

**INSIDE UNDEF**

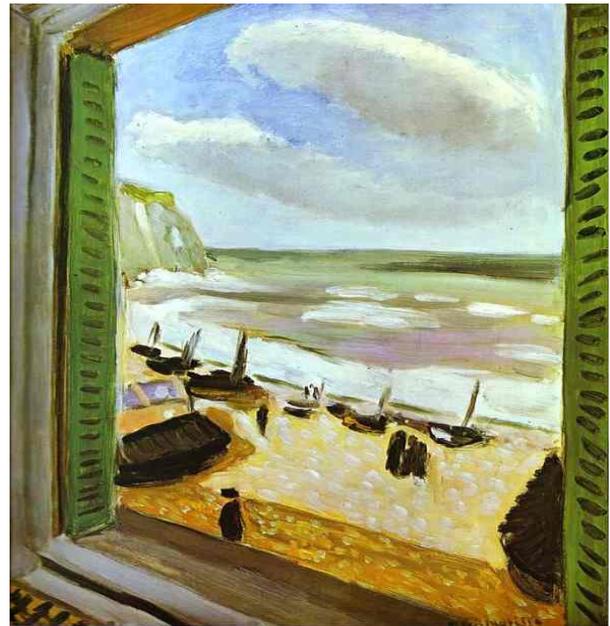
# Window for new project proposals opens on 15 November

UNDEF opens its annual window for project proposals for its Ninth Round of Funding on 15 November 2014, following the green light given by the UNDEF Advisory Board on 20 October (pictured). Project proposals may be submitted on-line between 15 November and 31 December at [www.un.org/democracyfund](http://www.un.org/democracyfund). Only on-line proposals 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 submit a proposal 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; empowering women; and media. UNDEF grants range from US\$100,000 to US\$300,000. So far, UNDEF has funded more than 400 projects in over 100 countries, bringing total disbursement to almost 140 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 2013, UNDEF received over 2000 project proposals. Some 50 were selected for funding.

Project proposals are subject to a highly rigorous and competitive selection process, quality vetting, due diligence and lessons learned from previous Rounds. A team of international assessors score each proposal against 10 set criteria and produce a long list. To narrow down the list further, UN Resident Coordinators and Experts of the UNDEF Advisory Board are invited to provide comments, quality vetting, and views on how proposed activities would fit in the overall context of existing UN work in the countries and fields proposed. The same comments are sought from the UNDEF Programme Consultative Group, making use of the specific expertise of each of its entities: the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the

UN Development Programme, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women. Based on this collective input, the UNDEF Secretariat produces a first short-list, expected to be completed only in mid-year, after which the process moves into the next stage. Each short-listed applicant will be contacted with a request for a draft project document, which is in effect the contract between UNDEF and the grantee. The project document negotiation requires the applicant to provide a more elaborated project design, and involves detailed input from both UNDEF and the applicant, as well as scrutiny and due diligence enquiries by UNDEF. Only upon successful conclusion of the project document, will the project proposal formally be approved for funds disbursement – usually after September.





# 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 rounds. It provides useful pointers for you to bear in mind as you prepare for your application.

## Presentation

The higher the quality of 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 400 projects implemented to date, only one project has received this amount. The average grant is around \$250,000. An application requesting \$299,000, but delivering the same outputs as a similar application asking for \$150,000, 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 2015 or preferably 2016. 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.

## Strengthening local governance accountability in Kosovo\*



An UNDEF Kosovo\* project engages civil society in monitoring to advance transparency and accountability in local governance. Coordinated by the Kosova Democratic Institute, the project works in 14 municipal assemblies across all seven regions of Kosovo -- Prishtina, Mitrovica, Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, Ferizaj and Gjilan. It trains civil society groups in monitoring local assemblies and in implementing actual monitoring and civic action exercises, including issue identification; holds town hall meetings; and elaborates public issue papers. The civil society groups then conduct advocacy campaigns in their respective municipalities, and work to strengthen the civil society network across Kosovo.

The project groups 11 civil society organizations: Serbian Democratic Youth, Iniciativa për Zhvillim Lokal, Mundësia, Prehja, Shoqata Gazetarëve, Polis, Koha, Shoqata e Intelktualëve te Pavarur, Elita-Viti, Fortesa, and Bashkohu Edhe Ti. UNDEF Deputy Head Mikiko Sawanishi visited the project in October 2014, and is pictured here in Gračanica with project implementers Jetmir Bakija of the Kosova Democratic Institute and Marko Trajković of Serbian Democratic Youth.

*\*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)*

## Law students compete to support alternatives to prison in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia



An UNDEF-funded project for penal reform in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia held an essay and presentation competition for law students to increase awareness of alternatives to imprisonment, reflect on challenges of existing criminal justice policy, and advance professional interest in building a probation system, currently non-existent in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The contest asked participants to think about new approaches to working for greater use of community service and other options, demonstrate critical thinking on the low application of alternatives to imprisonment, and provide reasonable arguments to enable lobbying of the ideas before governmental bodies. The competition judges included representatives of the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Justice of Armenia, the International Federation for Human Rights, the National Probation Agency of Georgia, the Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, as well as human rights lawyers and academics from leading universities. The award ceremonies took place in Yerevan and Tbilisi in October 2014.

The goal of the overall project is to promote the effective use of non-custodial and early release measures to challenge the overuse of imprisonment, help decrease the prison population and build proportionate responses to crime. The project works to help develop a probation system in Armenia and Azerbaijan -- including through capacity-building and lessons learned from Georgia, which has a probation service. Penal Reform International South Caucasus is implementing the project in partnership with the Civil Society Institute of Armenia and the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan.



## Empowering National Council of Paramount Chiefs of Sierra Leone

An UNDEF-funded project in Sierra Leone has empowered the National Council of Paramount Chiefs with a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to be responsive and accountable to the needs and rights of their people as well as contribute to sustained peace, security and development. It is one of several UNDEF projects in the Ebola-stricken country that prevails in the face of the epidemic, along with projects in Liberia and Guinea, the other two nations hit hardest by the deadly virus.

Sierra Leone's Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Finda Diana Konomanyi-Kabba, officially launched the plan, underscoring the Government's support for providing strategic focus to the institution of the Chieftaincy. She pledged her ministry's full commitment to the implementation and monitoring of the strategic areas. Paramount Chief Charles Caulker said the plan would give Paramount Chieftaincy institution direction to achieve its goals.

The UNDEF-funded project, implemented by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, works to address unaccountable chieftaincy and low participation of citizens in local governance in Sierra Leone. It strives to enhance local capacity and create democratic space for traditional authorities and chieftaincy, working through a platform for community dialogue with chiefs as well as broad participation and regular feedback on chieftaincy governance related issues.



## UNDEF signs first project of new round, to strengthen independent journalism in Libya



The first project of UNDEF's Eighth Round of Funding was signed on 9 September 2014, one of some 50 new initiatives that will be launched by UNDEF in this new Round. The project will work to strengthen independent journalism in Libya, so that local citizens have better access to information about the country's democratic process even amid considerable security challenges. Implemented by the Rory Peck Trust together with local partners, the project will train a core group of freelance journalists in freelance tradecraft and safety skills. This will be developed into an online resource, providing all freelance journalists in Libya with access to information that can assist them in producing more professional and ethical content, safely and securely.

"This is the first UNDEF-funded project devoted entirely to supporting freelance journalism", said Annika Savill, Executive Head a. i. of the UN Democracy Fund, on signing the project document at UN Headquarters in New York with Tina Carr, Director of the Rory Peck Trust. "The murders of freelance journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and the growing restrictions on media in a range of countries, make even more relevant and important the work, courage and safety of independent journalists worldwide. The Rory Peck Trust is uniquely equipped to carry out this project in an environment such as Libya, where the need is acute and the challenges in operating are just as acute."



The London-based Rory Peck Trust is the world's only organization dedicated fully to supporting and assisting freelance newsgatherers. It was established in memory of Rory Peck, the pioneering freelance cameraman who covered the wars in the Gulf, Bosnia and Afghanistan and helped to found FrontlineTelevision News, a London-based co-operative of freelance cameramen. He was killed in crossfire in Moscow in 1993 while filming a gun battle outside the Ostankino television station.

## INSIDE UNDEF

## International Day of Democracy in New York: Engaging young people

UNDEF and its partners in the United Nations Working Group on Democracy held an event at the International Peace Institute in New York on the theme of democratic engagement of young people.

Panel speakers were Hafsa Afailal of Morocco, Programme Officer with Médiateur pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme and coordinator of an UNDEF Morocco youth project; Gustavo Arturo Martínez Rodríguez of El Salvador, Youth Volunteer with Coordinadora Intersectorial Pro Juventudes de El Salvador; and Farkhunda Zahra Naderi of Afghanistan, Member of Parliament in the Lower House. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, made opening remarks.

The event, which is available as a webcast [here](#), addressed questions such as do young people find politics irrelevant and dull? Have young people discovered more powerful tools for democratic change than any generation before them?

People between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five constitute one-fifth of the world's population, and in many developing countries the proportion is even higher. However, numerous studies show decreasing levels of youth participating in elections, political parties, and traditional social organizations. At the same time, informal, youth-led movements for democratic change are on the rise. Using new communication tools, young people are making their mark on democracy-building in untraditional ways.

The United Nations, several other international organizations, and a range of civil society groups have set out to facilitate and support the participation of young people in democracy worldwide. But what is the reality on the ground? How do young people engage in politics and policymaking? How can they contribute to creating more inclusive and participatory democracies? What challenges are they encountering? How do they perceive the role of the international community in strengthening young people's engagement with democracy? How do they view the changes brought about by young people in the Arab Spring and elsewhere, and what are the lessons learned?

The event was held in cooperation with the Community of Democracies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.



## International Day of Democracy in Athens: Democracy under pressure

The Athens Forum 2014: Democracy under pressure was organized for the second consecutive year by the International New York Times and Kathimerini newspapers in cooperation with the UN Democracy Fund. The full-day programme included a series of discussions at the Acropolis Museum and in the Ancient Agora of Athens – the birthplace of democracy.

Speakers included Antonis Samaras, Prime Minister of Greece; Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden; Evangelos Venizelos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece; Danilo Türk, former President of Slovenia; Costas Simitis, former Prime Minister of Greece; Vuk Jeremić, former President of the United Nations General Assembly; Georgios Kaminis, Mayor of Athens; Dmitry Trenin, Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center; Roger Cohen of the New York Times; Mathias Müller von Blumencron, Editor, online edition at the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; Nicklas Lundblad, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, Google; and Annika Savill, UNDEF Executive Head a.i., who represented UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Her remarks are available [here](#). Full speakers' lists and webcast are available at [athensforum.org](http://athensforum.org)

As the UN Secretary-General said in his message to the Forum, "Gatherings like the Athens Forum for Democracy are living proof that inclusive participation is not only an end in itself. It prepares communities, societies and entire countries to address opposing points of view, forge compromises and solutions, and engage in constructive criticism and deliberations."

This year's programme follows the Athens Forum 2013, the first of its kind marking the International Day of Democracy.





## Liberia: UNDEF funds Ebola radio announcements

To combat rising Ebola infections in Liberia, UNDEF funds Ebola radio announcements in Liberia, where the epidemic is taking a terrifying toll: click on [link](#). Ebola Awareness Audio Messages and Ebola Awareness Radio Drama and Song CDs intended for distribution has been produced by the Liberian Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC) and Center for Media Study and Peacebuilding (CEMESP) in collaboration with We4Self for the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism and National Ebola Taskforce. Audio messages were created to reach maximum audiences in Liberia where sections of the population are a non-reading society.

## Pakistan: 5th National Youth Peace Festival

The Chanan Development Association (CDA) organised a four day festival titled Pakistan Vows for Democracy, Education and Peace, in collaboration with UNDEF, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Umeed Jawan and the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) in September. This provided people from diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions, communities, and socio-economic background with an opportunity to share their opinions. The participants passed a resolution stating that the government, media and civil society organisations should play their due role to ensure political stability and strengthening democracy. The event was covered in the [Express Tribune](#) and [Daily Times](#).



## Somalia: UNDEF Trains 100 Members of Women Organizations

The Centre for Education and Development (CED) trained 100 women from 20 women organizations in Mogadishu in August. The training was on capacity building, women empowerment in politics and women rights. The Minister for Women and Human Rights Hon. Khadija Mohamed Diiriye, congratulated CED and UNDEF on the successful training. She states that such opportunities should be utilized by women and other organizations. She in particular mentioned that such trainings are important for women members of parliament and women in the civil service. The training was featured in [AllAfrica](#).



## Gabon: Civil and political rights of youth

A national forum on youth voting and democracy in Gabon will be held on 14 and 15 November at the initiative of the Network of free civil society for good governance in Gabon (ROLBG), supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund and the Embassy of the United States of America in Gabon. The forum is a broad discussion among young people, policy makers, and representatives of political parties around the issue of political participation. The meeting will attempt to fight against civic and political disaffection and encourage and educate youth. Approximately 250 youth leaders will take part in exchanges in a first of its kind event for Gabon stressing the importance of the constitution, the electoral process and voting. The forum gained coverage in [Africetime.com](#)

