

UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**

EVALUATION REPORT



UDF-UGA-10-367 – Grassroots Gender Accountability in Uganda

Date: 18 May 2015

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	4
(i).The project and evaluation objectives	4
(ii) Evaluation methodology	4
(iii) Development context	5
III. PROJECT STRATEGY	6
(i) Project strategy and approach	6
(ii) Logical framework	7
IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS	9
(i) Relevance	9
(ii) Effectiveness.....	11
(iii) Efficiency	14
(iv) Impact	16
(v) Sustainability	19
(vi) UNDEF Value Added	20
V. CONCLUSIONS	21
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS	23
IX. ANNEXES.....	25
ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS	25
ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	26
ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS	27
ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS.....	29

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Background

The project ran from 15 April 2012 – 14 April 2014, with a total grant of USD 225,000. It was designed by the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), and was implemented in four districts of Uganda (i.e. Gulu, Kabale, Kibaale, and Kibuku). It was implemented without the involvement of further funding sponsors or implementing partners. The target population consisted of grassroots women and men above 18 years, and district and sub-county councillors from the four districts, as well as newly elected women Members of Parliament (MPs). As defined in the Project Document, the two major objectives were (a) to influence democratic processes by empowering grassroots communities; and (b) to achieve gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery through capacity building of elected representatives and public awareness. Accordingly, FOWODE's strategic approach aimed for three key outcomes:

- Gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy making and implementation achieved;
- Local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery enhanced;
- Public awareness of gender-sensitive policymaking and service delivery increased.

(ii) Assessment of the project

The design of the project's training methodology was appropriate to motivate and transfer skills in gender-sensitive analysis, budgeting, caucusing, lobbying and advocacy. The approach of putting in place a monitoring system that was run by Village Budget Clubs (VBCs) and district councillors alike was appropriate to allow for an assessment of the extent and quality of gender-sensitive local service provision, and of the compliant use of allocated funds. Outputs disseminating information via the media finally made it possible to increase advocacy for gender-responsive policy making and to achieve increased publicity for the work of the VBCs. It is therefore our view that the **overall design of the project was relevant** to strengthen gender-sensitive policy making, and to enhance local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery in the project's four target districts.

While only minor changes occurred to the planned project activities, evaluators noted that the project in most cases achieved or exceeded its objectives. More precisely, the grantee facilitated the formation of 12 new, and not as planned 8 in addition to the already 4 piloted VBCs. Visibly empowered district and sub-county councillors expressed with pride their new influence on the gender-sensitive application of laws, policies and local budgets. Former women MP trainees proudly cooperated across party lines on priority issues of Ugandan women in parliamentary committees. Given that the newly trained VBC members engaged three times more often than planned (i.e. 96 instead of 32 times) with their leaders in community budget dialogues to discuss the findings of the regular monitoring exercises, and considering the utility of radio shows to establish accountability for lacking or deficient service provision, evaluators are of the view that **the project was effective**.

Capacity building activities represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, 40% of the FOWODE's expenditure covered the project's training programme and activities supporting

gender-sensitive policy-making, budgeting and service monitoring. Breaking the corresponding budget fraction over the reported total number of 493 trainees provides an acceptable average cost of approximately USD 162, which was spent per beneficiary to enable gender sensitive policy making, budgeting and service monitoring. The budget for project equipment (4%) and miscellaneous administrative costs (11%) appears rather costly, but this was partially offset by the fact that the purchase of motorcycle and bicycle equipment generated a dearly needed gain of mobility and time saving for project staff and trained monitors in the target districts. **While not particularly efficient, evaluators are still satisfied** given the project's achievements.

The grantee's initially proposed target indicators lead to a favourable assessment. Due to a lack of pertinent data they, however, fail to establish the extent to which district budget resources allocated to gender-specific projects have been increased. The grantee also failed to present data to demonstrate how media involvement increased grassroots' ability to challenge the current state of local service budgeting and delivery. On the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence evaluators, however, confirmed that **the project generated positive impact**, as the project introduced enhanced interaction between the local population and government stakeholders, and ways to agree on remedial action to improve the quality of local service provision.

Evaluators also found **promising signs of sustainability**. All VBCs and caucuses of women councillors from the districts of Gulu, Kibaale and Kibuku, which evaluators have met, continue to use the monitoring approach to jointly identify and address gender-specific local service needs. Evaluators were also pleased to identify individual cases, in which VBCs (e.g. in Kibaale) have shared their knowledge with neighbouring counties, whose representatives visited to observe VBC members during the conduct of service monitoring assignments. Evaluators were also in a position to confirm that VBCs in at least 3 of the 4 target districts had launched initiatives to fund identified service needs privately, should they face limited availability or flexibility of public financing.

(iii) Conclusions

- The fact that FOWODE's approach included the conduct of baseline research and the use of outcome indicators is highly commendable, as it confirmed the project's **relevance** and facilitated the evaluators' favourable **assessment of effectiveness and impact** of the grantee's contribution towards grassroots communities influence on gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery. However, evaluators would have appreciated a more rigorous approach to data analysis and a reporting which is pertinent and fully responding to the project document's monitoring framework.

- Given the increased involvement of the supported communities in local decision-making processes and the anecdotal evidence about successfully addressed health and education issues, there is little doubt that the project **effectively contributed to improved gender-sensitive service provision**. It is, however, also clear that the effects of the grantee's intervention have not yet reached out to many more sub-counties other than those covered by the grantee.

▪ Therefore, continued and improved outreach and wider dissemination will be needed, in order to **expand and sustain the application of the participatory budget monitoring and service tracking approach to other local communities**. Ideally, this would be realized (1) by actively involving previously trained district councillors and VBC members who are willing to share their skills and knowledge with neighbouring communities; and (2) by exploiting existing partnerships with counterparts in the four district authorities, who agree to commit to the provision of the logistical support needed to roll out the programme.

(iv) Recommendations

▪ In accordance with our **observations on effectiveness and impact**, **we recommend to the grantee** to design monitoring frameworks, which make consistent use of baseline and target indicators, as this could enable FOWODE to improve its current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organization's strategic objectives. This may also help the grantee to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project.

▪ **Based on our comments on impact and sustainability**, **we recommend to the grantee** to consider a wider dissemination of the budget monitoring and service tracking approach to local communities in districts previously not covered by the UNDEF project, and to facilitate enhanced communication between political stakeholders at district and national levels. To support the design of such an extended project intervention we recommend the following measures:

- Investigate options that could deepen and innovate the budget monitoring and service tracking approach in already supported communities, to facilitate efficient replication elsewhere. More specifically, consider the following questions:
 - (a) Is it feasible to commit local authorities to publish information about their public services provision on the Internet (including current activities, budget allocations, as well as the findings of VBC budget monitoring and service tracking, and related service improvement performance reports)? Could this further improve transparency and increase the extent to which good practice subsequently be showcased and disseminated to local communities from other districts interested in trying to apply this approach themselves?
 - (b) Would the introduction of a platform for exchanging knowledge and experience among previously supported VBCs (e.g. in the form of an association or network) inspire and hence accelerate the identification of gender-sensitive solutions to common service provision issues?
- Reflect on how to establish links between female district councillors (identifying unsolved, pressing service issues on the ground) and women MPs (shaping policy in parliament committees), in order to create bottom-up lines of communication that ensure informed national policy formulation.
- Undertake donor screening in preparation for a proposal suggesting an extension of the project in line with the above suggestions.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report contains the evaluation of the project entitled “Grassroots Gender Accountability in Uganda”. The project ran from 15 April 2012 – 14 April 2014, with a total grant of USD 225,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 22,500 for monitoring and evaluation).

The project was designed by the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), and was implemented in four districts of Uganda (i.e. Gulu, Kabale, Kibaale, and Kibuku). While it was implemented without the involvement of further funding sponsors or implementing partners, the grantee made links with relevant associations operating in these districts. As defined in the Project Document, the two major objectives were (a) to influence democratic processes by empowering grassroots communities; and (b) to achieve gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery through capacity building of elected representatives and public awareness. Accordingly, the target population consisted of grassroots women and men above 18 years, and district and sub-county councillors from the four districts, as well as newly elected women Members of Parliament (MPs).

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

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by a team of international and national experts, under the terms of the framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. In accordance with the agreed process, the evaluation aimed to answer questions across the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability*, as well as the additional criterion of *UNDEF value added* (see Annex 1).

The evaluation took place from February – April 2015 with the fieldwork in Uganda conducted from 09 – 13 March 2015. The evaluators reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials on issues surrounding the access of communities to public goods and services in Uganda (Annex 2). Initial and final interviews were held at the offices of the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Kampala, involving FOWODE’s senior programme director, as well as its programme officer. Other meetings focused on interviews and exchanges with the project’s staff (field officers), and with beneficiary representatives of the target groups from various districts of Uganda, to confirm the project beneficiaries’ experiences and to obtain updates of their most recent activities. These interviews and group meetings were carried out in Kibuku and Gulu districts, as well as in the country’s capital (for the Kibaale district), involving 6 project staff, 2 resource persons, and 42 project beneficiaries.

(iii) Development context

Although the majority of Uganda's population lives in rural areas (88%) and is female (51.5%)¹, the UNDEF grantee FOWODE found the medical, educational and economic support needs of rural women underserved, if not ignored. This represented a stark contrast to the government's policy objective of decentralization, which aimed for democratization, improved service delivery, and poverty reduction. While these aims are reflected in the country's 1995 constitution, as well as its local government act², several challenges to the implementation of the decentralization policy have been identified³, among them notably (a) low local government own revenues limiting local government autonomy, (b) growing dependency on central government transfers, and (c) inadequate downward accountability.

According to the principles of service delivery in Uganda, local governments should improve service delivery as part of their responsibility to the people. They therefore should⁴:

- Evaluate citizens' needs, priorities and decisions;
- Increase understanding and act upon socio-economic needs of the citizens in order to design appropriate service delivery mechanisms;
- Improve decision-making capacity of leaders at all levels;
- Continuously improve service delivery mechanisms to meet changing needs and demands of the citizens;
- Provide relevant, timely, cost-effective and useful services beneficial to the people;
- Increase collaboration and cooperation between local and central government;
- Define the outcome, effectiveness and relevance of each mechanism to be used;
- Use performance management tools and methods to evaluate the services delivered;
- Ensure that the information received is acted upon;
- Increase participation of people in decision-making for service delivery;
- Learn from successful and unsuccessful outcomes; and
- Share responsibility with all actors engaged in local government service delivery.

Uganda's constitution also provides for a 1/3 representation of women in local councils and a women representative for every district. Despite the existence of the above local governance principles and constitutional provisions, women kept finding themselves excluded from participation in democratic processes. The reasons thwarting their involvement ranged from partisan and patriarchal tendencies to lack of skills, experience, access of information, and financial resources⁵. There was hence a clear need to provide local women and men with skills and knowledge to monitor local services provision, and to engage their local political and technical leaders in a joint effort rendering local service delivery more gender-responsive and transparent.

¹ Source: Country Cooperation Strategy: Uganda, World Health Organization (WHO, May 2014).

² Source: Local Governments Act, which amended previously existing law on local governments in line with the Constitution, among others with the objective "[...] to ensure good governance and democratic participation in, and control of, decision making by the people [...]", (Cap 243, 1997).

³ Source: Local Government Management Service Delivery, implementation completion and results report (IDA-43720), World Bank, Urban Development and Services (Country Department AFCE1, Africa, June 2013).

⁴ Source: Handbook on Principles of Service Delivery in Uganda's Local Governments, Ministry of Local Government of the Republic of Uganda, financed by and developed in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, November 2013).

⁵ Source: UNDEF Project Document (UDF-UGA-10-267, April 2012).

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project strategy and approach

The major objectives of the project “Grassroots Gender Accountability in Uganda”, as defined in the Project Document (UDF-UGA-10-367) in April 2012, were (a) to influence democratic processes by empowering grassroots communities; and (b) to achieve gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery through capacity building of elected representatives and public awareness. At the project’s outset Uganda just had held parliamentary and local government elections, and many of the successful candidates were elected into sub-county, district, and national legislator positions for the very first time. According to the grantee’s initial analysis, these legislators lacked knowledge and skills to debate and influence government policy proposals, especially from a gender perspective. At the same time the government’s local service delivery did not meet the basic needs of the rural poor and, in particular, of women. FOWODE saw therefore a need to raise the capacity of local communities and elected representatives, in order to address prevalent issues negatively affecting the efficient and effective delivery of basic local services.

Accordingly, the project's three key outcomes were defined as follows:

- Gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy making and implementation achieved in four target districts by 2014;
- Local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery enhanced in four target districts by 2014;
- Public awareness of gender-sensitive policymaking and service delivery increased in four target districts by 2014.

The project strategy for objective (a) focused on the creation of new Village Budget Clubs (VBCs), an approach already tested during a pilot phase, and the equipping of advocates in these VBCs to “be at the forefront in demanding better service delivery and gender accountability from leaders”. To achieve objective (b), the strategy involved capacity building of female Members of Parliament, as well as district and sub-county councillors, and organizing them into a gender caucus to support cross-party advocacy for gender-sensitive policies. A media strategy was devised to support increased public awareness in support of these objectives.

Established in 1995, FOWODE is a national women's rights organization, free of political affiliation⁶. It evolved from Uganda’s women caucus of the 1994-1995 Constituent Assembly, which debated and passed the country’s constitution. The women caucus’ gender working group formed FOWODE thereafter, with the aim of mobilizing women to take advantage of the gender sensitive constitution. FOWODE envisions a just and fair society, in which women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision-making processes. It is the organization’s strong belief that sustained involvement of women in decision-making at various political levels will result in policies, laws, plans, and budgets that favour and strengthen the process of women's empowerment in Uganda.

⁶ Source: <http://www.fowode.org>

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates FOWODE’s programmatic approach into a structured plan of project activities and intended outcomes. The framework below aims to capture the project logic systematically, and attempts to link activities and intended outcomes with medium-term impacts and long-term development objectives, which evaluators observed dispersed over different sections of the grantee’s Project Document.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Medium Term Impacts	Long Term Development Objectives
<p><u>1. Strengthening female legislators’ capacity to shape gender-sensitive policies</u></p> <p>Establish women leaders’ caucus at district/sub-county levels: workshops, strategy and planning meetings</p> <p>Train women Members of Parliament: workshop, draft action plan & implement it</p> <p>Conduct gender analysis of forthcoming legislation</p>	<p>Gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy making and implementation achieved in the four target districts</p>	<p>Gender-related legislation proposed by female legislators in each district council</p> <p>Gender-sensitive public policies adopted in each of the four districts</p>	
<p><u>2. Strengthening communities’ capacity to monitor the local financial & service provision</u></p> <p>Train VBC facilitators (ToT), review method & material</p> <p>Train VBC members, then: budget monitoring; service delivery tracking;</p>	<p>Local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery enhanced in the four target districts</p>	<p>Significantly increased district budget resources allocated to gender-specific projects, addressing women’s needs</p> <p>Submitted VBC requests adopted and implemented</p>	<p>Empowered grassroots communities influence democratic processes</p> <p>Gender-sensitive policy making and service</p>

community budget dialogues; meetings of VBCs, community, leaders	by the district administration / sub-county leadership	delivery
Elaborate budget tracking and service delivery study		
<u>3. Enhancing public awareness</u>	Public awareness of gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery increased in the four target districts	Increased grassroots' knowledge how local budgeting affects poor women/men, and ability to challenge the state of local service budgeting & delivery
Investigative journalism, radio/ TV discussions, radio spots, e-newsletter and posters		



Members of Gwengdia VBC (Gulu district) share their experiences during the evaluators' visit

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

Baseline Situation

The grantee's initial assessment of the baseline situation was the result of a combination of FOWODE's experience and analysis, which included findings from its own previous project interventions and research undertaken among the project's target population. This way of insight prompted the grantee's concern that the local service offer in the targeted districts lacked a gender dimension and was insufficiently informed by the needs of the grassroots communities. The baseline findings were informed by (a) the piloting of community-driven Village Budget Clubs (VBCs), which monitored local budget and service provision in the project's target districts; (b) a baseline survey involving focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and the administration of questionnaires; and (c) document reviews. These inputs confirmed most importantly the findings of the VBC pilot, that (i) local community apathy led to increasingly poor service delivery; (ii) planning without grassroots involvement caused wrong budgeting priorities; (iii) lack of opportunity for debate and integration of grassroots community concerns was detrimental to the accountability of policy makers vis-à-vis the local population; and (iv) lack of budget monitoring and service delivery tracking skills enabled corruption. Given its presence in the target areas, FOWODE reportedly found itself frequently approached by local community and authority representatives, who were seeking support to facilitate public dialogue.

The project response

The grantee's pilot action demonstrated that increased activism among grassroots citizens, who monitor budgeting processes and service delivery of local governments, empowers communities to hold their leaders accountable, thus resulting in enhanced local democracy. FOWODE following the UNDEF grant award therefore decided to apply the new funding to expand the VBC approach to previously uncovered areas within the four target districts. Accordingly, each of FOWODE's four local project officers would build on the previously existing cooperation with district authorities when *identifying the sub-counties to obtain the project's support*. In addition to this mode of selection, which relied on findings of the districts' limited monitoring capacity (i.e. on-the-spot checks conducted by sub-county and

Selected baseline findings

- 59% of female Members of Parliament (MPs) were new entrants. The share of first-time councillors was even higher (e.g. almost 90% in Kibuku and Kibaale).
- There was concern about the lack of sufficient gender knowledge and engagement skills among district and sub-county level councillors to effectively push the equality agenda.
- At the local level, gender-sensitive bylaws were almost inexistent. While linked to a lack of gender knowledge, the situation was exacerbated by weak policy consultation mechanisms.
- Local communities displayed low levels of awareness of gender sensitive policy-making, budgeting, and service delivery.
- Accordingly, limited interaction between the population and duty bearers had taken place in this respect. On average 25% interfaced with district councillors, and 36% with sub-county councillors.

district level officials or councillors), the subsequently conducted *baseline study* served to confirm that the selected communities lacked interaction with duty bearers⁷ therefore creating a gap on accountability of service delivery. Within this framework, evaluators found various examples of relevant project design, addressing the baseline aspects and involving a variety of relevant stakeholders:

1. Strengthening female legislators' capacity to shape gender-sensitive policy

The purpose of the *workshops in effective legislative engagement and gender budgeting* was to promote among district and sub-county level councillors the formulation of gender-sensitive laws, policies and budgets, thus addressing a major concern confirmed by the baseline study. Subsequently, the participants were expected to mobilise in a *women leaders' caucus* in each target district, and to use this platform to influence policy and advocate for more accountability vis-à-vis women's issues. Based on the workshops' outcome, regular *strategic and planning meetings* were meant to formulate action plans, implement and report activities and recommend follow-up activities.



Evaluators meet with MP Dorothy Mpiima, a former trainee from Buikwe

Increased advocacy for women's issues at the national level was the objective of the project's *training for women MPs*. Given the high number of first-time elected female representatives in parliament, the project activity aimed to foster reflection and positioning among women MPs with regards to effective legislation and accountability, and was hence in tune with the needs identified by the baseline study. Training methodology and package contents were designed to motivate and transfer skills in gender analysis, gender budgeting, caucusing, lobbying and advocacy. The ultimate goal of this workshop exercise was the *agreement on an action plan*, which – if jointly implemented – was meant to (a)

influence the enactment and enforcement of gender laws and policies, and to (b) further support the building the capacity in effectively managing constituency outreach and networking for the advancement of women in Uganda.

The conduct of *gender analysis of forthcoming legislation* finally was intended to ensure a critical debate from a gender-sensitive point of view. Carried out by FOWODE and specialist consultants, the activity was meant to inform legislators on gender issues and to facilitate an inclusive discussion. Wide dissemination of analytical reports aimed to ensure to spread relevant knowledge throughout the four target districts as well as at national level.

2. Strengthening communities' capacity of local financial and service provision

The activities under this project component served to launch and support the operation of Village Budget Clubs (VBCs) in several sub-counties of each target district. Aiming to strengthen capacity and ensure focus, VBC activities (i.e. budget monitoring, public service delivery tracking, community budget dialogues, and interface meetings with leaders) were coordinated by the grantee's district officers, who were also supported by VBC facilitators.

⁷ With the exception of Gulu district, which displayed first signs of limited community participation in planning and budgeting.

FOWODE hired a consultant in order to (a) *review and convert existing government monitoring tools* into an easy-to-use manual on community budget monitoring and service delivery tracking, and (b) to *orient selected community members* in the use of the manual in order to become VBC facilitators. These VBC facilitators finally were expected to *train VBC members* at an as early as possible project stage. The goal of VBC members conducting *budget monitoring, service delivery tracking and community budget dialogues* was to identify and resolve gender-sensitive issues, which critically affect local key service delivery. In addition the grantee foresaw that VBC members would function as multipliers further encouraging other community members to advocate for accountability, transparency and to participate in the local governments' planning and budgeting processes. While this sequence of activities at the sub-county level may not always generate solutions, *quarterly interface meetings* were designed as an opportunity for exchanges between the community, VBC and district level officials about critical local service delivery issues in need of improvement.

The objective of the *budget tracking and service delivery study* was to accumulate case studies and to draw lessons learned from the work accomplished by the VBCs in the four target districts. Based on authentic feedback, this publication was designed as one of the project's key deliverables to advance gender-sensitive budgeting and service delivery at local and national level.

3. Enhancing public awareness

Media activities aimed to increase the publicity of the work of the VBCs and increase advocacy for gender-responsive policy making. More specifically, (a) *investigative journalism* was intended to critically review shortcomings discovered by VBCs throughout the project's target districts; (b) *TV and radio shows* were meant to overcome the lack of interfaces between the local population and duty bearers and to serve as a strategy for increased accountability; and (c) the *dissemination of posters* to visually clarify what constitutes and what the benefits are of a "good budget".



Investigative journalism was used to raise the awareness about shortcomings identified by VBCs

(ii) Effectiveness

According to the Final Narrative Report (FNR), changes were only made to the plan of VBC project activities. Community budget dialogues, interface meetings and radio talk shows were rescheduled to take place earlier, so as not to break the VBCs' flow of activities. The outbreak of a disease affected the implementation of VBC activities in Kabale district, where larger public meetings were temporarily prohibited. Other adjustments involved the relocation of project field offices within Kibaale and Gulu districts, which were intended to make the project's management more effective from a logistical point of view.

Although evaluators noted variations at the level of the initially planned output indicators, their assessment was that the project in most cases achieved or exceeded its objectives. Most importantly, the grantee finally formed 12 new (planned: 8 new and 4 already piloted) *VBCs to obtain the project's support*, of which 3 were located in each of the four target

districts of Gulu, Kabale, Kibaale, and Kibuku. Subsequently, the project - as planned - *conducted a survey* among the local communities and district representatives supported by the project. The resulting *baseline study* identifying opportunities and barriers to gender-sensitive policy-making and service delivery was communicated to UNDEF and used by the grantee for the detailed design of the project's activities.

1. Strengthening female legislators' capacity to shape gender-sensitive policy

"We have been given the power to debate, and we have understood that it is our constitutional right to oppose to council decisions, if necessary. Just recently our caucus disagreed to spend budget resources on artisan support, until we were shown the list of proposed beneficiaries."

Sabano Zerida
Deputy Speaker, Kibuku Council

Separate *workshops in effective legislative engagement and gender budgeting* were held as planned in each of the project locations, involving the participation of 97 (planned: 100) district and sub-county level councillors. The project also formed the foreseen 4 *women leaders' caucuses*, each of which comprised of the projected minimum of 15 councillors. Interviewed field officers from Kibuku, Kibaale, and Gulu confirmed to evaluators that 5 (planned: 4) *strategic and planning meetings* were held in each district to formulate action plans, implement and report activities and recommend follow-up activities. District and sub-county level

councillors in conversations with evaluators clearly demonstrated that they are using these to jointly influence the gender-sensitive application of laws, policies and budgets. They explained how their strategic discussions led them to agree on a thematic focus (most frequently: health and education), and that such agreement was followed by the identification of sites (e.g. a school, a health centre), to which a monitoring visit should be planned. What impressed evaluators was the visibly high degree of empowerment that these women councillors have derived from their engagement in the process of action planning, needs identification and follow-up.

The *training for women MPs*, which was held to increase advocacy for women's' issues at the national level and to *agree on an action plan*, involved 20 participants. According to the grantee, the invitation of MPs from areas outside the four target districts served to maximize outreach. It is also understood that they comprised not only of newly elected MPs, so as to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience. During their interviews with evaluators, former workshop participants frequently mentioned that the training and their action plan's commitment to address the priority issues of Ugandan women positively affected their work in the parliamentary committees, both in terms of the women MP's solidarity across party lines and as far as concrete cooperation in parliament is concerned.

"We have learned how to operate jointly and with a unified voice. And it is now clearly established in parliament committee work that gender balance does not only mean that a woman may raise her voice, but that there will be an equal number of statements made by male and female MPs."

Asamo Hellen Grace
MP, Eastern Region

Four upcoming legislative acts (instead of planned: 6) became the subject of a *gender analysis*. The ambition to keep the project's advocacy and lobbying support efforts focused on a limited number of key issues, but also unexpectedly high consultancy fees led to a

reduced number of analysed draft bills, which finally included: (a) the petroleum exploration, development and production bill; (b) the petroleum refining, gas processing and conversion, transportation and storage bill; (c) the bio-safety and bio-technology bill; and (d) the public finance bill. In addition to having contributed to the legislative process with a detailed review of the gender-sensitivity of these draft bills, the grantee's most remarkable achievement under this activity is the newly introduced legal requirement that future drafts of the country's annual budget need to be certified as gender sensitive prior to parliamentary approval.

2. Strengthening communities' capacity of local financial and service provision

Under the first activity of this project component 18 (planned: 20) community members were introduced to the budget monitoring and service delivery tracking manual. Chosen by the respective field officers from amidst the 4 target communities (i.e. potential activists or personalities who previously led by example), and trained by FOWODE's consultant, who used a specifically prepared manual (*reviewing and converting existing government monitoring tools* for use in the sectors of: health, education, agriculture), they became VBC facilitators. They were conversant both in English and the language of their local community, so that training peers with low levels of literacy would not represent an issue. Subsequently, these community facilitators held as planned 48 orientation sessions (3 per VBC) to *train 360 VBC members*, thus effectively spreading among their peers the knowledge required to conduct budget monitoring, community activism and service delivery tracking.

As anticipated by the grantee, the thus trained community members of the 12 VBCs participated in 8 quarterly monitoring exercises, i.e.: with the support of field officers and community facilitators, the VBCs selected service points belonging to the sectors of health, education and agriculture and tracked them during 96 *budget monitoring and service delivery tracking exercises*. The communities being empowered with the ability to engage with their leaders by providing evidence about service delivery gaps, and given that the monitoring exercises were managed efficiently, the grantee was able to increase the frequency of *community budget dialogues* (from initially planned 32) to the similar number of 96. During *quarterly interface meetings* finally VBCs had opportunity to present their reports, which they assembled to highlight the most critical issues they observed in the context of their monitoring exercises. The issues presented and discussed between the community, VBC members and district level officials related principally to poor health care service delivery and poor education facilities and systems.



Evaluators meet with members of the three VBCs from Kibuku district

The *budget tracking and service delivery study* once more involved the services of an external consultant, who - following induction by FOWODE - conducted joint budget tracking exercises with the VBCs. The resulting publication, entitled "Follow the Money", is based on case studies and lessons drawn from budget tracking exercises in the districts of Kibuku and Kabale, as - according to the grantee - the available funding turned out to be too limited to cover field costs for originally intended similar exercises in the districts of Gulu and Kibaale. Prior to its publication, the project's key deliverable was (as planned) the subject of a joint

review by the grantee's field officers, the targeted districts' officials (including community development officers, health officers), gender experts, and CSOs the grantee regularly cooperates with. Evaluators, however, had difficulties to obtain from FOWODE a clarification, how this exercise differed from the VBCs' regular budget monitoring activity (described above). It is therefore unclear, why the external consultant was unable to access information from the Gulu and Kibaale field officers, in order to also include already existing experience, anecdotes and lessons learned from these districts into the study.

3. Enhancing public awareness

Within the framework of the project the grantee undertook various activities informing the public about the work of the VBCs, thus increasing advocacy for gender-responsive policy-making, and demanding accountability for related local service provision from district administrations. The *investigative journalism task* was merged onto a single senior expert (*planned: 4 local and 1 national expert*), who followed up on shortcomings discovered by VBCs. Published (as planned) in 4 national newspaper and online articles, as well as in 600 (*planned: 1,000*) booklets and the national "Black Monday" anti-corruption newsletter, these journalistically reviewed some of the most critical issues prevailing in the project's target districts. According to the grantee, 4 (*planned: 5*) *TV talk shows* – and even more so – 32 *radio shows* and 720 *radio spots* promoting increased financing for gender-sensitive health, education and agricultural services were key essential to connect the local population with government authorities, thus helping to hold duty bearers accountable for lacking or deficient service provision identified by the VBCs. To improve visibility and outreach, 500 (*planned: 2,000*) *posters* outlining the benefits of a "good budget" were put not only put on display in the project's target areas, but across Uganda in all districts with FOWODE presence. It is understood that shortfalls at output level under this component have generated economies, which were used to ensure sufficient funds to finance the above noted additional community budget dialogues and to realise the planned number of radio shows.

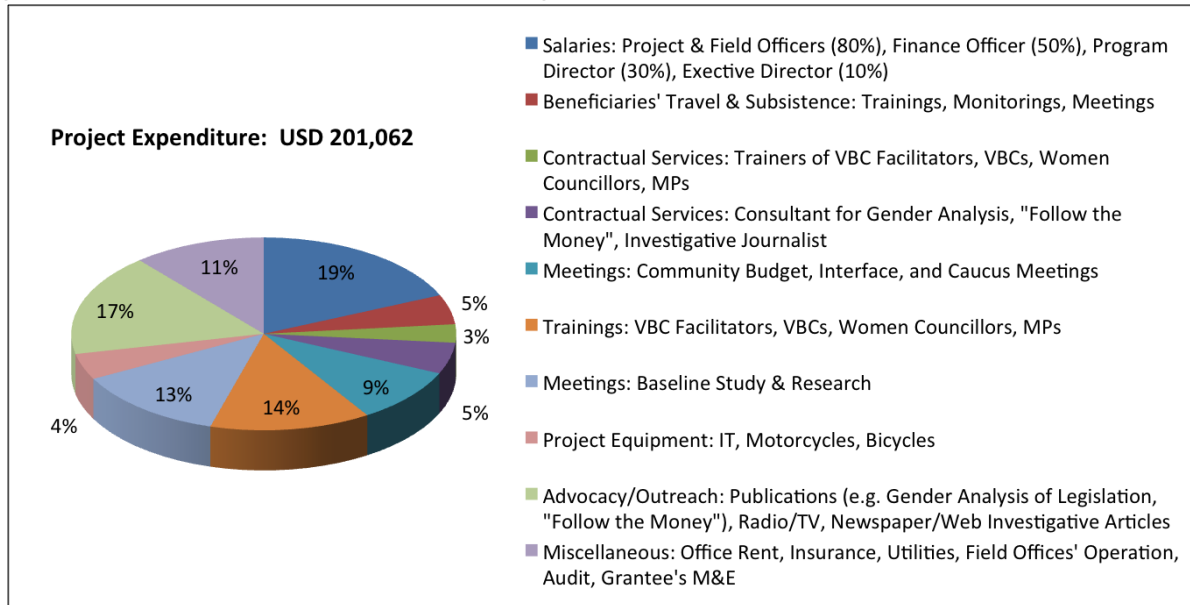
It is the evaluators' understanding that the (a) community dialogues, (b) interface meetings, and (c) radio talk shows have particularly contributed to the project's effectiveness. These sequential activities ensured that the findings of each VBC's initial monitoring exercise obtained a transparent follow-up: they empowered VBC activists to continuously hold local leaders accountable to service delivery commitments, which they had made to the local population in response to the monitoring. Accordingly, VBCs and women councillor caucus members kept tracking, while FOWODE's field officers facilitated the process of engagement with administrative channels. Considering the above, evaluators are of the view that the project effectively contributed to participatory governance in gender responsive budgeting and service delivery.

(iii) Efficiency⁸

In addition to the project's *advocacy and outreach activities*, which achieved a good output level (c.f. section on effectiveness) by expending 17% of the project's budget to increase grassroots' knowledge about local budgeting and the wider population's ability to challenge the state of local service budgeting & delivery (among them: radio talk shows, radio spots and TV talk shows), capacity building and activities supporting gender sensitive policy

⁸ Quantitative assessments made in this section are based on the total amount of project expenditure, which excludes the budget amount reserved for evaluation by UNDEF.

making, budgeting and service monitoring represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, these accounted for about 40% of the budget's expenditure related to *staff salaries*⁹, *beneficiaries' travel & subsistence*, *contracted trainers' services*, *as well as meetings and training sessions*. Breaking the same amount over the reported total number of 493 trainees results in an average cost of approximately USD 162, which was spent per beneficiary to enable gender sensitive policy making, budgeting and service monitoring. Regrettably, the grantee failed to provide evaluators with disaggregated expenditure data, which made it impossible to consider expenditure by type of trainee (i.e. 18 VBC facilitators, 360 VBC members, 97 women Councilors, and 18 women MPs). Given that training costs usually differ between the different categories of beneficiaries the above stated expenditure per trainee is, however, still deemed acceptable.



Contractual consultancy services covering baseline study and other research efforts, including the gender analysis of legislative drafts, as well as research for the budget tracking and service delivery study "Follow the Money", required about 13% of the budget.

Spending about USD 53,800 for project staff and external consultants, the nominal human resources spending of FOWODE amounts to 27% of the total budget. This is acceptable, given the fact that the resources specifically required to manage and administrate the project (FOWODE's project and finance officers) were charged part-time, at reasonable rates, and still within UNDEF's 20% threshold for staff salaries.

With 16%, the grantee's combined budget for *project equipment* (4%) and *miscellaneous administrative costs* (11%) appears rather costly. Evaluators, however, wish to highlight that costs for the purchase of motorcycles and bicycles included in equipment, have been greatly offset by the important gain of mobility (and time savings), which field officers and those involved in the local service monitoring have experienced. It is also worth noting that the miscellaneous cost element comprises of USD 1,200 in expenditure for monitoring and

⁹ Staff salaries considered for this purpose includes resource persons only, i.e. executive director, senior program director, and project field officers.

evaluation, as the grantee mistakenly assumed access to this budget category, which is reserved for exclusive use by UNDEF.

In conclusion evaluators are of the view that the grantee's overall spending policy has been acceptable. While it was not particularly efficient, evaluators are still impressed, since - compared to related expenditure - achievements of the project's capacity building and awareness raising components among the grassroots were commendable.

(iv) Impact

The design of the project's results framework, and the grantee's monitoring of and reporting on some of the target indicators therein allow for a preliminary analysis of potential impact. A review of these indicators, paired with field observations, leads to the following assessment:

- *Gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy-making and implementation achieved:* while the grantee's reporting failed to comprehensively document the achievement of the project's quantitative targets, there is qualitative evidence that women councillors in all districts are now engaged in the proposal of gender-related legislation (e.g. motions targeted universal education, health care, women affected by war, and persons with disabilities), and that satisfactory progress has been made with the adoption of gender-sensitive policies (e.g. times of operation of bars were restricted to counter-act gender-based violence linked to alcohol consumption; school meal programmes were introduced to improve performance and limit drop-out of female pupils).
- *Enhanced local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery:* the grantee did not analyse budget allocations in a way which documents that district budget resources allocated to gender-specific projects have been increased from 2% to 7%. However, there is evidence of enhanced gender-sensitive service delivery, as local administrations address VBC requests (e.g. primary school toilet facilities for girls; equipment and structural improvements for of health centre maternity wards).
- *Increased public awareness of gender-sensitive policy making and service delivery:* the grantee presented no data that could be linked to an initially proposed survey approach meant to demonstrate a 40% increase in the number of grassroots' women and men displaying the ability to challenge the current state of local service budgeting and delivery. Evaluators have, however, noted relevant impact in the form of vivid online readership discussion and comments in relation to the project's investigative journalism outputs.



Staff absenteeism prompted a VBC to push for the construction of this local accommodation facility at a health center

On the basis of interviews held with 6 project staff, 2 resource persons, and 42 project beneficiaries, evaluators independently formed the view that the project generated some

positive effects. Selected anecdotes are provided below¹⁰. Grouped along key issues identified at the outset of the project (= baseline, cf. section on relevance), they demonstrate that the grantee has managed to empower grassroots communities to influence democratic processes, and to achieve gender-sensitive policy-making and service delivery:

Acquisition of sufficient gender knowledge and engagement skills to effectively push the equality agenda

In the context of their training, **women councillors from Gulu district** discussed the drop-out of girls from a majority of the district's primary schools as a dominant issue, and identified forced marriage, early marriage and pregnancy as the main reasons. They therefore agreed in their women caucus meetings to **jointly influence the district council** to pass a by-law promoting school outreach, in order to **sensitize the community** about the importance of girl child education. They also successfully enacted a by-law on the **observation of property rights of both men and women** at all times (failure to comply draws a penalty of 6 months of imprisonment or payment of fine of 200,000 Ugandan Shillings). In addition, the caucus members proposed at a district council meeting a motion to protect the **rights of the girl child to equal treatment in accessing basic services** (including education among others). The proposal was successfully adopted and turned into an ordinance tabled for the Attorney General's approval to become a national law.

Recent experience from the **Kibuku district** shows how - one year after the completion of the UNDEF-supported funding period - **VBC members of Kalampete sub-county continue to make a difference**, and it demonstrates the trust VBCs have gained among the wider local population. Following a divorce, a mother and child from Kalangi village found themselves deprived of their livelihood, as the former husband refused to provide alimony. Tired of being sent from one local service provider to the next without obtaining advice, the single mother addressed the VBC of Kalampete with her plight. VBC members agreed to mediate and a meeting was held at FOWODE's Kibuku field office. In a written agreement the husband committed to his equal responsibility for his son, and to therefore support the mother raising the child. A copy of the signed commitment shown to evaluators during their visit was further detailing the father's support, which included the provision of all means necessary to ensure the children's nutrition, shelter, clothing and medication.

Necessity to improve gender knowledge and to strengthen policy consultation mechanisms to ensure the formulation gender-sensitive bylaws at the local level

Members representing the three **VBCs of Tirinyi, Kalampete, and Kataka** from the Kibuku district praised the usefulness of community dialogue and radio talk shows to **inform policy responses to issues affecting the local communities** living within their areas of operation. Speaking to evaluators, VBC members confirmed that these approaches effectively worked like communication tools, raising their communities' knowledge that equal access to and gender-sensitive provision of public services are each citizen's right, and that local communities are therefore entitled to make their voices heard at the local government authorities of Kibuku district. They proudly shared that the VBC's service monitoring and tracking of financial resources allocated for implementation of community projects in the target areas is highly appreciated by local leaders, as it supports them in the identification of local priorities and the formulation of future policies and bylaws addressing existing local challenges.

¹⁰ In line with current development practice, an effort was made to identify recent anecdotes or to obtain, where possible, details of relevance complementing the grantee's available report documentation, to conduct an independent assessment of impact.

Local communities display improved levels of awareness of gender sensitive policy-making, budgeting, and service delivery...

The *Tirinyi VBC engaged with its local government* to petition for support to the **completion of a primary school construction project**, which was originally initiated by the pupils' parents. Local authorities responded and public funds were secured for the extension building's roof. Visiting the school, evaluators found the building shell indeed completed from foundation to roof. In addition, the VBC assured them that efforts were underway to mobilise further funding to accomplish the two classroom block's interior fittings. Similarly, a dry borehole **prompted the VBC of Kalampete parish to formally petition Kibuku's district authority**, which responded by providing a **new borehole in working condition**. In both cases the issue of non-functional and gender sensitive public services was informed by the VBCs' monitoring activity, and the petitions for remedial action were based on these groups' insight into the Kibuku district's budget provisions for the sectors of education and health.

In *Gulu district* the services of a **local health centre monitored by the Gwendia VBC** were found severely affected by poor management (staff absenteeism, use of a poor water source, and lack of accountability for drugs supplied by the District Directorate of Health Services). The **VBC's findings were shared during a community dialogue**, to which the official in charge of the health centre was invited to provide explanations for the gaps and loopholes identified. The matter was discussed and action points drawn. VBC members proudly told evaluators that health centre staff had been put to task, and that corrections applied have led to improved performance of the health centre's service delivery. In the same district, prior to **VBCs monitoring primary schools in Gwendia, Lakwana and Awach** carried a reputation for teachers' absenteeism, lack of punctuality, alcoholism, mismanagement of universal primary education funds, and embezzlement of parent-teacher association contributions. Kids were hence frequently taught outside school, which resulted in lower enrolment and even poorer academic performance. The VBC reported that its findings **led local leaders to commit to corrective action and to take responsibility for resources under their authority**: in accordance with the teachers' code of conduct all drunken teachers were removed from these schools and by December 2014 a total of 1,633 pupils were retained in the three schools. Moreover, parents contributed to staff housing, thus enabling the head teacher permanently staying on school premises to ensure supervision of teachers' performance and attendance of pupils during school terms.

... resulting in enhanced interaction between the population and governance stakeholders

When asked about their next actions, members of **different VBCs of Kibuku district shared their intention to make a joint enquiry** about the functionality of the district's grader. According to them, the district's **road construction equipment** was used without a publicly agreed work plan, and they therefore felt that this rather served the political interests of some leaders than the local community. They plan to reach out to the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, as well as to the officer in charge of the district's Works Department, to request that the public will be informed about the grader's use to date.

Aiming to mobilise financial support for local projects, the **Kibuku district VBCs also plan to address the State Minister for Wealth Creation**. Among these are activities initiated by and benefiting **persons with disabilities**, and a stipend to **support the school fees of girls** displaying best performance in the primary leaving examinations.

(v) Sustainability

In view of the project's achievements (cf. sections on effectiveness and impact), evaluators at the time of their field visit mainly focused on (a) the continued use of the VBC monitoring exercise as a tool to jointly identify and address gender-sensitive local service needs; (b) the expansion of this approach to potentially interested neighbouring communities not yet familiar with the VBC concept; and (c) the extent to which access to financing affects the feasibility of service needs identified by VBCs.

a. Continued use of VBC monitoring to jointly identify and address gender-specific local service needs

Given the way conversations went with local community representatives from sub-counties in the districts of Gulu, Kibaale and Kibuku, evaluators have little doubt that the VBC monitoring approach has become an accepted and lasting method, as it jointly involves the population and all stakeholders in the identification of gender-sensitive solutions to local areas' most pressing needs. At the time of the evaluation visit, local leaders and administrators alike highly appreciated and supported what had been achieved together with the VBCs to date, and certain sub-counties already had even started to introduce the approach to interested representatives from other communities on their own. Most discussion partners explained their motivation to continue monitoring, and their willingness to share the approach, with the particular characteristics of the VBC process:

1. Although written in English, VBC members found the budget monitoring and service tracking manual easy to use, because (i) English-speaking training facilitators were recruited from within the local community to address possible language and literacy issues; and (ii) at trainee stage, monitors teamed up in pairs comprising of one English speaker, thus enabling easy reference to the manual as and when needed.
2. The sequential involvement of VBCs, starting with the identification of gaps and shortcomings, to the participation in budget planning processes, through to the reflective evaluation of service performance, provided an environment for creative and innovative solutions. It therefore generated a high degree of ownership.
3. Local communities hence felt strongly empowered to participate in local decision making processes, which determine how public funds are allocated to key development activities within their areas. They thus felt confident that future local service provision would be based on transparent, accountable and responsible performance of local leaders and administrators.

This assessment would, however, be incomplete without reporting further interview findings that showed evaluators that many local community representatives (i) appreciated the way in which FOWODE's field officers supported the process, which is why they (ii) expressed their hope that the grantee would remain available for on-the-spot assistance, as and when needed.

b. Sharing knowledge with neighbouring communities not yet familiar with the VBC concept

Evaluators were pleased to identify individual cases of knowledge sharing with neighbouring areas, e.g.:

1. Community members from the neighbouring district of Holima asked the project's Ksita VBC from Kibaale to share their monitoring knowledge. Accordingly, a

- delegation was received to accompany the Ksita VBC during a day of monitoring.
2. Furthermore, NGOs are still inviting FOWODE's Kibaale field officer to radio shows to share the approach and achievements of the monitoring work with a wider audience. One particular radio station has even offered free airtime.
 3. In addition to their determination to keep up with their monitoring exercise, VBC members from across the Kibuku district expressed that they would be more than willing to spread out to new project sites to share their knowledge.
 4. The grantee has also confirmed to evaluators that FOWODE has obtained new funding from the Ford Foundation, which will enable them to expand the programme in order to establish and train VBCs in another two neighbouring communities of Kibuku district (i.e. Kirika sub-county).

“Wherever there shall be opportunity, our VBC members should help other local communities to identify and communicate local service shortcomings. It is important that those in charge are held accountable, so that dedicated funds are consistently put to use for gender-specific needs.”

Dagira David
Chairperson, Kalampete VBC

c. The extent to which access to financing affects the feasibility of service needs

The fact that budgeting is usually based on annual cycles always comes to play when new service needs are discovered. In addition to the time factor, existing but not sufficiently catered needs may face, like in any other place, circumstances that render the availability and flexibility of public financing to a limited amount. Evaluators were in a position to confirm that VBCs in at least 3 of the 4 target districts had put in place instruments to secure financing in such case. Examples included, among others, (i) monthly contributions by VBC members to a joint savings account; and (ii) donor-funded community project proposals, which - once implemented - were expected to result in income-generating activities. These VBC strategies aimed to support e.g. community-led projects responding to urgent needs, but also to sponsor primary school materials, uniforms and fees of pupils in need.

(vi) UNDEF Value Added

According to the grantee, UNDEF's award decision raised FOWODE's profile vis-à-vis other prospective donors, as it added to the credibility of the organization's capability to work with grassroots communities and to promote gender-sensitive policy-making and service delivery.

V. CONCLUSIONS

i. The project approach was based on research findings, which the grantee, the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), sourced from its own previous project interventions and a baseline study undertaken among the project's target population. Accordingly, the project was designed (a) to achieve gender-sensitive policymaking and service delivery by supporting elected representatives, and (b) to enable democratic processes by empowering grassroots communities. While this was addressed through capacity building, there was also a need for (c) outreach, in order to raise awareness how local budgeting affects poor women and men, and to enable the wider population to challenge the state of local service budgeting and delivery. It is therefore our view that **the project represented a relevant effort** to strengthen gender-sensitive policy making, and to enhance local government accountability and gender-sensitive service delivery in the project's four target districts. Our findings related to the capacity building components show that the project's training methodology and package contents were designed to motivate and transfer skills in gender-sensitive analysis, budgeting, caucusing, lobbying and advocacy. Aiming to allow for an assessment of the extent and quality of gender-sensitive local service provision, and of the compliant use of allocated funds, it was appropriate to put a monitoring system in place that was run by Village Budget Clubs (VBCs) and district councillors alike. Activities disseminating information via the media finally aimed to increase advocacy for gender-responsive policy making and to achieve increased publicity for the work of the VBCs.

ii. Only minor changes were made to the planned project activities. Although evaluators noted variations at the level of the initially planned output indicators, their assessment was that the project in most cases achieved or exceeded its objectives. Most importantly, the grantee facilitated the formation of 12 new, and not as planned 8 in addition to the already 4 piloted VBCs in the four target districts of Gulu, Kabale, Kibaale, and Kibuku. Visibly empowered district and sub-county level councillors in conversations with evaluators explained how they are engaging in joint actions to influence the gender-sensitive application of laws, policies and local budgets. Former women MP trainees highlighted that their workshop participation positively led them to cooperate across party lines on priority issues of Ugandan women in parliamentary committees. Regular budget monitoring and service delivery tracking finally empowered trained grassroots-level VBC members to engage three times more often than planned (i.e. 96 instead of 32 times) with their leaders in community budget dialogues to discuss the evidence they established about local service delivery gaps. Given these significant achievements, and considering the utility of the radio shows to connect the local population with government authorities, thus establishing accountability for lacking or deficient provision of gender-sensitive health, education and agricultural services identified by the VBCs, evaluators are of the view that **the project was effective**.

iii. Some of the grantee's reporting on the target indicators allows for a preliminary analysis of potential impact. While there is qualitative evidence that women councillors in all districts are now engaged in the proposal of gender-related legislation, and that satisfactory progress has been made with the adoption of gender-sensitive policies, there is a lack of pertinent data to establish the extent to which district budget resources allocated to gender-specific projects have been increased. The grantee also failed to present data to demonstrate how media involvement increased grassroots' ability to challenge the current state of local service budgeting and delivery. Evaluators have, however, noted relevant impact in the form of vivid online readership discussion and comments in relation to the project's investigative journalism outputs. In addition, they independently gathered first-hand anecdotal evidence, which established that the project introduced enhanced interaction between the local population and governance stakeholders, and ways to agree on remedial action to improved the quality of local service provision. Evaluators therefore conclude that **the project generated positive impact.**

iv. Capacity building activities represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, 40% of the grantee's expenditure covered the project's training programme and activities supporting gender-sensitive policy-making, budgeting and service monitoring. The combined budget for project equipment (4%) and miscellaneous administrative costs (11%) appears rather costly, but this is partially offset by the fact that the purchase of motorcycle and bicycle equipment generated a dearly needed gain of mobility and time savings in the target districts. With 17% just marginally more of the project's budget was needed to enhance grassroots' awareness about local budgeting and the wider population's ability to challenge the state of local service budgeting and delivery. **Although not particularly efficient, evaluators are still satisfied in view of the project's achievements.**

v. In addition to the positive results, evaluators also found **promising signs of sustainability.** All VBCs and caucuses of women councillors from the districts of Gulu, Kibaale and Kibuku, which evaluators have met, continue to use the monitoring approach to jointly identify and address gender-specific local service needs. Evaluators were also pleased to identify individual cases, in which VBCs (e.g. in Kibaale) have shared their knowledge with neighbouring counties, whose representatives visited to observe VBC members during the conduct of service monitoring assignments. Evaluators were also in a position to confirm that VBCs in at least 3 of the 4 target districts had launched initiatives to support identified service needs privately, should they face limited availability or flexibility of public financing.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen the outcome and similar projects in the future, evaluators recommend to UNDEF and project grantees:

i. The fact that FOWODE's approach and methodology included the conduct of baseline research and the formulation of target indicators is highly commendable, as this enhanced the project's **relevance** and significantly facilitated the assessment of **effectiveness and impact**. Evaluators, however, missed a more rigorous approach to data analysis (e.g. assessing separately by district and sector, the policies / budget allocations / services, which have been proposed or implemented) and a reporting which is pertinent and fully responding to the project document's monitoring framework (i.e. in relation to the targeted outcome "increased public awareness", by at least systematically tracking the type of feedback received from the investigative journalism's readership and the radio talk show listeners). Based on the above **we recommend to the grantee to design monitoring frameworks, which make consistent use of baseline and target indicators**. Exploiting the results of progress monitoring more systematically facilitates the identification of remaining and new needs. This could enable FOWODE to improve its current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organization's strategic objectives. It may also help the grantee to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project.

ii. Given the increased involvement of the supported communities in local decision-making processes and the anecdotal evidence about successfully addressed health and education issues, there is little doubt that the project contributed effectively to improved gender-sensitive service provision. Despite this achievement it is, however, also clear that the intervention's medium-term effects have been limited to those sub-counties covered to date by the grantee. Based on our observations on **impact and sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee** (1) to consider ways **to actively involve trained district councillors and VBC members**, in order to support an expansion of the budget monitoring and service tracking approach to not yet covered neighbouring communities within the four target districts; and (2) **to exploit existing partnerships with counterparts in the four district authorities**, who have been cooperating and praising the project's positive effects, in order to commit them to provide logistical support, which may be needed to mobilize willing resource persons and to roll out the programme.

iii. With a view to the long-term, it is our strong belief that a wider dissemination of the budget monitoring and service tracking approach to local communities in districts previously not covered by the UNDEF project, and enhanced communication between political stakeholders at district and national levels will be essential. Based on our comments on **sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee** to:

- **Investigate options that could deepen and innovate the budget monitoring and service tracking approach in already supported communities**, to facilitate

efficient replication elsewhere. More specifically, consider the following questions:

- (a) Is it feasible to commit local authorities to publish information about their public services provision on the Internet (including current activities, budget allocations, as well as the findings of VBC budget monitoring and service tracking, and related service improvement performance reports)? Could this further improve transparency and increase the extent to which good practice subsequently be showcased and disseminated to local communities from other districts interested in trying to apply this approach themselves?
- (b) Would the introduction of a platform for exchanging knowledge and experience among previously supported VBCs (e.g. in the form of an association or network) inspire and hence accelerate the identification of gender-sensitive solutions to common service provision issues?

- **Reflect on how to establish links between female district councillors** (identifying unsolved, pressing service issues on the ground) **and women MPs** (shaping policy in parliament committees), in order to create bottom-up lines of communication that ensure informed national policy formulation.
- Undertake donor screening in preparation for a new proposal suggesting an extension of the project: In line with the above suggestions future grant applications should **present potential donors with a new, innovative approach, which goes beyond simple replication, in order to accelerate the dissemination of the VBC method.**

IX. 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

UNDEF

- Final Narrative Report
- Mid-Term/Annual Progress Report
- Project Document
- Milestone Verification Reports
- Financial Utilization Report
- Project Officer's Evaluation Note

Forum for Women in Democracy

- Analyses of Public Finance Bill, Petroleum Bills
- Report on the Women MP Workshop
- Women MPs' Action Plan
- Published Investigative Journalism Stories
- Additional Press Clippings
- Manual on Budget Monitoring and Public Service Delivery Tracking
- VBC Monitoring Template
- Kibuku Field Office Presentation to District Budget Conference FY 2013/14
- Result Framework Summary Report
- Images

Laws, conventions:

- Constitution of Uganda
- Local Governments Act, amending a previously existing law on local (Cap 243, 1997)

Other sources:

- Country Cooperation Strategy: Uganda, World Health Organization (WHO, May 2014)
- Local Government Management Service Delivery, implementation completion and results report (IDA-43720), World Bank, Urban Development and Services (Country Department AFCE1, Africa, June 2013)
- Handbook on Principles of Service Delivery in Uganda's Local Governments, Ministry of Local Government of the Republic of Uganda, financed by and developed in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, November 2013)

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

9 March 2015	
<i>Grantee's Project Briefing (FOWODE Office, Kampala)</i>	
Maureen Kangere	Programme Officer, FOWODE
Julius Mukunda	Senior Programme Director, FOWODE
10 March 2015	
<i>Beneficiary Interviews: Parliament of Uganda (Kampala)</i>	
Betty Iyamulemye	UWOPA Coordinator
Asamo Hellen Grace	MP PWD Eastern Region
Jovah Kamateeka	MP Mitooma District
Dorothy Mpiima	MP Buikwe District
<i>Resource Person Interviews (FOWODE Office, Kampala)</i>	
Ladu Ismael	Journalist, Daily Monitor
Magelah Peter G	Lawyer & Researcher, ACODE
11 March 2015	
<i>Beneficiary Interviews: Kibuku District</i>	
Kagwa Moses	FOWODE Kibuku, Field Officer
Katama B. James	FOWODE Kibuku, Field Officer
Saaba Elisabeth	Chairperson for Production
Ssali Anna Munghono	Secretary for Production
Sabano Zerida	Deputy Speaker
Nasiyo Farida	Finance, Administration and Works
Namuzungu Amina	Member of Finance, Planning & Administration, Works and Technical Committee
Mbulachola Getrude	VBC Chairperson, Tirinyi
Fairosi Magino	VBC Treasurer, Tirinyi
Kauma Jesca	VBC Chairperson, Kataka
Dagira David	VBC Chairperson, Kalampete
Margaret Mubala	VBC Member, Kalampete
Manikamagola	VBC Vice Chairperson, Kalampete
Kujji Isma	VBC Member, Tirinyi
Amandu Nulu	VBC Member, Kalampete
Nasyo Prosy	VBC Member, Tirinyi
Mbulamberi Bernard	VBC Secretary, Kataka
Kyenda Michael	VBC Member, Kataka
Mbulabantu Yoweri	VBC Treasurer, Kalampete
12 March 2015	
<i>Beneficiary Interviews: Kibaale District (FOWODE Office, Kampala)</i>	

Tinner Areeba	FOWODE Kibaale, Field Officer
Mokasa James	District Community Officer
Kiiza Veronica	District Councillor
Tumwebembeize Benon	VBC Chairperson
Komwero Patricia	VBC Member
Kyomugisha Hope	VBC Member
Mahereza Gad	VBC Chairperson
13 March 2015	
<i>Beneficiary Interviews: Gulu District</i>	
Jomeo Richard	FOWODE Gulu, Field Officer
Lalam Lillian Stella	Woman Councillor, Awadu/Patoko/Palimo
Adong Caroline Rose	LCV PWD Councillor
Atim Betty	Chairperson, Women Caucus
Akello Grace Ouma	Member of District Women Caucus
Acira Muhole	VBC Chairperson, Gwengdia
Oola Ben	VBC Secretary, Gwengdia
Oneka Isaac	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Oryem Benson	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Ochola Francis	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Omony Selestino	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Akenya Alfred	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Odong Richard	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Ocan David	VBC Member, Gwengdia
Aryemo Mary	VBC Treasurer, Gwengdia
Lawil Jennifer	VBC Member, Gwengdia
<i>Grantee's Debriefing (FOWODE Office, Kampala)</i>	
Maureen Kangere	Programme Officer, FOWODE

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
VBC	Village Budget Clubs
WHO	World Health Organization