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EVALUATION REPORT



TRANSTEC
PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

**UDF-SOM-07-168 Strengthening Somali Media Capacity for Democracy and
Human Rights**

Date: 28 October 2011

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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Map of Somalia ©UN

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	4
(i) Project and evaluation objectives	4
(ii) Evaluation methodology.....	4
(iii) Development context	6
III. PROJECT STRATEGY	8
(i) Project approach and strategy	8
(ii) Logical framework	9
IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS.....	10
(i) Relevance	10
(ii) Effectiveness.....	11
(iii) Efficiency.....	12
(iv) Impact.....	12
(v) Sustainability	13
(vi) UNDEF added value	13
V. CONCLUSIONS.....	14
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
VII. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND CLOSING THOUGHTS	16
VIII. ANNEXES.....	17
ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS:.....	17
ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:	18
ANNEX 3: PERSONS INTERVIEWED	19
ANNEX 4 : ACRONYMS	20
ANNEX 5: OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA	21

I. Executive Summary

(i) Project Data

This report is the evaluation of the project “Strengthening Somali media capacity for democracy and human rights” implemented by the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), from September 2008 to August 2010. The project budget was US\$180,000. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Somali media to “implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights”, by providing professional training to Somali journalists across the country, focusing on ethics and good journalistic practices, and holding workshops on good governance and human rights.

(ii) Evaluation Findings

The project was undoubtedly **relevant** in that it responded to a need: the professional capacity of Somali journalists is low, as is their understanding of human rights and good governance. The use of training sessions and workshops was appropriate to address the issue of journalists’ skills development. The media center was also a useful tool helping journalists do their work. However, the project’s relevance suffered from poor design and strategic thinking: the planned activities were not sufficient to address all its objectives. The project’s failure explicitly to address editors, producers and publishers/owners also diminished its relevance.

NUSOJ has been **effective** in implementing the planned series of trainings and workshops and in establishing the media center. It effectively used opportunities given by the changing security situation to implement virtually its entire program of training sessions. The number of participating journalists was on target. The ratio of women participants (30%) was also roughly on target. This is a very significant achievement, considering the prevalence of armed violence and high levels of political instability in many parts of Somalia during the project period.

The project was **efficient**: activities took place within budget and within the planned period. It may be argued that the cost of the activities (about US\$500 per participant, plus the cost of the media center) was relatively high, but this is largely justified by the conflict context. Somalia is an expensive country because the civil war leads to multiple shortages in goods and services and increases to the cost of transportation. These factors increased logistical costs. With this caveat, there is no particular concern about the cost of activities.

Conditions prevailing in Somalia, as well as the impossibility for the evaluators to visit Somalia, have made assessment of **impact** difficult. Some participants in training and workshops have stated that they understand human rights better as a result of the sessions. In view of the fact that training and workshops involved about 300 of the estimated 600 journalists working in Somalia, the project appears to have benefited a significant proportion of Somalia’s journalists. On the other hand the failure of the project to address other stakeholders (government, editors) reduced the likelihood that positive changes will stem from the project in terms of media coverage of human rights and government attitude to the media. However the very fact that the project took place has to be seen as an achievement in its own right. Its impact lies primarily in the positive signal it sends to the journalistic community in Somalia, that the international community is supportive of ethical journalism based on human rights values and principles of good governance.

Sustainability was a relative weakness. The project has probably built the capacity of individual journalists, but there were no plans to help with follow-up and continued capacity building. Conditions in Somalia would in any case have made it difficult to implement any follow-up support, but existing communications platforms (NUSOJ website, social networks) could have been used to reinforce liaison among journalists.

This project was illustrative of **UNDEF added value** in that it was the only one addressing the needs of journalists in Somalia. Other organisations had recognised that need for years, and some steps had been taken to meet it through training outside the country, but this is the first – and so far only – project that took the training to journalists across Somalia (where accessible) and that managed to implement a complete schedule of sessions despite the on-going civil war. It is also noteworthy that it did so while taking gender balance among participants into account.

Nevertheless the project would have benefitted significantly from additional strategic advice. Conditions in Somalia are obviously challenging for any organisation no matter how excellent its management capacity. But NUSOJ had understandable organisational weaknesses and was itself in need of support. Additional “hand-holding” by a partner organisation would probably have helped NUSOJ make better use of its members’ energy and commitment to engage in advocacy on matters of rights and policy.

(iii) Conclusions

- The project **identified a clear need** on the part of Somali journalists, and went a long way towards meeting that need. This conclusion follows from findings (i) and (ii).

- The project was highly ambitious, purporting to address a range of aims and objectives. However, **the project design did not address all the objectives**, which resulted in some objectives not being adequately fulfilled. This conclusion derives from findings (i) and (iv).

- Although they were extremely pro-active and implemented activities in a cogent manner, **the project implementers lacked strategic vision**, which contributed to the project’s failure to integrate a greater advocacy dimension on freedom of expression and on the media’s role in monitoring governance. This conclusion stems from findings (i), (iii) and (vi).

- In view of the highly troubled context, **the project achieved a remarkable degree of effectiveness**, all planned activities being implemented during the project period and on schedule. This conclusion stems from findings (ii) and (iii).

- The project took due account of the requirements of gender balance in terms of participation. However **the contents of the training sessions did not sufficiently emphasize the gender aspects** of human rights and governance, which are particularly important in a conflict context such as Somalia’s. This conclusion stems from findings (i) and (iii).

- The sheer implementation of the project is sending **an important positive signal of the international community’s support** for freedom of expression and good governance in Somalia. Although sustainability is always a challenge in troubled

contexts such as Somalia's, **the project has laid valuable groundwork for future action** in support of media freedom. This conclusion stems from findings (iv), (v) and (vi).

▪ **This is a project, and a situation, in which the implementer would have benefited from close strategic advice.** For all its leaders' commitment and activism, NUSOJ lacked project management capacity and above all lacked the time and the inclination to consider "big picture" policy and strategic issues. NUSOJ to some extent anticipated its own weakness by suggesting in the project document that an Advisory Committee including UN representatives would be appointed to help it implement the project. It is regrettable that this committee did not get established, partly because NUSOJ did not follow up on the idea (UN agencies in Kenya would in any case have been hard-pressed to devote the human resources needed to provide the kind of guidance NUSOJ needed).

(iv) Recommendations

▪ **NUSOJ should consider seeking support for a follow-up project taking account of the lessons learned** on this one. In particular, any follow-up project should include an advocacy dimension directed at government and local authorities, and should consider ways in which training sessions can be followed-up to further support participating journalists, for example through the use of social networks. See conclusions (i), (ii) and (iii).

▪ **Any new project should include a significant dimension concerning gender rights awareness.** This is particularly relevant in the Somali context, in which women are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses due to civil war. See conclusion (v).

▪ **Any new project should include an element of strategic support to NUSOJ,** to complement its members' activism. The modalities of such support may vary (partnership with another organization, use of the Advisory Committee model foreseen in this project but not implemented). However the need for strategic support is clear, and meeting this need could significantly enhance the impact of a future project. See conclusions (ii) and (iii).

▪ **Any new project should take account of the low level of journalistic skills of the more junior Somali journalists** and include basic journalistic skills training. Other forms of training, such as mentoring of junior journalists by more senior one, should also be considered. See conclusions (i) and (ii).

II. Introduction and development context

(i) Project and evaluation objectives

This report is the evaluation of the project “Strengthening Somali media capacity for democracy and human rights” implemented by the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), from September 2008 to August 2010. The UNDEF grant amount was US\$200,000. Since US\$20,000 was retained by UNDEF for monitoring and evaluation purposes, the project costs amounted to US\$180,000. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Somali media to “implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights”, by providing professional training to Somali journalists across the country, focusing on ethics and good journalistic practices, and holding workshops on good governance and human rights.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

Two international experts carried out the evaluation. The methodology of the evaluation is set out in the Operational Manual governing the UNDEF-Transtec framework agreement, with brief additions in the evaluation Launch Note. In accordance with the agreed process, a set of project documents was provided to the evaluators in February 2011 (see list of documents consulted in Annex 2). On that basis, they prepared the Launch Note UDF-SOM-07-168 setting out issues to be considered during the evaluation.

Though sticking to the broad outline of the agreed approach, this particular project evaluation amended the methodology in view of the fact that a field visit to Somalia was inadvisable for security reasons. Having taken the decision to not undertake a field visit, Transtec, in consultation with NUSOJ, proposed in the Launch Note to carry out interviews in Nairobi (Kenya) instead of Mogadishu. The following elements motivated this choice:

- A significant number of Somali journalists, including NUSOJ members and leaders, have gone into exile in Kenya, and live in Nairobi or “commute” between the Somali-Kenyan border and Nairobi.
- Many other individuals and institutions working on Somalia, or monitoring the situation in that country, are currently based in Nairobi.
- UNDP staff working on Somalia are also, for a significant part, based in Nairobi.

During his stay in Nairobi, from 28 May to 2 June 2011, the evaluation team leader conducted interviews with seven NUSOJ leaders and journalists who had taken part in training sessions organized by NUSOJ in Somalia, out of the roughly 300 journalists who had been trained according to NUSOJ. He also sent an email questionnaire to another 23 journalists based in Somalia, and received four responses. In addition, he met in person or spoke on the phone with a further six experts with knowledge of the situation in Somalia, particularly regarding the media: representatives of NGOs working on Somalia, analysts of the conflict, economists and diplomats following the situation in the country. A seventh expert responded to email questions (see list of people met in Annex 3).

Impact of the conflict context and humanitarian situation on the methodology

In general, the evaluation methodology developed by Transtec and UNDEF is flexible enough to adapt to a variety of situations, with little change. However, the severity and duration of the conflict in Somalia have required that extra attention be paid to the impact of the conflict on project design and implementation. The conflict had to be taken into

account in relation to all the evaluation criteria: the evaluation questions (listed in Annex 1) had to take account of the fact that the project was designed, managed and implemented in a highly unstable and politically very delicate climate.¹

The humanitarian situation was also an important element that was taken into account in the conduct of the evaluation. Somalia is considered a “failed” or “fragile” state by many donors and financial institutions, its ranking on a range of international indices on items such as food security and MDG implementation is dismal.

Most evaluation interviews took place before the humanitarian consequences of southern Somalia’s drought became clear, but the journalists who benefited from the project had nevertheless been subjected to the impact of years of insecurity (food and otherwise) on themselves and their families.

The humanitarian and conflict context was taken into consideration when assessing the project under the standard evaluation criteria. The evaluation questions listed in Annex 1 were interpreted in a manner that took account of the context, as follows:

- **Relevance:** in Somalia, assistance needs are so great that almost any project meets a need of some kind. However the context made it particularly difficult to achieve strategic objectives because of the high degree of instability. It was also clear that risk assessment and mitigation strategies were constrained by political violence.
- **Effectiveness:** the situation in Somalia meant that factors beyond the control of the project managers were always going to dictate what could be achieved or not. In assessing effectiveness, the evaluation therefore considered not just whether planned objectives were met, but also whether project implementers took appropriate advantage of any window of opportunity to take action.
- **Efficiency:** the context posed a particular challenge in relation to assessing the criterion of the relationship between project inputs and outputs. It was necessary to take into account the cost of the very flexibility that was required to implement activities.
- **Impact:** the context of political violence and social disruption lowered the level of expectations in relation to impact. By nature, civil conflicts destroy peacetime social links. Information and communications are such links, and are particularly targeted by politically motivated violence of the kind exercised by the parties to the Somalia conflict.
- **Sustainability:** again, the context brings constraints to both aspects of this criterion (continuation of impact and capacity to continue implementation). In assessing these aspects, the evaluation had to rely on indirect, subjective indications given by stakeholders, rather than on clear evidence.
- **UNDEF value added:** it was clear in this context that UNDEF’s contribution had to be assessed against the huge constraints and limitations facing any project in Somalia.

A consideration common to all the criteria concerns information. All ex-post evaluation benefit from hindsight: this is a particular advantage in unstable and relatively

¹ A basic chronology of the 20 years of conflict in Somalia is given in Annex 5.

unpredictable contexts such as Somalia's. The evaluators try to assess the project, to the extent possible, taking into account the information that was available at the time to project implementers, thus mitigating elements that may appear misjudged in hindsight.

Finally, attention is drawn to the political context. The civil war in Somalia has multiple dimensions: ethnicity and clans, religion, ideology, economy, geopolitics, to name but a few. These affect everyone in the country, including journalists and other project stakeholders. The evaluation tried to remain as impartial as possible in relation to the fault lines dividing Somalis, although it constantly bore in mind the democratic values and international human rights principles embodied by the United Nations.

(iii) Development context

Somalia has been plagued by armed conflict throughout the period of the UNDEF-funded project. Indeed, most Somalis have known only armed conflict in their country all their adult life – except to some extent for those living in Somaliland, northwest of the country, which has achieved a degree of stability since declaring unilateral independence in 1991 (Puntland in the north and some parts of central Somalia have also been relatively stable in recent years, while armed violence was strongest in the south of the country).

The humanitarian impact of the conflict includes, according to UN estimates, the internal displacement of 1.5 million Somalis as of late 2010. Also according to UN estimates, the number of those affected by the 2011 drought is in the millions.

There is a pattern of impunity for those responsible for human rights violations, including the killing of journalists. Some armed groups, as well as Transitional Federal Government (TFG) troops, reportedly apply disciplinary measures against some officers found to commit serious abuses. However any such occurrences appear to be unsystematic and fail to meet international humanitarian (let alone human rights) standards.

The situation of the media

There is no up-to-date authoritative survey of the situation of the media in Somalia. The most recent published study is a 2005 survey by the BBC World Service Trust survey, which estimates that there were about 350 practising journalists in Somalia that year. NUSOJ, the project's implementer, currently claims a greater membership (about 600) but this includes journalists based outside the country and people who may not currently be working as journalists.

The following types of media are present in Somalia:

- Radio: according to NUSOJ journalists, there are about three dozens radio stations across the country, up from an estimated 22 in 2007, according to the NGO International Media Support (IMS), most of which reportedly operate without formal license. There is no nationwide radio station.
- TV: IMS indicates that in 2007 there were two TV stations in Puntland, three in Somaliland and two in Mogadishu, one of which was government-run. UNDP estimated in 2001 that 600,000 people had access to TV. NUSOJ journalists believe this figure to have increased markedly since, but that the increase has mostly benefited satellite channels.
- Newspapers: according to the BBC survey of 2005, the written press is strongest in Somaliland. UNDP estimated in 2002 that there were over 60 newspapers across the country, published at least once per month. Most of the functioning newspapers are reportedly located in Mogadishu and in Somaliland. According to

NUSOJ journalists, print runs are below 1,500 for most newspapers, and editorial quality is low. As elsewhere in Africa, the lack of production facilities as well as low literacy rates and disposable incomes are key obstacles facing the press.

- Internet news: this is the key change in news availability in Somalia in recent years. There are dozens of news websites in Somali, or Somali and English. Some are linked, openly or otherwise, to armed groups or the TFG, and others are related to NGOs – including the website of NUSOJ itself, for example, or to radio stations or newspapers. Some of the websites carry advertisement as a source of revenue. Overall these websites offer a fairly broad range of news, views and opinions on the situation in Somalia, though news reporting standards are reported to be of variable quality. According to Internet World statistics, about 106,000 people in Somalia had access to the Internet in mid-2011. This represented a small proportion of the population (just over 1%, on the basis of UN population estimates) but marked a rapid increase from a very low base. The actual audience of the websites is probably much larger, because many computers with Internet access are used by groups of people and because news taken from websites are rebroadcast by radio stations.

The key challenge common to all media is the political control of news. Formal media legislation is out of date and fitfully applied, but the TFG and armed groups both seek to influence news reporting through ownership or influence over media outlets, or through direct pressure on journalists. NUSOJ and international NGOs report that scores of journalists are killed, wounded or “disappeared” each year, largely as a result of such pressure.

Another challenge is that journalists often lack in-depth professional skills. Few journalists have received formal training, and many learn on the job. This challenge is compounded by low pay (or lack of pay altogether), which limits the ability of journalists to exercise their profession sustainably.

Target population

The project mainly targeted NUSOJ journalists, and secondarily also benefited people who were not professional journalists but contributed information to radio stations and websites. The project document made no direct reference to owners, publishers or producers, although these are important stakeholders in their own right. Political leaders and government authorities were also not specifically addressed.



Participants at the June 2010 workshop (see box on p. 11). Photo: © UNDP

III. Project strategy

(i) Project approach and strategy

The project developed by NUSOJ was based on the view that “the increase in the number of media outlets in Somalia has corresponded with the arrival on the labor market of a generation of journalists unskilled in either the basics of the profession or in its ethical requirements”. NUSOJ also noted that the increase in outlets did not necessarily lead to an increase in pluralism and freedom of opinion. NUSOJ also noted that Somalia was an exceptionally dangerous place for journalists due to the frequency of violent attacks against journalists and other contributors of information to the media.

In view of these findings, the project’s objectives, as set out in the Project Document, were:

- To build the capacity of journalists to report about peace building and democratisation; and
- To promote the role of the media in building democratic governance.

More broadly the project also aimed at:

- “Promoting an environment in which an independent, sustainable, pluralistic and professional media sector can flourish”;
- “Providing professional training and development opportunities to Somali media professionals”;
- Enhancing the role of journalism “in promoting democracy, peace and reconciliation”;
- and
- “Raising public awareness about corruption, human rights violations and other abuses of power, and contributing to the debate on appropriate solutions”.

Merely listing these objectives and aims demonstrates how ambitious the project was – particularly in view of the context described in the previous section. The high-level objectives and aims also contrast with the narrow scope of proposed activities, which were the following:

- Preparation of training materials and identification of trainers and workshop facilitators;
- Establishment of a media center in Mogadishu; and
- Organization of training sessions and workshops.

It is clear that the project was in effect focused on training journalists. The broader objectives and aims, which would have required a sustained and coordinated advocacy strategy, were in fact not explicitly addressed in the project design.

One proposed activity was the establishment of a media center in Mogadishu. The nature and specific objectives of that center were not made clear in the project document. Interviews with NUSOJ representatives showed that the media center was in fact the NUSOJ headquarters office, equipped with computers and Internet access. This allowed NUSOJ itself to function more effectively thanks to the telecommunication equipment and payment of rent. Journalists were also able to use the facilities for their work.

There were no formal project partners, though NUSOJ did work with academics and TFG government officials (as workshop facilitators) as well as with the authorities in Puntland, in the case of workshops held there.

As foreseen in the project document, the timing of activities was heavily influenced by the context of hostilities. This meant that NUSOJ had to make flexible use of opportunities to implement workshops at times when conflict was subsiding. In the same way, there were delays in the establishment of the media center – which was inaccessible to most journalists for a period because of fighting.

The project document originally anticipated that an Advisory Committee would contribute to the management of the project, in support of NUSOJ. The document said that UNDP and other UN agencies would be invited to join that committee. However, NUSOJ had not checked with the relevant UN Country Team whether they would be able to join that committee. In the event, the Advisory Committee that was established at the start of the project only included NUSOJ members and no UN representative. UNDP did provide some input when requested, such as sending an observer to one of the workshops. There were also more informal discussions between NUSOJ and UNDP staff over the years, but these did not amount to the formal UN contribution to project management that was foreseen in the original design.

(ii) Logical framework

The table below summarizes the project design as presented by NUSOJ, and makes explicit the links between activities and expected objectives. The project document included a results framework setting out baseline data, outputs, activities and timelines. However it did not include a full logical framework and did not explicitly link the project's aims and objectives to specific activities: as a result, the framework presented below is *ex-post facto*. The table maintains the distinction established by NUSOJ between training sessions and workshops, even though both sets of meetings effectively covered similar ground.

Project activities	Intended outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Long-term development objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project implementation capacity 	Training sessions and workshops are implemented; training material is developed	NUSOJ capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming Project Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 Training sessions for journalists on best practices in journalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating journalists training on human rights and role of the media 	Journalists gain knowledge of human rights, capacity to research human rights stories	Contribution to more democratic debate in Somalia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Workshops for journalists on good governance, human rights, rule of law, media governance etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of good governance and freedom of expression among participating journalists and other stakeholders 	Stage set for enhanced dialogue on governance and rights between journalists, governments and others (academics, etc.).	Contribution to improved governance, reduced impunity for human rights violations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a Media centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of journalists' work, access to Internet 	Provision of workspace to journalists, advice on Internet use.	Enhanced professional skills of journalists

IV. Evaluation findings

The following findings stem from the evidence gathered by the evaluators.

(i) **Relevance**

The project undoubtedly responded to a need: the professional capacity of Somali journalists is low, as is their understanding of human rights and good governance. Outside observers such as representatives of media NGOs concur on this view. There was also a need to address democratic development issues such as good governance and advocacy for freedom of expression, which were also among the objectives of the project.

The use of training sessions and workshops was appropriate to address the issue of journalists' skills development. The media center was also a useful tool helping journalists do their work. It is clear that the civil war context hampered the implementation of all these activities: however the difficulties were largely anticipated, and NUSOJ was able to navigate the conflict in a flexible manner, using available opportunities to implement activities. The conflict situation itself, therefore, did not significantly hamper the relevance of the project.

However, the project's relevance suffered from poor design and strategic thinking:

- The project was poorly designed, in that the planned activities (training, workshops and media center) were not sufficient to address all its objectives. In particular, the promotion of the role of the media and freedom of expression should have been the object of advocacy activities beyond the workshops. NUSOJ representatives did conduct some advocacy activities, but these were not part of the UNDEF-funded project and addressed mainly the international community.
- The project design failed to take into account a factor that NUSOJ had nevertheless anticipated: that many junior journalists often lack basic training in journalism (and not only awareness of rights, good governance, etc.). Knowing this lack of skills, NUSOJ could have been expected to address it by including more practical exercises in the training curriculum, or by providing some form of mentoring to

Example of a project activity: workshop in Mogadishu

In June 2010, NUSOJ organised a three-day workshop for journalists in Mogadishu, aimed at enhancing their reporting skills on human rights, good governance and democracy. UNDP Somalia sent an observer to the workshop.

About 30 Mogadishu-based journalists, including 13 women, took part in the workshop, led by three (male) facilitators: a lawyer, a senior editor and a Director at the Ministry of Information. The workshop covered issues such as the right to freedom of expression, the link between good governance and free expression, ethics of accurate reporting, the role of the media in supporting the rule of law, etc.

The workshop was well received by participants, who reportedly found the information provided valuable. However, NUSOJ representatives later noted that some journalists lacked basic reporting skills and could therefore not make full use of the knowledge imparted during that session.

Similar workshops were held in 10 other locations across Somalia between 2008 and 2010, with about 300 participants, 30% of whom were women.

less experienced journalists. This was not done: interviews with some of the more junior participants in training sessions suggest that some of them were unable to understand some of the issues raised, and therefore did not draw a lasting benefit from the sessions.

- The project's virtually exclusive focus on journalists themselves was a weakness: many journalists fail to publish stories on human rights and good governance because editors and owners refuse them. The project's failure explicitly to address editors, producers and publishers/owners therefore diminished its relevance.
- The project also failed adequately to involve government authorities where this was possible. Although local officials were informed of activities, and occasionally invited to take part, there was no explicit attempt to convey the concerns of journalists to authorities or otherwise to associate them to a search for policy solutions.²

Some non-NUSOJ sources have raised a separate point, noting that, as a journalists' union, NUSOJ was perceived by some Somalis as being politically biased. It is undeniable that NUSOJ had better relations with the TFG and some local authorities than with opposition armed groups. However there is no specific indication that this situation significantly hampered the relevance of the project. In particular, it is not clear that NUSOJ's perceived political positioning prevented the participation of some journalists: no trainings or workshops were held in al-Shabaab-held areas of Somalia, but that had more to do with the militias' hostility to free media than with the reputation of NUSOJ.

(ii) Effectiveness

NUSOJ has been effective in implementing the planned series of trainings and workshops and in establishing the media center. It effectively used opportunities given by the changing security situation to implement virtually its entire program of training sessions, with the caveat that the location of some sessions was changed. Lists of participants submitted by NUSOJ (but impossible to confirm independently) indicate that the number of participating journalists was on target. The ratio of women participants (30%) was also roughly on target.

"I found the training really valuable. We learned how to report human rights stories. As a result I felt more confident producing radio broadcasts about women in the civil war."

Waris, training participant

This is a very significant achievement, considering the terrible conditions in Somalia. Nevertheless, there are concerns about aspects of effectiveness, some of which stem from the project design issues raised in the section on relevance:

- The failure to adequately engage editors and publishers/owners undermined the ability of the project to achieve its objectives, because the value of work on human rights, good governance and freedom of expression was not specifically conveyed to this important set of stakeholders.

² NUSOJ representatives note in response that they engage in dialogue with authorities as part of their journalists' union work, separately from the project. Although this is a reasonable point, it remains that the project itself could have benefited from greater engagement with authorities on matters of policy and media regulation, and on human rights safeguards in general.

- On the gender side, while the ratio of women participants was satisfactory, the information given by NUSOJ about the contents of the training suggests that women's rights were only addressed marginally. This is a concern, particularly in the Somali context, as women have been major victims of war-related violence.

Overall, however, NUSOJ deserves credit for implementing the project against very significant odds. That it has done so is evidence of the organizational skills and dedication of its core leadership, and of the commitment of some of its members in towns where activities took place.

(iii) Efficiency

The project activities took place within budget and within the planned period. It may be argued that the cost of the activities (about US\$500 per participant, plus the cost of the media center) was relatively high, but this is largely justified by the conflict context. Somalia is an expensive country because the civil war leads to multiple shortages in goods and services and increases to the cost of transportation. These factors increased logistical costs. With this caveat, there is no particular concern about the cost of activities.

One minor concern, however, relates to the media center: although the evaluators did not visit it, the description of the center given by NUSOJ representatives indicate that the center is located in the premises that also serve as NUSOJ's headquarters in Mogadishu. This means that the project is, in effect, subsidizing the NUSOJ office.

The evaluator's visit to Nairobi coincided with press reports that some NUSOJ members were critical of the organization's current leadership, which they accused of political bias and mismanagement. The evaluator discussed the background to these accusations with NUSOJ members and international NGO representatives who have worked with NUSOJ. He also attempted, unsuccessfully, to talk to NUSOJ members making the allegations. The evaluator concluded from the feedback received that the accusations were essentially reflective of internal dissent within NUSOJ. The allegations were of a general nature and there was no indication that they were related to the UNDEF-funded project. NUSOJ Secretary General Omar Faruk Osman told the evaluator that the allegations were withdrawn during a NUSOJ annual general meeting in June 2011.

(iv) Impact

Conditions prevailing in Somalia, as well as the impossibility for the evaluators to visit Somalia, have made assessment of impact difficult. Three of the four participants in training and workshops who responded to the email questionnaire³ stated that they understood human rights better as a result of the sessions – as did five of the seven interviewed in person. Although this is a small sample, the virtually unanimous highlighting of improved understanding suggests that the training had some impact in this respect. In view of the fact that training and workshops involved about 300 of the estimated 600 journalists working in Somalia, the project appears to have benefited a significant proportion of Somalia's journalists.

On the other hand the failure of the project to address other stakeholders (government, editors, etc.) is reducing the likelihood that positive changes will stem from the project in terms of media coverage of human rights and government attitude to the media.

³ Only a small number of participants contacted by email responded to the questionnaire sent to them by the evaluator. This was in part because some email addresses provided by NUSOJ were out of date, and possibly also because few of the participants were actually fluent in English

It is not realistic to expect the project to have a catalytic or multiplier effect in Somalia. The disruption caused by continuing political violence means, on the contrary, that professionally experienced Somali journalists have a strong incentive to go into exile, at least temporarily. The huge constraints under which more junior journalists discharge their duties (physical danger, lack of regular pay, food insecurity for themselves and their families) reduce the scope for them to engage into effective investigative reporting or into any in-depth reporting of human rights issues.

In this context, the very fact that the project took place has to be seen as an achievement in its own right. Its impact lies primarily in the positive signal it sends to the journalistic community in Somalia, that the international community is supportive of ethical journalism based on human rights values and principles of good governance.

(v) Sustainability

This aspect is a relative weakness. The project has probably built the capacity of individual journalists, but there were no plans to help with follow up and continued capacity building. Conditions in Somalia would in any case have made it difficult to implement any follow-up support, but existing communications platforms (NUSOJ website, social networks) could have been used to reinforce liaison among journalists.

There is scope for future projects to harness new technologies to enhance mutual support among journalists, thus maximizing the benefits from the activities carried out.

(vi) UNDEF added value

This project is illustrative of UNDEF added value in that it was the only one addressing the needs of journalists in Somalia.⁴ Other organisations had recognised that need for years, and some steps had been taken to meet it through training outside the country, but this is the first (and so far only) project that took the training to journalists across Somalia (where accessible) and that managed to implement a complete schedule of sessions despite the on-going civil war. It is also noteworthy that it did so while taking gender balance among participants into account, ensuring that about one third of training participants were women journalists.

Nevertheless the project would have benefitted significantly from additional strategic advice. Conditions in Somalia are obviously challenging for any organisation no matter how excellent its management capacity. But NUSOJ had understandable organisational weaknesses and was itself in need of support. Additional “hand-holding” by a partner organisation would probably have helped NUSOJ make better use of its members’ energy and commitment to engage in advocacy on matters of rights and policy. The evaluators recognise that UNDEF cannot provide support beyond funding to all its grantees: but a case can be made that this Somalia project, due to its uniqueness, would have justified some additional resource expenditure on the part of UNDEF, aimed at helping NUSOJ develop a suitable partnership. This could have ensured that the project design included strategic support through the development of a formal partnership with another NGO.

⁴ To the knowledge of the evaluators, no comparable training project was implemented in Somalia since 2008. In 2007, following the BBC World Service Trust study, the Trust carried out training sessions for Somali journalists outside the country.



Opening session of the June 2010 workshop: speech by Ministry of Information Director General Abdirizak Bahlawi. Photo: © UNDP

V. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here are based on the findings set out in the previous section and on the contextual information presented in section II.

(i) The project **identified a clear need** on the part of Somali journalists, and went a long way towards meeting that need. This conclusion follows from findings (i) and (ii).

(ii) The project was highly ambitious, purporting to address a range of aims and objectives. However, **the project design did not address all the objectives**, which resulted in some objectives not being adequately fulfilled. This conclusion derives from findings (i) and (iv).

(iii) Although they were extremely pro-active and implemented activities in a cogent manner, **the project implementers lacked strategic vision**, which contributed to the project's failure to integrate a greater advocacy dimension on freedom of expression and on the media's role in monitoring governance. This conclusion stems from findings (i), (iii) and (vi).

(iv) In view of the highly troubled context, **the project achieved a remarkable degree of effectiveness**, all planned activities being implemented during the project period and on schedule. This conclusion stems from findings (ii) and (iii).

(v) The project took due account of the requirements of gender balance in terms of participation. However **the contents of the training sessions did not sufficiently emphasize the gender aspects** of human rights and governance, which are

particularly important in a conflict context such as Somalia's. This conclusion stems from findings (i) and (iii).

(vi) The sheer implementation of the project is sending ***an important positive signal of the international community's support*** for freedom of expression and good governance in Somalia. Although sustainability is always a challenge in troubled contexts such as Somalia's, ***the project has laid valuable groundwork for future action*** in support of media freedom. This conclusion stems from findings (iv), (v) and (vi).

(vii) ***This is a project, and a situation, in which the implementer would have benefited from close strategic advice.*** For all its leaders' commitment and activism, NUSOJ lacked project management capacity and above all lacked the time and the inclination to consider "big picture" policy and strategic issues. NUSOJ to some extent anticipated its own weakness by suggesting in the project document that an Advisory Committee including UN representatives would be appointed to help it implement the project. It is regrettable that this committee did not get established, partly because NUSOJ did not follow up on the idea (UN agencies in Kenya would in any case have been hard-pressed to devote the human resources needed to provide the kind of guidance NUSOJ needed).

VI. Recommendations

(i) ***NUSOJ should consider seeking funding for a follow-up project taking account of the lessons learned*** on this one. In particular, any follow-up project should include an advocacy dimension directed at government and local authorities, and should consider ways in which training sessions can be followed-up to further support participating journalists, for example through the use of social networks. See conclusions (i), (ii) and (iii).

(ii) ***Any new project should include a significant dimension concerning gender rights awareness.*** This is particularly relevant in the Somali context, in which women are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses due to civil war. See conclusion (v).

(iii) ***Any new project should include an element of strategic support to NUSOJ,*** to complement its members' activism. The modalities of such support may vary (partnership with another organization, use of the Advisory Committee model foreseen in this project but not implemented). However the need for strategic support is clear, and meeting this need could significantly enhance the impact of a future project. See conclusions (ii) and (iii).

(iv) ***Any new project should take account of the low level of journalistic skills of the more junior Somali journalists*** and include basic journalistic skills training.

Other forms of training, such as mentoring of junior journalists by more senior one, should also be considered. See conclusions (i) and (ii).

VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts

It is probably clear to the reader that this evaluation took a more constructive and “sympathetic” approach than many other evaluations concerning projects implemented in less unstable contexts. It is indeed easy, when applying standard evaluation criteria, to doubt the value of engaging in a rights-related project in an environment such as Somalia’s. Risks are high and benefits difficult to discern, even when activities take place.

The initial stance of the evaluators was similarly skeptical. However, contacts with NUSOJ members brought to light their high level of commitment and activism, and also highlighted the high level of physical risks (to them and to relatives) that some of them were taking to implement activities. Interviews with other observers also brought home the fact that implementing a project in Somalia (any project) is so fraught with difficulties and dangers that the mere implementation of a schedule of training session had to be seen as a success.

Overall, the uniqueness of this project in the Somali context also highlighted its value: while many humanitarian projects take place in that country, the UNDEF-supported project by NUSOJ was virtually the only one that highlights issues of human rights and good governance. To that extent, it was an important and valuable investment.

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:

Documents by NGOs and intergovernmental organisations (in chronological order):

World Bank, 2005, *Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics*, World Bank Publications, Washington DC

Jamal Abdi Ismail, 2006, *Somalia: Research Findings and Conclusions*, African Media Development Initiative, BBC World Service Trust, London

Thomas Ansorg, 2006, *Strengthening Dialogue between Non-State Actors and the EC on the new EU Assistance Strategy to Somalia*, Saferworld et al, London

United Nations, 2007, *United Nations Transition Plan for Somalia 2008-2009*, UN Office for Somalia, Nairobi

UNDP 2007, *Millennium Development Goals Report for Somalia*, New York

NUSOJ, 2010, *Mouth-Murder and Media Hijacking: 2010 Annual Report*, NUSOJ, Mogadishu

African Development Bank, 2010, *Somalia Country Brief*, Tunis

UNDP, 2010, *Workshop on Good Governance: Monitoring Report*, UNDP, Mogadishu

International Crisis Group, 2011, *Somalia: the Transitional Government on Life Support*, Africa Report #170, Brussels

Websites consulted:

Reporters Sans Frontières (www.rsf.org)

Somalia Report (www.somaliareport.com)

Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)

Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)

Médecins sans Frontières (www.msf.org)

Shabelle (www.shabelle.net)

Puntland Post (www.puntlandpost.com)

SomaliTalk (www.somalitalk.com)

OHCHR (www.ohchr.ch)

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

* Denotes people interviewed by phone

** Denotes people questioned by email

Name	Position
Abdigani Sheik Mohamed	NUSOJ Treasurer
Abdirahman Omar	NUSOJ Programme Officer
Ahmed [surname not legible]	NUSOJ member, participant in training
Ali Fahd [surname not legible]	NUSOJ member, participant in training
*Andrew Anderson	Deputy Director, Frontline Human Rights Defenders
*Ambroise Pierre	Africa Bureau, Reporters Sans Frontières
**Ben Peterson	Executive Director, Journalists for Human Rights
*Dr Elizabeth Marsh	Former DFID Governance Advisor, East Africa
*Florent Geel	Deputy Africa Director, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues
**Maxamed Xuseen Jantiile	Puntland Post journalist, participant in training
*Michael Logan	Editor, Somalia Report
*Mike Dottridge	Former Somalia Researcher, Amnesty International
Mohamed Hajji Hassan	NUSOJ member, participant in training
**Ms Mulki Xazzan Xayle	Freelance journalist, participant in training
Omar Faruk Osman	NUSOJ Secretary General
**Ms Shamsu Cabdi Qayax	Freelance journalist, participant in training
Ms Waris [surname not legible]	NUSOJ member, participant in training
**Wariye Maaxiye	NUSOJ member, participant in training

Annex 4 : Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMS	International Media Support
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (UN)
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UNDEF	United Nations Fund for Democracy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia

Annex 5: Overview of the conflict in Somalia

Key stages of the conflict

There are no reliable statistics on the death toll related to the conflict. However the Somalia Online news website compiled estimates of 350,000 to 1 million fatalities in the 20 years since the overthrow of Siad Barre in January 1991. The broad phases of the conflict are the following (see sources listed in bibliography in Annex 2):

1986-1991: Insurrections against the Siad Barre regime. Unilateral declaration of independence by Somaliland.

1992-1995: a famine threatening southern Somalia prompts a UN intervention (UNOSOM). Initially USA-led, the intervention is taken over by the UN in 1993. Beginning of a series of peace conferences. UNOSOM ends in 1995.

1996-99: conflict subsides, becomes more local (inter-clan) as armed criminality rises, blurring lines between political and criminal violence.

2000-2003: the Transitional National Government (TNG) is established as a consequence of the Arta Peace Conference, but its authority is limited to the capital.

2004-2006: the TNG is in exile in Kenya, moves to Baidoa in 2006. Also in 2006 the Islamic Court Union (ICU) gains ground and captures Mogadishu, held until then by more secular warlords.

2007-2008: the ICU is unable to consolidate its gains, partly as a result of renewed military involvement by the USA. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) establishes itself in Mogadishu and some southern *Somalia provinces, with a key Ethiopian contingent.*

2008-2009: the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces weakens AMISOM; the al-Shabaab Islamic “youth” militias gain ground. AMISOM’s hold on Mogadishu becomes symbolic.

2010-2011: dissensions among forces fighting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and AMISOM (including some pirate groups aligned by al-Shabaab), and the gradual reinforcing of AMISOM troops, lead to AMISOM and TFG recapturing most or all of Mogadishu. However control of the southern Somalia provinces remains largely in the hands of local armed groups.

In 2011, Southern Somalia is affected by a severe drought, which leads to famine situations and to a massive influx of Somali refugees into Kenya. Humanitarian NGOs note that access to famine victims in Southern Somalia is severely hampered by the divisions among armed groups.

While an assessment of the causes and state of the conflict is beyond the scope of the present evaluation, some pointers are useful because they offer some indication of the conflict dynamics that the project had to take into account.

- The conflict is complex and multi-layered; it cannot be reduced to a simple set of causes. Like many other African conflicts that began in the 1980s and 1990s, its origins are linked to the end of the bipolarisation caused by the Cold War, although it was also related to long-standing tensions (for example, externally with Ethiopia, and internally among clans with regional bases).
- Foreign involvement in the conflict has also had multiple and shifting motives. In the early 1990s, geostrategic considerations reportedly played a role in motivating the initial US intervention that led to the establishment of UNOSOM: attempts to counterbalance the influence of Ethiopia and to establish a foothold in a zone potentially rich in oil. Later, and particularly after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the fight against Al-Qaeda was also a key motive of Western intervention. To that extent, Somalia has become one of the world's "theatres" of the worldwide struggle against international Islamic terrorism.
- The humanitarian situation has also been a contributing factor for outside intervention, as famine relief was often linked with peace keeping. Although long-term observers of Somalia note that the country is potentially self-sufficient in food – and that some provinces are traditional food exporters – the disruption brought about by armed violence has certainly been a contributing factor to significant food insecurity in recent years, including the "pockets of famine"⁵ observed in 2011.
- Lawlessness and poverty brought about by the years of conflict in some areas have also been reported to be contributing factors for the rise of piracy off the coast of Somalia, prompting further international concern and maritime interventions. There are also reports that revenue from piracy, as well as weapons linked to that activity, has fuelled some of the political violence.
- The conflict – more precisely the lawlessness and poverty it has fostered in parts of Somalia – has led to the multiplication of acts of piracy by Somalia-based perpetrators in international commercial sea-lanes off the Horn. As a result, the conflict has an impact on the safety of key world trading routes, giving it a strategic importance beyond Somalia itself.

Like any civil conflict, the situation in Somalia imposes severe hardships on the population. Population displacements have affected millions over two decades. Basic health and education services have been severely disrupted, making Somalia one of the countries that is the furthest away from achieving the Millennium Development Goals – indeed UNDP reports stagnation or backward slides in key indicators. Central government infrastructures have all but disappeared, and prospects for the re-establishment of a central authority respected across the country are very dim indeed.

However the picture, as noted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and others, is not entirely hopeless:

- Remittances by Somalis living abroad have provided a lifeline to millions of civilians in the country: though probably unsustainable in the long term, the flow of remittances seems to have prevented Somalia falling into an even greater situation of humanitarian distress.

⁵ Expression used by the medical NGO Médecins sans Frontières, to highlight the (partly) man-made nature of the 2011 emergency.

- The economy has not collapsed. Sustained by trading and the resilience of social ties, economic activity has continued during the years of conflict, and GDP per head is estimated by the AfDB to be higher than that in Tanzania (Somalia's average is increased by greater economic activity in more stable Puntland). The Somali Shilling has not collapsed, although the economy has largely been "dollarized".
- By contrast with inexistent national institutions, the local governance structures have reportedly held up to some extent, which means that a degree of economic activity and governance is in place in many towns and rural areas – at least outside periods and areas of actual armed fighting. However, customary and Sharia law have largely replaced the pre-existing legal system.

Although none of the observers met by the evaluators felt able to express optimism about Somalia's economy, some did note that, despite the conflict and the humanitarian emergencies, the relative lull in fighting experienced in recent years in many provinces outside Mogadishu had allowed for some trading to develop. Journalists interviewed for the evaluation have confirmed this, indicating that intra-provincial travel is often possible (even if travel to and from Mogadishu is often impossible), as are exchanges between the south, Puntland and Somaliland.

Human rights situation in Somalia

In addition to the death toll of the civil war itself, on which estimates vary widely (see box above), there are widespread and grave human rights violations in Somalia. These include:

- Thousands of civilians killed or injured as a result of indiscriminate attacks. According to Amnesty International, hospitals in Mogadishu have recorded several thousand casualties in 2010, including hundreds of children under 14.
- Internally displaced people and other civilians affected by the conflict have suffered further as a result of forced removals from Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps (including in Puntland) and interference by armed groups in the operations of humanitarian agencies.
- Armed groups continued the forcible recruitment of children as soldiers. According to Amnesty International, boys as young as 9 were recruited into forces including those of the Islamist militia al-Shabaab. Girl children were also reported to be recruited forcibly as servants or spouses of al-Shabaab militia members. Allegations of forcible recruitment of children were also made against the armed forces of the TFG.
- Civilians accused of crimes were killed or tortured in public by armed groups including al-Shabaab. Accusations included rape, theft or "spying" on armed groups.
- Journalists and members of civil society organisations are threatened with killing and kidnapping. According to Reporters without Borders at least three journalists were killed in 2010 and several others were arbitrarily arrested.