Secretary-General finalizes short list of Fourth Round Projects

The UN Secretary-General has accepted the recommendations of the United Nations Democracy Fund Advisory Board and approved the short list of projects for the Fourth Round of Funding. UNDEF congratulates all those short-listed, applicants and thanks all those who applied in the Fourth Round.

Inclusion of a project proposal on the UNDEF short list is a significant achievement, given the very stiff competition: 1,966 applications were received and fewer than 65 shortlisted. But it does not in itself mean that the project proposal will be funded. Applicants will now be required to proceed to the next stage of the selection process -- negotiating a Project Document with UNDEF, which is in effect a contract between the grantor and the grantee. Only on the satisfactory conclusion of a Project Document, and its approval by the United Nations Controller, will the proposed project be formally approved for funds disbursement. Once the process is complete, UNDEF will publish the list of grantees.

We encourage future applicants to read the lessons learned published in UNDEF update 6, and, with that as a guide, to begin already now to think through any future applications.

The short list is the product of a thorough process of assessment, quality vetting, due diligence and lessons learned from previous rounds. As only about three percent of the total proposals submitted could be included on the short list, the selection process was highly rigorous and competitive. A team of five international assessors combining highly rigorous and competitive. A team of five international assessors combining

Given the number of applications, it is not possible for UNDEF to advise unsuccessful applicants of the results, or to enter into a dialogue on individual proposals. If applicants have not received an email from UNDEF to the contact points provided on the application, they can assume that their proposals are not on the final short list.

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UNDEF has entered into a two-year agreement with an experienced firm of commercial evaluators, Transtec, to conduct post-project evaluations of UNDEF’s Second and Third Rounds. Based in Brussels with a regional office in Beirut, Transtec has broad experience in evaluations, audits and studies in a range of fields, including institution-building, democracy and governance, community development and post-conflict rehabilitation. In addition to evaluating a majority of UNDEF’s single-country projects in the Second and Third Rounds, Transtec will also conduct cluster evaluations in several thematic areas of UNDEF activities, including youth projects and initiatives in human rights and the rule of law. The UNDEF Advisory Board is committed to commercial evaluation of UNDEF projects as a basis for a stronger learning process and further improve UNDEF project selection and management.
The third International Day of Democracy will be held on 15 September 2010, with many events planned by intergovernmental and representative bodies. UNDEF urges civil society organizations to join the party and organize their own activities on this auspicious day. It could be seminars or workshops — for example, analyzing the Universal Declaration of Democracy and asking how well it is implemented in each country; exhibitions or film screenings; essay, drawing or painting competitions; book readings or reviews; or simply informal gatherings for discussions. Whatever your activity, it will contribute to strengthening the understanding of democracy.

UNDEF wants to showcase your event. Please write a brief account and take some interesting photos and email them to us at democracyfund@un.org soon after the observance, and we will display them on a special page on our website. This way, you will be able to share your activity with the rest of the world and also learn about what others have done. So get involved and be creative!

The 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies was celebrated in Krakow, Poland, on 2-4 July 2010. The event drew 87 official delegations from around the world, including 40 at the ministerial level, who met at the Krakow Opera and the Słowacki Theatre (pictured).

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was represented by Roland Rich, Executive Head of the UN Democracy Fund, who delivered a message [http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=4663 ] on the Secretary-General’s behalf.

The message stressed the partnership between the Community and the United Nations in areas ranging from poverty, development and democracy to gender equality and empowering civil society.

US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton gave a speech [http://www.state.gov/secretary/rlm/2010/07/143952.htm] devoted entirely to the importance of civil society in any democracy, stating: “These three essential elements of a free nation — representative government, a well-functioning market, and civil society — work like three legs of a stool.”

Founded in Warsaw in 2000, the Community is an intergovernmental organization of democratic countries committed to strengthening democratic values around the world, with a focus on engaging civil society actors. Ministerial meetings of the Community of Democracies are unusual in that civil society representatives participate along with government officials in various sessions and workshops.

Conectas Human Rights serves on the UNDEF Advisory Board 2010-2011 as one of the representatives of civil society. An international non-governmental organization, Conectas was founded in São Paulo in 2001 with a mission to advance human rights and the rule of law, especially in the southern hemisphere.

Conectas develops programmes to build capacity among advocates and academics to demand accountability from authorities, and to increase civil society interaction with the United Nations. In Latin America, Conectas builds capacity for legal action in the public interest.

The Conectas Justice Programme works at the national and regional levels to protect victims of human rights violations, including through pro bono legal services in support of vulnerable groups. Through its Global South Programme, Conectas conducts research, shares knowledge among and between academics and practitioners, promotes alliances and south-south cooperation. In these ways, Conectas is enhancing the influence and impact of a new generation of human rights defenders in the Global South.
**Training Somali Journalists in Tools for Democracy**

Somalia’s journalists operate in one of the world’s most challenging and dangerous environments. As part of the UNDEF-backed project “Strengthening Somali Media Capacity for Democracy and Human Rights,” the National Union of Somali Journalists held a comprehensive workshop in June 2010 on human rights, good governance and democracy.

Participants said it was the first workshop of its kind held in Mogadishu during the two years of anarchy that have characterized the country as whole and the capital city in particular. Previous workshops had been held outside Somalia. This time, large numbers of journalists had the opportunity to attend at minimum cost.

Reporters and editors working for mainstream media and international news agencies were trained in media as an effective tool for human rights and good governance; decent working conditions for journalists; journalistic quality and freedom of expression; press freedom as a key to a well-governed society; and the role of the media in advancing human rights. The workshop included a special focus on Somalia’s Transitional Democratization Process, and featured speakers from the National Union of Somali Journalists, Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government as well as the UN Development Programme.

Among the participants’ concluding recommendations were to hold this type of training at least once a quarter, inside the country rather than outside; and to provide protective equipment such as helmets and bullet-proof vests to journalists in Mogadishu.

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**Linking Parliament with Civil Society in Pakistan**

With UNDEF support, the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, PILDAT, is creating a directory and electronic database linking parliamentary committees with civil society organizations so as to strengthen interaction between parliament and civil society, including professional bodies.

The Directory and Database will match each Parliamentary Committee with non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, trade unions and research institutes in areas directly relevant to the scope of the committees. Such interaction is essential to foster better understanding among parliamentarians of issues under consideration -- especially as in Pakistan, Parliament and Parliamentary Committees have limited in-house research capacity -- and to enable civil society organizations to further their cause. The initiative is part of the UNDEF-backed project “Electoral and Parliamentary Process and Civil Society in Pakistan.”

**Widening the Embrace of Local Governance in Afghanistan**

In Afghanistan, UNDEF funds an initiative to improve mechanisms for inclusive local governance by building synergies between communities and their local government representatives. By creating sustainable relationships between local government, community development councils and civil society groups, the project, implemented by ACTED, aims to foster community-government interactions that are more responsive to vulnerable groups. The project strategy is designed to work on several levels of local governance through training on gender, advocacy, vulnerability assessment and capacity-building training.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

In Palestine, UNDEF funds a project to build leadership capacity among youth and establish forums for them to participate in democratic processes and promote democratic principles in their communities. With UNDEF support, the Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies has developed a programme to improve democratic dialogue among youth in both the West Bank and Gaza City. Implemented in several stages, the programme started by training participants in tolerance and constructive dialogue. In the most recent phase, participants attended collective training workshops in Ramallah and Gaza City to put these skills into practice. The meetings included leaders, facilitators and youth representing a variety or perspectives, making the workshops a valuable opportunity to network and gain understanding of various cultural, traditional and religious backgrounds. The sessions addressed a range of topics: human rights, international law and conventions; democracy, tolerance, equality, civil liberties and citizenship; good governance, accountability and transparency; freedom of belief and expression; rights of marginalized groups; and academic freedoms and educational rights.

In Moldova and Ukraine, UNDEF supports a project to strengthen collaboration between government and civil society, in which UN funding, strong local partnerships and cautious goodwill are already showing signs of a stimulating and improved dynamic.

The project, implemented by Euclid Network, builds on a simple principle, according to Euclid Programme Manager Ben Rattenbury: “Every government looks to civil society to help resolve problems, rather than be one. If both sides share this principle, a positive, mutually beneficial relationship between government and civil society is possible anywhere.”

The project is conducted with local partners GURT and the Counterpart Creative Center in Ukraine, and CReDO and Contact in Moldova, with a focus on Transnistria through World Window.

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The core of the project is a series of roundtable meetings enabling senior representatives from government and civil society to meet, build trust, and generate case studies of effective cooperation as compelling evidence that working together is in the interest of all parties. This emphasis on regular, long-term dialogue on an equal footing is one of numerous innovative elements of the project design, and is already bearing fruit: in Ukraine’s Luhansk Oblast, senior public officials have shown interest in the discussions held at the first two roundtables, and in September will participate in the third, where new draft regulations on the forming and running of civic councils will be discussed.

Another unique element of the project is its focus on utilizing indigenous expertise in combination with the advice of peers from other parts of Europe. As a pan-European network of civil society professionals, Euclid invited members to submit proposals to help deliver master classes on NGO advocacy and networking. The invitation elicited 60 proposals, from which the in-country partners selected the best. These members were then able to share their expertise as fellow practitioners, discuss them with Ukrainian and Moldovan peers and to draw fascinating parallels.

This methodology has the potential to be replicated across a wide range of contexts, because it starts from a position of mutual self interest between government and civil society. As the project in Ukraine and Moldova develops further, lessons will be drawn which will help refine the toolkit, enabling similar benefits to be felt in all parts of the world, from the most democratic to the least.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

In Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador and Peru, UNDEF backs a project to give voice to marginalized shanty town-dwellers who lack collective democratic space, are excluded from formal networks, and are therefore unable to break the cycle of extreme poverty.

The project, implemented by Un Techo Para Mi País, focuses on establishing community-organizing meetings led by elected community leaders and youth volunteers, so as to enable participants to live as active citizens by identifying problems, solutions and rights, and educating themselves about resources, possibilities and networks.

The meetings take place in community centres built by the local community and Un Techo Para mi País volunteers, and give residents an opportunity to formally discuss community issues through slum representatives and elected leaders. The meetings will be complemented by leadership training and competitive community grants.

PROMOTING GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR PACIFIC WOMEN

In the Pacific region an average of 2.5 per cent of parliamentarians are women, compared with a world average of 17.7 per cent. To strengthen the political power and standing of Pacific women and foster good governance in the region, UNDEF supports a practical initiative implemented by the Foundation for Development Cooperation in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga.

The Bottom-up Governance Leadership Program for Women in the Pacific seeks to improve women’s knowledge of leadership and governance and encourage the design of local initiatives which promote democratic and participatory processes within communities. Participants gain a deeper understanding of concepts including the basics of governance, leadership, democracy, rights, ethics and corruption through online modules, supporting resources and practical assignments. Participants include villagers, community workers and emerging leaders. The programme also equips women with valuable project planning and management skills, which will enable them to transfer their skills to exercise effective leadership at a larger capacity within their communities.

BUILDING SPACE AND VOICE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

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Au Tchad, la Fondation pour la Démocratie et le Développement, avec le soutien du FNUD, met en œuvre le projet "Renforcement de la citoyenneté et consolidation de la démocratie au Tchad".

La Fondation vise la mise en place d’un observatoire national permanent et efficient des consultations électorales ainsi que le renforcement des capacités des populations à la base dans le domaine de la démocratie et des libertés. De plus, l’information et la sensibilisation de la société civile ainsi que la formation et l’alphabétisation conscientisante des masses populaires s’inscrivent au cœur des initiatives de la Fondation. Le séminaire relatif à la réflexion sur l’organisation et la mise en place d’un observatoire des scrutins électoraux organisé dernièrement au Centre de Moundou dans la Région du Logone Occidental, s’inscrit dans le cadre de ces initiatives. La mise en place d’un tel observatoire nécessite en effet la création d’un réseau de structures de la société civile capables d’œuvrer de concert pour une participation démocratique et citoyenne de tous lors des élections. Pendant quatre jours, sous forme de travaux en groupe et de formations interactives, des notions telles que le ‘vote’, la ‘bonne gouvernance’, les ‘circonscriptions électorales’, la ‘Constitution’ ou encore le ‘referundum’ ont été explicités par les participants.

Dans le cadre de ce projet, un bulletin d’éducation civique intitulé « Infos Citoyennes » a été lancé et déjà 6 bulletins ont été réalisés. Cette publication a pour but de contribuer à l’éducation et à la formation citoyenne des populations aux élections présidentielles et locales.

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Renforcer les dialogues en Ituri,
RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

En République Démocratique du Congo, Radio Canal Révélation, avec le soutien du FNUD, met en œuvre le projet « Renforcer les dialogues dans les Communautés pour la prise de décision ». Le projet s’appuie sur différents Clubs d’écoute installés à travers le District d’Ituri qui organisent des ateliers pour renforcer la capacité des communautés à communiquer entre elles et avec les autorités détentrices du pouvoir. Des débats radiodiffusés réunissant autour des micros les leaders des communautés de base et des dirigeants permettent un échange public d’opinions susceptibles d’influencer les décideurs.

Les problèmes relatifs au développement local des citoyens, aux violations des droits humains et autres règles démocratiques sont abordés. Dans ce cadre s’est tenu à Bunia en mai 2010 une session de formation sur le renforcement de capacité des mamans leaders des Clubs d’écoute sur le thème « Droits et devoirs de la femme ; participation de la femme dans le processus démocratique ».

Avec une enseignante et un juge exerçant sa fonction au Tribunal militaire Garnison de Bunia, la formation était concentrée sur les « Droits et devoirs de la femme », y compris les règles du Code de la famille et de l’article 14 de la Constitution qui dispose que « la femme a droit à une représentation équitable au sein des institutions nationales, provinciales et locales ; la loi garantit la mise en œuvre de la parité homme-femme dans lesdites institutions » ; ainsi que « La participation de la femme dans le processus démocratique ». A travers la métaphore de la construction de la maison et des piliers nécessaires au maintien de cet édifice, les participantes ont pris connaissance des fondations et outils indispensables à l’établissement d’une démocratie pérenne.

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Since 2006, some 10 percent of UNDEF’s projects have been executed in a partnership with the UN Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM. A new UNIFEM publication, Democracy: With Women, For Women [http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UNDEF_Round_I_Evaluation_web_1.pdf], provides an overview of what was achieved through seven grants to improve women’s political participation in a diverse set of countries and regions. A series of project profiles, drawn from reports and independent evaluations, summarizes objectives and activities, results, challenges, lessons and ideas for future work. Collectively and individually, the profiles shed light on effective strategies in implementing gender and governance programmes.