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CLUSTER EVALUATION REPORT



TRANSTEC
PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

UNDEF-FUNDED MEDIA-RELATED PROJECTS

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Acknowledgements

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) Data on the portfolio of projects evaluated

This report is the cluster evaluation of 12 UNDEF-supported projects related to the media. It concerns projects that either focused on media capacity building or included a significant element of work with the media. The projects were implemented between 2007 and 2011; they lasted between 12 and 24 months. The total budget of the 12 projects was US\$3.519m (including evaluation costs of US\$20,000 to 25,000 per project). Eleven of the projects covered individual countries – six projects in Africa (two of which in Sierra Leone), four in Asia, one in Europe – and one was global. National civil society organizations (CSOs) implemented four of the projects, while international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or their local affiliates implemented the other eight. The table below lists the projects and their main objectives. The table below lists the projects. More project details are appended in Annex 1 of this report, including the budget, main objectives and major outcomes of each project and details of the implementing organizations.

Country/Region	Project objective (summary from project documents)
Projects with a specific media objective	
Albania	Increase media capacity to inform citizens on corruption, other concerns
Ghana*	Support system for participatory community radios
Global	Organization of the 2 nd Global Forum for Media Development
Liberia	Establishment of Liberia Women's Democracy Radio
Philippines	Promotion of ethical journalism and investigative reporting
São-Tomé and Príncipe	Strengthen governance through community media, dialogue
Sierra Leone 108	Build reporting capacity
Sierra Leone 154	Enhance political participation through media
Somalia	Enhance journalists' capacity to report on human rights
Timor-Leste*	Enhanced reporting capacity of journalists
Projects with objective other than media	
Afghanistan	Radio programs on prominent women's life and "voices from the field"
Nepal	Radio broadcasts on reconciliation, human rights, rural youth

* The Ghana and Timor-Leste projects do not have a final evaluation report. See Annex 1 for details.

Overall, the projects all attempted to contribute to strengthening the media as a channel for civil society participation in democratic decision-making. Project activities included:

- Training and advice to journalists, communities
- Facilitation of program production (lending of equipment, technical support, etc.)
- Research and monitoring of media output
- Support for the media professions (networking, conferences)
- Work with local communities
- Support to women's groups (establishment of women's media, rights awareness raising)
- Advocacy and outreach
- Support to professional unions
- Support for an enabling media environment (freedom of expression, press pluralism)

(ii) Evaluation Findings

In general, the project documents have correctly identified the role played by the media in relation to democratization and the promotion and protection of human rights. They have also correctly identified challenges faced by the media – mostly falling within the categories mentioned in section II of this report. The activities proposed to address these challenges (listed in section III) have also been appropriate, at least to address the most immediate challenges of each particular context. In that sense the projects have been **relevant**. Elements that have enhanced the relevance of projects included:

- Sound research.
- Appropriate gender mainstreaming.
- A “sector-wide” approach.

Limitations to the relevance of projects came from the following elements:

- Training that was not adapted to the needs or skills of participants, or that was not followed up with on-the-job mentoring.
- Inadequate engagement with authorities, resulting in activities being delayed or cancelled.

Projects that have taken a holistic view of the media, engaging journalists, owners, regulators, and other relevant stakeholders, gained in relevance. It is to be noted that none of the projects targeted the development of internet-based media.

The media cluster projects were generally **effective**. Some exceeded their objectives in terms of numbers of participants. In other cases, the capacity-building activities for journalists were clearly successful, as evidenced by the amount and quality of reports on human rights issues produced by participating local journalists. Factors that have helped enhance the effectiveness of media-related activities included the following:

- Appropriateness of training to the skills of journalists, and involvement of a critical mass of participants.
- Provision of production tools and facilities for the media (video cameras, voice recording equipment, editing suites, etc.).
- Support to the development of an enabling environment for the media.
- Work with women and communities, in particular the skilled use of “listening groups” for community members to debate the contents of broadcasts.

However, the projects’ effectiveness had limits related to the following factors:

- The training offered was not always consistent with journalists’ level of skills (some investigative reporting training had to be scaled back to focus on basic journalistic skills).
- The effectiveness of some projects was hampered by their dependency on regulators’ responses.
- Advocacy activities, while generally effective when targeting the general public and government authorities, often failed to engage key stakeholders in the media sector, such as publishers and editors of private or public media outlets.

The effectiveness of projects often depended on the commitment and skills of small teams of project implementers.

The **efficiency** of the projects varied widely. In the main, the eight projects implemented by international NGOs carried out activities as planned and within budget. Commonalities across projects in relation to efficiency included:

- The relatively high cost of training.
- The projects run by international NGOs or local affiliates benefited from better-than-average project management.
- One area where efficiency was hard to assess concerned the provision of production equipment (video cameras, editing suites, etc.).

More generally, the skills and experience of managers was an important factor in ensuring that projects were run efficiently.

While it is always difficult to assess the **impact** of media projects such as those in the present portfolio, individual project reports provide some evidence of impact. For example:

- The projects in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste were able to reach a critical mass of journalists thus achieving an identifiable impact on the amount of reporting on human rights and democracy issues.
- Some of the clearest evidence of a positive impact comes from the projects that focused on women's rights.

The impact of advocacy activities was difficult to gauge. Some had identifiable impact – for example in Albania, impact was connected to investigative reporting supported by the project. However, the impact of the projects on media freedom and pluralism was weak, partly because the projects did not develop sustained strategies, backed by structured activities, to support an increase in freedom of expression and media pluralism.

Contributing to **sustainability** was the fact that seven of the projects were implemented by international organizations specializing in work with the media. This helped ensure that a majority of the projects continued their activities after UNDEF support ended. Projects that lacked sustainability were those that failed to engage in-depth with stakeholders or neglected key stakeholders such as publishers and editors.

(iii) Conclusions

- The projects have helped disseminate information about human rights and democracy in many of the countries in which they were implemented. Training for journalists on human rights and investigative reporting helped ensure greater coverage of these issues. This outcome would have been further enhanced if media owners, publishers and producers had been more systematically engaged with by capacity building activities. The overview of activities (chapter II) and of project design (chapter III, relevance) confirms this pattern.

- The projects that involved work with communities and women's groups have helped empower these target groups. They have done so by providing them with relevant information about their rights, and in some cases by helping them establish their own local media. Another relevant factor in this respect was the provision of training to women journalists, including in conflict contexts, thus indirectly contributing to greater coverage of the situation of women in conflict. See chapters II (list of activities) and III (effectiveness).

- Some of the projects have engaged in effective advocacy on behalf of media freedom. However they have not in themselves been sufficient to enhance media freedom or to create a more enabling environment for the media. Project often lacked a concerted strategy to enhance freedom of the press and media pluralism. The advocacy activities (see chapter II these included networking with regulatory agencies and supporting licensing applications) were often insufficiently targeted to make a significant difference. See chapter III (impact).

- The projects have widely succeeded in enhancing reporting skills among journalists who took part in training sessions. This was particularly the case in countries where a range of capacity building methods were used, mixing conventional group training with individual mentoring and on-the-job advice. This activity was often effectively combined with awareness raising on the ethical standards of journalism. See chapters II and III (effectiveness).

- In some cases the training lacked follow-up and participants were not able to make full use of the skills acquired. This was the case in particular of the projects implemented in conflict zones (Somalia) and in some post-conflict contexts (Timor-Leste), partly because logistics made training follow-up difficult, and partly because such follow-up was not adequately provided for the project as designed. See chapter III (effectiveness and impact).

- The projects that achieved the greatest impact were those that addressed a significant cross-section of stakeholders in the media “sector”. This highlights the potential benefits of taking a sector-wide approach in media-related activities. An important factor in taking a sector approach is sound research into the baseline situation of the media at the time of project design. See chapter III (impact and sustainability).

- In some cases, projects could not be completed, or missed some of their objectives, partly because the implementers lacked organizational capacity and governance, or lacked institutional foundations. This concern was greater in those cases where the implementers were local organizations and there were not national or international partners.

(iv) Recommendations

- **UNDEF should continue supporting media capacity building projects.** The issue is clearly relevant to UNDEF’s mandate and past projects have addressed genuine needs. There is also a clear demand by civil society in this field, complemented by appropriate experience and skills. This recommendation is based on conclusions (i) and (vi).

- **UNDEF should encourage applicants to design media-related projects with a “sector-wide” approach.** Media capacity building and freedom, as well as the use of the media by citizens, depend on a wide range of socio-economic, political and legal factors. The most relevant and impactful projects have taken all these aspects into account, even when they did not address them all in activities. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

▪ **UNDEF should encourage applicants to present project proposals based on sound research about the situation of the media in the country/countries concerned.** Projects have often been most relevant and have achieved the most impact when they were based on a good initial understanding of the situation of the media. Applicants should be encouraged to refer to international assessments and indices on press freedom, human development, corruption, etc., when designing their projects. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

▪ **UNDEF should request that training activities, when included in projects, should address a critical mass of journalists and reporters. They should use a range of resource people and support techniques.** While training is rightly used as an integral part of media capacity building, projects need to focus on the quality and scope of the training they will propose. The most effective forms of training have been those that combine a range of different approaches and a mix of international and local resource people. This recommendation is based on conclusions (i), (iv) and (v).

▪ **UNDEF should continue supporting projects that target advocacy at media regulators, with a view to encourage pluralism and community media.** In many countries, laws and regulations hamper the development of free and pluralistic media. Regulatory institutions are also often weak and/or politicized. It is relevant to address these concerns, provided projects focus on enhancing safeguards for freedom of expression and pluralism. This recommendation is based on conclusions (iii) and (vi).

▪ **UNDEF should encourage applicants to take emerging trends into account in project design, particularly the rise of Internet-based news.** As Internet connectivity progresses, web-based media capacity building tools also become more accessible. The scope for debating and sharing information also grows through access to the Internet. These elements should become integral parts of future projects. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

▪ **UNDEF should continue its support for media-related projects in zones of conflict.** Whereas most international assistance in zones of conflict is related to humanitarian aid and service delivery, UNDEF is one of the few sources of funding that is able to channel funds to projects in zones of conflict that focus on enhancing the quality of information. In that sense, support to media projects in conflict contexts is one form of UNDEF added value to development assistance, and to interventions by other UN agencies. This recommendation is based on conclusions (ii) and (iv).

▪ **UNDEF should encourage local organizations to apply for grants in partnership with others.** In some cases, local NGOs implementing projects on their own were not able to complete them satisfactorily, largely because of a lack of organizational capacity. By involving national or international partners with appropriate institutional capacity and governance, applicants could help reinforce project management. See conclusion (vii).

➤ **Implementation of the recommendations**

It is suggested that UNDEF should direct applicants to the evaluation reports posted on its website (including potentially the present report). Applicants should be advised to take the findings of relevant thematic and country evaluations into account when designing their project proposals.

II. Introduction and development context

(i) Project and evaluation objectives

This report is the cluster evaluation of 12 UNDEF-supported projects related to the media. It concerns projects that either focused on media capacity building or included a significant element of work with the media. The projects were implemented between 2007 and 2011; they lasted between 12 and 24 months.

The total budget of the 12 projects was US\$3.519m (including evaluation costs of US\$20,000 to 25,000 per project). Eleven of the projects covered individual countries – six¹ in Africa, four in Asia, one in Europe – and one was global. National civil society organizations (CSOs) implemented four of the projects, while international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or their local affiliates implemented the other eight. Ten of the projects focused on training and other forms of capacity building directed at the media themselves. Two of the projects included support to the media in their activities but aimed at achieving broader objectives such as improved governance, awareness of women's rights and post-conflict reconciliation.

Project	Country/Region	Title
AFG-06-002	Afghanistan	Human rights and women's rights in the context of Islam
NEP-06-086	Nepal	Reconciliation and democracy building
PHI-06-099	Philippines	Media, democracy and development
STP-06-105	São-Tomé and Príncipe	Promoting democracy and accountability
SIL-06-108	Sierra Leone	Democracy, human rights and media
TIM-06-115	Timor-Leste	Training for new journalists
GLO-07-128	Global	Global forum: creating democratic media cultures
GHA-07-143	Ghana	The right to communicate through community radio
LIR-07-146	Liberia	Women's Democracy Radio: "Voices to the Voiceless"
SIL-07-154	Sierra Leone	Democratic dialogue through media
SOM-07-168	Somalia	Strengthening Somali media capacity
ALB-07-190	Albania	Media, transparency and accountability

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".

In the case of the cluster evaluations, an Approach Paper² developed by Transtec in November 2011 states:

"The main purpose of cluster evaluations is to compare different project approaches within similar [thematic] project areas. Evaluations should identify which variables (contexts, approaches, partners, management styles, needs assessments, timing, networks, etc.) led to different results among projects in a thematic area. Cluster evaluations should lead to a clear assessment of what project strategies worked well, what ones did not, and should provide conclusions and recommendations for improved project selection."

¹ Two projects took place in Sierra Leone. The portfolio therefore covers five countries on that continent.

² Major excerpts from the Approach Paper are appended to this report (see Annex 4).

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The cluster evaluation was undertaken by one of the Transtec consultants involved in UNDEF project evaluations since late 2010. The November 2011 Approach Paper calls for “a comparison of experiences” based on project documents and interviews with relevant project stakeholders. The evaluator used the following sources of information:

- Project documentation including: original project proposals, mid-term reviews, final reports and final evaluations. Nine of the twelve sets of documents were complete, the three others missed some elements, including one (Timor-Leste) that was terminated early.
- Interviews: a range of resource people were identified in consultation with UNDEF, to contact as sources of additional information and expert views on media work. The resource people also helped identify comparable projects funded by donors other than UNDEF. A consideration of these projects complemented the literature review also conducted as part of this evaluation.

The key methodological challenge of this evaluation lies in accommodating the diversity of projects. It was necessary to identify common patterns across a range of projects with very different priorities and operating in a variety of environments. To help with developing a synthetic overview, the evaluator amended the set of evaluation questions used in project evaluations, and developed a more synthetic set of questions (see Annex 2).

(iii) Development context

Opportunities and challenges of media-related work

All the projects were implemented – or addressed concerns – in developing countries.³ It therefore makes sense to describe in broad terms the opportunities and challenges faced by the media in these countries and more widely the benefits and costs of including media-related activities in projects supported by UNDEF.

In essence, the twelve projects under consideration have between them identified **opportunities** faced by the media in the countries covered, which included the following:

- *Improved governance.* The media can make a key contribution to government accountability by researching and reporting information on the actions of government authorities. This contribution can in principle be fed back into the government process through public debate and dialogue, legislation, and the development of media regulation institutions. News media owners, publishers and producers, as well as journalists, are the key media actors in this regard.
- *Awareness of rights.* The media can help citizens better understand and exercise their rights, by disseminating information on the nature of these rights and practical ways to exercise them. This can be done through the work of journalists, as above, but may also be done through works of fiction ranging from radio dramas to soap operas, and through other formats such as public debates. Important actors in this field include media owners and managers, as well as journalists. Those involved in the writing and production of works of drama and fiction also play a key role, as do opinion leaders and even those financing programs such as sitcoms.

³ None, apart from the Albania project, was implemented in a country undergoing transition away from socialism.

- *Political participation.* The media may offer a platform for members of the public (individually or organized into civil society groups) to express opinions and exchange views on political issues, thus potentially enhancing democratic accountability processes. The traditional news media have long played this role, though internet-based social media are developing a critical mass in this regard. As social networking develops, the media's role in enhancing political participation shifts from reliance on professional journalists to inclusion of ordinary citizens who are not media professionals (but may be experienced civil society activists⁴).

The above three functions are those that are most closely related to the democratic accountability processes that UNDEF seeks to support. Against these, the projects have addressed a range of **challenges** faced by the media, including:

- *Capacity of journalists* to cover human rights and government accountability. Journalists often lack training in this field and may have little awareness of human rights issues. Through capacity building, projects have aimed at contributing to greater and better quality coverage of human rights in the media. While failure to cover human rights is in part a consequence of lack of expertise among journalists, media owners and publishers also frequently lack interest in that issue, hence discouraging its coverage.⁵
- *Regulation and licensing.* Many countries have legislations that make it difficult to establish new media outlets, or limit the freedom of existing ones. Projects have proposed to address issues of media regulation and adverse legislation through capacity building of license applicants, lobbying for legal and regulatory reform, and by using the Internet to publish stories, thus bypassing the limitations of traditional media.
- *Media work by civil society and communities.* Civil society organizations working on human rights and democratization issues have been unable to make full and effective use of the media to enhance citizens' participation in politics and raise awareness of their concerns. Some projects have sought to help NGOs improve their access to the media by developing more media-friendly materials and by raising awareness of their work among journalists. Projects have also supported the establishment of community media, as well as radio broadcasts "listener groups" debating programs.

The situation of the media since 2007

There has been a clear recognition of the role of the media in democratization processes in recent years. The UNSG Guidance Note on Democracy, which underpins the work of UNDEF, states that assistance to the media is, among other tools, "necessary to strengthen democratic citizenship and ensure effective popular participation". It adds that media freedom and public access to information are "critical to the democratic process". The Guidance Note builds on many previous UN documents and human rights standards, which similarly recognise and protect media freedom.

⁴ The increased role of non-journalists in reporting through social media brings benefits in terms of openness, but also carries risks such as political bias.

⁵ It is also the case in many countries that some media, for ideological, partisan or economic reasons, are themselves contributing to human rights violations, for example by encouraging or otherwise supporting ethnic discrimination. The role of *Radio Mille Collines* in the 1994 Rwanda genocide has been widely documented. Sections of the media in Sierra Leone and Liberia (two countries where media projects have been implemented with UNDEF support) have also been accused of fuelling the civil wars that raged in these countries during the 1990s.

Despite this recognition in principle, the media, as noted by one of the project proposals⁶, has not been defined as a sector in its own right and media assistance programs have often not been “linked strategically to overall democracy building, good governance and development”. The proposal goes on to note that “in spite of increased recognition by policy makers and donors that media play a key role in democratic development, the lack of an identifiable sector” has hampered the development of media programs. Specific challenges identified by media practitioners in the developing world include:

- *Contributing to democracy building.* The media’s watchdog role is not always recognised by government, even if they pay lip service to freedom of expression. One global project identified, as a way forward, the need to build partnerships between media and civil society, to develop communities of practice and advocacy strategies, and more generally to foster an enabling environment for the media to operate.
- *Enhancing government accountability.* This is a key role of the media in any country, but some project proposals have noted the particular importance this role takes on at times of rapid economic change – for example in the case of a poor country suddenly faced with the discovery of large oil reserves, as was mentioned in one project proposal⁷.
- *Post-conflict social reconstruction.* Of the 11 projects in the portfolio that covered a single country, seven⁸ addressed media concerns in countries that have recently emerged from civil war. They included a project in Somalia, which took place during civil war. In post-conflict situations, the media face all the above challenges at the same time. In addition, experienced journalists have often died or left the country (or entered politics), thus reducing the pool of skills in the media in general.
- *Media regulation and censorship.* The proportion of news provided by state-owned sources is diminishing around the world, including in developing countries where state-owned radio and television channels face increasing private competition. One result of this situation is the development of media regulation authorities. While these authorities may have a legitimate regulatory function (for example when it comes to protecting privacy), they may also be misused to censor the media. Journalists may also engage in self-censorship to protect their livelihood.

Similarly, some countries have legislation aimed at punishing libel and defamation, which can be used to limit legitimate investigative journalism. Together with threats of violence, such legislation may result in the media exercising a high level of self-censorship. The Reporters without Borders index of media freedom described below highlights many such country situations.

The advent in recent years of reporting based on social media and other web-based tools is probably one of the main worldwide changes in the way information is disseminated. However it is difficult to assess whether the situation of the media has improved since 2007 in the countries covered by the projects, partly because there is no single, internationally agreed set of criteria for assessing this. However, one measure suggests an improvement: Reporters without Borders (RWB), an international organisation tracking media freedom and human rights violations against journalists, has since 2002 published

⁶ See UDF-GLO-07-128 project document, situation analysis section.

⁷ See UDF-STP-06-105 project document, introduction.

⁸ Including the two projects in Sierra Leone.

an annual press freedom index, based on a range of criteria including experts' and journalists' perceptions, and the number of journalists killed or suffering other human rights violations.

This index should doubtless be used with care: it is largely based on the perceptions⁹ of journalists themselves and is avowedly used by RWB as a campaigning tool. However it is worth noting that, with one exception, the index has improved in each country where projects took place. The table below compares the indices of each country concerned for 2007 and 2010 (the last year for which the information was compiled by RWB). Lower numbers indicate higher levels of press freedom. Single dramatic events, such as happened in the Philippines, can influence the rating significantly.¹⁰

Country**	index 2007*	index 2010*	Evaluator's comments
Afghanistan	56.5	51.61	Armed groups violence and (slightly fewer) arbitrary arrests
Albania	25.5	21.5	Limited improvement, fewer arrests
Ghana	9.0	8.0	Improvement in perception, barely significant, from a good base
Liberia	25.33	22.5	Fewer attacks on the press by officials
Nepal	53.75	36.38	Noticeably more peaceful politics as Maoist insurgency ended
Philippines	44.75	60.0	Massacre of 34 reporters on Mindanao Island, 2009
Sierra Leone	39.5	24.95	Less official pressure on journalists, more internet news
Somalia	71.5	66.0	Continuing very high level of danger for journalists
Timor-Leste	27.0	25.0	Continuing repression against journalists

* Lower percentages indicate freer conditions, higher ones denote more restrictive conditions.

** The RWB index has no data on São-Tomé and Príncipe.

It is impossible to link the UNDEF projects to any specific improvements in the country indices, if only because the indices depend to a large extent on government action (or inaction), and on long-term, very incremental developments such as peace building.

⁹ In assessing press freedom, perceptions are a valid yardstick because they take account of aspects that are difficult or impossible to measure objectively, such as official pressure. The worldwide corruption index developed by Transparency International is also largely based on perceptions.

¹⁰ See the RWB website for methodological notes and caveats: <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2010,1034.html>

III. Overview of project objectives and approaches

This section provides an overview of the media-related objectives of the projects in the portfolio, and of the strategies deployed for their fulfillment. Inevitably, in view of the diversity of countries and approaches, the description below may not do justice to some activities. However, the objective of this section is to analyze the general intervention logic underpinning media projects.

(i) Project objectives

Of the 12 projects in the portfolio, 10 had an objective directly concerning the media. The two others involved media work aimed at reaching other objectives. The table below provides an overview (projects are referred to by the name of the country or region they cover, with the last digits of the project number used to distinguish between the two projects in Sierra Leone).

Country/Region	Project objective*
Projects with a specific media objective	
Albania	Increase media capacity to inform citizens on corruption, other concerns
Ghana	Support system for participatory community radios
Global	Organization of the 2 nd Global Forum for Media Development
Liberia	Establishment of Liberia Women's Democracy Radio
Philippines	Promotion of ethical journalism and investigative reporting
São-Tomé and Príncipe	Strengthen governance through community media, dialogue
Sierra Leone 108	Build reporting capacity
Sierra Leone 154	Enhance political participation through media
Somalia	Enhance journalists' capacity to report on human rights
Timor-Leste	Enhanced reporting capacity of journalists
Projects with objective other than media	
Afghanistan	Radio programs on prominent women's life and "voices from the field"
Nepal	Radio broadcasts on reconciliation, human rights, rural youth

*As defined in project documents or other reports. Summarized by the evaluator.

Overall, the projects all attempted to contribute to strengthening the media as a channel for civil society participation in democratic decision-making. To achieve this, projects have included **milestones** such as:

- Improved media coverage of human rights violations, corruption;
- Closer link between community concerns and media coverage;
- Improvement to the legal and regulatory framework guiding media operations;
- Enhanced reporting skills among journalists.

In relation to the **identification of risks**, proposals have listed elements including:

- Censorship and self-censorship, including on the part of media owners, program producers and publishers;
- Government interference in the economics of the media sector (for example by withdrawing advertisement by state-owned companies from critical newspapers or TV channels);
- Turnover among journalists, resulting in trained journalists quitting their jobs to join international organizations, work as government spokespeople, etc.

These elements are synthesized in the table below.

(ii) Intervention logic

This table provides a synthesis of the intervention logic reflected in the portfolio of projects. As mentioned above, none of the projects have attempted to reach all of the outcomes described below, nor have they carried out activities in all the areas listed. However, each project sought to make a contribution consistent with this overall intervention logic.

Intended outcomes	Medium-term impacts	Project activities	Long-term development objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and advice to journalists • Support to media production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced reporting skills among journalists; development of investigative reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved standards of journalism, including investigation, responsiveness to audience demands and diversity of coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the media as a channel for civil society participation in democratic decision-making, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing censorship and self-censorship ○ Addressing undue government interference in media freedom and pluralism ○ Encouraging improved reporting standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on the situation of the media • Monitoring of media contents • Support for media professionals • Development of media codes of ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of closer links between community concerns and media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved standards of journalistic ethics, including in relation to respect for privacy and resistance to pressure or corruption • Enhanced networking among stakeholders in the media sector (including publishers, journalists, regulators, civil society, etc.) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communities on establishing local media (radio) outlets • Debates about current affairs and awareness raising of human rights, in relation to media broadcasts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater diversity of media outlets, through development of community media 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with women's groups on access to information and influencing mainstream media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved media coverage of human rights violations, corruption and other issues affecting democratic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness of human rights among communities and women's groups 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of advocacy fora linking media, regulators, civil society and other stakeholders • Support to the creation of an enabling environment protecting media freedom and pluralism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the legal and regulatory framework guiding media operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater sharing of information both domestically and internationally 	

(iii) Project activities

The projects have implemented a wide range of activities towards the above objectives. The table on the next page shows the types of activities implemented in each project. Many common patterns appear across the projects – for example, training journalists is a feature of virtually every project, even though the contents of training varies from one project to another. Similarly, all projects have engaged in some form of advocacy or other.



Women talking about the UNDEF-supported media project in Baneshwor-Sankhuwasabah district, Nepal © A. Ferreira

A table on page 17 summarizes the types of activities implemented under the projects. The analysis below presents the main types of activities, roughly in order of prevalence among the 12 projects under consideration¹¹. No project has undertaken the entire range of activities listed, though some projects did one of the activities listed under virtually each heading.

Training and advice

- Training of journalists on reporting techniques, including investigative reporting (IR). This went from basic training in countries where journalists' skills levels were low, to specialist sessions on financial journalism, analysis of state budgets, etc. There were frequent references to IR: many projects saw a need to encourage journalists to move from reproducing institutional information to seeking out news by them.

- Other forms of hands-on advice and support to journalists. This included mentoring (support to junior journalists provided by a more senior or higher-skilled colleague), technical production training (e.g. video editing) and ad hoc help such as language editing.

- Internships: some projects have included financial and organizational support for internships by young journalists in media houses, either in their own country or abroad.

Production

- Production of press articles, radio or TV news clips or documentaries on topics such as human rights violations, corruption, gender discrimination, etc. For the most part the material was then broadcast by a partner TV or radio station, or

¹¹ There are many overlaps among types of activities (for example working with communities and working with women). The list is simplified, conflating activities that some projects have implemented separately.

published in the press. In some cases the material was posted on the implementer's own website.

- Production of radio dramas. This activity differed from the above in that it involved the production of works of fiction rather than reporting. Implementers took on tasks such as scenario writing, liaison with actors, etc. They also liaised with communities and other stakeholders to whom the dramas were targeted.
- Posting material on implementer's website. This sometimes occurred also when the implementer did not contribute to the production of the material, for example in cases where no local media would carry an item.
- Provision of equipment to journalists (cameras, sound recording, video or audio editing facilities, etc.).

Research

This included gathering information about the situation of the media in the target country, audience surveys and other research provided to communities and media houses.

- Monitoring of media contents. Some projects have been based on such monitoring of the media, to address weaknesses and enhance the quality and fairness of reporting where necessary.

Support for media professionals

- Organizing a global conference. The global project was centered on such a conference, aimed at fostering South-South exchanges and addressing challenges faced by the media in developing countries.
- Workshops on journalistic ethics, IR. These have brought journalists together with academics, legal experts and regulators, often with a view to encouraging progress towards national codes of practice for the media.
- Support for media standards, journalistic codes of ethics. Beyond the workshops mentioned above, projects have often provided support for the development of such standards. In many countries where governments have applied arbitrary pressure on the media, such standards and codes have been seen as strategically sound because they encourage media regulation by independent institutions.
- Establishing human rights reporters' network. Often as part of their work with communities (see below), project implementers have selected groups of young reporters whom they trained to monitor and report about human rights.
- Support for journalists' union. Some implementers have been journalists unions themselves, others have worked with unions. This was often the only way to address a significant cross-section of the journalistic profession.
- Production of manuals and newsletters for media professionals.

Work with communities

- Training on work with the media (drafting news releases, addressing the media, etc.). This has been done either in the context of encouraging the establishment of community radios, or as part of raising awareness about human rights.
- Establishing community radio stations. This has been seen by some projects as a key step to ensure that remote, information-poor communities, as well as vulnerable groups, enhance their political and social participation.
- Formation of contents advisory group. This was done by projects that included the production of radio dramas.
- Establishment of network of trained community reporters. Some projects have done that as part of their general support to communities, others have separately selected groups of young people for training in newsgathering and reporting.

Work with women

- Establishing women's community radio stations. Like other community radios, those aimed at and run by women sought to enhance information flows and social inclusion.
- Building capacity of women to access media. This capacity-building work aimed at ensuring that the concerns and life experience of women were mainstreamed into the media – largely owned and edited by urban men.

Advocacy, outreach

- Establishing discussion forums linking the media, civil society and government representatives (and media regulators, where these existed as independent institutions). The objective of this activity was to create a more “enabling environment” for the media, by raising awareness of journalists’ work among regulators and officials, and by enhancing the visibility in the media of civil society concerns.
- Workshops with students. University students were perceived as future opinion leaders. Such workshops aimed at ensuring that they understand the way media function, and have a more critical approach to media reporting.
- Advocacy to government. Projects that included this activity usually addressed issues of legislation and regulation affecting the media. They also sometimes addressed the situation of individual journalists who suffered (or risked) human rights violations.
- Training and lobbying of media regulators. Some projects have included activities aimed at media regulation institutions. The training and lobbying was a way of engaging with these institutions and ensuring they functioned in accordance with international standards on freedom of expression.

Support to the journalistic profession

- Advocacy on behalf of journalists. In some cases the UNDEF project implementers have themselves conducted lobbying on behalf of journalists (in contrast to supporting organizations that did so). In one case the implementer actually contributed to employment contract negotiations on behalf of journalists.
- Advocacy on media freedom. In some cases, for example when the project implementer was a journalists' union, advocacy was a key element of the project.
- Monitoring of human rights violations against journalists and of threats against media freedom. This was most important in a number of post-conflict or conflict contexts, where journalists were deliberately targeted. The projects sought to enhance the visibility of human rights violations and help keep the issue on the international community's agenda.

Support enabling environment

- Lobby for radio station licensing. One project took on this task, whereas others have taken a more indirect route, training journalists' groups on the legal and regulatory environment. In both cases the objective was to increase the availability of local radio outlets.
- Training for media owners, publishers, and editors/producers. Some projects identified the lack of human rights awareness among media owners and managers as one reason why human rights stories lacked visibility. Training for this constituency was seen as complementing the training given to journalists on researching and reporting on human rights.

Overview of activities under the media cluster portfolio									
Project	Training and advice	Production facilitation	Research & monitoring of media	Support for media profession	Work with communities	Work with women	Advocacy and outreach	Work with professional unions	Support enabling environment
AFG-06-002	☐		☐		☐	☐	☐		
NEP-06-086		☐	☐		☐		☐		☐
PHI-06-099	☐			☐			☐	☐	☐
STP-06-105		☐			☐		☐		☐
SIL-06-108	☐	☐	☐	☐			☐	☐	
TIM-06-115	☐	☐		☐		☐	☐	☐	☐
GLO-07-128			☐	☐			☐	☐	☐
GHA-07-143	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐		
LIR-07-146	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
SIL-07-154	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SOM-07-168	☐	☐					☐	☐	
ALB-07-190	☐	☐	☐				☐		☐

Notes – the types of activities are detailed in section (iii) of chapter II. The main variations from these activities were as follows:

- *AFG: the training in this project was directed at women community leaders.*
- *NEP: the support for an enabling environment was primarily directed at peace building, not media freedom per se.*
- *PHI: few of the planned activities actually took place; the project was terminated early.*
- *STP: advocacy focused on the use of future oil wealth, as did work with communities.*
- *GLO: the activities were all centred on a global conference on media capacity building.*
- *GHA and LIR: the activities were focused on the establishment of a women's radio station*

IV. Evaluation findings

This section attempts to give an evaluative synthesis of the projects in the cluster. It is not an attempt to tease out the “average” relevance or effectiveness of projects in the cluster by “summing up the score” of each project under each criterion. Instead, it is an attempt to identify which aspects of the projects have had most influence – positive or negative – on the fulfillment of the criteria. To do this, the section refers to the project activities categorized in the previous section.

In a more interpretative move, the section also seeks to identify specific practices and project designs that have contributed to improving performance under each criterion.

(i) Relevance

In general, the project documents have correctly identified the role played by the media in relation to democratization and the promotion and protection of human rights. They have also correctly identified challenges faced by the media – mostly falling within the categories mentioned in section II of this report. The activities proposed to address these challenges (listed in section III) have also been appropriate, at least to address the most immediate challenges of each particular context. In that sense the projects have been relevant.

Elements that have enhanced the relevance of projects (according to evaluation reports and the evaluator’s own reading of project documents) included:

- Sound research. Projects based on reasonably detailed factual research were more relevant in their approach and activities implemented. This is probably most important in the post-conflict or conflict situations in which many of the projects in the cluster were implemented. Research helped move away from value judgments towards reasonably explicit links between the proposed project objectives and activities. In post-conflict contexts, for example, an overview of the past role of the media in the conflict was helpful.

Example of a relevant approach to media capacity building: mentoring in Sierra Leone

In a project implemented in Sierra Leone between from 2008 to 2009, the Canadian NGO Journalists for Human Rights carried out a range of capacity-building actions aimed at journalists. Its project was based on extensive research, including on the role of the media in the years of conflict. One approach taken was mentoring: the establishment of a peer-to-peer relationship between a trainer-journalist and a Sierra Leonean colleague, journalist or editor.

Mentoring complemented training and ensured that the beneficiary received on-going, practical support for a period of months. Beyond benefits to individual journalists, the approach also helped increase awareness about rights among editors. (Project Sierra Leone 154)

- Appropriate gender mainstreaming. As journalism is in many countries a male-dominated profession, an explicit gender equality approach is often necessary to ensure that post-project reporting addresses gender issues. Whereas all the projects in the portfolio have incorporated a gender component, some have

enhanced their relevance by focusing on women’s media (Liberia) and women’s rights (Afghanistan). Several projects (Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone) have included specific gender issues in the training provided to journalists. In Somalia, where training was offered to journalists, 30% of the participants were women, an impressive proportion in view of the otherwise wide male dominance of this profession in the country. The involvement of women journalists in training is particularly relevant in conflict and post-conflict contexts, partly because the majority of victims of war-related human rights violations are women.

- A “sector-wide” approach. Although the media are not traditionally regarded as a “sector” in the development assistance sense of the word, there is a case to be made for it to be treated as such (see below). Projects that have taken a reasonably comprehensive look at the media were the most relevant. This involves, for example, not limiting the project to training journalists, but also to take into account issues of media regulation, the media’s economic models and legislation surrounding freedom of information.

In view of the project activities listed in the previous section, some comments on relevance can be made:

- Training is doubtless an important element of most projects. However it is important for projects to take into account the fact that training on human rights alone is often irrelevant. This is because journalists in many countries lack formal professional training, and therefore need at least some basic reporting training. In this context, implementers should either factor such basic training in their project, or select beneficiaries who have already received formal journalistic training.
- On a similar note, several projects have referred to training on “investigative reporting” (IR) – when training delivered under that label was often about enhancing basic reporting skills. The label IR was sometimes justified, for example when specialist skills are imparted on addressing corruption or public finances, as has been done in Albania and Sierra Leone respectively. However, more often than not, it was a fig-leaf to hide the poor journalistic competence of beneficiaries.
- Engaging with media regulators and with journalists’ professional bodies also enhanced the relevance of projects by ensuring that the capacity building offered to journalists was also made more visible to other stakeholders.
- Inadequate project design that failed to mitigate external risks hampered projects’ relevance. For example the project in Ghana was partly predicated on community groups obtaining a radio license well within the project implementation period, so

Effective awareness raising about the peace process in Nepal: use of listeners’ groups

The project in Nepal involved the production of radio broadcasts to raise awareness about the peace process, and the development of rural listeners’ groups debating the broadcasts. One group member wrote to the program presenters:

“I think the program enabled the youth of [our group] to (...) take greater interest in the peace process (...). We are now able to create a harmonious relationship between hostile families and communities by addressing their disputes through discussion in a group. The young people have learned the skills of handling and resolving problems through the radio programs.”

that the subsequent launch and running of community radio stations could be part of the project. In the event the licenses were not issued in time, making part of the project irrelevant. This was a risk that could have been anticipated and mitigated.

- Activities supporting the journalistic profession as such (capacity building for journalists' associations, newsletters for journalists...) were less relevant than training and other forms of engagement, because they largely failed to prioritize human rights and democracy issues.

More generally, projects that have taken a holistic view of the media, engaging journalists, owners, regulators, and other relevant stakeholders, have gained in relevance. The evaluation report of the global project (conference of media practitioners) stated that "media development is too rarely defined or funded as a development goal and sector in its own right". By contrast, projects that have deliberately combined training, advocacy towards governments or regulatory institutions, and towards media owners and managers, have been more relevant than those focusing only on capacity building for journalists.

It is to be noted that none of the projects targeted the development of internet-based media or journalism. This may be in part because this field has radically evolved recently (for example through the rise of "citizen reporting" through social networks, for example in Arab Spring countries), whereas the projects in the portfolio were mostly designed in 2007 and 2008. Another factor is that internet-based journalism is still in its infancy, particularly in developing countries where connectivity to the Internet is relatively low. However this sector of journalism is doubtless growing fast, as is connectivity, raising the prospect that new projects in this field will be forthcoming.

(ii) Effectiveness

A broad overview of final reports and evaluations indicates that the media cluster projects were generally effective. Some, such as those in Afghanistan and Nepal¹², exceeded their objectives in terms of numbers of participants in "listening circles" (groups of citizens listening together and debating issues raised in radio broadcasts). In other cases, such as the two projects in Sierra Leone¹³, the capacity-building activities for journalists were clearly successful, as evidenced by the amount and quality of reports on human rights issues produced by participating local journalists.

Factors that have helped enhance the effectiveness of media-related activities included the following:

- Appropriateness of training to the skills of journalists, and involvement of a critical mass of participants. Where training for journalists was implemented, it was most effective when different forms of training were provided to people with different sets of skills, as was done for example in Sierra Leone:
 - More basic training was offered to more junior journalists;
 - More specialized training was offered to senior journalists, concerning such issues as state budgets, the investigation of corruption, women's rights, etc.

It was also important that training should be offered to a reasonably large cross-section of journalists. That helped enhance the visibility of the

¹² The projects were similar and both implemented by Equal Access, a US-based NGO.

¹³ Projects implemented by Journalists for Human Rights, an NGO based in Canada.

training among journalists and publishers, thereby highlighting the importance of quality journalism.

The provision of production tools and facilities for the media (video cameras, voice recording equipment, editing suites, etc.) enhanced the effectiveness of activities in countries where these facilities are rare or expensive – for example where state media monopolies own most production facilities. However some of these tools have become cheaper as a result of the widespread availability of digital cameras and Smartphone and because some non-profit organizations such as Reporters without Borders make editing software available to developing country journalists for free. It is likely therefore that in future this aspect will be less necessary than it has been in previous years.

- Activities facilitating the development of an enabling environment for the media have also contributed to the effectiveness of projects, because of their favorable multiplier effect on the media sector as a whole. Projects that have engaged with media regulators and licensing authorities (in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste in particular) have often raised regulators' understanding of specific aspects of the media (community radios, rights-based reporting, etc.). In Albania, the media project effectively used the journalists' professional association as an entry point to enhance reporting quality (it helped ensure that journalists joined the association by producing membership cards that journalists valued). The Albania project was subsequently able to raise awareness of its capacity building activities among a broad cross-section of media professionals.
- The effectiveness of work with women and communities was linked to two key factors: the production of fictional "radio soaps" illustrating rights- and democracy-related issues; and the skilled use of "listening groups" for community members to debate the contents of broadcasts. Projects ensured that radio soaps were tailored to highlight specific issues and encouraged identification by audiences with specific characters. This cannot be achieved through conventional news reporting.
- However effective radio programs may be at raising awareness of human rights and democracy, their effectiveness was significantly enhanced by community debates: these helped establish a link between the fictional situations described in the broadcasts and the actual experience of listeners.

However, the projects' effectiveness had limits related to the following factors:

- The training offered was not always consistent with participating journalists' level of skills. For example, some of the journalists' training in Somalia included detailed discussions of international human rights standards, whereas the majority of participants lacked basic reporting skills. It was therefore unlikely that the activity reached its capacity-building objective with all participants.
- As mentioned in the discussion of relevance, some investigative reporting training was scaled back to focus on basic journalistic skills.

- The effectiveness of some projects (such as support to Ghanaian NGOs to get a radio broadcasting license) was hampered by their dependency on regulators' responses. Activities designed to be more independent of regulators' action could have made the project more effective.
- Advocacy activities, while generally effective when targeting the general public and government authorities, often failed to engage key stakeholders in the media sector, such as publishers and editors of private or public media outlets. All too often, advocacy was targeted at journalists themselves and therefore ignored the economic and social constraints within which media outlets generally operate.

The projects were generally effective in view of the very difficult practical conditions in which they operated. Seven of the 12 projects were implemented in countries recently recovering from war – or under war conditions, as in Somalia. While the impact of the violence on the population varied from one country to another (less disruptive in Nepal than in Liberia or Sierra Leone), logistics were often made more difficult by weak infrastructures. Historically low education levels in most of the countries also had an adverse impact on the level of skills of reporters. In this context, merely achieving the planned activities was often a challenge. The effectiveness of projects often depended on the commitment and skills of small teams of project implementers.

(iii) Efficiency

The efficiency of the projects varied widely. In the main, the eight projects implemented by international NGOs carried out activities as planned and within budget. Of the four projects implemented by national NGOs, one (Timor-Leste) was inappropriately managed and had its funding cut mid-project. The project in Somalia, though hampered by the conflict and high logistics-related costs, was implemented within budget. The project in Ghana did not give rise to particular efficiency concerns, although it suffered from weak design¹⁴. Commonalities across projects in relation to efficiency included:

- The relatively high cost of training. In Somalia, training costs averaged US\$500 per participant, mostly because of the logistics (transport and security) costs of operating in a civil war environment and because of the relatively small pool of participants. In other projects, high costs were related to the need to fly experts into the country for short-term training sessions, and sometimes also to the failure to identify enough qualified participants, thus driving up the cost of sessions per participant.

However, the projects run by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) in Sierra Leone demonstrated that it was possible to keep training costs down, even in environments such as that in Freetown, where logistics costs are high. Efficiency was ensured by using trainers and mentors who were mainly volunteers and were based in the country for months at a time. Cooperation with appropriate stakeholders – media outlet, journalists' association, university media studies department – ensured that a large pool of participants was targeted, thus lowering costs per person. The JHR projects also demonstrated that it is possible and

¹⁴ The project incorrectly assumed that community radios would obtain an operating license shortly after applying for one as part of the project. As a result, project activities aimed at supporting the activities of new community radio stations could not be implemented in a timely manner. The implementing organization had insufficient project management capacity to modify the project quickly when it became clear that a license would not be forthcoming.

advisable to avoid paying per diem to participants when training costs are borne by the implementing NGO.

- The projects run by international NGOs or local affiliates benefited from better-than-average project management. In most cases, project managers had previous experience of similar projects in other countries, and therefore brought a high level of skill to the projects. They also had access to management and other expertise provided by the headquarters of their organization.
- One area where efficiency was hard to assess concerned the provision of production equipment (video cameras, editing suites, etc.). As the price of electronic equipment dropped in recent years, capital costs were generally kept under control. However, few of the project final reports and evaluations indicate clearly what happened to the equipment after the end of the UNDEF funding. In some cases, such as JHR's projects in Sierra Leone, the equipment continued to be used because JHR remained in the country with the support of other donors. However some of the other projects did not have a clear policy on the future use of equipment.

More generally, the skills and experience of managers was an important factor in ensuring that projects were run efficiently. This underlines the potential usefulness of providing management training to heads of NGOs and other senior project implementers. Such training might help them avoid mistakes such as inappropriate project design, ineffective implementation of activities or inadequate monitoring of budgets.



Members of the Indigenous Photographers' Union of Sierra Leone, trained and supported by an UNDEF project © Journalists for Human Rights

(iv) Impact

During the explosion in media assistance that occurred in the 1990s, evaluation was little on the agenda of those defining the agenda. This is, to some extent, due to the different intellectual foundations. Economic development professionals tended to come from the social sciences including economics, where cost-benefit analysis (in the case of economics) and program evaluation (in the case of sociology) came naturally. Media professionals, to the extent that they thought conceptually instead of technically, tended to come from a more European school of thought, more concerned with grand theory than nuts-and-bolts project and policy assessment. As late as 2009, a National Endowment for Democracy (NED) survey of M&E practices in media could lead off with a section entitled “Why M&E?”¹⁵

Those media practitioners have given increasing emphasis to monitoring and evaluation is perhaps in part due repercussions from Rwanda, Bosnia, and elsewhere that demonstrated the media can be as effective for the forces of evil as for the forces of good. The internet explosion has proven to be a double-edged sword, as evidenced not only by the proliferation of racist and xenophobic sites but also by the leveraging of political forces that, while within the pale, are considered for the most part to be anti-democratic.

A challenge is that media, as a field, has tended to run along two axes. One has to do with setting the legal and regulatory basis for a robust free media; this is essentially the purview of lawyers and political scientists, who have traditionally had a view of impact very different from that of funding organizations. “A seminar was held, the draft law was revised as a result, the law was passed” is an impact from this point of view. That the law is regularly flouted is evidence of the need for further cooperation, not evidence that the first project failed. The second axis is technical, involving the basic technology and skills required to run a modern media operation, from equipment to reporting. Both axes involve heavy emphasis on capacity building, training, and institution building. At what point, however, is one entitled to step back and ask what the actual impact on the life of the average person been?

While it is always difficult to assess the impact of media projects such as those in the present portfolio, individual project reports provide some evidence of impact:

- Some of the clearest evidence of a positive impact comes from the projects that focused on women’s rights. The project in Afghanistan, for example, was able to report positive feedback from women participants in listening groups making to project evaluators statements that included the following:
 - “My daughter is going to school now because I was able to talk about this with my husband.”
 - “Our men are listening to the tapes and enjoying them.”
 - “I am able to talk to my husband about these things and have more influence over him.”
 - “Being a part of this group gives me confidence and hope.”
 - “We worked together to help one of the women’s daughter’s choose not to get married. That was good for us to do.”
 - “We need more programs about how to care for our children and how to take care of our health.”

¹⁵ Mosher, Andy 2009. Good, But How Good? Monitoring and Evaluation of Media Assistance Projects. Center for International Media Assistance, NED. June 2009.

- “We have listened to all the tapes many times as have our husbands. Can we get new tapes?”
- In Liberia, the project supported a women’s radio station, which was credited with influencing “public perceptions and raising awareness about the role of women in society.” The project’s evaluation concluded that it contributed to influencing decision-making in Liberia and to the development of a more gender sensitive media environment.

More generally, projects whose objectives were broader than media capacity building were able to identify evidence of impact more easily than projects that focused on the media alone. However, these projects also identified impact. For example the projects in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste were able to reach a critical mass of journalists (about 20% of the membership of journalists’ unions, and at least 30% of active journalists), thus achieving an identifiable impact on the amount of reporting on human rights and democracy issues.

The impact of advocacy activities was difficult to gauge, according to project reports and evaluations. Some of the advocacy had identifiable impact – for example media work against corruption in Albania led to prosecutions, the recovery of unpaid taxes, etc. These were directly connected to investigative reporting supported by the project.

Similarly, the project in São-Tomé e Príncipe has reportedly contributed to the government emphasizing sustainability and ethical norms in its supervision of oil exploration and extraction, and establishing procedures for a national fund financed by oil revenue to support development projects. But in this as in other cases, attribution of any change to a specific project is always risky – though few projects in this field were active in São-Tomé, making attribution more likely.

However, the impact of the projects on media freedom and pluralism was weak. Some projects effectively engaged with media regulators (Liberia, Albania), thus indirectly influencing the supervision of the media sector by governments. Some projects also worked with the media and journalists’ unions to develop ethical standards and improve media self-regulation (Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste). However the projects did not develop sustained strategies, backed by structured activities, to support an increase in freedom of expression and media pluralism.

How could the impact of media project have been maximized? Two elements emerge from reports:

- Targeting all the relevant stakeholders in the media “sector.” Media professionals, owners, publishers, regulators and others (such as distributors) form a network with fairly close economic ties and complementary interests. Projects that have attempted to target all the relevant stakeholders appear to have achieved most impact (although some project managers have warned that the economic and political interests of some stakeholders may diverge, which makes it difficult to address them all).
- Combining media capacity building and work with communities. The projects in Afghanistan, Liberia and Nepal have taken that approach – the first two focusing on women’s groups. This seems to have freed some synergies between awareness raising about rights, conducted at the community level, and media capacity building, which helped produce programs that supported the needs and

demands of communities. In the three cases, effective project design was a key factor contributing to the achievement of impact on community attitudes.

Despite the above caveats, it is possible that some projects may have contributed to the momentum towards improvement in the local human rights situation, for example by supporting some emblematic human rights reporting that may have encouraged other journalists to follow suit (Sierra Leone) and by enhancing the international profile of some journalists, thus affording them a measure of protection (Somalia). The experience of international human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International is also that, as journalists get better at reporting on human rights violations (for example as a result of training), they report more credibly and provide more relevant facts. These facts are subsequently re-used by international NGOs in the research they submit to the UN and other human rights monitoring bodies. There is therefore an indirect, tenuous but real link between capacity building for journalists and information about human rights. The UNDEF project in Somalia directly led to Reporters without Borders receiving more accurate information about the situation of media professionals in the country.¹⁶

(v) Sustainability

Contributing to sustainability was the fact that seven of the projects were implemented by international organizations specializing in work with the media. This helped ensure that a majority of the projects continued their activities after UNDEF support ended. Several of the projects also engaged with institutions such as media regulators: in some cases, such as in Albania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and São-Tomé e Príncipe, these institutional links are likely to be maintained and possibly further developed in other projects.

In Timor-Leste, the project failed to be completed, because the implementing organization itself appears to have been dissolved in the course of project implementation. UNDEF drew from this the lesson that supporting journalists' organizations on their own (without other partners, local or international) may present a risk because they may not have the organizational foundations to carry out and sustain projects of a relatively long duration. More generally, this highlights the need to ensure that implementers can demonstrate adequate organizational capacity and governance.

Projects that lacked sustainability were those that failed to engage in-depth with stakeholders (documents suggest that training for journalists in the Philippines was perfunctory) or neglected key stakeholders such as publishers and editors. The project in Somalia was in a category of its own due to the conflict there, and was not expected to be sustainable, although it also could have benefited from greater engagement with media owners.

In hindsight, projects appear to have made insufficient use of the Internet as a tool of media capacity building. Essentially, the Internet has been used in the projects to post news on the websites of implementing organizations. This conventional approach ensured, for example, that reporting on human rights and democracy issues – and on security incidents affecting journalists – were made public even if not broadcast or printed in the local media.

Nevertheless, the Internet was underused in the projects. It is true that the countries where projects were implemented have low rates of Internet access, but these are

¹⁶ Internet-based social networks and “citizen journalists” are now also fulfilling this function. However human rights researchers state that professional journalists remain, to date, the main providers of information about human rights violations in closed or conflict-affected countries.

growing very fast, including in poor and conflict-affected regions. Mobile telephony networks and more affordable smartphones mean that users without a computer and a standard landline-based Internet connection can also increasingly use the Internet. The Internet can provide a platform for the transmission of news on social networks and conventional news websites, and allows “citizen journalists” as well as professional reporters to post news rapidly and economically. It is also proving to be an effective forum for holding the kind of democratic debate that conventional projects have supported at community level, and that may not be printed or broadcast in conventional media. It is to be expected that future media-related project proposals will include more deliberate use of the Internet than the portfolio covered by this report.



A presenter of the Liberia Women Development Radio, created with UNDEF support © Liberia Women Media Action Committee

V. Conclusions

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

(i) The projects have helped disseminate information about human rights and democracy in many of the countries in which they were implemented. Training for journalists on human rights and investigative reporting helped ensure greater coverage of these issues. This outcome would have been further enhanced if media owners, publishers and producers had been more systematically engaged with by capacity building activities. The overview of activities (chapter II) and of project design (chapter III, relevance) confirms this pattern.

(ii) The projects that involved work with communities and women's groups have helped empower these target groups. They have done so by providing them with relevant information about their rights, and in some cases by helping they establish their own local media. Another relevant factor in this respect was the provision of training to women journalists, including in conflict contexts, thus indirectly contributing to greater coverage of the situation of women in conflict. See chapters II (list of activities) and III (effectiveness).

(iii) Some of the projects have engaged in effective advocacy on behalf of media freedom. However they have not in themselves been sufficient to enhance media freedom or to create a more enabling environment for the media. Project often lacked a concerted strategy to enhance freedom of the press and media pluralism. The advocacy activities (see chapter II these included networking with regulatory agencies and supporting licensing applications) were often insufficiently targeted to make a significant difference. See chapter III (impact).

(iv) The projects have widely succeeded in enhancing reporting skills among journalists who took part in training sessions. This was particularly the case in countries where a range of capacity building methods were used, mixing conventional group training with individual mentoring and on-the-job advice. This activity was often effectively combined with awareness raising on the ethical standards of journalism. See chapters II and III (effectiveness).

(v) In some cases the training lacked follow-up and participants were not able to make full use of the skills acquired. This was the case in particular of the projects implemented in conflict zones (Somalia) and in some post-conflict contexts (Timor-Leste), partly because logistics made training follow-up difficult, and partly because such follow-up was not adequately provided for the project as designed. See chapter III (effectiveness and impact).

(vi) The projects that achieved the greatest impact were those that addressed a significant cross-section of stakeholders in the media "sector". This highlights the potential benefits of taking a sector-wide approach in media-related activities. An important factor in taking a sector approach is sound research into the baseline situation of the media at the time of project design. See chapter III (impact and sustainability).

(vii) In some cases, projects could not be completed, or missed some of their objectives, partly because the implementers lacked organizational capacity and governance, or lacked institutional foundations. This concern was greater in those cases where the implementers were local organizations and there were not national or international partners.

VI. Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are addressed to UNDEF and are based on the findings and conclusions set out above.

(i) **UNDEF should continue supporting media capacity building projects.** The issue is clearly relevant to UNDEF's mandate and past projects have addressed genuine needs. There is also a clear demand by civil society in this field, complemented by appropriate experience and skills. This recommendation is based on conclusions (i) and (vi).

(ii) **UNDEF should encourage applicants to design media-related projects with a "sector-wide" approach.** Media capacity building and freedom, as well as the use of the media by citizens, depend on a wide range of socio-economic, political and legal factors. The most relevant and impactful projects have taken all these aspects into account, even when they did not address them all in activities. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

(iii) **UNDEF should encourage applicants to present project proposals based on sound research about the situation of the media in the country/countries concerned.** Projects have often been most relevant and have achieved the most impact when they were based on a good initial understanding of the situation of the media. Applicants should be encouraged to refer to international assessments and indices on press freedom, human development, corruption, etc., when designing their projects. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

(iv) **UNDEF should request that training activities, when included in projects, should address a critical mass of journalists and reporters. They should use a range of resource people and support techniques.** While training is rightly used as an integral part of media capacity building, projects need to focus on the quality and scope of the training they will propose. The most effective forms of training have been those that combine a range of different approaches and a mix of international and local resource people. This recommendation is based on conclusions (i), (iv) and (v).

(v) **UNDEF should continue supporting projects that target advocacy at media regulators, with a view to encourage pluralism and community media.** In many countries, laws and regulations hamper the development of free and pluralistic media. Regulatory institutions are also often weak and/or politicized. It is relevant to address these concerns, provided projects focus on enhancing safeguards for freedom of expression and pluralism. This recommendation is based on conclusions (iii) and (vi).

(vi) UNDEF should encourage applicants to take emerging trends into account in project design, particularly the rise of Internet-based news. As Internet connectivity progresses, web-based media capacity building tools also become more accessible. The scope for debating and sharing information also grows through access to the Internet. These elements should become integral parts of future projects. This recommendation is based on conclusion (vi).

(vii) UNDEF should continue its support for media-related projects in zones of conflict. Whereas most international assistance in zones of conflict is related to humanitarian aid and service delivery, UNDEF is one of the few sources of funding that is able to channel funds to projects in zones of conflict that focus on enhancing the quality of information. In that sense, support to media projects in conflict contexts is one form of UNDEF added value to development assistance, and to interventions by other UN agencies. This recommendation is based on conclusions (ii) and (iv).

(viii) UNDEF should encourage local organizations to apply for grants in partnership with others. In some cases, local NGOs implementing projects on their own were not able to complete them satisfactorily, largely because of a lack of organizational capacity. By involving national or international partners with appropriate institutional capacity and governance, applicants could help reinforce project management. See conclusion (vii).

➤ **Implementation of the recommendations**

It is suggested that UNDEF should direct applicants to the evaluation reports posted on its website (including potentially the present report). Applicants should be advised to take the findings of relevant thematic and country evaluations into account when designing their project proposals.



A Reporter for the UNDEF-supported project in Albania, speaking on Albanian TV about a corruption case © Hapur

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: projects forming the Media Cluster

UDF-RAP-06-015 – Asian Young Leaders in Governance	
Country/Region	Asia/Pacific
Executing Agency	UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok
Implementing Partners	5 Subgrants to CSOs
Project Dates	March 2007 - June 2009
Budget	USD 314,624
Project Summary	Strengthen young leaders in Asia-Pacific region through leadership training and capacity building, promoting networking and partnerships on democratic governance and supporting 5 pilot projects to create a critical mass of young leaders.
Intended Project Outcomes	Transparent, accountable and inclusive state-citizen partnerships for effective service delivery in the Asia-Pacific region through capacity development of young leaders with the potential to serve as catalysts for change
Primary Outputs	Leadership resource kits customized for sub-regional and national/sub-national use, 56 Leadership Fellows trained, 20 Leadership trainers trained, 5 pilot projects funded reaching 230 young leaders in 5 countries, Young Leaders Network initiated

UDF-LIR-07-146 – Liberian Women’s Democracy Radio: “Giving Voices to the Voiceless”	
Country/Region	Liberia
Executing Agency	Liberia Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC) and Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)
Implementing Partners	N/A
Project Dates	October 2008 to September 2010
Budget	US\$ 300,000
Project Summary	Liberia Women Democracy Radio seeks to serve as a medium to enable women in the country to have their voices heard, strengthening the capacity of women journalists, support Liberian women in obtaining access to information to increase women’s involvement in decision-making initiatives in Liberia

Intended Project Outcomes	Providing women with information about their human rights and equal opportunities, disseminating their views and building knowledge on national and local issues, women's empowerment and participation
Primary Outputs	Dissemination of information on gender-related national policies, training for journalists, promotion of gender equality and empowerment, increase of women working in media sector, community outreach activities

UDF-STP-06-105 – Promoting Democracy and Public Accountability in Sao Tome and Principe

Country/Region	Sao Tome and Principe
Executing Agency	UNDP Sao Tome and Principe
Implementing Partners	International Alert
Project Dates	01/02/2007 to 31/12/2008
Budget	US\$ 339,839
Project Summary	The project seeks to contribute to improving living conditions for the people of STP through socially responsible management of future oil revenues through information dissemination, strengthening critical media, the establishment of community radio for marginalised groups and the facilitation of stakeholder dialogue.
Intended Project Outcomes	Strengthen the capacity of local actors and institutions to influence and monitor national, regional, and international policies to counter oil related conflict and promote good governance
Primary Outputs	Contribution to the government emphasizing sustainability and ethical norms in its supervision of oil exploration and extraction, and establishing procedures for a national fund financed by oil revenue to support development projects

UDF-NEP-06-086 – INSPIRE: Reconciliation and Democracy Building in Nepal

Country/Region	Nepal
Executing Agency	UNDP
Implementing Partners	Digital Broadcast Initiative, Equal Access Nepal and Equal Access International
Project Dates	01/02/2007 to 31/12/2007
Budget	US\$ 350,000
Project Summary	Giving voice to rural youth, youth leadership training and radio series broadcast to catalyse local dialogue and participation in reconciliation

	activities and the emerging democratic process in Nepal.
Intended Project Outcomes	Production and broadcast of 52 new democracy, civil education and peace building radio episodes, creation of 30 leadership trainings for over 900 rural youth, formation of national and regional organizing committees for a youth parliament to guide democracy building activities in over 900 youth clubs.
Primary Outputs	More participants than anticipated in listening circles, impact on community attitudes, trained youth to promote reconciliation and local democratic practice and community reconciliation activities

UDF-AFG-06-002 – Human Rights & Women’s Rights in the Context of Islam and Afghanistan	
Country/Region	Afghanistan
Executing Agency	Equal Access
Implementing Partners	Equal Access Afghanistan
Project Dates	01/02/2007 to 31/12/2007
Budget	US\$ 350,000
Project Summary	Giving voice to rural community’s, education on women’s rights, human rights and democracy within an Islamic context through radio series and rural leadership training to foster participation in human and women’s rights activities
Intended Project Outcomes	Production of 52 human rights and democracy radio episodes, 45 leadership trainings for 1200 rural women and decision-makers, formation of rural civil society networks including traditional and religious organisations to inspire communities to promote human rights, women’s involvement in community decision-making and prevent human rights abuses.
Primary Outputs	Radio programs on prominent women’s life and “voices from the field”, more participants in listening circle than anticipated, positive feedback from women participants on impact of radio programmes, synergies between awareness raising about rights, conducted at the community level, and media capacity building

UDF-ALB-07-190 – Media, Transparency and Accountability in Albania	
Country/Region	Albania
Executing Agency	IREX Europe
Implementing Partners	2 Albanian initiatives (Hapur Foundation, Union of Albanian Journalists)
Project Dates	01/10/2008 to 30/09/2010
Budget	US\$ 300,000
Project Summary	Strengthen Albanian media to enhance good governance and democratic accountability, investigation of corruption and public-awareness raising, development and implementation of ethical media standards.
Intended Project Outcomes	Support to Hapur Foundation to report on corruption through TV-programmes, training on investigative journalism, training of Union of Albanian Journalists to enhance advocacy skills, monitor threats to independent media and build consensus on ethical and professional standards.
Primary Outputs	Teaching investigative skills that led to prosecution of corruption cases, enhancement of reporting quality, raising awareness of capacity building qualities of the project among media professionals, engagement with media regulators

UDF-GLO-07-128 – Global Forum for Media Development: Creative Democratic Media Cultures	
Country/Region	Global
Executing Agency	International Federation of Journalists
Implementing Partners	Global Forum for Media Development Steering Committee
Project Dates	01/09/2008 to 31/08/2010
Budget	US\$ 200,000
Project Summary	Contribution to Global Form for Media Development: Global Information for All in Athens 2008 to establish GFMD as a membership network, building partnerships between media assistance groups and civil society promoting democracy in the global South to promote media development.
Intended Project Outcomes	Key issues are media and dialogue, advocacy, legal structures relevant to free media, dialogue with civil society, new technologies, media and governance, monitoring and evaluation to further media development
Primary Outputs	Definition of themes, publication of statutes, case studies, conference facilitation, PR to facilitate media capacity building

UDF-SIL-06-108 – Democracy, Human Rights and Media in Sierra Leone	
Country/Region	Sierra Leone
Executing Agency	Journalists for Human Rights
Implementing Partners	N/A
Project Dates	01/04/2007 to 31/12/2008
Budget	US\$ 348,959
Project Summary	Building capacity of local media to support post-conflict human rights and democracy reporting, working with local media organisations, journalists, NGOs, and journalism schools.
Intended Project Outcomes	Increasing journalist's understanding of human rights, increase of human rights reporting in the media
Primary Outputs	Training journalist trainers, reaching a critical mass of journalists, workshops, development of human rights and democracy reporting curriculum, human rights reporting award, reducing pressure on journalists, increasing online reporting, increase of human rights reporting

UDF-GHA-07-143 – The Right to Communicate Through Community Radio	
Country/Region	Ghana/ West Africa
Executing Agency	Ghana Community Radio Network
Implementing Partners	N/A
Project Dates	01/10/2008 to 30/09/2010
Budget	US\$ 350,000
Project Summary	Increasing the number of community radio stations in the country, fostering the Right to Communicate and facilitate participation in community radio. This project does not have a final evaluation report.
Intended Project Outcomes	Regional action research workshops with community stakeholders and local CSOs to increase applications for participatory community radio licenses
Primary Outputs	Facilitation workbook for community radio, cooperation with community-based organisations and local people to enhance community ownership, engagement with media regulators, enhancing understanding.

UDF-SOM-07-168 – Strengthening Somali Media Capacity for Democracy and Human Rights	
Country/Region	Somalia
Executing Agency	National Union of Somali Journalists
Implementing Partners	N/A
Project Dates	01/09/2008 to 31/08/2010
Budget	US\$ 200,000
Project Summary	Capacity building among journalists on ethics, human rights and best practice, enhanced political and social reporting, more active media involvement in peace-building and governance
Intended Project Outcomes	Training to increase the number of journalists involved in peace building and the transition process in Somalis (30% women), workshops on good governance, human rights, corruption etc. Establishment of a Media Centre.
Primary Outputs	Training of journalists to enhance understanding of human rights in workshops, giving Somali journalists international profile, thus increasing safety, providing information to Reporters without Borders

UDF-TIM-06-115 – Training for New Journalists on Basic and Investigative Journalism in Timor-Leste	
Country/Region	Timor-Leste
Executing Agency	Timor-Lorease Journalists' Association
Implementing Partners	2 media associations in Timor-Leste
Project Dates	01/04/2007 to 31/03/2008
Budget	US\$ 80,740
Project Summary	Training of new journalists to empower the people of Timor-Leste in a time of political transition. This project was not completed due to lack of capacity of the implementing agency. The project was ended prematurely, so there is not final evaluation report.
Intended Project Outcomes	Enhance reporting skills of new journalists on election reporting and improve investigative journalism in bi-annual workshops, development of training materials
Primary Outputs	Engagement with media regulators, training that reached a critical mass of journalists (including women), thus enhancing human rights and democracy reporting, but lack of organisational sustainability

UDF-PHI-06-099 – Media, Democracy and Development	
Country/Region	Philippines/ Southeast Asia
Executing Agency	UNDP Philippine Country Office
Implementing Partners	Centre for Community Journalism and Development
Project Dates	Terminated early
Budget	US\$ 349,125
Project Summary	The project aimed to expand the network of journalists advocating for and promoting public interest journalism, to renew media ethics and responsibility, and to increase public awareness on the right to information.
Intended Project Outcomes	Strengthening of the Access to Information Network of investigative journalists; development of a pool of investigative journalists actively covering public interests stories; establishment of provincial media centers in specific regions.
Primary Outputs	Training of journalists and media networks on ethics and responsibilities, and on investigative journalism. Provision of writing grants. Production of online stories on human rights and related topics. Online database of information relevant to journalists covering the military and other topics.

Annex 2: evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question
Relevance	To what extent were the projects in the cluster, as designed and implemented, suited to the context and needs of the media?
Effectiveness	To what extent were the projects in the cluster, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals in relation to the media?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and media-related project impacts?
Impact	To what extent have the projects in the cluster put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of the media in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?
Sustainability	To what extent have the projects in the cluster, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing media-related impetus towards democratic development?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results, in relation to the media, that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?

Annex 3: acronyms and abbreviations

AFG	Afghanistan
ALB	Albania
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GHA	Ghana
GLO	Global project
IR	Investigative reporting
JHR	Journalists for Human Rights
LIB	Liberia
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NEP	Nepal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PHI	Philippines
RWB	Reporters without Borders
SIL	Sierra Leone
SOM	Somalia
STP	São-Tomé e Príncipe
TIM	Timor-Leste
ToT	Training of trainers
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General

Annex 4: excerpts from Cluster Evaluation Approach Paper

NB: This paper was submitted to UNDEF in November 2011. It summarized the evaluation methodology agreed by UNDEF and Transtec for the implementation of cluster evaluations.

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The purpose of cluster evaluations

Project-level evaluations carried out by Transtec for UNDEF have served, first and foremost, an accountability function. They also generate lessons learned and recommendations for future actions, but these lessons and recommendations are derived from findings that fit squarely under the accountability umbrella (via the DAC criteria).

While cluster evaluations have an accountability function in some degree, they are more strategic in nature. The subject being evaluated is UNDEF’s overall engagement in a thematic area; in fact, it would not be misleading to refer to these as “thematic evaluations.”

The main purpose of cluster evaluations is to compare different project approaches within similar project areas. Evaluations should identify which variables (contexts, approaches, partners, management styles, needs assessments, timing, networks, etc.) led to different results among projects in a thematic area. Cluster evaluations should lead to a clear assessment of what project strategies worked well, what ones did not, and should provide conclusions and recommendations for improved project selection. Where cut-and-dried conclusions are not possible, the evaluator should at least try to identify tendencies.

Suggested approach

A comparison of experiences and the conclusions and recommendations that emerge. We would suggest retaining the DAC criteria at the thematic level, as well as the logical chain of thematic findings, thematic conclusions, and thematic recommendations that we have established at project level.

- *Thematic-level findings.* Good practice is that thematic-level *findings* (in this context, cluster-level assessments of the DAC criteria) should be based on comparison of project evaluation findings related to the DAC criteria, as judged and précised by the cluster evaluator). In other words, the cluster evaluation would ask, based on project evaluations as synthesised by the evaluator, as well as project-level interview notes as synthesised by the evaluator, “Which approaches were successful in achieving the DAC criteria and which were not? What were the most important variables determining success?”
- *Thematic level conclusions and recommendations.* Cluster evaluations will follow the logical chain established in the Transtec project evaluations, but at the thematic level. That is to say, thematic-or cluster-level findings related to the DAC criteria will give rise to conclusions (usually, but not always, one conclusion per finding; combining findings into one conclusion is permissible, as is deriving more than one conclusion from a finding) and conclusions will give rise to recommendations (usually, but not always, one recommendation per conclusion).

This is to say that thematic- or cluster-level conclusions and recommendations will not simply be a synthesis of project conclusions and recommendations. It may be useful to cite project level recommendations, but these are not simply to be repackaged or summarised at the thematic level. What is aimed at is comparison of how different approaches and other variables helped to account for varying degrees of success in fulfilling the DAC criteria. Special attention may be given to recommendations that will help UNDEF to improve its selection criteria.

