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**EVALUATION REPORT**



**TRANSTEC**  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT

**UDF-TUR-08-268: Monitoring and influencing the Central Budget  
By Civic Empowerment in Turkey**

**Date: 27February 2012**



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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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## I. Executive Summary

### *i. Project Data*

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled "Monitoring and Influencing the Central Budget by Civic Empowerment", implemented by TESEV, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, based in Istanbul, Turkey, between October 1, 2009 and June 30, 2011 (21 months). The project benefited from an UNDEF grant of \$230,000, with a project budget of \$207,000, plus a monitoring and evaluation component of \$23,000.

The project was implemented by the grantee in partnership with a small group of like-minded academic institutions, policy research centres and non-government organizations, also based in Istanbul. Together, the partners formed the Permanent Monitoring Group, or PMG.

Through the project, the partners sought to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations at local level to influence the budget and expenditure process, with particular emphasis on the social sector. The initiative took place in a governance environment where there is no tradition of using the budget as a means of holding the government accountable, at national or local levels, even in the Parliament.

### *ii. Evaluation Findings*

**Project Relevance:** This project represents one component of a broader effort to draw public and media attention to the importance of budget-making, while building the capacity of civil society to engage with government on budget matters, thus enhancing public accountability.

Increasingly, the responsibility for administration of the social sector budget, including health and education, as well as social protection, rests with the municipalities. This has led to recognition of the enhanced importance of municipal government as a focus for civil society engagement with government. In this regard, one critical innovation has been the establishment of the Urban Council (UC) as a mandatory, advisory body at municipal level. The UC is distinct from the elected municipal council. It is intended to bring together central and local government, other public institutions and civil society, with civil society representation predominating.

A second focus of the project was on strengthening the role of the Women's Assembly (WA) and promoting greater attention to gender equality in municipal government. This was a significant initiative, in light of the lack of attention to the gender impact of public policy in Turkey.

The project was directly relevant to the development problems to be addressed. It focused on four critical deficiencies, or gaps, in Turkish political development:

- The limited effectiveness of mechanisms for accountability of government to the public for its decisions, particularly as manifested in budget-making;
- The lack of attention to the social sector and provisions in the central and local government budgets to finance social expenditures;

- The limited role of civil society as a recognized partner in consultations on public decision-making; and,
- Despite a number of legislative initiatives in recent years, which have reduced the disadvantages of women in law, the continuing absence of an understanding of gender equality and the priorities of women in government decision-making.

The initiatives undertaken by the project were all relevant responses and worthwhile contributions in addressing the four key issues listed here.

The emphasis on the budget for the social sector was particularly relevant as a step towards drawing attention to, and seeking to improve, the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The selection of the Urban Council and Women's Assembly (WA) as a focus for strengthening the role of civil society in monitoring the performance of municipal government was a relevant and appropriate choice, given the project objectives. The key products developed by the project, the Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG) and the Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Manual were both directly relevant to the problems to which they were directed and were well received.

Concerning **Project Effectiveness**, there was a clear logic to the project design, which blended applied research with training and advocacy, while also combining efforts at national and local levels. However, the pursuit of multiple objectives lent a measure of complexity to the design which also went along with greater risks to project results. The decision to add a gender equality component to the project by providing special training to Women's Assemblies reflected the recognition of a significant capacity gap in local civil society.

Overall, the project demonstrated an admirable ability to adjust and adapt its plans as circumstances changed and new challenges emerged. However, adding new elements to an already multi-faceted project gave the project an open-endedness and lack of completeness, particularly in its efforts to support civil society capacity development. From this perspective, the project is best appraised as a beginning, a catalyst, to further action.

If the project were a stand-alone effort in a resource-starved environment, the Evaluation Team would regard this as a serious problem. However, the UNDEF project takes its place as one of a continuing series of initiatives undertaken, singly and collectively, by members of the Permanent Monitoring Group (PMG), and more work is already underway. Accordingly, this may not amount to a negative comment on the project's effectiveness.

The project was highly effective in drawing attention to the importance of "the social budget", demonstrating the value of budget monitoring, emphasizing the need for civil society to take an active role in local governance, and in supporting efforts to address the gender gap in government decision-making. It was less effective in achieving those of its specified results which required the building of civil society capacities, though it did make positive contributions in this sphere. At the same time, it also supported the achievement of other results, beyond those initially indicated.

In terms of **Project Efficiency**, given the scope of activities undertaken, the project budget was reasonable. TESEV was careful in management of both human and

financial resources. As noted earlier, the project's weakness was in the lack of completeness of its efforts to build the capacity of the UCs and WAs. This aspect of the project was under-budgeted.

**Project Impact:** In the five pilot municipalities, TESEV was able to introduce Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies to a new approach to utilizing budget analysis as a mechanism through which to hold local government to account. WAs also gained an appreciation of how appraising a budget from a gender equality perspective.

The project's impact was primarily at the municipal level. At national level, an opening was secured by TESEV and its partners with the newly-established Women's Equality Commission of the Parliament (EC).

In terms of advocacy, the project's principal impact was through the stimulus it provided to local activists, working through the UCs and WAs, to press municipal authorities to establish municipal Equality Commissions (ECs) as sub-committees of elected municipal councils. The initiative to set up the ECs was an outcome of the closer working relations the project helped to nurture between civil society and local government. These enhanced working relations had other payoffs, in terms of a willingness of municipal government to present the budget for social sector activities in coherent and transparent fashion, and in an opening for the UCs to take part in budget planning.

Overall, the project has made a difference. It has acted as a catalyst to ushering in change in political relationships at local level, assisting civil society to take on a more pro-active role in influencing municipal government priorities. Further it focused attention of local government on the needs of the social sector. In addition, the project strengthened the appreciation by WAs, representing women's organizations and women activists, of the need to give priority to placing municipal government and its decisions under a gender lens. It also facilitated a change in thinking on the part of officials in the five pilot municipalities on the role of civil society, and particularly women, in deliberations on local government business, as well as on the need to give closer attention to the social sector.

As to **sustainability**, TESEV and its partners are involved in a series of additional projects which build on the experience of the UNDEF project, and begin to address the gaps in capacity development for local civil society.

### **iii. Conclusions**

- The project was **relevant in the Turkish political context** as it addressed: the limited effectiveness of mechanisms for accountability of government to the public, the lack of attention to the social sector, the limited role of civil society as a recognized partner in consultations on public decision-making; and, the lack of attention to gender equality and the priorities of women in government decision-making.

- The project was **effective in developing a tool for the monitoring of social sector budgets at local government level**. It also succeeded in **raising the public profile of both the social sector budget and the value of civil society**

**engagement with budget monitoring at local level.** It was less effective in its efforts to build the capacity of the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies, though it made contributions towards results in this sphere.

- **The project's approach to training was incomplete**, and there is a clear need for TESEV to **strengthen its expertise in capacity development**, beneficiary needs assessment and the development of training plans.

- **Partnership was a real strength of the project. The Permanent Monitoring Group (PMG), where organizational members have worked with each other for some time, over a series of projects, is an excellent institution.** The partnerships that TESEV established with local beneficiaries were also strong, and are likely to continue beyond the project.

- **It is apparent that involvement of TESEV and its partners in initiatives with specific local government units stimulated interest in the ideas promoted by the project on the part of mayors and senior local officials, as well as with the leadership of the Urban Councils (UCs) and Women's Assemblies (Was).** This heightened interest contributed to project effectiveness through the strengthening of linkages between the municipal executive and the UC, and, in some cases, closer consultation on budgetary matters.

- In the sphere of **advocacy**, the project's principal **impact** was through the stimulus it provided to local activists, working through the UCs and WAs, to press municipal authorities to establish **municipal Equality Commissions (ECs)** as sub-committees of elected municipal councils. **The project supported its civil society partners to act on this opportunity. All five pilot municipalities have now either set up, or are planning to set up, ECs.**

- **WAs gained an appreciation of how appraising a budget from a gender equality perspective** can assist in revealing the extent to which local government programs and expenditures benefit women, or serve to perpetuate disadvantage.

- **Both municipal officials and civil society also gained an understanding of the value of bringing together all budget items** which contribute to social sector spending as a means of tracking expenditures and comparing them with commitments made in municipal strategic plans.

#### ***iv. Recommendations***

It is recommended that:

- **TESEV considers cooperating with a capacity development specialist in project planning and design** (or cooperates with a like-minded organization with the necessary expertise);

- **TESEV undertakes a careful organizational needs assessment of beneficiaries at the inception stage** of a project as a basis for developing detailed capacity development plans;

- TESEV’s approach to “training” has been somewhat vague, and, in this project, the training component seemed incomplete. It is recommended, therefore, that a **basic training plan be developed as part of a project’s capacity development component**, based on learning objectives, reflecting organizational needs and capacity gaps;
- It is also recommended that in approaching project design, TESEV **gives careful attention to avoiding unnecessary complexity** and setting potentially conflicting objectives (in other words, develop a design for a manageable project).
- It is recommended that, given its growing appreciation, in the course of the UNDEF project, of the centrality of Gender Equality in consideration of budgeting for the social sector, as well as in democratic governance, more generally, TESEV **undertakes an in-house gender analysis of its programming, and integrates gender analysis in its approach to capacity development in future programming.**
- It is further recommended that TESEV and its partners **seek funding to provide “gender impact” training to all Urban Councils, as well as Women’s Assemblies.**

## II. Introduction and development context

### *i. The Project and Evaluation Objectives*

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled “Monitoring and Influencing the Central Budget by Civic Empowerment”, implemented by TESEV, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, based in Istanbul, Turkey, between October 1, 2009 and June 30, 2011 (21 months), which is shorter than the usual UNDEF project duration, which is 24 months. The original project duration was 18 months and the grantee obtained a three-months extension. The project benefited from an UNDEF grant of \$230,000, with a project budget of \$207,000, plus a monitoring and evaluation component of \$23,000. The final amount spent by the project \$26,028 less than the approved budget.

The project was implemented by TESEV in partnership with a small group of like-minded academic institutions, policy research centres and non-government organizations (NGOs), also based in Istanbul. Through the project, the grantee sought to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations at local level to influence the budget and expenditure process at central government level, with particular emphasis on the social sector.

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

### *ii. Evaluation methodology*

The evaluation was conducted by two experts, one international and one national, under the terms of a framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. The methodology of the evaluation is set out in the Operational Manual governing this framework agreement, as well as in the evaluation Launch Note. A set of project documents was provided to the evaluators in the weeks preceding the field mission. On that basis, they prepared the Launch Note (UDF-TUR-08-268) setting out key issues and particular areas of focus, to be considered during the field mission, which took place from October 17-20, 2011, with a preliminary briefing and planning meeting held the previous week, while the Evaluation team was in Istanbul undertaking the field mission for another UNDEF project evaluation. Additional documents were obtained from other relevant sources (see list of documents consulted in Annex 3).

The field mission included meetings in Istanbul at the offices of TESEV, as well as at the offices of other institutional members of the Permanent Monitoring Group, which guided the project. These included: NGOs, policy research centres and academic research centres. In addition, the Evaluation Team spent a half-day in meetings with the Women’s Assembly in Kadikoy, a large urban district in Istanbul, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The Team also travelled to Kocaeli, a province in the Marmara

Region, where meetings were held with the Urban Council and the Women's Assembly. Municipal officials also took part in the discussions.

### **iii. Development context**

In Turkey, the democratic process and political culture remain heavily influenced by earlier decades of authoritarian rule. In an unusually centralized and bureaucratized political system, old habits persist, and institutions of accountability are relatively weak. While in most democratic states, the budget process is a focus for public debate and dialogue, this has not been the case in Turkey. Rather, the budget is an internal matter for public officials in the Ministry of Finance and the State Planning Commission, and in negotiation with counterparts from line ministries and other state agencies. At the local level, the budget is assigned to municipalities by the national government, based on a formula.

There is little provision for public consultation at either national or local level. Under current conditions, The Budget and Finance Committee of the Grand National Assembly (GNA), or Parliament, is unable to perform its role of holding the executive accountable. This project represents one component of a broader effort to draw public and media attention to the importance of budget-making, while building the capacity of civil society to engage with government on budget matters, thus enhancing public accountability.

Increasingly, the responsibility for administration of the social sector budget, or the "social budget", including health and education, as well as social protection, rests with the municipalities. While there have been some important developments in local government in recent years, it appears that these have not yet made a great deal of difference in democratic practice. However, there is potential for change, in that some additional openings exist for public consultation and enhancing the role of civil society in influencing decision-making.

One critical innovation has been the establishment of **the Urban Council (UC)** as a mandatory body at municipal level (details in this section of the report are based on interviews and on The City (Urban) Council as a Participatory Governance Model Developed in Turkey, a report produced in November 2009 by *Unified Cities and Local Governments, Middle East and West Asia Section*.) The UC is distinct from the elected municipal council. It has an advisory role and is intended to bring together central and local government, other public institutions and civil society, with civil society representation predominating. Initially developed as an informal body as an initiative of the Local Agenda 21 Program<sup>1</sup>, the UC was formally established as part of Turkey's system of local governance under Article 76 of the new Law on Municipalities (No. 5393) of July 2005, which specifies that: *The Urban Council shall comprise*

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<sup>1</sup> **Local Agenda 21 (LA- 21)** was a participatory effort to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level. It focused on preparation of a comprehensive action plan for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. The LA-21 program in Turkey was coordinated and implemented by United Cities and Local Governments, Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA) and Youth for Habitat, in close cooperation with UNDP and supporting partners, including the Union of Municipalities of Turkey. The Turkish program operated for 15 years, and was completed earlier in 2011. The global LA-21 Program was initiated as a mechanism for implementing the Action Plan adopted at the **UN Rio "Earth Summit" in 1992**. The program in Turkey received a further impetus as a result of the adoption of the Action Plan of **the UN Habitat II Conference, held in Istanbul in June 1996**. The Summit, which itself may be seen as an outcome of the Rio Agenda 21 focused particular attention on sustainable cities, and, in support of achieving this objective, the importance of civil society and the leadership role of local government. The LA-21 Program was launched in the country the following year.

*representatives of public-law professional organisations, trade unions, notaries public, universities (if any), the civil society organisations concerned, political parties, public institutions and bodies and neighbourhood muhtars (headmen), and other parties concerned. The municipality shall provide assistance and support in order to ensure that the council's activities are conducted effectively and efficiently.*

In accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Law, working procedures for the new Councils were set out in the by-laws adopted in October 2006 and amended early in 2009. These regulations confirmed that, among other things, the purpose of the Council was to strengthen public participation, the “institutionalization of civil society”, enhancing the sense of ownership for the city agenda and building inter-group harmony, while also making for greater accountability and transparency of public decision-making.

Following the LA-21 model, emphasis is also given to the establishment of a framework of partnership, whereby the Councils bring together all local stakeholders and facilitate the generation of “a collective wisdom” which expresses a city-wide consensus (see discussion in Turkey Local Agenda 21 Handbook, 2005, p. 65) Specific mention is made of the need to ensure that women, youth and the disabled have an active role in local decision-making

In those cities which had been actively engaged in the LA-21 program, the Urban Councils are well-established and interested in pursuing new ideas. They have also benefited from financial support from municipal government and have full-time staff, as well as good facilities, also provided by the municipalities. The Urban Councils have not, as yet, made a great difference in strengthening local democracy. Thus, the European Union has noted that “transparency, accountability and participatory mechanisms need to be strengthened, especially in local government.” (European Commission, Turkey 2010 Progress Report, p.10) However, the Councils have considerable potential, as well as the political space to play a more pro-active role. Given their formal mandate, they were seen by TESEV as a promising focus for efforts to support civil society engagement with the budget process.

### III. Project strategy

#### *i. Project approach and strategy*

TESEV is a public interest research and advocacy organization, focusing on social, political and economic issues facing Turkey, and bridging the academic and public policy spheres. Its Good Governance Program has been in operation for 10 years, and its key areas of concern include public administration reform and local government. It has made contributions to the conceptualization and preparation of draft legislation in both fields.

For some years, it has cooperated with a range of other national civil society and academic organizations with related interests. A number of these partners joined TESEV as members of the “Permanent Monitoring Group” (PMG), which guided and participated in the project.<sup>2</sup> The members of the group make up a network engaged in a series of projects and research activities relating to budget-making and monitoring and efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of governance accountability mechanisms.

Among the members of the PMG most active in contributing to the project were: Istanbul Bilgi University, Civil Society Centre and Budget Studies Unit; the Educational Reform Initiative (ERI); Youth for Habitat; and, Transparency International Turkey. Other organizational members include KADER -the Association for Promotion and Training of Women Political Candidates, another UNDEF grantee. The Social Policy Forum of Bogazdei University was an active participant for the initial phase of the project, but withdrew when the emphasis for monitoring moved from the central budget to local government budgets, as will be discussed below.

A core part of the continuing sequence of activities involving the network has been the development of an initiative led by the Budget Studies Unit and Civil Society Centre of Bilgi University. The focus of the initiative has been on training civil society groups on budget analysis and monitoring, and establishing a coalition of NGOs to monitor the central government budget, with an emphasis on social expenditure and advocating for greater transparency and dialogue in budget-making. Building on this effort, TESEV took the lead in planning a project focusing on local government budgets, which derive primarily from fiscal transfers from central government.

Local government and the need for greater decentralization have received greater attention in the current era of governance reform, initiated, in part, at least, as a response to dialogue with the European Union (EU) over potential accession (see II (iii), above). Through the experience of its years of work on governance at local level, TESEV recognized that civil society had little idea of how to proceed in holding the local administration accountable. This led to the definition of the “development problem” which formed the basis for the UNDEF-funded project. With its knowledge of government at local level, TESEV determined that, in order to reach civil society and build for the future, it would work with Urban Councils, a body where civil society was well-represented, and which had an official mandate to advise municipal government and work in partnership with it.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “Permanent Monitoring Group” was deliberate and reflects the ongoing collaboration of the partners across projects led by one or other organizational member of the network.

While the project sought to provide direct assistance to civil society at local level, it also intended to make a difference at central government level. Hence, two sets of beneficiaries were defined:

- Civil society and “social stakeholders”; and,
- Parliamentarians.

According to the Project Document, there were three aims guiding project strategy:

- a) To involve socially-excluded groups in the budget process, at both national and local level;
- b) To increase the effectiveness of Parliament in the budget-making process; and,
- c) To increase public awareness on social-protection-related (the social sector) components of the central budget.<sup>3</sup>

The major components of the project’s methodology were as follows:

- The PMG would develop a set of tools packaged into a Social Budget Monitoring Guide, a mechanism for tracking social expenditure at local level. This work also involved the task of determining an appropriate, practical definition of “social expenditure” as a basis for data collection;
- Local Monitoring Units (LMUs) would be established under the aegis of the Urban Councils of pilot municipalities;
- Training on budget monitoring would be provided to the LMUs by members of the PMG;
- With the support of the LMUs, The PMG would collect data on allocations from the national budget to local government. The findings of a comparative analysis of the data would be shared with parliamentarians, the mass media and national and local stakeholders;
- The LMUs would meet with local members of Parliament and provide local feedback on issues arising from the analysis of the budget;
- Project activities would culminate in a national conference, where information on the Budget Monitoring Guide and what had been learned from its application in the pilot municipalities would be shared with other local and national stakeholders.

The pilot cities selected were: Kocaeli, Bursa, Denizli and Diyarbakir, along with the Istanbul urban district of Kadikoy. It had proved necessary to make changes to the initial list of five. Following local elections, which took place early in the period of project implementation, there was a change in the majority party in one city, which now indicated that it had no interest in participating in the project. In a second case, continuing political difficulties and controversy precluded attention to the project. Accordingly, two replacement cities were identified.

**Resources:** Of the planned project budget of \$207,000, the largest portion (\$90,250) was allocated to travel and related costs associated with training and the national conference. The conference alone was budgeted at \$42,000. Fees for “consultants” and “experts” amounted to \$69,000, with a further \$16,000 for a Project Assistant. The project was led by the National Consultant to TESEV, also the Director of its Good Governance Program. The key external consultant, Mr. Murat Seker, is an academic, with expertise in public finance and budgeting, who was responsible for drafting the

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<sup>3</sup> The term “social protection” is used by TESEV and its partners to refer to the broad social sector, including health and education. The term may be misleading to readers, since the World Bank and other international organizations use the term in a more narrow sense, excluding health and education and restricting the term to “social welfare” activities. To avoid possible confusion, the broader term, “social sector”, is used in this report.

Social Budget Monitoring Guide, in consultation with the PMG. An Austrian gender studies expert was recruited to develop a Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Manual, and to provide training, based on the manual. The contribution to office costs was assessed at \$19,250, with a further \$5,000 allocated to hardware (two computers).

**Assessment of the Strategy:** There was a clear logic to the project design, which blended applied research with training and advocacy, while also combining efforts at national and local levels. This lent a measure of complexity to the design which also went along with greater risks to project results. A lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Finance and State Planning Commission in releasing data on social expenditures at local level obliged TESEV to obtain most of the required data from local government sources. Difficulties in engaging with parliamentarians caused the project to switch its focus to Urban Councils as the main beneficiary and target audience.

The decision, following implementation, to add a gender equality component to the project by providing special training to Women's Assemblies, attached to Urban Councils, reflected the recognition of a significant capacity gap in local civil society. While it strengthened the ability of the project to reach "socially excluded groups", at the same time, it also stretched the project's budget and reach, and broadened the range of objectives to be addressed.

Overall, the project demonstrated an admirable ability to adjust and adapt its plans as some doors closed and other opened. However, adding new elements to an already multi-faceted project gave the project an open-endedness and lack of completeness, such that there is a sense that this is best viewed as a beginning, a catalyst, to further action. If the project were a stand-alone effort in a resource-starved environment, the Evaluation Team would regard this as a serious problem. However, in that the UNDEF project takes its place as one of a continuing series of initiatives undertaken, singly and collectively, by members of the PMG, and that more work is already underway, this may not amount to a negative comment on the project's contribution.

## ii. Logical framework

Project activities	Intended outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Long-term development objective
Selection and organization of Permanent Monitoring Group (PMG) and development of Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG), with a focus on the social sector	An active and effective PMG is leading the project process, producing a high-quality SBMG, conducting training and leading advocacy efforts.	Local civil society has the technical skills and self-confidence required for budget and expenditure monitoring, and for analysing budgets from a gender perspective, and demonstrates its capacity to act on this basis	<b>Civil society is considered a legitimate stakeholder in budget planning and consultations over the social spending envelope</b>
Building of linkages with Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies (WAs) and establishment of Local Monitoring Units (LMUs); training of LMUs and WAs by PMG	LMUs and WAs are capable of understanding and monitoring local government budgets  WAs understand Gender-Responsive Budgeting and its application	Civil society is involved in regular discussions with municipal councils and the local administration, as well as MPs, on budget-making and sector allocations	<b>Increased recognition of the need for consideration of gender-sensitive approaches to budgeting at local government levels</b>
To facilitate advocacy, linkages established with national and local politicians, and between PMG and Parliament	Key local stakeholders are brought together with MPs and senior local politicians and administrators and constructive dialogue takes place; appropriate arrangements are made for dialogue between PMG and Parliamentarians	Enhanced public awareness of new possibilities for budget monitoring, thus potentially strengthening the accountability of government for social expenditures	<b>Increased public attention to planning of social spending as a component of the budget process</b>

The logical framework is based on the original results framework prepared by the grantee, as well as project reports. It also takes into account changes introduced following inception. Analysis of the project suggests that there are two inter-related, but separate, and potentially competing logics at work in *Monitoring and Influencing the Central Budget by Civic Empowerment*.

The first focuses on the set of activities involved in conceptualizing the Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG), resolving technical and practical difficulties in clarifying the requirements for data collection, obtaining local government budget data, and analysing the data to demonstrate the utility of the Guide. From this perspective, the

national conference was of value principally to publicize the SBMG, using illustrations from data obtained from the pilot municipalities. Within this logical framework, it is the SBMG which takes centre stage.

The second logic underlying the project and its strategy focused on civil society at the local level, via the Urban Councils (UCs) and Women's Assemblies (WAs). The concern here was to develop tools to support them in monitoring local budgets and to train them. Related to this were efforts to enable the civil society at local level to forge closer relationships with decision-makers at local and national level to provide a basis for on-going dialogue and discussion on budget priorities and allocations to the social sector. In terms of this logic chain, it is the building of civil society capacity which is at the centre of things, with the tools developed serving its needs.

The "unfinished" and "open-ended" quality of the project, referred to in the consideration of Project Strategy, above, mainly derives from the less systematic approach adopted in addressing the requirements of this second logic chain, and the somewhat awkward blending of the two logics in project plans. As noted above, this is less problematic than it might otherwise be, since TESEV and its partners are already engaged in other efforts to build, at least in part, on what was accomplished in the UNDEF project.

## IV. Evaluation findings

The evaluation is based on a set of Evaluation Questions or EQs, designed to cover the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; plus the issue of UNDEF value added. The Evaluation Questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

### *i. Relevance*

The project responded to a specific weakness in the practice of democratic governance in Turkey: the absence of effective mechanisms through which citizens may hold government to account for budget-making and for efficiency and effectiveness in allocating funds in response to the needs of vulnerable groups. Particular attention was given to the local level, where municipalities bear increasing responsibility for social spending, and where institutions of accountability, including elected municipal councils, are notably weak.

The emphasis on the budget for **the social sector** was particularly relevant as a step towards drawing attention to, and seeking to improve, the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In a highly-centralized system, there is weak input and feedback from the local to the national level. The lack of transparency in budget-making, along with weak monitoring by government (the Finance and Interior Ministries, and others with responsibility for the social sector) of allocations to social expenditures has led to duplication, inefficiencies and a lack of fit between funding and social needs. The problems are exacerbated by the lack of data at either the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Interior (General Directorate for Local Authorities) on the actual allocations and expenditures by local government units; only aggregate data is available.

The primary beneficiaries of the project are **civil society representatives**, reached through the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies. Civil society in the country is growing in importance, but continues to face bureaucratic and other difficulties and a less than positive enabling environment (EU, [Turkey 2010 Progress Report](#), p.22). While there have been important examples of national-level advocacy aimed at influencing specific pieces or programs of legislation, civil society has little experience in routine advocacy and engagement with government administrators and elected officials, and little opportunity to consult with decision-makers. For those organizations active in the social sector, including women's organizations, most are concerned principally with service provision, rather than with seeking to influence policies, programs or budgets.

**Urban Councils**, which represent a variety of public, private and community institutions, as well as local NGOs, for the most part, have sought to avoid contentious issues, and have not devoted much attention to holding local government accountable, or raising constructive questions about the formulation of the budget. The project represented a relevant response to both the issue of government accountability and that of the empowerment of civil society at the local level by encouraging the Urban Council to fulfil this aspect of its mandate (see II (iii), above).

The addition to the list of direct beneficiaries of the project of the **Women's Assemblies (WAs)** was a response by TESEV to an opportunity to engage with a group that represented a focus for women's organizations and women prominent in local activities, and whose members are normally very active in local affairs. WAs take on additional importance in view of the fact that, despite the high level of involvement of women in voluntary organizations, typically, they are represented poorly as municipal councillors, senior officials or mayors.

Within the broader civil society sphere, women's organizations seem to face particular challenges, in terms of organization, finance and staffing, depending largely on volunteer efforts. Any effort to strengthen the capacity of the representatives of these organizations who are members of WAs, and of the ability of WAs, as institutions, to influence the public agenda, represents a positive development. The poor representation of women in public life and at senior decision-making levels represents a serious deficiency in Turkish democracy, while also reducing the potential pressure on policy-makers to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to decision-making.

As to the third group of designated beneficiaries, **Parliamentarians**, their role as effective actors in the political system has been poorly-developed. The Parliament is often the site of strong disagreement among political parties. It is not, however, an institution which has played an effective role in the scrutiny of draft legislation or budgets. It was the intent of the project to draw attention to a sphere - budget-making - where MPs could play a stronger role, while also providing comparative data on social expenditures indicating particular issues of concern to MPs in terms of how well the needs of their local constituents are looked after in national budgets.



**Meeting of TESEV Delegation with the President and Staff of Parliamentary Equality Committee**

**Local Government** was also identified in the Final Narrative Report as a beneficiary. Certainly, the dialogue between the project team and PMG members and the mayors and municipal officials opened up new possibilities in terms of cooperation with civil society in budgeting. The project also drew attention to budgeting for the social sector and added to the knowledge of municipal finance officials. It also brought a greater

focus in local government to the needs and of women, and made the case for adopting a gender equality perspective in considering social and other expenditures.

There were two key products developed by the project as a means to carry forward its work. The first of these was the **Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG)**. The second was the **Gender-Responsive Budgeting Manual (GRBM)**.

***The Social Budget Monitoring Guide:*** The Guide is a comprehensive report, rather than a guide or manual, where the trainee can actually learn how to monitor, through examining and analyzing case-study data in a workshop setting. It presents the main elements of the budgeting process, and explains social budgeting and gender-responsive budgeting, with actual examples from all the pilot cities of the TESEV project, as well as a comparison of selected expenditures for all Turkish cities. It also provides a rich bibliography on the subject.

The main sections of the Guide are as follows:

- Structural aspects of budgeting
- What is social expenditure
- The “Social Budgeting” concept
- Types of social spending and their representation in local government budgets
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Budgeting process in local governments
- Findings of data analysis from pilot sites
- Comparison of the results from pilot sites
- A methodological suggestion on how to monitor social budget expenses by local government
- Conclusions

The Guide is a good resource document for all those interested in local government functioning, the budget making process, social budgeting, and comparisons of social expenditures across municipalities. For training purposes, a different kind of manual could be extracted from this Guide, and elaborated on, for more hands-on exercises.

***The Gender-Responsive Budgeting Manual:*** The Manual, prepared by the Austrian consultant, Ms Elizabeth Klatzer, serves as an introduction to GRB. It lists resources from around the world and it reads as a report, but it is difficult to label it as a manual. The reader gets a good sense of GRB, but, after reading it, one is not equipped to apply GRB. This is the manual’s major weakness.

The brief review of the two core documents produced by the project illustrates the difficulties the project faced in serving two masters, the two logics, one focusing on making a contribution to tackling the longer-term problem of ensuring proper attention to the needs of the social sector through effective civil society budget monitoring, and the second, addressing the short-term needs of local civil society for capacity development. In the long term, the two are mutually supportive. In the short timeframe of an UNDEF project, capacity development concerns did not receive sufficient attention. This reduced to a degree the project’s relevance as a means to achieving the results specified. While the two documents discussed above are of real value, neither was adequate, on a stand-alone basis, as a training manual.

## ii. Effectiveness

The project was effective in drawing attention to the importance of monitoring the way budgets for social sector spending are drawn up and of assessing the fit between the needs of vulnerable groups and the allocations of state expenditures. It was less effective in achieving those of its specified results which required the building of civil society capacities, though it did make positive contributions in this sphere. Overall, the project had a mixed performance in achieving its **Intended Outcomes**. At the same time, as will be discussed below, it did support the achievement of other results, beyond those initially indicated.

### Kadıkoy Municipality (prepared by Aylin Yardimci)

The meeting in Kadıkoy Municipality, with the attendance of Mayor Selami Öztürk, featured fruitful discussions on the issues of both gender-responsive budgeting and the social budget. The meeting lasted for almost 2 hours (which exceeds the norm for meetings with high ranking officials in Turkey) with the Mayor listening closely to our findings and learning more about the project. Following the presentations and discussions, the Mayor personally instructed the Head of Strategic Planning to take Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality as a model and introduce gender-responsive targets to the Kadıkoy Strategic Plan.

**An active and effective PMG is leading the project process:** The PMG proved to be both knowledgeable and active in supporting, and contributing to, the preparation of the SBMG. Members were also involved in meetings and training activities at the local level and in Istanbul. They also took part in advocacy and information-sharing activities. Beyond this, they also provided assistance in obtaining data on elements of the local government budget, notably for health and education, which might not have been available otherwise.



Meeting in Kadıkoy Municipality, with Mayor Selami Öztürk

### LMUs and WAs are capable of understanding and monitoring local government budgets:

For most of the pilot municipalities, there were some initial meetings and presentations at their home locations, followed by a one-day workshop in Istanbul with major presentations on key topics, and where two or three local teams came together in each case (there were two of the Istanbul workshops, each intended for a different grouping drawn from the local Urban Councils).

It is somewhat misleading to use the term “local monitoring unit”. The project did not establish and train a core group in each municipality. “Training”, in any case, is a term

used very loosely. Any meeting where there is an explanation of the “social budget” and the concept of budget monitoring was termed “training.”

Preliminary meetings in each municipality with the leadership of the UC, the mayor and local officials, were devoted principally to obtaining support for the project and explaining the need for budget data on social expenditures. Subsequently, there were some formal meetings in each locality, followed by open sessions, attended by a range of those interested from the UCs, where presentations were given on the social budget and the concepts presented in the SBMG. A smaller group, normally including at least one municipal official, was selected to attend the Istanbul workshop.

The outcome of this process was not the establishment of a core group of those capable of monitoring the local government budget. Rather, a number of the civil society members of the UC, or its Steering Committee, had received exposure to the idea of the concept of the social budget and had gained an idea of its importance.<sup>4</sup> They had also contributed to the SBMG by working with municipal officials to obtain the necessary budget data for each pilot municipality.

They were now exposed to an appreciation of the centrality of the budget in implementing municipal strategic plans. They were also motivated and empowered to pay attention to the municipal budget and to raise basic questions with municipal officials about its composition and about anomalies between entries in the budget and priorities set in Strategic Plans. This was an important step forward, and represented a partial realization of the anticipated outcome. However, it did not result in the establishment of a core group with an on-going mandate and the requisite technical skills to track budget plans and expenditures, nor did it equip local civil society to determine and advocate for its priorities, or obtain the know-how to play its potential role as an actor in the local democratic process.

As to the **WAs**, in most cases, they received a half-day’s briefing on the social budget, and a second half-day on GRB. Some WA members had also participated in earlier meetings organized with the UC. Once again, sessions at the local level were open to all who were interested. In Kocaeli, there was great interest among women, as well as municipal officials in GRB, and some 30-40 people took part in the 3-hour session; 5-6 of the attendees were members of the WA. There was no opportunity for hands-on learning. The Kadikoy District WA, which had come into the project at a late stage, received no training on the social budget, only the GRB session. The first exposure of the group to presentations on the social budget was when three of them took part in the National Conference, at the end of the project.

In most cases, the sessions with the international specialist represented the first exposure of the participants to GRB. There was a very positive response to the sessions, but the single session (sometimes reinforced by a further session with the project Coordinator) was not sufficient to equip participants with a capacity to apply what had been learned in a systematic way.

In putting this conclusion into context, it should be recognized that, in assessing the situation it encountered at local level, TESEV had discovered something of a vacuum in the area of gender equality. For the most part, neither civil society leaders, nor local

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<sup>4</sup> The Kocaeli UC has a total membership of 155. It meets twice-yearly. A Steering Committee of 16 meets monthly. The WA in Kocaeli has 75 members, with some 20-25 attending weekly meetings.

officials or councillors, had any appreciation of the idea of gender mainstreaming. Women's activities were viewed as something separate. Further, the local budget does not readily lend itself to gender analysis. Accordingly, it was decided that, in working with WAs, it would be necessary to start with the basics: how to do gender analysis; understanding the gender implications of policy; and, what is required in making an analysis of the budget from a gender perspective. The organization is building on this initial effort in other projects.

Beyond this, TESEV came to recognize that GRB was perhaps more valuable as a sensitizing device than as a technical tool to equip women civil society activists with the means to do detailed budget analysis. What may be more important as a focus for continuing work will be on ensuring that social policies and programs respond to women's needs.

***Key local stakeholders are brought together with MPs and senior local politicians and administrators and constructive dialogue takes place; appropriate arrangements made for dialogue between PMG and Parliamentarians***

One of the discoveries of the project in the first months of implementation was that it would be more effective to focus efforts on influencing decision-makers at local, rather than at national level. In considering the effectiveness of the project in contributing to this outcome, it must be appreciated that TESEV and its PMG partners have considerable credibility in the local governance sphere. It is apparent that their involvement in initiatives with specific local government units stimulated interest on the part of mayors and senior local officials, as well as with the leadership of the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies.

This heightened interest translated into a willingness, formal and informal, to cooperate in providing data on social spending. It also contributed to the strengthening of linkages between the municipal executive and the UC, and, in some cases, closer consultation on budgetary matters. The effectiveness of the project in influencing local MPs, who sit as members of the UCs, is not known.

At national level, with one exception, the PMG experienced little success in meeting with and engaging in dialogue with parliamentary commissions (committees). The exception was the newly-established (Women's) Equality Commission (EC). The timing of TESEV's engagement, through the project, with the WAs, was fortuitous, coinciding as it did with the establishment of the Commission. With no lead time, the PMG was invited to meet with the President of the Commission, and a very positive meeting was held, with a focus on possible links between the EQ and the local level. TESEV maintains good relations with the Commission, despite the replacement of the President of the Commission, following a national election.

***The PMG publishes and distributes the Social Budget Monitoring Guide and introduces it to the wider public and mass media through a National Conference and press conferences***

The Guide was published as planned, and has received a very positive response in professional and public policy circles. It is viewed as a valuable resource, and has been distributed widely to municipalities. Its development and the provision of a comparative analysis of social spending across municipalities, along with the highlighting of the

issue of the lack of budget transparency in Turkey attracted considerable press interest. Press conferences were held in Ankara with parliamentary journalists in October 2010 and with the Economics Journalists Association in July 2011, also in Ankara.

The National Conference, intended to be a key event in introducing the Guide to a broad range of local and national decision-makers and civil society peers, and to bring it to the attention of a wider public, was a disappointment. There was a major conflict of dates, with the Conference coinciding with the national general election campaign. As a result, attendance was much lower than had been expected, and the profile of participants was not in line with what had been desired. There were 40 participants, most of whom were delegates from the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies of the five pilot cities. The project had already received a three-month extension from UNDEF, and the request for a further extension to accommodate holding the Conference at a later date was turned down.

### ***iii. Efficiency***

Given the scope of activities undertaken, the project budget was reasonable. TESEV was careful in management of both human and financial resources. There was a full-time Project Assistant, and the project also covered the costs of the "National Consultant", paid at a modest level, given his level of both expertise and experience. The project was guided throughout by a TESEV staff member, who served as project Coordinator. As noted earlier, the project's weakness was in the lack of completeness of its efforts to build the capacity of the UCs and WAs. This aspect of the project was under-budgeted.

While TESEV made a valuable contribution in exposing its local beneficiaries to new knowledge and a new understanding of their potential roles in strengthening local democracy, the project would have benefited from a more careful needs assessment for both the UCs and WAs, and the services of an expert with more experience in designing capacity development programs. The project would then have been able to adopt a more focused approach to training, setting learning objectives which drew on the needs assessment.

Savings were made in a number of areas of planned expenditure, and, overall, the project was unable to spend its full budget. This was partly the result of a slow start to the project, and the loss of its first Project Assistant, during the inception period (October 2009-February 2010). This set back proceedings. The National Conference was also a smaller affair than had been planned, and this also resulted in cost savings. Some of the savings were dedicated to supporting the wider distribution of the SBMG, which was sent to all municipalities in Turkey with a population of 5,000 or more. Both the SBMG and the GRB Manual were also made available on the TESEV web-site.

The following article was published in *Hurriyet Newspaper* on 9 August, 2011. The article was written by journalist, Ms. Gila Benmayor, and translated by Ms. Billur Gungoren.

***Social Spending Report Card of Municipalities:***

**How are municipalities spending their money?**



We all wonder what is the answer to the question above, but it is not that easy to discover, because local municipalities have a variety of budgets. For example, the budget of repair works for pedestrian crossings is different than the social budget. It is equally important to define “social budgets”. A majority of municipalities place social expenditures under the budget line of cultural activities.

According to TESEV Good Governance Program Director Fikret Toksoz, the money spent on concerts and conferences is definitely not social spending:

*We need to define social spending as the money spent for the disadvantaged groups of the society. We can include women, elderly, children, unemployed, migrants, the disabled, and the uneducated in this disadvantaged population.*

In my hands is the Social Budget Monitoring Guide prepared by Mr. Toksoz and his team. The Guide gives clues about how civil society can monitor the budgets. Of course, the first rule is that municipalities have to put their activity reports, strategic plans, and final budgets on their websites. According to newly adopted legislation, this is mandatory. But implementation of this legislation is “up in the air.”

**No budgets for women**

The Social Budget Monitoring Project, implemented with support of the United Nations Democracy Fund, also tackled the question of how much is spent for women. I need to say at the outset that local municipalities do not have such budget lines. Gender-responsive budgeting is a theme often discussed by women’s civil society organizations.

***iv. Impact***

***Impact on Beneficiaries:*** In the five pilot municipalities, TESEV was able to introduce ***Urban Councils*** and ***Women’s Assemblies*** to a new approach to utilizing budget analysis as a mechanism through which to hold local government to account. WAs also gained an appreciation of how appraising a budget from a gender equality perspective can assist in revealing the extent to which local government programs

and expenditures benefit women, or serve to perpetuate disadvantage. Both **municipal officials** and civil society also gained an understanding of the value of bringing together all budget items which contribute to social sector spending as a means of tracking expenditures and comparing them with commitments made in municipal strategic plans.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond this, the project succeeded to some degree in placing the idea of monitoring the local government budget on the public agenda, drawing public and media attention to the “social budget”, and encouraging civil society to focus more directly on its role in strengthening local democracy by holding municipal government to account for its decisions. In this, it complemented other aspects of the work of the PMG network and added a new dimension to the work of organizations seeking to build the capacity of civil society in Turkey.

The project’s impact was primarily at the municipal level, reflecting the change in emphasis by TESEV as it began implementation. Not surprisingly, impact at central government level was far less noticeable. The exception was the opening secured by TESEV and its partners with the newly-established **(Women’s) Equality Commission of the Parliament**. This body is still in the process of determining its mandate, and its capacities to act are unknown at this time. However, given the positive response to TESEV and its proposal that the EC supports the strengthening of efforts at municipal level to give greater attention to gender equality, there is the prospect of building a strong link between the national EC and those being established at municipal level (discussed below), as well as the WAs.

Related to the breakthrough achieved with the Parliamentary EC, in terms of **advocacy**, the project’s principal impact was through the stimulus it provided to local activists, working through the UCs and WAs, to press municipal authorities to institutionalize the renewed focus on gender equality in public policy and decision-making. The establishment of municipal Equality Commissions as sub-committees of elected municipal councils is permitted and encouraged under law, though not yet mandatory. The project supported its civil society partners to act on this opportunity.

In Diyarbakir, in a predominantly Kurdish region, where the local government and Urban Council were of one mind politically, the EC had already been established. The UCs and WAs of the five pilot municipalities issued a joint declaration, calling for the setting-up of similar bodies in the other pilot municipalities. With the support of the mayor, who confessed his embarrassment to the TESEV team and the WA at his previous “gender blindness” and the President of the UC, prior to the completion of the project, the EC was put in place in Kadikoy, a district where women are extremely active in community activities. It is already active. In the other three cases, its establishment has been placed high of the municipal agenda.

The initiative to set up the ECs was an outcome of the closer working relations the project helped to nurture between the UCs and WAs and between both groups and local politicians and officials. Greater cooperation along these lines has also led to other concrete results.

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<sup>5</sup> In Turkey, the Municipal Law requires all municipalities to prepare and publish a strategic plan six months following the completion of local elections.

- In Diyarbakir, the already strong relations between the UC and local government were reflected in the participation of the UC in budget planning. As a result of the exposure of local officials, along with leaders of the UC, as well as the WA, to GRB, through the project, the WA has also been invited to take part in budget discussions. In addition, the Social Services Department of the municipality has requested TESEV's assistance in conducting a GRB analysis of its planned expenditures.
- In its coverage of the project, the national and local media paid particular attention to the findings of the comparative analysis of social sector spending across the five pilot municipalities. Publication of the findings was also a topic of debate within each municipality.  
It was revealed that Denizli, a relatively well-off city, was spending only 2-3% of its budget on the social sector. This contrasted with the situation in Kadikoy, a distinctive urban district in Istanbul, roughly comparable in terms of its socio-economic profile, where the figure for social expenditures was 9%. In Diyarbakir, the most economically disadvantaged of the pilot municipalities, 15% of the budget was devoted to the social sector. Once it had digested the findings, Denizli announced that it would increase social spending.
- In Kocaeli, the UC has indicated that it now intends to be involved in consultations on budget planning at the initial stage, and not, as now, only after the budget has been announced. Municipal officials confirmed to the Evaluation Team that they were supportive of this development.
- The Bursa WA has made a study of the municipality's budget targets for 2011, making a partial estimate of the gender impact of the budget, drawing on the knowledge it acquired through the introductory GRB training.
- The UNDEF project and the first exposure to GRB assisted the Kadikoy WA in its effort to develop a strategic action plan for gender equality.

#### **v. Sustainability**

TESEV and its partners are involved in a series of additional projects which build on the experience of the UNDEF project. Youth for Habitat is implementing a major EU-funded project, *Participatory Strategic Governance at the Local Level*, in 26 cities, including several of the municipalities included in the UNDEF project. The new initiative, which also involved TESEV and other PMG members, focuses on building Urban Council capacity for participation in strategic planning. As a result of the UNDEF project, a budgetary component has been included in the project, and consideration is being given to introducing training on gender mainstreaming.

TESEV itself is seeking to build on its initial experience with the WAs. It is planning to establish "regional gender networks", involving the WAs, beginning in the Marmara Region, which includes both Kadikoy and Kocaeli. The objective will be to work with the Marmara Regional Development Agency on a more coordinated effort to development of strategic goals in enhancing gender equality, and in working with municipal Equality Commissions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Information cited based on a private communication to the Evaluation Team from TESEV's Project Coordinator.

In addition, with the support of the EU Delegation to Turkey, TESEV had begun to implement an initiative utilizing the tools and methods developed in the UNDEF project in providing training to additional WAs and in twinning more established Assemblies with less-experienced counterparts in other municipalities (see feature story below).

It should also be noted that The Social Budget Monitoring Guide is being used by TESEV and other members of the PMG in their continuing work. The Gender-Responsive Budget Manual is also being used by TESEV in its new initiatives. Finally, as noted above, the partnerships forged with local beneficiaries are likely to continue beyond the project.

#### **vi. UNDEF added value**

Having the name of UNDEF and the UN associated with the project was certainly helpful to TESEV in ensuring the full cooperation of the Urban Councils, local government and the President of the Equality Commission of the Parliament. Political polarization in Turkey and the tendency of the government to be suspicious of European donors and international foundations engaged in support for democratization

causes difficulties for local civil society partners, in some cases. From this perspective, the UNDEF label was a plus for the project.



A second benefit to TESEV related to the nature of funding, where UNDEF covered the full cost of the project over an extended period. Most donors will only pay partial costs. This enabled the TESEV team to concentrate on implementing the project, rather than on scrambling to find additional financial assistance

**TESEV's Oyku Ulacay (left) and Aylin Yardimci (2nd left), with members of the Edirne WA, during the visit to Diyarbakir.**

## **Edirne meets Diyarbakır: an Inspiring Encounter between Two Women’s Assemblies (Prepared by Aylin Yardimci)**

Pairing experienced, successful and proactive Women Assemblies with more passive, timid and inexperienced ones was a major component of our project in an attempt to induce a learning process between different Women’s Assemblies, and educate them to be more able and willing to monitor and influence their local budgets. For this purpose, we took the Women Assembly (WA) of Edirne to Diyarbakır to introduce them to the impressive work of their counterparts. Edirne is a small city in the westernmost part of Turkey, where the lifestyles and mindsets of women are influenced by factors that are completely different from those in the less economically-developed and politically-oriented city of Diyarbakır. To put it differently, the social, political and economic cultures of Edirne and Diyarbakır produce polar opposites. It is for this reason that we found the encounter between the Women’s Assemblies of these two cities to be meaningful and promising.

During the trip, we observed two major and important impacts on the members of the Edirne Women Assembly:

1) Tolerance and recognition: Contrary to popular political prejudice in Western Turkey against the Eastern part of the country (mainly due to the Kurdish political movement), the members of the Edirne Women Assembly demonstrated a surprisingly tolerant and appreciative attitude in Diyarbakır. After visiting several sites and projects organized by the Diyarbakır (provincial) Women’s Assembly in collaboration with the Metropolitan and smaller municipalities (e.g. bread ovens for unemployed housewives to utilize free of charge and sell their baked goods; vocational training centers, free laundrettes for those living in the poorest neighborhoods, etc.), the members of the Edirne Women’s Assembly were noticeably impressed and inspired by the achievements of their Eastern counterparts. The close friendships they had formed in the field are in fact hard to translate into written observations.

2) Inspiration for proactive work: The biggest issue Edirne Women Assembly has in its own locality is lack of smooth relations with the municipality. Although the relationship between the Women’s Assembly and the municipality is rather close in Diyarbakır, there is a strong lack of communication between the Women’s Assembly/Urban Council and the Governor & Special Provincial Administration. The members of the Edirne Women’s Assembly were visibly inspired by Diyarbakır Women’s Assembly’s efforts to work against institutional obstacles, which then translated into concrete ideas to counter the pressure they received from their own municipality.



## V. Conclusions

*All conclusions are derived from the findings of the Evaluation, presented above.*

*i.* The project was **relevant** to the key development problems addressed, which corresponded to a set of inter-related gaps in Turkish political development:

- the limited effectiveness of mechanisms for accountability of government to the public for its decisions, particularly as manifested in budget-making;
- The lack of attention to the social sector and provisions in the central and local government budgets to finance social expenditures;
- the limited role of civil society as a recognized partner in consultations on public decision-making; and,
- the lack of attention to gender equality and the priorities of women in government decision-making.

Further, the emphasis on the budget for the social sector was particularly relevant as a step towards drawing attention to, and seeking to improve, the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

*ii.* In selecting the Urban Council (UC) and Women's Assembly (WA), a sub-group of the UC, as a means to support civil society, TESEV recognized the value of building on the mandate assigned to the UC under the Municipal Law. The project encouraged its civil society members of the UC to take a pro-active role in realizing its assigned functions of enhancing public accountability and ensuring that municipal government decisions reflected the priorities and concerns of social stakeholders. Given its objectives, the focus on the UC and WA was a highly **relevant** strategic decision.

*iii.* The project design blended applied research on the social budget and budget monitoring with attention to the capacity development of local civil society, and advocacy. It was **effective** in developing a tool for the monitoring of social sector budgets at local government level. It also succeeded in raising the public profile of both the social sector budget and the value of civil society engagement with budget monitoring at local level. It was less effective in its efforts to build the capacity of the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies, though it made contributions towards results in this sphere.

*iv.* The project's approach to training was incomplete, and there is a clear need for TESEV to strengthen its expertise in capacity development, beneficiary needs assessment and the development of training plans.

*v.* The Members of the Permanent Monitoring Group (PMG), who were intended to guide the project, proved to be both knowledgeable and active in supporting, and contributing to, the preparation of the SBMG. Members were also involved in meetings and training activities at the local level and in Istanbul, and took part in advocacy and information-sharing activities.

**vi.** Partnership was a real strength of the project. The PMG, where organizational members have worked with each other for some time, over a series of projects, is an excellent institution. The partnerships that TESEV established with local beneficiaries were also strong, and are likely to continue beyond the project.

**vii.** It is apparent that involvement of TESEV and its partners in initiatives with specific local government units stimulated interest in the ideas promoted by the project on the part of mayors and senior local officials, as well as with the leadership of the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies. This heightened interest translated into a willingness, formal and informal, to cooperate in providing data on social spending. It also contributed to project effectiveness through the strengthening of linkages between the municipal executive and the UC, and, in some cases, closer consultation on budgetary matters.

**viii.** In terms of the project's gender equality dimension, its training on **Gender-Responsive Budgeting**, while limited in scope, served to strengthen the interest of at least some of the members of WAs in looking at local decision-making through a gender lens. This led to specific actions by the WAs to seek to influence budget-making in some cases.

**ix.** The **Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG)** has been well-received in professional and public policy circles. It is viewed as a valuable and technically-sound resource, and has been distributed widely to municipalities. Its development, along with the highlighting of the issue of the lack of budget transparency in Turkey attracted considerable press interest. The Guide is being used by TESEV and other members of the PMG in their continuing work.

**x.** The National Conference was a disappointment and did not contribute greatly to project results. There was a major conflict of dates, with the Conference coinciding with the national general election campaign. This resulted in significantly lower numbers of participants than had been hoped for.

**xi.** In terms of **Project Efficiency**, given the scope of activities undertaken, the project budget was reasonable. TESEV was careful in management of both human and financial resources.

**xii.** In terms of **the project's impact**, in the five pilot municipalities, TESEV was able to introduce **Urban Councils** and **Women's Assemblies (WAs)** to the value of utilizing budget analysis as a means to hold local government to account and to raise questions about social spending priorities.

**xiii.** **WAs** gained an appreciation of how appraising a budget from a gender equality perspective can assist in revealing the extent to which local government programs and expenditures benefit women, or serve to perpetuate disadvantage.

**xiv.** Both **municipal officials** and civil society also gained an understanding of the value of bringing together all budget items which contribute to social sector spending as a means of tracking expenditures and comparing them with commitments made in municipal strategic plans.

**xv.** In the sphere of **advocacy**, the project's principal impact was through the stimulus it provided to local activists, working through the UCs and WAs, to press municipal authorities to establish **municipal Equality Commissions (ECs)** as sub-committees of elected municipal councils. The project supported its civil society partners to act on this opportunity. All five pilot municipalities have now either set up, or are planning to set up, ECs.

**xvi.** The initiative to set up the ECs was an outcome of the closer working relations the project nurtured between civil society and local government. These enhanced working relations had other payoffs, including an opening for the UCs to take part in budget planning.

**xvii.** In turning to plans for **sustainability** of the gains accomplished through the project, TESEV and its partners are involved in a series of additional projects which build on the experience of the UNDEF project, and begin to address the gaps and lack of completeness in capacity development for local civil society.

**xviii.** The two principal products of the project are also being used in other initiatives. The Social Budget Monitoring Guide is being used by TESEV and other members of the PMG in their continuing work. The Gender-Responsive Budget Manual is also being used by TESEV in new projects.

## VI. Recommendations

### ***It is recommended that:***

**i.** TESEV considers cooperating with a capacity development specialist in project planning and design (or cooperates with a like-minded organization with the necessary expertise);

**ii.** TESEV undertakes a careful organizational needs assessment of beneficiaries at the inception stage of a project as a basis for developing detailed capacity development plans;

**iii.** TESEV's approach to "training" has been somewhat vague, and, in this project, the training component seemed incomplete. It is recommended, therefore, that a basic training plan be developed as part of a project's capacity development component, based on learning objectives, reflecting organizational needs and capacity gaps;

**iv.** It is also recommended that in approaching project design, TESEV give careful attention to avoiding unnecessary complexity and setting potentially conflicting objectives (in other words, develop a design for a manageable project).

**v.** It is recommended that, given its growing appreciation, in the course of the UNDEF project, of the centrality of Gender Equality in consideration of budgeting for the social sector, as well as in democratic governance, more generally, TESEV undertakes an in-house gender analysis of its programming, and integrates gender analysis in its approach to capacity development in future programming.

**vi.** It is further recommended that TESEV and its partners seek funding to provide “gender impact” training to all Urban Councils, as well as Women’s Assemblies. This will counteract the danger that Gender Equality is viewed as “a women’s issue.”

## **VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts**

While there were gaps in project design and “competing logics” underlying the articulation of results, overall, the project had made a difference. It has acted as a catalyst and a “door-opener” to ushering in change in political relationships at local level, encouraging and assisting civil society to take on a more pro-active role in influencing municipal government priorities. Further it has focused the attention of local government and, through the media, a broader public, on the needs of the social sector. In addition, the project strengthened the appreciation by WAs, representing women’s organizations and women activists, of the need to give priority to placing municipal government and its decisions under a gender lens. It also facilitated a change in thinking on the part of officials in the five pilot municipalities on the role of civil society, and particularly women, in deliberations on local government business.

A limitation of the project was that it sought to equip local civil society through Urban Councils and Women’s Assemblies with new skills, when such institutions lack the basic knowledge of how to operate effectively in seeking to influence local government decision-making. Budget monitoring is a tool, but, to be effectively employed by organizations, requires prior knowledge on how to play a role on a regular and routine basis as an actor in local democracy. Particularly at a local level, civil society in Turkey is relatively weak, and, as discussions in Kadikoy and Kocaeli during the Evaluation confirmed, mainly focused on service delivery. There is much to be done.

## 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"> <li>▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</li> <li>▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</li> <li>▪ 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?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached?</li> <li>▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</li> <li>▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</li> <li>▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</li> <li>▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</li> <li>▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▪ 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?</li> <li>▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</li> <li>▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization?</li> <li>▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?</li> <li>▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▪ 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.).</li> <li>▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

European Commission, *Turkey 2010 Progress Report*, Commission Staff Working Document: Brussels, 9 November, 2010, SEC (2010) 1327

Icduygu, Ahmet , Meydanoglu, Zeynep and S. Sert, Deniz S., April, 2011, *Civil Society in Turkey: At a Turning Point*, CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) Project, Country Report for Turkey II: Istanbul, Turkey, TUSEV Publications.

Kader, *For Equal Representation: Women and Politics Programme*, Istanbul, Turkey, 2011.

Oktem, Kerem, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989*. London: Zed Press, 2011.

The Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, General Directorate on the Status of Women, *Women's Status in Turkey*, Ankara, Turkey, 2011.

United Cities and Local Governments World Organization, Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA), *the City (Urban) Council as a Participatory Governance Model Developed in Turkey*: Istanbul, November 2009.

UCLG-MEWA/UNDP and Local Agenda 21 Turkey, *Turkey Local Agenda 21 Program Handbook*: Istanbul, September 2005

## **Annex 3: Persons Interviewed**

### **October 12, Wednesday**

1. Preliminary meeting with Oyku Ulucay, Program Coordinator at TESEV for evaluation to take place the following week (held during program for a second UNDEF Evaluation, held in Turkey).

### **October 17, Monday**

1. Fikret Toksoz, TESEV National Consultant and Oyku Ulucay, Program Coordinator
2. Ms Aylin Yardimci, former Project Assistant
3. Ms Oyku Ulucay (continued)

### **October 18, Tuesday**

1. Ms Hande Ozhabes, Coordinator, Transparency International Turkey
2. Ms Basak Saral, Secretary General
3. Professor Nurhan Yenturk, Director Civil Society Centre, Bilgi University
4. Basak Ersen, Program Director, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV)
5. Aytug Sasmaz, Program Officer, Education Reform Initiative (ERI)
6. Skype Interview with Principal Expert (Public Finance), Murat Seker

### **October 19, Wednesday**

Travel to Kocaeli (ferry, taxi and inter-city bus)

Meetings with:

- Sedat Yucel, Secretary general of Kocaeli Urban Council
- Ms Emel Ceylan Balioglu, President of Kocaeli Urban Council, Women's Assembly (WA)
- Ms Gulcar Kocubiyik, Assistant WA
- Kenan Gocer, Head of Financial Services, Municipal Department of Finance
- Ms Mucahit Arslan, Director, Social Services, Municipality
- Cihan Alkan, Municipal Department of Finance
- Ms Mehri Tufon, Human Resources, Municipality

### **October 20, Thursday**

Meeting with Kadikoy Women's Assembly

- Ms Serep Ophon, President
- Ms Nezil Ozen, Secretary General and Member, UC
- Ms Sabahat Gulen, Member and Member, UC
- Ms Yesira Menderes, Member
- Ms Nalan Askin, Member and Member, UC
- Ms Suna Ozturk, Member

### **October 21, Friday**

Departure of international consultant for Vienna.

## Annex 4: Acronyms

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	Equality Commission
ERI	Education Reform Initiative
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
GE	Gender Equality
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
KADER	Association for Supporting the Training of Women Candidates
LA-21	Local Agenda 21
LMU	Local Monitoring Unit
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMG	Permanent Monitoring Group
SBMG	Social Budget Monitoring Guide
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TUSEV	Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
UC	Urban Council
UCLG-MEWA	United Cities and Local Governments, Middle-East and West Asia Section
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WA	Women's Assembly