

INSIDE UNDEF

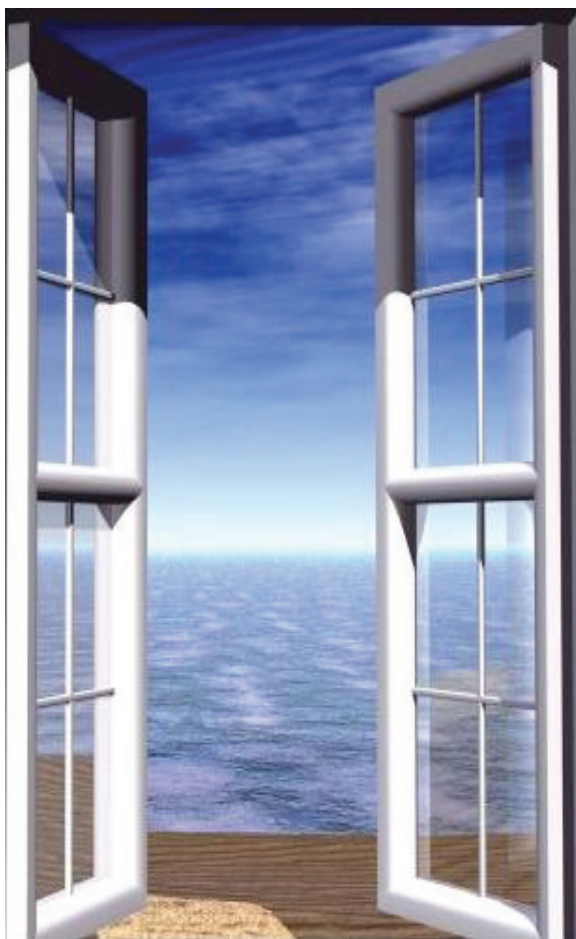
WINDOW FOR NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS OPENS ON 15 NOVEMBER

On 15 November 2011, UNDEF will open the window for applications for its Sixth Round of Funding, following the green light given by UNDEF Advisory Board. Project proposals may be submitted on-line between 15 November and 31 December at www.un.org/democracyfund. Only on-line applications in either English or French will be accepted.

Applicants can find guidelines, lessons learned, and examples of previous application forms [here](#). Those who plan to apply are strongly encouraged to visit this page as soon as possible to familiarize themselves with what is required.

UNDEF supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. It is the only UN entity that has the word “democracy” in its name; the only UN body with the primary purpose of supporting democracy through empowering civil society; and one of the youngest entities in the UN system. UNDEF projects exist in developing countries, in societies in transition and in challenging environments, and are in six main areas: Community development; rule of law and human rights; tools for democratization; youth; women; and media.

So far, UNDEF has funded about 340 projects in over 100 countries. Around 60 more projects will be funded by the end of 2011, bringing total



disbursement to some 120 million dollars. The large majority of funds go to local civil society groups. In this way, UNDEF plays a new and unique role, complementing the UN's traditional work with Governments to strengthen democratic governance around the world. It targets the demand side of democracy, rather than the supply side. In the Arab region so far, UNDEF has funded some 40 projects in 10 States plus Palestine – including in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Bahrain. Programmes in the Arab world now account for more than 15 per cent of UNDEF's total number of projects and spending.

UNDEF grants range from US\$50,000 to US\$500,000. Applications are subject to a highly rigorous and competitive selection process. In 2010, UNDEF received a record high of over 3,700 project proposals, reflecting an all-time high in demand for support from the Fund. Only some 60 were selected for funding.

UNDEF TO PUBLISH POST-PROJECT EVALUATIONS ON ITS WEBSITE

UNDEF will publish on its [website](#) all post-project evaluations conducted by its contracted commercial evaluators, Transtec. The decision was taken at the November 2011 meeting of the UNDEF Advisory Board, which is committed to commercial evaluation of UNDEF projects as a basis for stronger learning processes, project selection and management. In publishing such evaluations, UNDEF also consolidates its position as one of the most transparent entities in the UN family.

Based in Brussels with a regional office in Beirut, Transtec has broad experience in evaluations, audits and studies in institution-building, democracy, 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 of UNDEF's thematic areas, including youth; gender and elections; media; rule of law; indigenous and marginalized communities; and general election-related activities.

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CALLING ALL FUTURE APPLICANTS: LESSONS LEARNED

CLIQUEZ ICI POUR ACCÉDER À LA VERSION FRANÇAISE



Dear civil society organization applicants,

The following is feedback compiled on the basis of applications from UNDEF's first four rounds. It provides useful pointers for you to bear in mind as you prepare for your application.

Presentation

The higher the quality the presentation, the higher your application will score. You can get an idea of what is required by viewing an [application form](#), and by reading [project proposal guidelines](#). Fill in all the information that is relevant, but do not exceed the character limits in the application form. Ensure that the information is accurate. Write in plain English or French, avoiding jargon where possible. Use correct acronyms and website addresses. Write succinct sentences and avoid repetition.

Clarity

Clarity is the key to a successful application. The applicant must have a clear idea about what they want to achieve and a clear strategy for how to achieve it. You need to spell out the link between your overall vision and your activities and outputs – how these will translate your vision into reality. Lack of clarity cannot be disguised by the use of “buzz” words or other formulaic constructions; a successful design requires a logic that can be followed step by step. Brainstorm the ideas thoroughly before writing them down, but equally, agree on what specific steps are needed to make them happen, and in what sequence. Play the “devil’s advocate” and criticise the initial ideas until you have achieved a logical design.

Scoring and criteria

In UNDEF's initial assessment of applications, each project proposal is scored against 10 criteria. Since only three proposals out of 100 make it to the short-list, you need to score well on all the criteria to advance to the next stage. Make sure you demonstrate that your proposal satisfies each one:

- ♣ Does the applicant organization have a strong track record?
- ♣ Is the proposal technically sound in conception and presentation?

How would the proposed project:

- ♣ Promote the objectives of UNDEF?
- ♣ Make use of the UN's and UNDEF's comparative advantage?
- ♣ Have significant impact?
- ♣ Represent good value for money?
- ♣ Have strong prospects for successful implementation?
- ♣ Have strong prospects of sustainability beyond the project duration?
- ♣ Encourage inclusiveness?
- ♣ Enhance gender equality?

Innovation

How can your application stand out from the others? The answer is innovation. That means a new idea, a new method or an original proposal. If the outputs of the project are simply more workshops to raise awareness, then your application is unlikely to distinguish itself. When you think of innovative approaches, ensure that the proposal is action-oriented, with concrete outputs listed in the application.

Democracy

UNDEF was not established simply to fund good causes or good people. Arguing that your cause is just and your people are worthy is not sufficient. UNDEF is a Fund to promote democracy and each application must be able to show how the funding of that project will advance the cause of democracy. UNDEF focuses on supporting the voice of civil society, and so the application must show how that voice will be strengthened, and how that, in turn, will strengthen democratic processes. The more direct the link, the stronger the application.

Budget

Give considerable thought to the budget. Make sure the budget relates to the outputs listed in the narrative part of the application. We understand that the budget is an estimate, so use rounded figures (in the thousands or hundreds is sufficient). Do not ask for a high amount of salary in the budget, as UNDEF looks for an element of volunteering in applications. Do not ask for a high amount in other items as a back door method to obtain more salary. Also be aware that UNDEF rarely funds the purchase of vehicles.

Value for Money

Many applications have scored badly on the criterion “value for money” by asking for far too much in their budget. The maximum grant UNDEF can make is \$500,000; in more than 300 projects implemented to date, only one project has received this amount. The average grant is around \$250,000. An application requesting \$499,000, but delivering the same outputs as a similar application asking for \$350,000, will score low on value for money. That will probably be enough to knock that application out of the running. The more realistic the budget request, the better the score will be under the value for money criterion.

Timing

The activities in the project proposal should not begin until late 2012 or preferably 2013. Please do not leave submission of the proposal until the last few days. Given that the application window is open for six weeks, a well prepared applicant will submit well ahead of the deadline to ensure there is time left if something goes wrong. The later in the application process, the greater the risk that something may go wrong that cannot be remedied. And once the online proposal system is closed for the year, we cannot assist you. We have received dozens of “hard luck” stories about bad internet connections or electricity blackouts to explain why an application was late. The answer is to start in time.

INSIDE UNDEF

UNDEF CO-HOSTS SEMINAR ON LINK BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

UNDEF co-hosted a seminar in September 2011 exploring the links between democracy and development. In a vast and complex issue where political rhetoric often supplants rational analysis, the objective of the seminar was to concentrate on the analysis and forego the rhetoric.

Panellists discussing whether democracy is a necessary element for economic development were Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Zhang Dan, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, Morton Halperin, former Policy Planning Adviser at the State Department and currently senior advisor to the Open Society Foundations who co-wrote a book entitled *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*, and Roland Rich, Executive Head of the UN Democracy Fund. The seminar was co-hosted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

One of the strong conclusions to emerge from the seminar was that the quality of development was inextricably linked to the quality of democracy. The panellists agreed on the need for broad consent and consultation with the grassroots to make development a reality; there was discussion as to whether this could happen within a one-party system or whether a multi-party democracy was a necessity.



UNDEF BRINGS ACTIVISTS ON BOARD FOR OSLO DEMOCRACY GATHERING



The UN Democracy Fund was a co-host of the Oslo Governance Forum in October 2011, which brought together 250 practitioners in more than 70 countries. The Forum focused on case studies of local participatory approaches to holding governments accountable and serves as a platform for exchanging innovative experiences, knowledge and policy options. Organizers included the UN Development Programme, UNDEF, ActionAid, ACT Alliance, World Bank Institute and PRIA Global Partnership.

Four of UNDEF's grantees -- from Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria and the Russian Federation -- participated, along with UNDEF Deputy Executive Head Annika Savill, who delivered a [message](#) from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Pictured, from left to right: Fedor Sinitsyn, Director of the Center for Assistance to Victims of Violence and Human

Trafficking in Perm, Russia, who discussed the UNDEF-funded project *Empowering Civil Society Organizations of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in the Russian Federation*; Wunna Htyn, a youth activist from Myanmar, who described the work of the UNDEF-backed initiative *Deepening Democratization Processes through Youth Leadership in Myanmar*, implemented by ActionAid Myanmar; Annika Savill, UNDEF Deputy Executive Head; Elarbi Imad, President, Moroccan Center for Civic Education, who discussed the UNDEF-funded project *Supporting the Engagement of Civil Society in Morocco's Local Elections*; and Chibuzo Ekwewuo, who presented the UNDEF-financed *Nigeria Procurement Monitoring Project*. An article by Mr. Ekwewuo on procurement and access to information in Africa is featured on the last page of this newsletter.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

STANDING UP FOR THE DISENFRANCHISED IN RUSSIA

An UNDEF-funded project in the Russian Federation organized a rally in October 2011 to highlight the challenges faced by marginalized groups in voting in national elections. The event focused on homeless women's inability to vote because they lack a residence permit in their domestic passport. The meeting gathered signatures for a petition to the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and regions, demanding the enfranchisement of the homeless in elections of State Duma and the President of Russian Federation. Civil society, politicians and elected deputies participated in the action. The project, whose overall aim is to strengthen civil society participation in democratic processes in the Russian Federation, is implemented by the Foundation Social Investments.



CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS

In eight countries of Central Asia and South Caucasus, UNDEF funds a project to increase public participation and make governance more accountable through independent monitoring of public policy-making and implementation. The initiative relies on expertise from independent policy centres with experience of democratic transformation. Through mentoring, training, regional networking and exchange of know-how, civil society organizations are learning to build new channels of dialogue with governments at the national and local levels. They are also better equipped to monitor and evaluate inclusive public policies and to formulate effective policy proposals. The project, implemented by PASOS, covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD



UNDEF HOSTS CAIRO CONFERENCE ON THE WAY FORWARD IN EGYPT

UNDEF co-organized a conference in Cairo in July 2011 on “Ways to Strengthen the Democratic Transformation of Egypt”. The conference, held by [The Cairo Institute for Human Right Studies](#) in partnership with the Madrid-based think-tank [FRIDE](#), drew more than 100 participants from Egyptian civil society, political parties and academic institutions as well as a number of foreign observers.

The conference addressed in an open and informed manner the many challenges Egypt faces on its path to democracy, including the place of military and religious ideas in the future shape of the country’s governance. The mood veered from cautious optimism to concerned pessimism. Opinions varied over whether Egypt had experienced a true revolution or a coup d’état (or perhaps a self-coup by the military, what is called in Latin America a *golpe de estado*). The activism of the military courts was a matter of deep concern with thousands of people having been arrested – many for simply expressing criticism, often of the military. There were also doubts about both the legal basis of recent decisions and of the path towards elections and the return of authority to civilian hands. Further concerns were expressed about the capacity of the political parties to aggregate interests and to articulate policy positions. This was true on the liberal side of politics as well as the Islamic side, where the Muslim Brotherhood was having difficulty holding a common line and was being challenged by Wahabist and Salafist groups. Yet most speakers also based their perspectives on the premise that Egypt had been fundamentally changed by the 25 January revolution/event. There could be no return to the Mubarak system but what would replace it remained the key issue of the current public discourse.

POUR LA PARTICIPATION DES FEMMES DANS LA VIE PUBLIQUE EN ALGÉRIE

L’Algérie vient d’introduire une nouvelle disposition dans la loi qui oblige désormais les formations politiques à réserver un quota de 30 pourcent pour les femmes. Un projet en Algérie soutenu par le Fonds des Nations Unies pour la Démocratie a organisé en octobre 2011 un séminaire à Béjaïa sur le thème : “Renforcement des capacités et formation en leadership pour la participation des femmes dans la vie publique”. Objectifs visés : renforcer les capacités des femmes impliquées dans les associations, les syndicats et les partis politiques, à mieux s’affirmer et participer à la gestion de la cité, notamment par leur implication dans les institutions locales. Le projet soutenu par le FNUD a pour but de renforcer les capacités et formation en leadership pour les femmes en Algérie, et est mis en oeuvre par l’Association Culturelle Amusnaw.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD



UNDEF FUNDS FIRST COMMUNITY LEADER SUMMIT IN LATIN AMERICA

More than 100 community leaders from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay gathered in Lima in October 2011 for the First Latin American Community Leaders Conference to demand a voice in policy-making on poverty alleviation and job creation. The meeting, funded by UNDEF and organized by Un Techo Para Mi País, gained wide media [coverage](#).



"We do not understand why we are not taken into account on a range of policies, directly affecting slums, access to land, basic services and housing," stated the manifesto concluding the meeting. "To change the reality we live, we need to become engaged urgently."



PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN VIETNAM

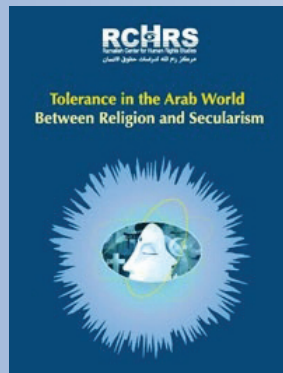


In the 25 years since Vietnam introduced the *doi moi* programme of reforms, citizens have come to participate far more actively in politics at both commune and village levels. But government is still not fully accountable, especially on issues impacting the environment.

This is why UNDEF funds a project to support civil society in monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions and governance. It builds capacity among local environmental NGOs, trains journalists in environmental reportage, and raises high-level political awareness. Implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the project held a workshop in August 2011 to develop a manual on human rights-based approaches to protecting the environment.



WORTH READING



WEST BANK: UNDEF-BACKED CONFERENCE ON TOLERANCE

Maan News [reported](#) on a conference on tolerance held by the Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies in October 2011 as part of an UNDEF-funded project to build leadership skills for young Palestinians and advance their participation in democratic processes. The focus was on the culture of tolerance, human rights, academic freedom, educational rights and pluralism. The preparation of working papers presented at the conference served as a tool for young participants to put their training into practice.

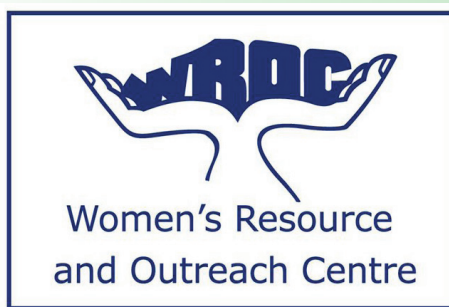


BANGLADESH, CAMEROON, GEORGIA, GUATEMALA: UNDEF FUNDS WOMEN LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

The Women's Democracy Network [reported](#) on the launch of its new Women Leadership Schools initiative, funded by UNDEF in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Georgia and Guatemala. Through a unique leadership development curriculum, the programme will increase the capacity of women to participate in the democratic political development and governance of their countries.

MEXICO: UNDEF FUNDS MOVEMENT FOR SERVICES WITH EQUITY AND QUALITY

An [op-ed](#) in *El Semanario* discussed an UNDEF-funded project in the Mexican states of Chiapas, Hidalgo and Guerrero -- home to some of the most excluded populations of Mexico -- to strengthen the voice of marginalized communities. This initiative to advance collective action among indigenous people, women and youth in demanding education and health services with quality and equity is a necessity in building true democracy in the region, according to the article.



JAMAICA: UNDEF-FUNDED PAPER RECOMMENDS BOARD QUOTAS FOR WOMEN

A [paper](#) developed by the Women's Resource and Outreach Centre with UNDEF support calls for quota appointments for women on public-sector boards as a special measure to create room for more women leaders to emerge. Government boards, it suggests, should have no less than 40 per cent female representation.

WORTH READING

AFRICA: UNDEF GRANTEE PROBES LINKS BETWEEN PROCUREMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

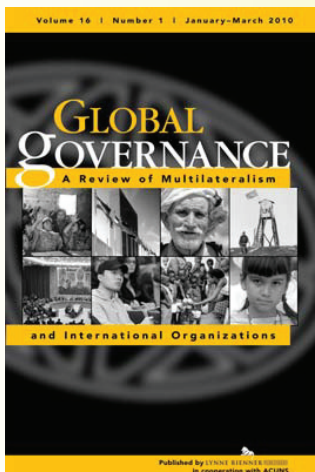


Chibuzo Ekwewuo, leader of the UNDEF-funded Nigeria Procurement Project, [discusses](#) the contribution of procurement laws to improving access to information in Africa. The article examines the meaning and purpose of public procurement, drawing parallels with the need and requirement for transparency to attain its objectives. It also examines the opportunities to improve access to procurement information under Nigerian law through the procurement monitoring [portal](#) developed with UNDEF supports.



MIDDLE EAST: UNDEF INTERVIEWED ON RESPONSE TO ARAB SPRING

Zunia Development Gateway [interviewed](#) UNDEF Deputy Executive Head Annika Savill about the Fund's response to democracy movements in the Arab region and beyond.



GLOBAL: 'UNDEF'S FOCUS ON CIVIL SOCIETY PROVIDES A MEANS OF COMPLEMENTARITY BY DESIGN'

The journal *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* featured an [article](#) on UNDEF by Executive Head Roland Rich. It notes that UNDEF pursues a strategy to contribute to democratization processes around the world by deploying the strength and legitimacy of the UN brand. It does not promote any national model of democracy, but works toward a vision of liberal, representative democracy where the checks and balances are undertaken by many groups, both formal and informal. It works resolutely on the demand side of democratization in support of the voice of civil society groups around the world. This focus gives the UNDEF a unique place in the work of the UN family: because most of the UN's work delivered by other agencies is in support of government institutions, UNDEF's focus on civil society provides a means of complementarity by design.