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EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-YEM-10-378 –Empowering Local CSOs in Yemen through Participation in Local Governance

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All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

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.

Authors
This report was written by Pierre Robert and national expert Yasser Mubarak in Yemen. Aurélie Ferreira coordinated the evaluation and provided methodological advice and quality assurance. Eric Tourrès was Project Director at Transtec.

Map of Yemen (©UN)

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Project data

This report is the evaluation of the project "Empowering Local Civil Society Organizations in Yemen through Participation in Local Governance", implemented from May 2012 to April 2014 inclusive by Humanitarian Forum Yemen (HFY), a non-governmental organization based in Sana'a, Yemen. The project budget was US$200,000. According to the project document, its overall aim was: "To address the perennial problem of weak local civil society organizations [CSOs] and the general lack of collaboration between private and public development stakeholders in Yemen." Specifically, the project sought to: "Improve the capacity of local CSOs and strengthen partnerships between local CSOs and the government at the local and national levels in order to effectively address emergencies and respond to humanitarian situations".

The project was implemented in four governorates of Yemen (Sana'a, Aden, Hadramawt and Hudaydah[1]). Three pilot districts (Ghayl Ba Wazir in Hadramawt, Al Boreqah in Aden, and Al Mansuriyah in Hudaydah) were selected for targeted cooperation between CSOs and local authorities, while advocacy at national level was conducted with the authorities in Sana'a. Additional activities due to be implemented in the governorates of Ta'izz, Hajja and Sa'dah towards the end of the project were cancelled due to security conditions, which led to over 25.000$ under-spending of the original budget.

(ii) Evaluation findings

The project was very **relevant**, in that it identified genuine needs at community level and in terms of civil society capacity building and took a two-pronged approach (work at national and local levels) that was appropriate to the situation in Yemen – and in line with UNDEF's guiding principles on democracy. Project design was adapted to the challenges of governance in Yemen, and the outcomes/results were defined in an appropriate manner. The only limitation to meeting the relevance criterion were related to somewhat over-ambitious objectives, and to a lesser extent to the challenges of working in a diversity of different local communities across the country. There was also a degree of disconnect in project design between the legislative ambition (to improve rules governing NGOs) and the objective of meeting humanitarian needs at local level. These issues are reviewed below.

It is clear that the project could not anticipate the near-failure of central government that Yemen has experienced since 2014. In particular, the work done in relation to the law on NGOs may not bear fruit as long as the national government's authority and legitimacy remain as shaky as they are at the time of writing (issue reviewed under the sustainability criterion). However the project strategy of working with local authorities and civil society stakeholders at community level was relevant to the reinforcement of local governance, irrespective of the national political situation.

The project was generally **effective** in terms of achievement of the planned activities. It was also effective, though to a lesser degree, in terms of achievement of the expected results/outcomes.

[1] Various transcriptions of Arabic names have been found in project documents. The transcriptions in this report are those most commonly used in UN documents, maps, etc.

Its effectiveness in terms of overall objectives was also satisfactory overall, mainly because of the achievements at local level – the deliquescence of Yemen's governance at central level has, in effect, put the achievement of national-level objectives on hold. However some significant groundwork has been carried out in this respect, which may bear fruit if a functional government is re-established.

Overall, the activities focusing on planning were effectively implemented: the various multi-stakeholder meetings were appropriate for these debates, as they were also for the discussion on the NGO law (see below). However, the evaluators noted that some interviewees did not recall the detail of awareness-raising seminars on local governance, participatory monitoring, monitoring tools; neither did they perceive the connection between planning and participatory monitoring. In Hudaydah, the CSO Committee was perceived to be a government initiative, not a part of the HFY project. This was due in part to a somewhat changed approach by HFY, which chose to work with the Ministry of Local Administration rather than directly with local authorities.

In addition to development activities reviewed above, the other key objective of the project concerned CSO governance and capacity building. The activities concerning the Law of Associations and Foundations (NGO law) were very effective: numerous consultations were held at governorate levels, in which HFY and partners such as MADA raised awareness about the opportunities offered by the NGO law and initiated debates about possible amendments to the law and its implementing regulation. There were also awareness raising sessions on the Code of Conduct for NGOs, aimed at improving their governance. The local debates were followed by a national conference, at which recommendations from the NGOs were presented to representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MoSAL).

More than 50% of the participants in meetings and activities were women. A majority of the projects identified at the local level jointly by the CSOs & Local Government Authorities (LGAs) were addressing needs and priorities of women. These included projects related to mother and child health, girls' education, the provision of female teachers, etc. Most of the project's field coordinators were women.

The project was **efficient**, in the sense that its varied and ambitious activities and results were largely achieved, in a difficult logistical and security context, and that it constituted good value for money. Project management was appropriate, though the project could probably have benefited from a larger management team able to liaise more regularly with partners at local level. Coordination with partners in Sana'a was good, and it is clear that HFY consulted them at every stage of the project. Though some partners felt that their recommendations were not implemented in full, all those interviewed indicated a willingness to continue working with HFY in future. Similarly, the project team's relationship with ministry officials was fruitful and should lay the groundwork for future collaboration (when central government authority is restored). It must again be stressed that the few weaknesses in project management may largely be ascribed to difficult logistical conditions, which limited the capacity to coordinate between Sana'a and the governorates. In the context of Yemen in the project period, the quality of management was impressive. HFY's management was pro-active and internal accountability mechanisms were appropriate.

It is of course difficult to identify the project's **impact** in view of the radical change in the political context of Yemen during – and particularly since the end of – the project period. As mentioned in the above sections, some of the potential impact of the project may only become reality if a

stable central government returns to the country. An additional caveat is, as always, that some aspects of impact probably also stem from factors other than the HFY project. However, some elements of impact may nevertheless be identified in relation to aspects of the project not directly related to the political situation, including:

- Several local NGOs have acquired a better understanding of rules and regulations concerning NGOs and – crucially – of the governance principles set out in the Code of Conduct disseminated by the project.
- At local level, there is evidence that local councils and NGOs have accepted the principle of working together and intend to do so beyond the project period.

Impact at national level was of course negatively influenced by the difficult political context. Nevertheless, additional elements of impact can be identified at national level, including:

- The dissemination of the use of the Code of Conduct among NGOs.
- The recognition among ministry officials that the NGO legislation needed to be changed.

Despite the difficult context of Yemen, interviewees noted that the project could have achieved a greater impact if it had given greater priority to media coverage of its activities and key messages on NGO governance and participatory planning.

The project was able to achieve a degree of **sustainability** of some of its results and impacts, including the following elements:

- The Code of Conduct was disseminated to a wide range of organizations, at least some of which appear to have taken its recommendations on board.
- The recommendations for amendments to the NGO law and implementation regulations may be followed-up if and when central government functions are re-established, especially if HFY and its partners continue to advocate for these changes.
- Local authorities' dialogue with NGOs on development planning should continue to be practiced in the target areas, and could also be disseminated to other district by HFY and its partners.

With regards to **UNDEF's added value**, HFY representatives noted that UNDEF's approach, encouraging grantees to develop partnerships and supporting dialogue with government authorities at national and local levels, was appropriate to conditions in Yemen. In the post-project context on enhanced political violence, where development assistance is curtailed by government dysfunction, it is all the more important that civil society continues to be supported, particularly in rural areas where needs are great and which have a record of resilience in the face of central government weakness. The ability of UNDEF to reach out directly to civil society organizations constitutes a significant advantage in this context.

(iii) Conclusions

- ***The project was highly relevant to the post-2011 situation in Yemen.***

- ***The project made a significant contribution to NGO governance practice.***

- ***The project was beneficial to dialogue between government and NGOs, at local and national levels.***

- ***The project was effectively supportive of the needs of women, and appropriately involved them in the management of activities.***
- ***Although training activities were generally effective, the project could have benefited from more expert input*** for awareness raising activities on participatory planning and project monitoring.

- ***The project lacked an explicit advocacy and information dissemination strategy, which could have enhanced its visibility.***

- ***The project could have benefited from an additional small grants scheme to support CSOs.***

(iv) Recommendations

- ***HFY and its partners should continue working with district-level NGOs, particularly in rural areas.***

- ***HFY should continue to prioritize development planning that addresses women's needs and is managed by women***.

- ***HFY and its partners should address local executives to advocate for the systematic, formal involvement of local NGOs in the preparation of local development plans.***

- ***Future HFY projects documents should more explicitly identify official stakeholders at national and local levels, particularly to distinguish between executive and consultative institutions.***

- ***Future HFY projects documents should include explicit advocacy/information dissemination strategies, as well as an exit strategy.***

- ***UNDEF should consider whether to encourage grantees to implement small grants processes as part of their project proposals.***

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report is the evaluation of the project "Empowering Local Civil Society Organizations in Yemen Through Participation in Local Governance", implemented from May 2012 to April 2014 inclusive by Humanitarian Forum Yemen (HFY), a non-governmental organization based in Sana'a, Yemen. The project budget was US$200,000, of which US$ 20,000 was retained by UNDEF for evaluation and monitoring purposes[2]. According to the project document, its overall aim was: "To address the perennial problem of weak local civil society organizations [CSOs] and the general lack of collaboration between private and public development stakeholders in Yemen." Specifically, the project sought to: "Improve the capacity of local CSOs and strengthen partnerships between local CSOs and the government at the local and national levels in order to effectively address emergencies and respond to humanitarian situations".

The project was implemented in four governorates of Yemen (Sana'a, Aden, Hadramawt and Hudaydah). Three pilot districts (Ghayl Ba Wazir in Hadramawt, Al Boreqah in Aden, and Al Mansuriyah in Hudaydah[3]) were selected for targeted cooperation between CSOs and local authorities, while advocacy at national level was conducted with the authorities in Sana'a. Additional activities due to be implemented in the governorates of Ta'izz, Hajja and Sa'dah towards the end of the project were cancelled due to security conditions.

The evaluation of this project is part of the larger set of evaluations of UNDEF-funded projects. The purpose of these evaluations is to "contribute to a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will in turn help UNDEF to develop future project strategies. Evaluations are also to assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved".[4]

ii. Evaluation methodology

UNDEF evaluations are more qualitative than quantitative in nature and follow a standard set of evaluation questions that focus on the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and any value added from UNDEF-funding (Annex 1). This is to allow meta-analysis in cluster evaluations at a later stage. This report follows that structure.

The evaluators reviewed the available documentation on the project and on issues of human rights, national and local governance, as well as civil society legislation in Yemen. They also reviewed reports about the political violence in Yemen in the period covered by the project (2012-14). In addition to the standard project documentation (initial project document, mid-term, final narrative and milestones report) the evaluators reviewed material produced in Arabic and English by the project, such as training curricula and lobbying documents.

[2] Actual spending on the project only amounted to US$154,500. The under-spending stemmed from the cancellation of some activities due to security reasons, and to a lesser extent from a slight change of approach in relation to planning issues (see "effectiveness" section below).
[3] Various transcriptions of Arabic names have been found in project documents. The transcriptions in this report are those most commonly used in UN documents, maps, etc.
[4] See: Operational Manual for UNDEF-Funded Project Evaluations, page 6.

The evaluation took place from December 2014 to February 2015, and included two components: desk-based analysis (outlined above), and field-based research. The situation of political violence and difficult security conditions in Yemen made it impossible for the international expert to travel to the country, hence the need for a preliminary desk study based on project documents, reports and other available material. For the field-based phase, a national expert based in Sana'a interviewed project stakeholders in that city in December 2014 and interviewed stakeholders in Aden, Hudaydah and other locations in February 2015. The in-person and phone interviews were carried out with a range of stakeholders agreed in consultation with the implementing NGO and the international expert, who also supplied an interview guide. The findings stemming from these interviews were then fed into the desk report.

This methodology differed somewhat from the standard approach in that it did not include visits to project locations: plans for such visits, initially made in December 2014, had to be cancelled due to the worsening security conditions (see context section below): the Huthi rebellion which took over by force in Sana'a made movement within the capital dangerous, and in effect paralyzed transport links with other parts of the country, hence the imperative need to substitute remote interviews to field visits. However, the interviews provided a sufficient information base for the evaluators to form a well-rounded view of the project.[5]

During the preparatory work (UDF-YEM-10-378 Launch Note Version 3, November 2014) the evaluator identified several issues, which the national expert followed up on during interviews. These included:

- **Relevance/effectiveness**. The project objectives were consistent with UNDEF's mandate. The evaluators sought to assess the level of skills previous experiences of the implementing NGO, and the extent to which the project liaised with and built upon the experiences made by other interventions of the international community targeting Yemen's CSOs, such as the EU-led Sharaka program, USAID projects Amideast and Yemen Responsive Governance Project, and the UNDP Emergency Capacity Development Facility program, which allowed the definition of the Partnership Framework between the Government of Yemen and CSOs.
- **Effectiveness**. The evaluators assessed the impact on the project's implementation of political instability in Yemen, both in terms of the anticipated legislative changes and in terms of relationships between CSOs and local authorities. The project operated in different locations across Yemen, addressing publics with presumably different needs and priorities. The evaluators assessed the extent to which the project team was able to ensure both consistency of project implementation and flexibility in taking account of local circumstances and needs.
- **Efficiency**. The evaluators assessed the coherence between the project design and the resources of the project, in view of the anticipated results.
- **Impact**. The evaluators sought information about the achievement of the project's expected impact. For example, they sought to find out whether the claimed approval by 150 CSOs and government bodies of the code of conduct and ethics of CSOs has led to the adoption of new practices by these CSOs and, if so, whether this impact can be attributed to the project.

[5] In addition to interviews, the evaluators were provided by HFY with a large amount of photographs of project activities, and with a promotional video summarizing project activities. A selection of photographs is featured in the present report, and others are submitted separately to UNDEF, along with the video.

- **Sustainability**. It was essential to the success of the project that an effective partnership be developed between CSOs and local authorities in the pilot districts. The evaluators assessed the quality and possible future of the partnerships, and considered the level of buy-in for the project on the part of local authorities.
- **Gender sensitivity**. The evaluators considered the strategies used by the project to enhance gender sensitivity, including in the partnership between CSOs and local authorities in the determination of areas of cooperation.

iii. Development context

Governance in a context of conflict

Yemen, a young republic reunified in 1990, has long been governed in a dual manner, according to international observers: state institutions – government, legislature, armed forces and even the judiciary – were reportedly led by dominant families and clans who also commanded tribal and religious loyalty across the country. The main families – Saleh, Mohsen, Islah, Ahmar – have been sharing power, however uneasily, under former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The uprising of 2011, part of the broader region-wide "Arab Spring" movement, forced Saleh to relinquish power in a transitional agreement sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council, with implementation supported by the UN. This also changed the balance of power among the dominant families.[6]

Former vice-president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi took over the presidency – in an acting capacity at first, then through an election in February 2012 in which he was the sole candidate. Under his watch and a government including senior opposition leaders, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) mandated by the transitional agreement started in March 2013, leading in January 2014 to a blueprint for political reform. While apparently consensual, the blueprint fell short of a practical peace plan. The end of the old balance of power also brought about the emergence of new entrants in the power game, whose interests were not necessarily taken into account by the NDC. These included the Zaydi Shiite from Sa'dah governorate in the north, known as the Huthis, and a Hiraak insurgency in the south, allied in some areas with groups loyal to Al-Qaeda. These groups, many of which had exercised a degree of local influence for years, profited from the instability in Sana'a to stake a claim to power at national level.

This unstable and volatile political context had a substantial adverse impact on the security situation across the country during the project period (May 2012 to April 2014). It also contributed to a very difficult humanitarian situation characterized by severe food shortages and poor access to healthcare affecting about 5 million people, according to an OCHA assessment in mid-2013. Hundreds of thousands of Yemenis were displaced by armed violence in several regions, a situation that continues to occur at present.

Resilient local authorities and civil society organizations

Nevertheless, Yemen remained during the project period a basically functioning state where the legislature (House of Representatives) debated and passed legislation, although enforcement remained very weak. Local authorities, though in dire need of basic resources, were reported by

[6] This section draws on reports by Crisis Group: *Yemen: Enduring Conflicts, Threatened Transition*, July 2012; and *The Huthis: from Saada to Sanaa*, June 2014. It also draws on reports by Chatham House: *Yemen – Corruption, Capital Flight and Global Drivers of Conflict*, September 2013; and by Amnesty International: annual report entries on Yemen for 2012, 2013 and 2014. These are to be found online on the websites of the respective organizations.

civil society organizations to continue operating at arms' length from the power struggles in Sana'a. This is partly due to a tradition of autarky and local tribal loyalty, and partly to the fact that state institutions such as civilian ministries and the army largely reflected the old power sharing arrangements in their tribal make-up.

In this context, civil society has undergone a strong development since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising. According to the World Bank[7], there were over 8,300 registered CSOs in Yemen in early 2014, almost 25% more than in 2010. Though not all of these organizations worked on development matters, they and other (unregistered) civil society groups, drawing on what the World Bank calls "a long tradition of community solidarity", have helped to "create a unique opportunity to build innovative development partnerships and channel citizens' voices".[8]

A 2013 CSO mapping and capacity study by the World Bank concluded that, while vibrant, the CSO community suffered from poor governance, competition over scarce funding and geographical isolation, which "inhibit[ed] knowledge sharing and coordination efforts". The study called on the Government of Yemen to take a number of practical steps to facilitate the registration and operation of CSOs, and encouraged CSOs to enhance networking and self-regulation. It called on donors to assist both government and CSOs in their development in this regard. In fact, a number of projects and programs by donors have contributed to enhancing CSO capacities in recent years. In 2014, the World Bank initiated a US$8m Yemen CSO Support Project aimed at building CSO capacity and enhancing the transparency and openness of the CSO sector. Earlier, the European Union's Sharaka project (since 2005) has supported human rights NGOs in Yemen. Bilateral donors and UNDP also have long-standing programs that include targeted support to CSOs.

Civil society and conflict resolution

Among the many analyses of the conflict in Yemen, a relevant one (carried out in 2010-11, at the time the HFY project was being designed) concluded that a frequent cause of conflict in several districts of the country is the deterioration of traditional tribal conflict mitigation systems, compounded by weak state institutions and law enforcement capacity. The study noted that traditional tribal conflict mitigation processes may have been weakened by factors such as corruption, tribal leaders moving to urban areas, and vulnerable and disengaged youth. The study noted that there was demand for enhanced institutional capacity at local government level to address community conflict. The study concluded with recommendations on addressing local conflict, which included involving youths and women in projects and building up trust with government authorities.[9]

At the time this report is written, Yemen faces an unprecedented crisis at central government level, as the northern Shi'a rebel group known as the Houthis has marched into Sana'a, an event that led to the resignation of the country's president and prime minister. The international community's attempts at mediation had not yet succeeded in February 2015, raising the prospect that further violence would engulf the country. However local authorities, though starved of funds as a result of paralysis in the capital, have also demonstrated a degree of

[7] See the World Bank report: *Yemen Civil Society Organizations in Transition*, June 2013. See also the page on the Yemen CSO Support Project of the World Bank website. Further sources: www.sharaka.eu; and www.ye.undp.org.

[8] According to MoSAL officials interviewed for this evaluation, Yemen, as at late 2014, had approximately 11,000 CSOs, of which 7,767 were working in development (the others were cooperatives). In 2014 the government cancelled the licenses of 1,482 organizations.

[9] See "Yemen Community-Based Conflict Mitigation Program", Partners for Democratic Change International (www.pdci-network.org), July 2012.

resilience in past crises. The delivery of social services may continue, albeit hampered by a lack of governance and insecurity in communications, transport and livelihoods. Community organizations are likely to remain important interlocutors for local authorities in the future, however hampered they will be by the lack of political settlement.

Humanitarian Forum Yemen

Humanitarian Forum Yemen is an offshoot of Humanitarian Forum (HF), a group supported by a range of donors, NGOs and international institutions, with the aim of bringing "humanitarians from different cultures" to work "together to save lives". Humanitarian Forum was founded in London in 2004 and implemented a series of workshops in 2005 in several Muslim-majority countries to discuss needs and approaches for the development of the humanitarian sector and the improvement of aid effectiveness and efficiency. As a result of these workshops, Humanitarian Forum Yemen was established in 2005 and officially registered in 2009. Its website currently lists 11 Yemeni NGO members (though the project document refers to 21 members, and HFY representatives mentioned 31 partners during interviews with the evaluator), and states that it is "developing local coordination and cooperation mechanisms and tools to ensure a more collective response during emergencies". HF supports its country affiliates with training and capacity building advice, as well as limited core funding. HF may also help channel donor funding to its affiliates. HF staff told the evaluators that they consider HFY to be a well-functioning affiliate with appropriate governance structures.

The project was being implemented at a time when the process of political transition as outlined in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Peace Agreement had just started and a new coalition cabinet was formed. The new cabinet put together a program for the transition assuming that the situation would improve. However, the situation continued to deteriorate and so did the financial resources of the government to run the country. This had an impact on local development. Usually, the priorities of the district plans were reflected in the governorate level plans, which informed the planning at the national level. However, as the State's resources declined, local projects were stopped. This meant that the LGAs did not receive allocations from the central budget for local implementation. They were thus left with only local resources, which were small.

Every year HFY conducts capacity building trainings for CSOs out of its own resources, covering strategic planning, financial management, logical framework of projects and (most recently) participatory planning. HFY works in 8 governorates of the country, including those covered by the UNDEF project.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

i. Project approach

The project was written in late 2011, in the wake of the Arab Spring uprising, at a time of what the project document called "anti- and pro-regime protests". The project document noted that the country was then seen to be at risk of "verging on state failure". At the same time, the project document identified elements that "should enable progress", including:

- The government's commitment to political reform, including "efforts to improve effectiveness and efficiency of institutions and agencies" and "broadening the avenues for participation of CSOs in political, economic and social programs";
- The government's stated support to "empowerment for local councils to achieve rural development";
- The fact that Yemen had "one of the most liberal NGO laws in the region, which is why its CSO sector has grown in number (more than quality) since Unification".

In view of the dire humanitarian conditions in Yemen and of the identified weaknesses of the CSO sector in terms of skills to participate in local governance, it made sense to work towards enhancing CSO and government "partnership for development and humanitarian action". This had to go hand in hand with support for the institutional capacity building of CSOs.

For the project to function, two pre-conditions had to be fulfilled:

- Willingness on the part of the authorities to engage in discussion about partnership with NGOs. HFY, through its on-going dialogue with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MoSAL) on humanitarian issues, knew that this was the case.
- Capacity to identify and work with local CSOs in selected governorates. HFY as an umbrella organization had access to a wide range of CSOs through its member organizations.

HFY also had access to the legal skills necessary to work on legislative issues, thanks to the legal expertise of HFY member MADA Legal Foundation, a legal advocacy and training NGO.

The project took place in a context of broader support for NGO capacity building and involvement in humanitarian relief activities, and for enhanced civil society and government partnership. As mentioned above, UN and bilateral donors, as well as the EU, had initiated programs in this field, of which HFY was aware (some of its member NGOs benefited from support in that context).

However, there were also indications that the government might be tempted to restrict its willingness to work with NGOs, partly because civil society in general may have been perceived at supporting anti-government protests. The project noted that amendments to NGO legislation were being drafted, to make it more difficult for organizations to obtain registration. Though the House of Representatives had rejected amendments to the fairly liberal NGO legislation, the danger existed, at the time the project was designed, that restrictions would be introduced nevertheless. The project document highlighted in particular the risk that legislation aimed at combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism could be used to restrict legitimate NGOs' access to resources.

ii. Logical framework

The framework aims to capture the project logic (link between overall objectives, project results and activities). It is based on the project proposal and therefore does not fully reflect the actual project's activities – discrepancies between planned and actual activities are discussed in the next chapter.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Project specific objectives	Development objective
• Consultations with local CSOs at governorate levels on legislative amendments • National conference to develop CSO and government consensus on amendments to the law on NGOs • Adoption of the agreed amendments by parliament	To promote and mainstream the rights, roles and responsibilities of local CSOs through engagement between CSOs and with the government.	To strengthen CSO-government partnership for development and humanitarian action.	Development and humanitarian interventions are planned and implemented jointly by government and civil society in a democratic and accountable manner
• Awareness raising seminars on local government • Mechanism for participatory monitoring of development interventions • Multi-stakeholder planning and budgeting workshops conducted • Agreement on process for CSO representation on local development councils • Local councils formally agree with the involvement of CSOs in development councils in the four governorates and three pilot districts • Development plans prepared with CSO involvement in each of the three pilot districts • Proposals from each pilot district presented at the governorate level development council meetings	To increase CSO participation in governance, particularly in the government's administrative and development councils at the local and national levels.		
• Best practice document disseminated through workshops on CSO transparency, accountability and good governance. • Monitoring mechanism established to ensure implementation of Code of Conduct and Ethics • Accreditation of HFY by MoSAL as a training center • Training of Trainers on local governance and participation • Three training workshops in governorates on participatory governance	To improve the accountability and transparency of CSOs, through Code of Ethics implementation and use of best practices.	To develop, adopt and institutionalize standards of transparency, accountability and good governance among local CSOs.	

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This evaluation is based on questions formulated to meet the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The questions and sub-questions are found in Annex 1 of this document.

(i) Relevance

The project was very relevant, in that it identified genuine needs at community level and in terms of civil society capacity building and took a two-pronged approach (work at national and local levels) that was appropriate to the situation in Yemen – and in line with UNDEF's guiding principles on democracy. Project design was adapted to the challenges of governance in Yemen, and the outcomes/results were defined in an appropriate manner. The only limitation to meeting the relevance criterion were related to somewhat over-ambitious objectives, and to a lesser extent to the challenges of working in a diversity of different local communities across the country. There was also a degree of disconnect in project design between the legislative ambition (to improve rules governing NGOs) and the objective of meeting humanitarian needs at local level. These issues are reviewed below.

It is clear that the project could not anticipate the near-failure of central government that Yemen has experienced since 2014. In particular, the work done in relation to the law on NGOs may not bear fruit as long as the national government's authority and legitimacy remain as shaky as they are at the time of writing (issue reviewed under the sustainability criterion). However the project strategy of working with local authorities and civil society stakeholders at community level was relevant to the reinforcement of local governance, irrespective of the national political situation.

The project was consistent with the broader strategy of the grantee, HFY, consisting in enhancing the capacity of its member organizations (and of the broader NGO movement) to meet key humanitarian needs of Yemeni citizens.[10] The project built on existing relationships developed by HFY and its member organizations with government authorities, MoSAL in particular[11], and with some local authorities. The project areas were selected on the basis of HFY member organizations' experience and because they represented a mix of urban and rural areas, with a large population. All these elements contributed to making the project relevant, by addressing needs in a way that could in principle be replicated elsewhere.

Strategy and stakeholders

The strategy underpinning the project design contributed to its relevance, but it also pointed to some of its limitations, as will be reviewed below. In essence the project addressed two sets of stakeholders – government and NGOs – at two different levels – national and local. It sought to foster two types of outcomes at local level:

- Dialogue between communities and local authorities; and
- Facilitation of urgent development/humanitarian activities.

[10] HFY gives the word "humanitarian" a broader meaning than traditional UN use, because it includes development work such as vocational education, the provision of schooling, health services, agricultural extension, etc.
[11] HFY and MADA also had links with the Ministry of Legal Affairs (MoLA).

In addition, the project sought to achieve outcomes internal to the NGO movement, by helping build NGO project management capacity and reinforce accountability and transparency within civil society. While these outcomes were all relevant, their achievement in four different locations including Sana'a was challenging, particularly in view of the ambitious objectives the project was meant to fulfill. Despite this limitation, the project's relevance lay essentially in its sound strategy, which the logical framework makes clear: to enhance NGOs' margin of action by seeking legal amendments while helping with organizational development, and at the same time achieve change on the ground through training and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Sound selection of partners: the role of MADA

MADA, HFY's partner in the project in Aden, had been working on the Law of Associations and Foundations in Yemen since 2007. It was informally consulted by HFY during the project design phase. MADA's role was to review the NGO law, hold local and national consultations and participate in developing the draft amendments based on the recommendations of the consultations. Its contribution went beyond Aden, and included local-level fora.

The purpose of the governorate level consultations was to present the law and the executive regulations and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of the national level consultations was to discuss amendments proposed during local consultations. MADA's input in the project went beyond its formal role. Its analysis of the NGO law was used in training sessions. Its networks in the target areas helped coordinate activities. MADA's legal experts reviewed and compiled the outputs of the local consultations. MADA also helped ensure the participation of women in the consultations.

In addition to analyzing the NGO law, MADA also helped review implementation regulations. Overall, MADA's contribution was essential in ensuring that the national conference on the NGO law was effective and appropriately followed up. MADA continues to collaborate with HFY beyond the project period.

The key weaknesses in the project design were the following:

- *Lack of a small grants scheme.* While the project strategy was sound, interviewees at local level regretted that there had been no provisions for a small grants process in the project design. Such a process might have indeed helped enhance the relevance of the multi-stakeholder dialogues at local level, and communities' buy-in in the project, as a result of the availability of (limited) funds to take immediate action. However, a small grants scheme would have increased the project's budget and probably caused an increase in project management costs.
- *Insufficient emphasis on addressing local executives.* The project document succinctly set out the key needs addressed by the project: to support the role of NGOs in post-2011 Yemen and to respond to the challenge of widespread poverty. However, the project document did not sufficiently analyze the challenges and opportunities related to local government structures in Yemen – in particular the difference in role between Local Councils (LCs) and Local Executive Offices (LEOs), which together form the Local Government Authorities (LGAs). LEOs are decision-making structures, which may access central government funds. By contrast LCs' role is merely consultative. In some governorates covered by the project, insufficient priority was given to engagement with the LEOs, and the focus instead was on engagement with LCs (and NGOs), which hampered its relevance since LEOs make ultimate decisions on community-level development projects.

- *Training.* A significant part of the project design involved training for national and local NGOs. The training sessions were planned to address a wide range of topics, from NGO legislation to monitoring local authorities. However, interviews with participants at local level suggest that the awareness raising seminars on local governance, participatory monitoring and monitoring tools were not sufficiently detailed to ensure that local NGOs could use the training to engage in participatory monitoring of LGAs. As in the case of engagement with local authorities, this was not the case everywhere, which suggests that the problem may have been one of implementation rather than design. However, the project document did lack detail about the nature of the training that was going to be offered, because there was no summary of the key points of training curricula. This made it more likely that discrepancies could appear at implementation stage between different locations.

On the other hand, the training sessions concerning the law on NGOs, designed and implemented in Sana'a, where widely seen as well thought-out and strategic. This highlights the fact that training skills and experience were largely concentrated in Sana'a. Indeed, the project's work on NGO legislation, including recommendations for future legislative amendments, can be considered to be one of the major strengths of the project design as a whole. The HFY project made good use of multi-stakeholder dialogue as a vehicle for change (see effectiveness section).

National Conference on the NGO law, Sana'a, January 2013. ©HFY

Planning and risk assessment

In general terms, the project was appropriately planned and structured, and clearly built on the expertise acquired by HFY and its partners. The expertise of HFY in the various project areas was also appropriate, and it had strong support from partners – in particular from MADA on matters concerning NGO legislation. MADA indicated to the evaluators that they had been invited by HFY to contribute to project design, which contributed to the proposal's relevance. However, the choice of two rural governorates for project activities (among the four), where HFY had little direct experience and needed to rely on the knowledge of partner organizations, made the project design riskier. The pilot districts in Hudaydah and Hadramawt governorates were relatively remote locations where formal government agencies carry less weight than traditional – mainly clan-based – power structures. The selection of these areas was a calculated risk, necessary to ensure that the project addressed areas that were representative of Yemen as a whole. However

a closer analysis, at project proposal stage, of the power structures in those districts would probably have reinforced the effectiveness and local impact of the project.

The project proposal included an appropriate risk assessment and mitigation strategy, based on a flexible approach in each project area and allowing for opportunities to be seized on a case-by-case basis. This proved sufficient, and the fact that the project was generally effective demonstrated both the appropriateness of this strategy and the capacity of HFY's partners to respond to changes at local level. However, the risk mitigation strategy could have been reinforced by the development of a more explicit advocacy strategy for the project, in particular in relation to amending the law on NGOs: many relevant recommendations were made in this respect, but the project design did not include a systematic follow-up of the recommendations with the relevant legislative and executive authorities.

Local consultation on the NGO law, Hudaydah, November 2013. ©HFY

(ii) Effectiveness

The project was generally effective in terms of achievement of the planned activities. It was also effective, though to a lesser degree, in terms of achievement of the expected results/outcomes. Its effectiveness in terms of overall objectives was also satisfactory overall, mainly because of the achievements at local level – the deliquescence of Yemen's governance at central level has, in effect, put the achievement of national-level objectives on hold. However some significant groundwork has been carried out in this respect, which may bear fruit if a functional government is re-established.

CSO-government partnership in development

According to the project document, the project included the design of development plans for three pilot districts, with the participation of local CSOs, and following a consultation process local authorities and civil society networks. The following steps were set out to achieve the development plans:

- Implementation of awareness-raising seminars on local governance, monitoring and evaluation, including field visits to pilot districts. The objective of these seminars was to familiarize CSO and LGA representatives with the principles of participatory monitoring, and to initiate a dialogue between these stakeholders about future development interventions.
- Planning and budgeting workshops bringing together CSOs and LCs to agree development priorities and eventually obtain an LC resolution formalizing the cooperation between LGAs and CSOs.
- Governorate level consultations for local CSOs and networks, aimed at discussing the future role of CSOs in the planning and budgeting of local development interventions and establishing representative CSO Committees in each of the target governorates, to act as intermediaries between CSOs and LCs.

Overall, the activities focusing on planning were effectively implemented: the various multi-stakeholder meetings were appropriate for these debates, as they were also for the discussion on the NGO law (see below). However, their effectiveness was hampered by some misperceptions:

- The evaluators noted that some interviewees did not recall the detail of awareness-raising seminars on local governance, participatory monitoring, monitoring tools; neither did they perceive the connection between planning and participatory monitoring. This suggests that the participants did not fully comprehend the contents of the awareness-raising sessions.
- With regards to governorate-level consultations, aimed *inter alia* at nominating a CSO Committee to represent local CSOs in interactions with the LGAs, feedback from interviews also suggested some misunderstandings:
    - Some interviewees did not clearly understand the role of the CSO Committees, even though they had been designated to sit on them.
    - In Hudaydah, the CSO Committee was perceived to be a government initiative, not a part of the HFY project. This misperception may have been fostered by the fact that the CSO Committees usually met in the presence of LC representatives, lending meetings an “official” appearance.

Initially, HFY had planned to ask each LC to adopt a resolution formalizing its dialogue and engagement with local CSOs, represented by the CSO Committee. In practice, however, a different approach was taken, in that agreement was reached at national level with the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA) to formalize CSOs engagement for the project duration. This may have led to participants misunderstanding HFY activities as being government-led.

Despite these changes and the slight weaknesses mentioned above, however, the development planning aspect of the project was generally very effective. The table below summarizes some examples of development activities undertaken in connection with this aspect of the project. The project helped facilitate the identification of these projects, and where possible their implementation and participatory monitoring. However, the project did not *fund* them: they relied on LGA and other sources for funding, and some identified projects did not take place due to

lack of funding or political will. This selection concerns only Aden and Hudaydah, and is representative of the type of development activities undertaken in the project.

Area	Project	Description	Remarks
Aden	Building additional 6 classrooms for a primary school	Children had to travel 3 km for attending the middle and high school. This was difficult, especially for girls. Therefore, additional classrooms were built in the existing primary school to upgrade it till std. 9. Benefitted 100 households	Budget: US$ 90,000 Completed
	Expanding Health Center	Constructing a pediatric unit, equipping it and providing a doctor. The project benefitted 300 households.	
	Water Supply System	The target area was a desert and a garbage dump. However, the communities living there were in need of water. There were three factories in the area. The planning team discussed the problem with the factories who agreed to supply water from the factories. This was a temporary solution.	The project was implemented. However, due to the economic situation, the factories were shut down and the water supply was cut.
	Building a new Health Center	The target area is a desert area. There are 300 households permanently living here. Approximately 300 nomadic families come to this area every year. This project benefitted from 300 – 600 households.	Budget: US$ 45,000 Completed
	Rehabilitation of household water and sanitation, electricity connections and installation of electricity meters	The target area is the natural water reservoir of Aden. The water supply to the governorate comes from this underground water. Many households built houses, the government refuses to provide services and wants them to move. There is no electricity, water supply or drainage. Any excavation to install septic tanks comes with the risk of the sewage mixing with the underground water. Providing a specialized drainage system which does not pose this risk is expensive and beyond the capacity of the government. Unsafe, illegal and non-metered electric connections also affected the supply in the neighborhood.	Planned but not implemented
Hudaydah	Water Supply	Digging a 200 m deep bore well, installing water pump, providing connections to households.	Budget: US$ 60,000 Pump and household connections not yet installed. LGA seeks further funding.
	Health Center	To be built from the ground up. No additional description provided by local partners.	Budget: US$ 110,000
	School	To be built from the ground up. No additional description provided by local partners.	Paperwork done, ready for tendering. LGAs seeking funding

CSO governance and transparency

In addition to development activities reviewed above, the other key objective of the project concerned CSO governance and capacity building. The activities concerning the Law of Associations and Foundations (NGO law) were very effective: numerous consultations were held at governorate levels, in which HFY and partners such as MADA raised awareness about the opportunities offered by the NGO law and initiated debates about possible amendments to the law and its implementing regulation. There were also awareness raising sessions on the Code of Conduct for NGOs, aimed at improving their governance. The local debates were followed by a national conference, at which recommendations from the NGOs were presented to representatives of MoSAL.

Needs assessment field trip, Boreqa near Aden, May 2013. ©HFY

A drafting committee was formed to draft the amendments to the NGO law. According to MADA, the drafting committee felt that some changes proposed by civil society would have negative consequences, than therefore rejected these proposals. Those proposals that were prioritized covered the following key points:

- *Registration & annual renewal of the registration:* It was agreed by all participants of the consultations that the current system of registration and renewal was giving space for manipulation of the CSOs and corruption based on political affiliation, origin, etc.. Also, there was no way of holding CSOs accountable and checking their credibility. Therefore, a new system was agreed upon.
- *Funding:* The current regulation asks the CSOs to get government approval to receive funding. This is affecting funding by international organisations as well as local funding. This was identified as excessive control. The CSOs felt that it was possible to inform the

government about the sources of funding, but that government approval for receiving funds was not required.

- *Discrepancies between law and executive regulations*. For example, regarding suspension or closure of an NGO, the current law says that the government cannot close an organisation unless they go to the court and get its approval. But the regulation allows the Minister of Social Affairs to close an organisation. It was recommended that this inconsistency be removed.
- *Logistics of NGO licencing*. Under current rules, NGO licences expire each year on 31 December. However, the renewal process depends on NGOs' relations with the authorities. If relations are good, renewal is granted fast. If not, renewal may be delayed by several months, preventing NGOs from getting funded in the interval.

MoSAL officials interviewed by the evaluators agreed that the NGO law was not responding to the need of the current times. The officials were members of the drafting committee that recommended the above amendments to the law. They noted, however, that they had been nominated by their Ministry to join the drafting committee in their capacity as experts, and not as officials with a government mandate. As a result, whatever their support for the amendment recommendations did not commit the government. The document was not submitted officially to MoSAL. This shows that the government was not formally a partner in the process of reviewing the NGO law, neither was it committed to act on the results.

Some interviewees' assessment of project activities

Several interviewees gave very positive assessments of the project (despite some criticism reviewed in the present chapter). Here are some quotes of stakeholders from Bureka district:

"LGAs do not conduct community consultations as a base for development plans. As a result, many projects are incorrectly identified. For example, in one remote area a school was constructed. However, there were only a few children going to the school. Also it was difficult to get teachers as the place was in a desert. The needs assessment conducted by the planning teams generated solid evidence for the needs. We realized its importance."
LC member

"We worked with other organizations before in planning, even with INGOs. However, most organizations focus only on the theory. The strength of this project was its practical orientation."
CSO representative

"After the Code of Conduct trainings, we conducted a SWOT analysis for our organization. Unclear structure and internal regulations and documentation came up as weaknesses, which we addressed. Now we are able to present ourselves to donors as a professional organization with proper systems in place. We have also started focusing on staff development. We have linked our staff to the USAID capacity building project.
CSO representative

When the representatives of MoSAL were interviewed in December 2014, they stated that the Ministry might work on amending the NGO law during 2015, carrying out another round of official consultations with NGOs. They stated that the work done under the HFY project would lay the foundation for the legislative revision process. In view of developments in Sana'a in early 2015, it

is likely that this review process will be stalled for a long time, if not indefinitely, until at least such time as a functioning central government is re-established.[12]

It must also be noted that the national dialogue conference also led to an unplanned positive outcome: NGOs and MoSAL agreed to establish a supreme council for NGO and government partnership, which would also liaise with the various NGO support projects implemented by other donors (World Bank, UNDP, EU, etc.). The government set up a preparatory committee with representatives of various ministries and NGOs. The legal expert seconded by MoSAL was one of the officials involved in the HFY project, and was therefore familiar with work done under the project. Unfortunately, the implementation of this council is also dependent on the re-establishment of a functioning central government in Yemen.

More than 50% of the participants in meetings and activities were women. A majority of the projects identified at the local level jointly by the CSOs & LGAs were addressing needs and priorities of women. These included projects related to mother and child health, girls' education, the provision of female teachers, etc.

The fact that some activities – notably training workshops in three additional governorates (Ta'iz, Haja and Sa'ada) resulting in over 25.00$ over spending – had to be cancelled for security reasons should not be considered to have diminished the effectiveness of the project, as this cancellation stemmed from conditions outside the control of HFY, and represented a risk that had been anticipated.

(iii) Efficiency

The project was efficient, in the sense that its varied and ambitious activities and results were largely achieved, in a difficult logistical and security context, and that it constituted good value for money. Project management was appropriate, though the project could probably have benefited from a larger management team able to liaise more regularly with partners at local level. Coordination with partners in Sana'a was good, and it is clear that HFY consulted them at every stage of the project. Though some partners felt that their recommendations were not implemented in full, all

Participatory planning meeting, Aden, August 2013. ©HFY

[12] In the past two years, some CSOs have submitted NGO law amendment to MoSAL However, the ministry had rejected them on the basis of the fact that they only represented the point of view of individual organizations. The proposals under the present project, having been adopted as a result of a consultative process, are more legitimate and therefore more likely to be taken into consideration.

those interviewed indicated a willingness to continue working with HFY in future. Similarly, the project team's relationship with ministry officials was fruitful and should lay the groundwork for future collaboration (when central government authority is restored). It must again be stressed that the few weaknesses in project management may largely be ascribed to difficult logistical conditions, which limited the capacity to coordinate between Sana'a and the governorates. In the context of Yemen in the project period, the quality of management was impressive.

Hadramawt Participatory Planning, May 2013. ©HFY

Implementation of project budget

The project had a total operating budget (excluding evaluation costs) of US$180,000. Spending covered the following broad areas, in accordance with original plans:

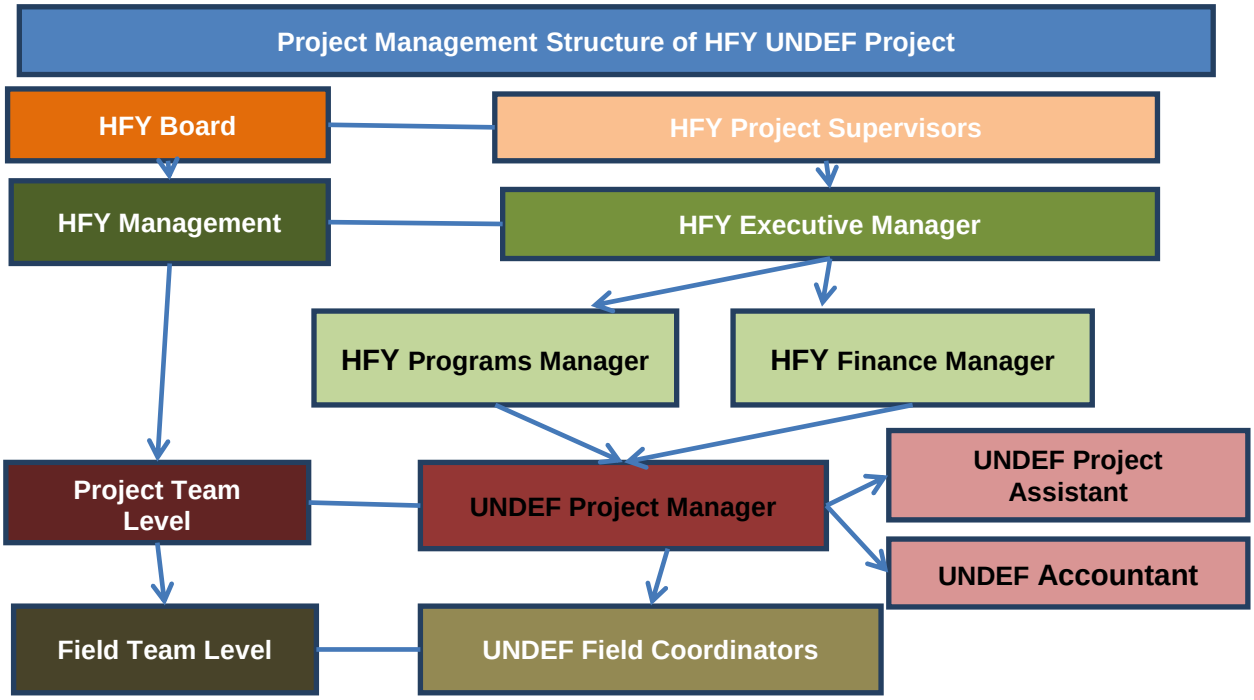
- Staffing (project management) and administration represented about 20% of the costs, which was a relatively modest proportion.
- Meeting and training costs represented the lion's share of the budget, which was logical in view of project design. Costs represented over 58% of the total costs (when HFY staff travel and accommodation costs are added to the cost of rooms, participants, etc.). The amount would have been even higher if separate provision had been made for trainers' fees, which appear to have been covered from these expenses.
- Advocacy and outreach costs represented about 13% of the total budget, which is moderate. It should be noted that this is the only item that was significantly underspent (spending was under US$14,000), largely because the price of producing the Code of Conduct had been over-estimated in the original budget. It is to be noted that no costs were budgeted for website management and broadcasts, which may have been a lost opportunity.
- Other costs, such as office equipment and contractual services, were kept to a minimum.

Overall, the utilization of funds closely reflected the original budget. As mentioned above, there were no provisions for small grants to local NGOs. HFY managers interviewed by the evaluators took the view that the project budget had not been sufficient, and stated that HFY had to provide resources from its core funds to ensure media coverage, project preparation, initial training sessions, and the salary costs related to the one-month extension of the project. The cost of management monitoring visits to governorates was also not included in the original budget.

Project management

Project management was appropriate. The Project Manager and Deputy were accountable to two HFY board members who had been appointed as Project Supervisors. The evaluators found internal HFY accountability mechanisms to function appropriately. Management was also pro-

active, in the sense for example that HFY used additional human resources of its own to ensure the completion of activities. The supervisors were representatives of reputable partner organizations. The HFY management team provided day-to-day management support to the Project Manager, as well as technical and financial management support. A field coordinator was appointed in each target governorate (two in Hudaydah). The coordinators were responsible for all the target districts in the governorate. Their role was to ensure coordination with LGAs and general coordination for activities, logistical support, implementation of activities and monitoring. Most of the field coordinators were women.



(iv) Impact

It is of course difficult to identify the project's impact in view of the radical change in the political context of Yemen during – and particularly since the end of – the project period. As mentioned in the above sections, some of the potential impact of the project may only become reality if a stable central government returns to the country. An additional caveat is, as always, that some aspects of impact probably also stem from factors other than the HFY project. However, some elements of impact may nevertheless be identified in relation to aspects of the project that are not directly related to the political situation. These have occurred particularly at local level, and included the following:

- Several local NGOs have acquired a better understanding of rules and regulations concerning NGOs and – crucially – of the governance principles set out in the Code of Conduct disseminated by the project. In some cases, this understanding has translated into revised governance practices within target NGOs, leading to more professional management (see box on this page).
- At local level, there is evidence that LGAs (particularly LCs) and NGOs have accepted the principle of working together and intend to do so beyond the project period. The main motive for this enhanced commitment to cooperation has been the effectiveness of the

consultative development planning process fostered by the project. For example, the Head of Mansuriya District LC told the evaluators that NGOs had played a key role in needs assessment:

> "Usually, when we develop district annual plans, we do not have adequate resources to conduct community consultations and needs identification. In most cases, we put up proxy estimates. Through the resources provided by this project, we were able to conduct a detailed needs assessment and take informed decisions. I think allocating resources for needs assessments is very important."

- In addition to cooperation between LGAs and NGOs, the project also, in at least one case, led to the establishment of a relevant CSO. This happened in Mansuriya, a district of Hudaydah, where Naima, a woman from the local community, was selected to represent civil society and participate in planning activities along with Hudaydah-based NGOs and members of the LC. As a result of the awareness-raising on the NGO law, project, a new CSO emerged and was registered, with support from Naima. As for Naima herself, she was appointed to head the newly-created Women Development Office in this district.

Impact at national level was of course negatively influenced by the difficult political context. As a result, the improvement in the quality of relations between HFY and ministries may have been short-lived (though contacts set up during the projects might be revived if and when the situation stabilizes). Nevertheless, additional elements of impact can be identified at national level, including:

- The dissemination of the use of the Code of Conduct. For example, the ICRC's Delegation in Yemen held a seminar on the Code of Conduct, comparing it with its own code.
- There was widespread recognition among ministry officials that the NGO legislation needed to be changed: this recognition stemmed directly from the wide range of stakeholders consulted by HFY and its partners, which lent legitimacy to the recommendations for change. The impact on the ministries was genuine, although the political upheavals prevented follow-up action.

Example of impact: organizational change within the Al-Atif Foundation

A representative of the Al-Atif Foundation, in Hudaydah, told the evaluators:

"We work in water projects. Through the Code of Conduct and Ethics trainings, we realized the importance of partnerships. We learnt that one organization cannot do everything and that sharing responsibilities leads to better results.

"Therefore, we signed partnership agreements with the LGAs and the communities we work with. According to the agreement, our Foundation will cover 60% of the total project cost, 30% will be LGA contribution and the beneficiary community will contribute 10%, for all future projects.

"We have implemented in this way 6 projects amounting to US$ 130,000. These included: building a water tank for a village (US$ 40,000); providing a pump for a village water project (US$ 15,000); increasing the depth of an existing bore well (US$ 10,000); installing a water supply system (US$ 30,000) and installing water tanks in different communities (US$ 35,000).

Despite the difficult context of Yemen, interviewees noted that the project could have achieved a greater impact if it had given greater priority to media coverage of its activities and key messages on NGO governance and participatory planning. The absence of a budget for web-based information dissemination or broadcast, and the failure of the project to include an

advocacy or public information strategy, were missed opportunities in this regard. Even modest plans could have reinforced the project's visibility.

(v) Sustainability

The HFY project was implemented on a relatively small budget, and was working with CSOs that were themselves suffering from tight human and financial resources. This made it particularly difficult to achieve sustainability. The political upheavals and climate of armed violence in the country constituted additional challenges to sustainability (and to development in Yemen in general). In this context, the project was able to achieve a degree of sustainability of some of its results and impacts, including the following elements:

Needs assessment visit, Aden area, May 2013. © HFY

- The Code of Conduct was disseminated to a wide range of organizations, at least some of which appear to have taken its recommendations on board. This is likely to contribute to on-going positive change in NGO governance, particularly if HFY continues to raise awareness about the Code and to support organizational development among NGOs.
- The recommendations for amendments to the NGO law and implementation regulations are reported to be sound and were seen as legitimate by officials familiar with them. These factors should ensure that they will be followed-up if and when central government functions are re-established, especially if HFY and its partners continue to advocate for these changes.
- LGA-NGO dialogue at local level in relation to development planning should continue to be practiced in the target areas, and could also be disseminated to other district by HFY and its partners. The experience of this project has shown that LCs were resilient and could take action on development, however limited, even if central government support is strongly curtailed. The dialogue with NGOs at local level is able in principle to reinforce the resilience of local governance.

(vi) UNDEF added value

HFY representatives noted that UNDEF's approach, encouraging grantees to develop partnerships and supporting dialogue with government authorities at national and local levels, was appropriate to conditions in Yemen.

In the post-project context on enhanced political violence, where development assistance is curtailed by government dysfunction, it is all the more important that civil society continues to be supported, particularly in rural areas where needs are great and which have a record of resilience in the face of central government weakness. The ability of UNDEF to reach out directly to civil society organizations constitutes a significant advantage in this context.

V. CONCLUSIONS

(i) The project was highly relevant to the post-2011 situation in Yemen. The analysis by HFY of the post-2011 situation was sound, and the project was an appropriate response to local communities' needs and to the need to improve NGO governance. Objectives were ambitious but well thought-out. Partner organizations were highly skilled, adding value to the project.

(ii) The project made a significant contribution to NGO governance practice. The Code of Conduct for NGOs was an excellent tool to disseminate principles of NGO governance and accountability, while also encouraging professionalization and organizational development. The work on the NGO legislation and regulations was conducive to improving NGOs' operating environment, and to improve dialogue between civil society and the government.

(iii) The project was beneficial to dialogue between government and NGOs, at local and national levels. The project design helped ensure that relevant authorities at appropriate levels were directly engaged and could achieve a degree of buy-in. This helped the project achieve local impact, and enhanced HFY's credibility with central government ministries.

(iv) The project was effectively supportive of the needs of women, and appropriately involved women in the management of activities. HFY and its partners were effective in ensuring that gender issues were considered at all stages of the project, from design to implementation. It was particularly helpful that women were involved in designing the project, and in leading its implementation at national and local levels. The needs of women and young girls were explicitly taken into account in activities such as development projects' planning and monitoring.

(v) Although training activities were generally effective, the project could have benefited from more expert input for awareness raising activities on participatory planning and project monitoring. The project relied significantly on training and awareness raising sessions. These were implemented by staff and volunteers of HFY and its partners, with little input from external professionals. Notwithstanding the quality of the work done, it would be appropriate in future to use more external professionals to design and deliver training sessions, with a view to enhancing their effectiveness and impact.

(vi) The project lacked an explicit advocacy and information dissemination strategy, which could have enhanced its visibility. Although the project included many elements that could be disseminated widely (Code of Conduct, recommendations on NGO law amendments, methodology for participatory planning and monitoring of

development activities, etc.) the project design did not include a clear strategy to disseminate information beyond targeted stakeholders, for example through broadcasts or on the Internet. This is all the more regrettable since HFY has gathered large amounts of pictures, videos, and printed materials. A formal strategy would have helped ensure that a wider range of civil society stakeholder, local authorities and citizens learn from the project's approach.

(vii) The project could have benefited from an additional small grants scheme to support CSOs. The project targeted among others a number of small local CSOs, which are institutionally fragile and often lack the means to implement their mission. By including in its proposal a small grants scheme (for example with grants as modest at US$ 1,000) HFY could have helped motivate these CSOs and enhance their credibility with communities through improved implementation capacity.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) HFY and its partners should continue working with district-level NGOs, particularly in rural areas. Regardless of political developments in Yemen, local authorities and local-level CSOs have demonstrated a degree of resilience, which should be further fostered. In this context it is important to support the professionalization and improved governance of local CSOs, while also supporting cooperation with local government.

(ii) HFY should continue to prioritize development planning that addresses women's needs and is managed by women. Part of the effectiveness of the project is related to its deliberate focus on women's needs, determined through appropriate participatory methodologies, which should continue to be implemented. The project also derived strength and legitimacy from its empowerment of women in the management of many activities, thus lending credibility to its message on gender equality.

(iii) HFY and its partners should address local executives to advocate for the systematic, formal involvement of local NGOs in the preparation of local development plans. The project was effective in its support for dialogue between local CSOs and government authorities. It is important to follow this up by entrenching this dialogue into formal policies and approaches, by advocating for them to be endorsed at national level and made formal at local level, at each stage of the development planning and implementation process.

(iv) Future HFY projects documents should more explicitly identify official stakeholders at national and local levels, particularly to distinguish between executive and consultative institutions. Much of the institutional dialogues implemented in the course of the project took place with representatives of consultative bodies such as Local Councils, or with officials acting in a personal capacity or as experts, but not with a formal mandate from their ministry. While this situation may be unavoidable in some cases, it is important for HFY and its partners to insist, whenever possible, that institutions should engage in formal dialogue, involving where appropriate policy and legislative follow-up.

(v) Future HFY projects documents should include explicit advocacy/information dissemination strategies, as well as an exit strategy. Appropriate strategies in these respects can help enhance the visibility and impact of projects. They can also help enhance sustainability by ensuring (through an adequate exit strategy) that stakeholders take relevant follow-up measures after projects end.

(vi) UNDEF should consider whether to encourage grantees to implement small grants processes as part of their project proposals. Nothing in the current guidance given to grantees prevents them from establishing small-scale sub-grants, it being understood that ultimate accountability for the good use of the sub-grants remains with the direct

UNDEF grantees. There are pros and cons to encouraging sub-grants: on the positive side, small grants (as small as US$ 1,000) may help local CSOs gain credibility and capacity; on the negative side, grantees must have appropriate monitoring capacity, which may increase project transaction costs. UNDEF should consider lessons from a range of previous projects in this respect, to see whether it should formally encourage sub-grants – and if so, what modalities it should recommend for their implementation.

VII. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF‟ s comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Project documents UDF-YEM-10-378:

- Project Document
- Mid-Term Report
- Milestone Verification Mission Reports
- Final Narrative Report
- Financial Utilization Reports
- Photographs and video provided by HFY

External Sources

- Crisis Group: *Yemen: Enduring Conflicts, Threatened Transition*, July 2012.
- Crisis Group: *The Huthis: from Saada to Sanaa*, June 2014.
- Chatham House: *Yemen – Corruption, Capital Flight and Global Drivers of Conflict*, September 2013.
- Amnesty International: annual report entries on Yemen for 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- World Bank report: *Yemen Civil Society Organizations in Transition*, June 2013.
- Partners for Democratic Change International (www.pdci-network.org): *Yemen Community-Based Conflict Mitigation Program*, July 2012.

ANNEX 3: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

NB: asterisks denote interviews conducted by telephone with project stakeholders in areas not visited by the evaluators

December 2014	
Sana'a (21-23 December)	
Noha Yehia Al Eryani	Executive Manager, HFY
Ahmed Zaid	Board Member for Finance, HFY
Mohammed Al-Habbabi	Finance Manager, HFY
Sultana Al-Giham	Executive Manager, MADA
Muna Nashwan	Project Coordinator, MADA
Salwa Mukhred	Deputy Minister and Advisor to Minister, MoLA
Nadia Al-Hashdee	General Director, Advisor in legal monitoring
Abdul Kadir Mohammad Al-Halili	General Director of Civil Society, MoSAL
London* (17 December)	
Tareq Bakri	Regional Coordinator, The Humanitarian Forum, UK
February 2015	
Hudaydah* (11-14 February)	
Ahmed	CSO representative
Saeed Musa Hakami	Head of the LC, Mansuriya District
Naima	Community representative
Ala Omar Usuf	Al-Atif Foundation
Aden* (11 – 12 February)	
Mona Hassan Al-Rayasi	Al-Firdos, Bureka district
Ali Saeed Haitam	LC member, Bureka district
Arif Kassim	CSSW, Aden
Hadramawt* (13 – 15 February)	
Salem Al-Outesh	CSO representative, Ghail Bawazir
Aneesa Hassan Momen	Yemeni Women's Union

ANNEX 4: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil society organization
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HFY	Humanitarian Forum Yemen
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
LC	Local Council
LEO	Local Executive Office
LGA	Local Government Authorities
MADA	Yemeni Legal Foundation
MoLA	Ministry of Legal Affairs
MoSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development