officials (number could not be determined) were taking into account the modalities for investigating acts of corruption provided through the training, and that the modalities provided were useful – in a group interview with Police officials, all indicated they were particularly pleased with the type of training provided through the project, and expressed to the evaluator that additional similar training should be provided. Training was also provided to journalists on their role as watchdogs in uncovering acts of corruption, as well as to civil society leaders in encouraging public institutions to act with more transparency. It was noted, however, by this evaluator that there appears to be a somewhat conservative atmosphere in investigating acts of corruption, reporting on acts of corruption, and civil society demands for more transparency, in Ecuador – this may or may not be a result of the dynamic mentioned above, in which the current government administration has taken what some might perceive to be a hard line against reports of acts of corruption within government institutions, resulting principally from the President's court battle and win against a newspaper for libel, and against authors of a book in which it was suggested the President knew of illegal awarding of public contracts.⁴ The complexity of this dynamic, which evolved over the course of the project's duration, probably had an impact on the willingness of the above actors (police, prosecutors, some civil society actors, and specifically journalists) to take concrete measures to combat corruption. In light of this dynamic, part of which might have been possible to foresee by project staff, but somewhat difficult to make timely adjustments given the timing of the judgments, the evaluator could not conclude whether the training provided will have a sustainable impact, or whether timely adjustments in training activities (more an issue of project efficiency) could have been made to increase the likelihood of sustainability.

⁴ See, for example, the following reports:
<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/americas/07/20/ecuador.libel.lawsuit/index.html> and
<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/02/16/2645657/ecuadors-correa-wins-fresh-victory.html>

As mentioned in previous sections, the videos on ethics and good governance, uploaded to YouTube certainly add to the sustainability of the project beyond the project's end date and beyond the end of funding for the project. The decision by project staff to use social media as the principal avenue for the publicity campaign (albeit with adjustments in the messaging of the campaign) will add to the longevity of the project's impact. In addition to the YouTube video links mentioned earlier in this report, please see the attached links as additional examples of the publicity campaign:

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxp1Xjzp8GE>
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d7MOIWL3A8>

It should be noted that the publicity campaign carried out by the Project was nominated, and ultimately was named a semi-finalist, for the *Caracol de la Plata Award*, given to those who carry out media campaigns for social benefit. See the attached link:

<http://www.yosiytu.org/2012/12/19/yo-si-y-tu-es-una-de-las-semi-finalistas-en-el-concurso-internacional-caracol-de-plata/>

E. GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

According to project staff and counterparts, the project facilitated the training of female police officers and prosecutors, and encouraged female members of civil society to participate directly in the activities of the project. Based on review of reports and documents of the launch of the education modules, many female teachers were involved in the incorporation of the modules into the education system. The Project Manager had also conveyed to the Public Ministry and the National Police that more females should be involved in all training activities.

The training modules developed for primary and secondary school students also conveyed the importance and value of equality in the context of ethical conduct. It appears that both UNODC and ESQUEL did convey a significant amount of emphasis on the UN principle of encouraging a reverse in gender imbalance.

At the time of the evaluation, the evaluator could not obtain a record of the number of females trained under the project, although beneficiaries clearly indicated that there were a "significant" number involved in the training.

Copies of training material provided to the evaluator showed that while training for police and prosecutors emphasized more efficient investigations with respect to acts of corruption, the material also highlighted that stronger penalties were not always the appropriate response, and would thus run contrary to the interest of ensuring basic human rights. Project personnel indicated that training that would encourage stronger penalties in cases involving corruption can inadvertently facilitate higher rates

of recidivism, in light of the fact that those imprisoned for acts of corruption (not necessarily violent crimes) for a lengthy period of time might be more vulnerable to associating themselves with more hardened criminals – e.g., those involved in more violent crime. Interviews with project personnel indicated that they had been careful to stress, particularly in the Ecuadorian dynamic, that harsher penalties were not ideal in terms of a broader, more successful approach to fighting corruption. In this context, it would appear that, in the training carried out, there was an effort to balance the fight against corruption with encouraging officials to avoid abusing certain human rights.

The evaluator notes that, in terms of lessons learned, although it appears based on discussions with all interviewed that many females were indeed trained by the project, stronger record keeping could have been made by ESQUEL (and confirmed by UNODC) with respect to the number of females trained, and by institution.

F. SYNERGIES AND COOPERATION

Based on interviews with individuals in ESQUEL, and with key counterparts (such as the Ministry of Education, the National Police, and the advertising agency NOTUSLINK, which developed the publicity campaign spots), it appears a good amount of coordination effort was undertaken to implement the activities of the project. While civil society entities do not appear to generally have strong relationships with public entities such as the National Police, feedback from the entities suggest that ESQUEL is an exception to the rule, and this probably facilitated smoother coordination of training activities with the National Police and as mentioned above facilitated the National Police's efforts to rebuild its community police service (see remarks under "Efficacy").

The evaluator reviewed agreements signed between ESQUEL and other entities (from both the public and private sector), demonstrating that ESQUEL was capable of negotiating and finalizing coordination mechanisms to facilitate implementation of the Project. An agreement reviewed by this evaluator (between ESQUEL and the advertising agency NOTUSLINK), when compared with the principal obligations or outputs required of NOTUSLINK, indicate that these obligations were met, and that, based on discussions late in the project between ESQUEL, UNODC and NOTUSLINK, an additional two spots were negotiated to be completed without added cost to the project.

Based on interviews with both ESQUEL and UNODC personnel, there appears to have been a very good working relationship to facilitate execution of the project, and to troubleshoot any problems that arose. Personnel from both UNODC and ESQUEL also indicated that, when administrative support was required from UNDP Ecuador (e.g., to facilitate payments, or the creation of consultancy contracts), this was enlisted and good synergy appears to have taken place.

It should also be noted that nearly all of the publicity material produced through the project included visibility for the entity that financed the project, the UN Democracy Fund. E-mail reviewed by the evaluator indicate that the Project Manager communicated a possible need to extend the project duration, that the extension was in fact later requested, and that the UN Democracy Fund approved this request based on the justification and explanation set forth by the Project Manager.

With respect to lessons learned, interviews with project personnel indicated that where the principal UNODC office that manages a project is located in a country other than that in which the project is being executed, extra effort needs to be undertaken to ensure constant and clear communication (in this case, principally with the implementing NGO ESQUEL) is established and maintained to ensure effective execution of the project.

V. LIMITATIONS

The principal limitation that may have hindered the project was the unforeseen uprising of elements within the National Police on September 30, 2010. As mentioned, this caused a delay in the implementation of several project activities, principally those involving scheduled training of police, and ultimately forced the Project Manager to request a six-month extension of the project

Another limitation on the project appears to have been an increasing climate, over the same time period of the project, of intolerance of claims of acts of corruption – this may have affected the ability of the project to produce greater impact in terms of training (for example, training of journalists on their role as watchdogs in revealing acts of corruption – given the dynamic mentioned in the sections above, it appears journalists in the country were increasingly reluctant to report on acts of corruption). The same dynamic clearly affected the project’s orientation of its planned publicity campaign, but this appears to have been well handled by project personnel in terms of re-orienting the campaign toward one of promoting ethical conduct, and by the decision to use social media, to appeal to a younger audience.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned at the beginning of this document, the purpose of this evaluation was to determine the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and synergies, as well as any impact on gender and human rights in the context of whether the project had achieved its overall objective.

1. In light of the extensive amount of reported corruption in Ecuador, and the high degree of concern expressed by officials, particularly in the justice sector, as

well as NGOs, a project of this nature appeared to be both timely and relevant. Numerous officials expressed concern over the lack of effort to better combat corruption. While this project was not meant to address comprehensively the many aspects of corruption in the country, it was indeed relevant and useful; the project design was clearly relevant given the needs and priorities identified at the beginning of the project. The project responded to these needs with a combination of specific training activities (for the public and private sector), a publicity campaign and, among other activities, the development of modules on ethics, good governance and democracy for the Ecuadorian education system. Despite the clear relevance of the activities, the dynamic in Ecuador, as discussed throughout the above sections and much of which could not have been reasonably foreseen, inhibited the overall impact of the project and probably limited the ability of the project to fully achieve its objective.

2. The project appears to have been consistent with UNODC's effort to promote implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
3. UNODC held discussions with key counterparts during the conception of this project, identified all of the relevant counterparts and beneficiaries, and responded with a list of activities that were based on the needs expressed by authorities, and by key civil society actors.
4. The project identified activities that would address (both in the short-term and long-term) corruption, transparency and ethical conduct; the project responded to concerns of the Government of Ecuador by identifying both urgent (capacity building) and long-term impact (education on ethics within primary and secondary schools) measures to implement.
5. This evaluator cannot, at the time of this evaluation, conclude whether – in a project aimed at reducing corruption and promoting transparency – any long-term impact will ultimately be achieved as a result of the project. This said, for the period of the project, a reasonable foundation appears to have been provided to officials and institutions (including the National Police and Ministry of Education) to establish a long-term, sustainable impact – again, the use of social media in the publicity campaign was likely a benefit to the overall long-term sustainability and impact of the project. UNODC may wish to consider that, in the future, projects of this nature include, where possible, a component for post-project feedback to UNODC, to allow UNODC and other key stakeholders to better assess long-term impact.
6. Counterparts were generally satisfied with the quality of the advice, training and technical support provided by both ESQUEL and UNODC in this Project.

7. Reasonably anticipated risks were identified and, when those risks surfaced during the course of this project, project management responded appropriately.
8. Although suffering from the above-mentioned limitations, the project was satisfactorily carried out; notwithstanding this the following lessons learned should be taken into account for future projects.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Strong working relations (and regular dialogue) with the National Police and other counterparts are useful in overcoming relatively unforeseeable events, such as what occurred during the execution of this particular project – an uprising of elements within the National which ultimately affected the project’s training schedule. These strong working relationships helped the project overcome an unforeseeable event and re-establish an adjusted timeline for execution (particularly for training), as well as timeline that would facilitate impact.
2. Projects of this nature, which include a publicity campaign, should make good use, as this project did, of modern social media frameworks, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to strengthen the reach of such campaigns, particularly on issues in which all citizens can play a role, such as preventing or combating corruption and/or demanding transparency within public institutions.
3. Projects of this nature should seek to ensure, where possible, stronger baseline and final data to more accurately measure whether or not, there was a measurable reduction in the amount of corruption, at least within certain institutions of the State; or a measurable increase in public demand by the citizenry for transparency within public institutions in Ecuador; this second lesson learned comes with the caveat that UNODC and other key counterparts – in this case the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) should probably not enter into such projects with the understanding or belief that significantly measurable reductions in corruption will occur within any particular country within the time period covered by this project, although there could have been better indicators that a reduction in corruption might be underway. Similar baseline and final data should be better established with respect to the number of females trained, and by institution.
4. Where the principal UNODC office that manages a project is located in a country other than that in which the project is being executed, extra effort needs to be undertaken to ensure constant and clear communication (in this case, principally with the implementing NGO) is established and maintained to

ensure effective execution of the project. This was in fact done in this particular project, but is noted here as a reminder for potential future projects.

5. Although not generated by this project, the project's publicity campaign was nominated, and became a semi-finalist, for an international award. This added to visibility for both the project and for the UN Democracy Fund. As this nomination was not contemplated by the project, the lesson noted here is that, for visibility purposes, future projects may want to maintain awareness of publicity (international award) opportunities of this nature.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Where possible, projects of this nature should take advantage of the breadth and potential impact of using social media for publicity campaigns, as well as a means of marketing other activities of the project (e.g., training carried out).
2. Projects related to strengthening the fight against corruption and improving transparency, because of their nature, should likely be understood as long-term efforts, especially in countries where corruption is considered an important part of the culture of doing business. The programming of activities to fight corruption is even more difficult in some areas of the country where there is a general absence of the state, or the absence of the rule of law. Consequently, UNODC, in developing anti-corruption projects and projects in favor of transparency, should consider that these projects have a duration of at least two years minimum and include mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability (not just within public institutions, but in the citizenry as well) to instill transparency and ethical behavior.
3. UNODC should take special note that, while a much can be achieved through the implementation of projects and programs to fight corruption, there is a range of unethical behavior which does not reach the level of the criminal definition of "corruption". It might, therefore, be useful for UNODC, in the development of future projects of this nature, to consider activities that address the prevention, monitoring and sanctioning of this unethical conduct, before it reaches the level of criminal corruption – this would likely help UNODC better position itself on crime prevention. Providing expertise to countries in strengthening transparency, strengthening the rule of law, promoting and rewarding ethical behavior, and strengthening mechanisms of administrative penalties for violations of ethical conduct would likely broaden the appeal of the brand of UNODC, and help avoid the perception that the anti-corruption approach of UNODC is mainly against crime, rather than the broader areas of unethical conduct and crime prevention.

4. Anti-corruption projects of this nature may wish to replicate the idea used in this project, as well as the previously-funded UNDEF Peru-based project, to develop and incorporate into the educational system modules on ethics, good governance and democracy. While this evaluation could not definitively measure the impact of this particular activity within this project, feedback from beneficiaries and counterparts under this project strongly suggest that such an activity is a good investment in terms of long-term impact. Incorporation of such an activity in future projects should be accompanied by some mechanism for post-project follow-up to measure the degree of impact (e.g., forums with teachers, and student beneficiaries to receive feedback).

RUBEN QUISPE CUEVA
CONSULTANT

ANNEXES:

1. Desk Review List

- a. Project Document – ECUT87FPE
- b. Agreement between UNODC and Fundación ESQUEL
- c. Work plan – ECUT87FPE
- d. Chronogram of disbursements - Fundación ESQUEL
- e. Terms of Reference and Contract (NOTUSLINK)
- f. Social media platform for implementation of publicity campaign (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts set up by project)
- g. Narrative Progress Reports – Fundación ESQUEL
- h. Narrative Progress Reports (NOTUSLINK)
- i. Semi-Annual Project Progress Reports (ProFi)
- j. Annual Project Reports (ProFi)
- k. Final Project Narrative Report - UNDEF

2. List of Persons Contacted During the Evaluation

- a. James Shaw, Project Manager, UNODC Regional Office for Peru and Ecuador
- b. Silvia Loayza, Financial and Administrative Assistant, UNODC Regional Office for Peru and Ecuador
- c. Boris Cornejo, Executive President, Fundación ESQUEL
- d. Wendy Almeida, Project Planning Coordinator, Fundación ESQUEL
- e. Pamela Villacrés, Cooperation Specialist, Fundación ESQUEL
- f. Evelyn Armas, Financial Assistant, Fundación ESQUEL
- g. Mayra Mejía, Coordinadora de Comunicación, Fundación ESQUEL
- h. Mery Jimenez, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
- i. Coronel Hector Mejia, National Police (Intelligence Services)
- j. Coronel David Polanco, National Police (Anti-Organized Crime)
- k. Sr. Camilo Carcelén, General Manager, NOTUSLINK
- l. Roberto Betancourt, NOTUSLINK
- m. Lorena Burey, Chief, International Cooperation Section, Office of the Attorney General for Ecuador
- n. Maria Teresa Alvarez, Assistant, International Cooperation Section, Office of the Attorney General for Ecuador
- o. Dr. Iván del Pozo, Chief Anti-Corruption Prosecutor, Public Ministry
- p. Andrés Buitrón, Chief, Victim and Witness Protection Programme, Office of the Attorney General for Ecuador
- q. Lt. Coronel Fausto Salinas, Community Police Planning, National Police, Ecuador
- r. Diego Cornejo Menacho, Ecuadorian Association of Press Editors (AEDEP)
- s. Gabriela Vallejo, UNODC Project Office, Ecuador
