



**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**

EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-ZIM-11-432 – Promoting Human Rights through Providing Access to Information for
Marginalized Women in Zimbabwe**

Date: 17 November 2015

Acknowledgements

The evaluators would like to thank the management and staff of the Media Centre in Harare for their support in organizing the evaluation. Media Centre Director Earnest Mudzengi and Program Officer Linda Nyama Mujuru provided the evaluators with a wealth of documentation; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Talent Tapera and Finance and Administration Officer Rumbidzai Machingura also provided substantial support. The evaluators are also grateful to the other stakeholders they met or interviewed, and particularly to the women beneficiaries in Chinhoyi and Epworth who attended meetings.

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 Belinda Musanhu. Aurélie Ferreira coordinated the evaluation. Landis MacKellar and Aurélie Ferreira provided editorial and methodological advice and quality assurance. Eric Tourrés was Project Director at Transtec.



Map of Zimbabwe ©UN – The evaluators visited Chinhoyi, about 120km northwest of Harare, and met women from Epworth, near Harare. Project activities took place in all ten provinces.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Project data

This report is the evaluation of the project “Promoting human rights through providing access to information for marginalized women in Zimbabwe”, implemented from May 2013 to April 2015 inclusive by the Zimbabwean non-governmental organization Media Centre, together with four implementing partners. The project budget was US\$202,500. According to the project document, its expected outcomes were to:

- “Increase and improve gender-sensitive media coverage of issues affecting women in marginalized communities, in traditional/mainstream media;
- “Create tools and utilize non-traditional media to disseminate and exchange information;
- “Increase capacity of marginalized women in using social media to access human rights information and freely express themselves on political, social, economic and cultural issues;
- “Increase marginalized women’s participation in policy dialogues and decision-making in target communities.”

The project was implemented in 10 communities, spread around the country, and was designed to benefit over 7,000 women through activities including training of citizens journalists, and professional journalists in gender-sensitive reporting; production of phone-in radio programs; mentoring of student journalists; and use of Internet-based platforms for sharing information.

(ii) Evaluation findings

The project was **relevant** in that it was based on a good analysis of the gender inequalities faced by marginalized women in relation to access to information, awareness of their rights and exercise of political participation. Nevertheless, the project’s relevance was marred by its overambitious design and a lack of prioritization among its various objectives and approaches.

The project design responded to the identified needs with a multi-pronged strategy. It had a triple development objective and four outcomes, to be achieved through eleven different activities, ranging from radio broadcasts to training workshops and campaigns. While this design was generally relevant to the needs of marginalized women, it lacked focus and prioritization.

With regards to the situation of women in the media, the project design also lacked clarity of purpose and prioritization: it was not clear whether the Media Centre’s intention was to improve gender sensitivity in reporting, to give a bigger role to women in the media, or to encourage alternative, more gender-sensitive channels of information.

The Media Centre proposal was presented as a partnership with three other NGOs and a private commercial radio station. The partners clearly brought added value to the proposal, because they had long-standing experience working with women in the project areas. However, the evaluators found that the partners had been insufficiently involved in the design of the project, and that they were presented with a set of activities to implement but had had little say in defining the project’s strategy.

The project was generally **effective**, in the sense that three of its four anticipated outcomes were achieved, and that significant steps were taken towards achieving the fourth. Nevertheless, there were some concerns relating to effectiveness:

- Not all the outcomes were directly related to the achievement of the development objectives;
- Some of the indicators related much more to activities than to outcomes, and were therefore inadequate for the purpose of assessing the achievement of outcomes;
- Some of the activities bore little relevance to the achievement of outcomes;
- The capacity-building activities lacked appropriate follow-up: skill development would have been more effective if some activities could have been repeated.

The project activities were implemented, to a very large extent, as planned. Some of the activities (internships, media monitoring in particular), though effectively implemented, were not directly relevant to the needs of marginalized women. In other cases (advocacy actions, video conferences) the activities were also effectively implemented but lacked follow-up. Nevertheless, the bulk of the activities were implemented in an effective and successful manner.

The Media Centre should have exercised more rigor in formulating both the outcomes and the indicators – making sure in particular that the indicators focus on outcomes rather than activities. It remains, however, that the project largely achieved the range of activities and outcomes it set out to achieve, which is no mean feat in view of the complex logistical situation in Zimbabwe. In hindsight, however, it appears that the standard of achievement of the desired outcomes could have been higher if activities had been better targeted to meeting the needs of marginalized women.

The project was broadly **efficient**, both in terms of value for money and use of funds, and in terms of project management. Spending on the project broadly followed the budget outlined in the project document, though some relatively minor changes were made. The main single heading of the budget was for meetings and training sessions (61% of the budget). Some of the activities, as mentioned above, were of relatively little relevance to the needs of marginalized women (internships, media monitoring).

While project management was generally of a good standards in terms of accountability to UNDEF and responsiveness to changing circumstances at local level, the partner NGOs were not adequately involved in the management of the project: each dealt separately with the Media Centre, and there was little collegiality in the management approach.

Among the elements of **impact** that can be identified, the key one must be the very palpable boost that the training has achieved in terms of self-confidence among the women who participated in training. The capacities of citizen journalists have also been substantially improved, and some women have clearly acquired skills that enhanced their notoriety at local level and continued to spur their posting of information on social networks. Nevertheless, the impact of the project was hampered by its design: too many activities were carried out, some of which lacked relevance to the desired outcomes: this also reduced their impact.

The key element of the project **sustainability** related to the use of social media. The project has ensured that a critical mass of women in the 10 communities across the country have acquired skills necessary to use social media, and the evaluators could see that the WhatsApp group

created as part of the project continued to be active at the time of the evaluation. The (relatively minor) task of moderating this group continued to be undertaken by Media Centre staff.

It is important to note that the project benefited from the perceived neutrality of **UNDEF** as a UN agency donor. In the sensitive context of Zimbabwe in relation to the media, the Media Centre managers noted that the fact that the project was funded by a UN agency helped local authority accept it and even buy into it.

(iii) Conclusions

- ***The project was relevant.***
- ***The project design was over-ambitious, and included too many disparate activities.***
- ***The project was broadly in meeting its anticipated outcomes, though not all of those were directly relevant to the situation of marginalized women.***
- ***The project design included several indicators, but these did not always focus on assessing project outcomes.***
- ***The project was efficient and represented good value.***
- ***Project management was appropriate in terms of accountability to UNDEF, but partner NGOs were marginalized.***
- ***The project achieved some elements of impact, particularly on the self-confidence of rural women in relation to political debates.***
- ***The training on social networks enhanced the project's sustainability.***
- ***The project benefited from UNDEF's perception as a neutral donor.***

(iv) Recommendations

- ***The Media Centre should make more rigorous use of the denomination "marginalized women".***
- ***When supporting the emergence of citizen journalists, the Media Centre should ensure that it takes a strategic approach.***
- ***The Media Centre should give further consideration to ways it can help enhance gender sensitivity in mainstream media reports.***
- ***Future Media Centre projects should be more focused.***
- ***The Media Centre should consider developing an "app" better tailored to sharing and disseminating news on women's rights in Zimbabwe.***
- ***In case of project proposals submitted by groups of NGOs, UNDEF should consider requiring a clear commitment, as proposal stage, to collegial project management.***

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

This report is the evaluation of the project “Promoting human rights through providing access to information for marginalized women in Zimbabwe”, implemented from May 2013 to April 2015 inclusive by the Zimbabwean non-governmental organization (NGO) Media Centre (MC), in partnership with three other NGOs and a radio station.¹ The project budget was US\$225,000, of which US\$ 22,500 was retained by UNDEF for evaluation and monitoring purposes. According to the project document, its objective was “to promote access to information for women living in Zimbabwe’s marginalized communities through alternative broadcasting and printed media as well as social media (blogs, etc.) and community-based policy dialogues on topical issues”. The project’s expected outcomes were to:

- “Increase and improve gender-sensitive media coverage of issues affecting women in marginalized communities, in traditional/mainstream media;
- “Create tools and utilize non-traditional media to disseminate and exchange information;
- “Increase capacity of marginalized women in using social media to access human rights information and freely express themselves on political, social, economic and cultural issues;
- “Increase marginalized women’s participation in policy dialogues and decision-making in target communities.”

The project was implemented in 10 communities, spread around the country, and was designed to benefit over 7,000 women through activities including training of citizens journalists, and professional journalists in gender-sensitive reporting; production of phone-in radio programs; mentoring of student journalists; and use of Internet-based platforms for sharing information.

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”.²

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation started in July 2015 with fieldwork in Zimbabwe from 21 to 25 September 2015 inclusive.³ An international expert and a national expert conducted the evaluation. 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.

¹ These were: The Women’s Trust; Zimbabwe Young Women Network for Peace Building; and Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU). The radio station – a business company – was Radio Voice of the People.

² See: Operational Manual for UNDEF-Funded Project Evaluations, page 6.

³ The fieldwork was originally scheduled for August 2015, but one of the consultants had to be replaced for health reasons, hence a delay.

The evaluators reviewed the standard project documentation: initial project document, mid-term and final narrative reports, milestones reports, etc. (see list of documents annexed to this report). The evaluators also reviewed documentation produced by the project: samples of news articles, workshop program, and radio program recordings. They also considered relevant reports by other organizations monitoring the situation of women in Zimbabwe.

UNDEF specifically requested the evaluators to verify the achievement of project outcomes by assessing the extent to which outcome indicators were fulfilled. As a result of the initial desk study of project documentation (Launch Note UDF-ZIM-11-432, July 2015), the evaluators also identified the following key issues requiring closer scrutiny:

- **Relevance of the strategy** of concentrating on media coverage of women's specific issues, rather than gender-sensitive reporting of news and current affairs.
- **Profile of the participating women** and in particular whether access to mobile phones and on-line access was determinant and restrictive in the selection of participants.
- **Consideration of protection of participants.** The project document noted that protection of participants was a concern, partly because people other than participants could have access to web-based discussions.
- **Consideration of protection of reporters.** In an environment of political intimidation, patriarchy and violence against women reporters are at risk.
- **Advisability of promoting on-line reporting of abuse.** The reporting of abuse is a complex matter; public reporting may have serious legal consequences.
- **Consideration of the human rights of alleged perpetrators of abuse.** The evaluation team raised this issue with the grantee and partners in order to understand the approach taken.
- **Numbers.** The evaluation team checked the accuracy of numbers quoted in the final report.

The evaluators met with a wide range of stakeholders⁴ during their visit:

- Media Centre Director and staff, as well as the chairperson of the Media Centre board;
- Representatives of UN agencies working on women's issues (UNDP, UNWomen);
- Professional and "citizen" journalists;
- Women from two of the communities where project activities took place: Epworth, near Harare, and Chinhoyi, a provincial capital 120km northwest of Harare;
- Representatives of project partners WIPSU, Women's Trust and Radio Voice of the People;
- Trainers and IT consultants involved in project activities.

A list of people interviewed is annexed to this report. Despite the time limitations, the evaluators were able to form a well-rounded view of the project.

(iii) Development context

Access to information is key to citizens securing their rights as it enables them to obtain the information needed in order to exercise rights such as education, health and sanitation. Knowing their rights emboldens and empowers citizens to demand transparency and accountability from

⁴ In addition to the stakeholders listed here and in the annex, the evaluators also sought to interview local politicians involved in community dialogues. Unfortunately none of those contacted returned phone calls or accepted interviews.

office holders and policy makers and improve service delivery by exposing corrupt practices and or inefficiency: an informed citizen is an empowered citizen. However, for this to be possible, there is a need to collect information from the communities and for this information to be accessible to the public and to the relevant authorities and policy makers. Access to information is in itself a right and not a privilege.

Zimbabwean citizens have access to information from various sources including community meetings and other local or social networks, the mainstream media (newspapers, radio and television), as well as social media and other Internet-based sources. However access to information in Zimbabwe is compromised by repressive legislation and flawed media practices. Whilst the constitution guarantees freedom of the media and access to information for all citizens⁵, some laws⁶ compromise the exercise of these rights. For example the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which provides the state with the power to register journalists and media houses, has been applied in a partisan manner to restrict media outlets perceived as supporting the political opposition.

Additionally the state has interfered in the public media as the Minister of Information controls the editorial policy of publicly owned media entities such as the public broadcaster and publicly owned newspapers. There are a number of newspapers, state- and privately-owned. However due to political polarization reporting tends to be politically biased and there is a lack of reliable non-partisan citizen focused information. There is less variety in the electronic media as there is only one national TV station, which is state-owned. There are a number of national radio stations owned by the state broadcaster and two that are privately owned, but with ties to the state. Although there is information coming from some community radios and from stations based outside the country, there is still little citizen generated and citizen focused news.

In Zimbabwe, women are still the primary care givers in most households and therefore they are often the ones that are most affected by service delivery issues. They are also the ones who may have to deal with issue that may be underreported such as rape, child marriages and so on. Due to their generally lower economic status⁷ and the cost of media products such as newspapers, women are the ones that may not have access to information and they are more likely to remain marginalized in terms of knowledge. Even where information is received through community meetings, the male-dominated community leadership structures, cultural expectations and lack of confidence amongst other issues, mean that women either do not participate at all or do not participate freely in meetings. Thus they do not often speak out about issues that affect them in community settings and may need a safe place to exercise their right to speak out about such issues.

Due to in part to institutionalized gender disparities and sexism in the media⁸, women (who make up 52% of the population) are not viewed as news sources or only seen as sources of trivial or localized issues and as secondary subjects of the news⁹. This perpetuates gender stereotypes and information disparities. The fact that national news reporting tends to be urban-centric further marginalizes rural women.

⁵ See: sections 61 and 62 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

⁶ These include the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act; the Broadcasting Services Act; the Official Secrets Act; and the Interception of Communications Act.

⁷ See: Gender Inequality Index 2015.

⁸ See: Her Media, Her Voice, Her Society – Media Centre 2015.

⁹ See: Her Media, Her Voice, Her Society – Media Centre 2015.

The advent of new information technologies such as computers and cellphones has broadened access to information for many. These devices increase accessibility of information, and because they are very personal gadgets help to remove the fear and lack of confidence that some groups such as women, may have in terms of sharing information and in terms of accessing the same information in public settings. The NITs also facilitate the growth of citizen journalism so that ordinary citizens, men and women alike can share information stories and experiences from their communities faster and in an easier way than before. This promotes independent and community based generation of information

Zimbabwe's ten provinces cover the range of spatial development and settlement patterns. There are urban, semi-urban and rural areas and subdivisions within each of these three areas. Social and economical marginalization can be found in all areas whether they are urban or rural. There is also marginalization in terms of information. Given that that the state-controlled media, particularly radio, still has more reach than private media in the rural areas, access to independent sources of information in rural areas is lower than it is in urban areas.

The Media Centre

The Media Centre was formed in 2010 and set itself the mission of working with media and civil society to “enhance professional journalism, support increased access to information and facilitate progressive public debate”. Its vision is of an “open and accessible media for an open society”. Amongst its functions, the Media Centre conducts training of journalists, citizen journalists and media students and provides a platform of debate on policy issues and citizen journalism in local communities through the use of information communication technology amongst other issues. Most importantly with regard to this project, the Media Centre assists marginalized communities in accessing information and telling their stories through electronic media, social media and other platforms.



March by project participants, International Women's Day 2015, Epworth. ©Media Centre

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

i. Project strategy and approach

Strategy

In essence, the project had a multi-pronged strategy to achieve its objective of enhancing access to information for marginalized women:

- The project sought to address the conventional media (print and electronic) by raising awareness of the need to improve coverage of marginalized women, to give a voice to women, and more generally to report in a more gender-sensitive manner.
- The project also sought to develop Internet-based information exchange to complement the range of information sources available to marginalized women. This approach was not only aimed at creating a new channel of information and knowledge-sharing, it also sought to provide more relevant contents, through a focus on the concerns of marginalized women. It also sought to ensure that more women play a role in the media as reporters.
- The project also had a strategic element of training: some of it was aimed at journalists (and editors) to raise awareness of gender equity and balance in reporting, and some was aimed at women in the target communities, to encourage the emergence of a group of “citizen journalists” – women who would report about events and issues at local level, in accordance with basic reporting standards of impartiality.
- Finally, the project initiated a series of public dialogue sessions bringing together groups of women with local office-holders – elected officials, traditional leaders, local government functionaries. The aim of these meetings were to enhance accountability of local government and empower community women by creating a setting in which they could debate with otherwise frequently distant officials.

This strategy was consistent with the analysis developed in the project document, and with the development context reviewed above. The key assumptions of the strategy were the following:

- That gender sensitivity in media reporting could be achieved by raising journalists and editors’ awareness of the situation of women and of the scope for reporting about women as agents of change.

This assumption was largely borne out in practice, as will be discussed in the next chapter. However, the project did not necessarily distinguish clearly between gender-sensitive reporting and reporting on issues perceived as affecting women predominantly. It was also assumed that the project could influence women’s role in the media, an assumption that proved over-ambitious.

- That the increasing availability of mobile phones and networks, including of smartphones, had the potential to allow rural women access to information through this medium, hence reducing their dependence on radio and other traditional media.

This assumption was very much justified, and practice exceeded the original assumptions in the sense that more women than expected had access to smartphones, and that the initial text-based (SMS) platform was overtaken by the widespread use of the WhatsApp app.

- That women in target communities would gain in empowerment by being able to report about issues of concern at local level, and would therefore strengthen their role as agent of change, including by demanding more accountability from government and elected officials.

This assumption too was justified, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Indeed, the project's contribution to self-confidence among targeted women is one of its key impacts.

The project benefited from the fact that following the general election of July 2013 tensions in the country – which routinely become greater in pre-election periods – were relatively low by historical standards. This meant that, for most of the project's two-year period, NGOs and the media could operate with fewer threats of violence than in the recent past – even though significant risks remained, as demonstrated by newspaper closures and journalists' arrests during the period.¹⁰

Approach

The project document didn't define what was meant by "marginalized women", but its situation analysis referred to women living in rural and peri-urban areas. The project document stated that its aim was to promote access to human rights information for women in marginalized communities, to enhance their freedom of expression.

The approach taken by the project to achieve this aim was to:

- Produce and broadcast a set of radio programs raising awareness of human rights among women in target areas;
- Hold training workshops on gender-sensitive reporting for journalists, and provide them with additional mentoring, while also providing internships to four student journalists;
- Establish an SMS platform and a website for women to share information and views on human rights, and report on human rights abuses;
- Monitor the output of the media to assess the level of coverage of issues affecting marginalized communities;
- Establish radio listening clubs;
- Train women in marginalized communities in the use of social media;
- Support advocacy campaigns by women in target areas;
- Hold policy roundtables at local level bringing marginalized women together with policy makers, community leaders, civil society and business leaders; and
- Hold video conferences linking groups of marginalized women and representatives of international NGOs and donors.

The project document identified four outcomes (see table below) and eight key indicators of success that were to be used to assess the achievement of the outcomes. These will be reviewed in the next chapter.

¹⁰ Conditions remain far from relaxed. For example, as the evaluators were planning in September 2015 to visit Epworth, a community near Harare, to meet women who had taken part in the project, the local police demanded to know the names of each person the evaluators wished to meet. To avoid having to provide this information, the evaluators invited the women to a meeting in central Harare.

ii. Logical framework

The framework below aims to capture the project logic. In view of the focus placed by the project document on outcomes and indicators, these are set out in separate columns. There were different formulations of the long-term development objective in the project document: the text given in the right-hand column attempts to cover all aspects of the various formulations. The activities should not necessarily be seen as serving only one outcome each.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Key indicators (target)	Development Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production and broadcasting of 10 (originally 20, but number reduced with UNDEF agreement) radio programs promoting the enjoyment of human rights and free expression by women in marginalized communities. Two training workshops on gender-sensitive reporting for 30 journalists and mentoring of the journalists in writing gender-sensitive stories on issues affecting women in marginalized communities. Internships for 4 student journalists. SMS platform for women in marginalized communities and dissemination of messages. Establishment of Women Speak website, as an alternative online media platform including database on human rights abuses. Media monitoring reports. Establishment of 10 women's radio listening clubs. Twenty one-day training workshops for marginalized women in the use of social media. Ten advocacy action campaigns by women in marginalized communities. Twenty policy roundtables interfacing representatives of women in marginalized communities and policy makers, community leaders, civil society and business Eight video conferences between women in marginalized communities with the international community. 	<p>To increase and improve gender-sensitive coverage, in traditional and mainstream media, of issues affecting women in marginalized communities.</p> <p>To create tools and utilize non-traditional media to disseminate and exchange information.</p> <p>To increase the capacity of marginalized women to use social media to disseminate and exchange information.</p> <p>To increase marginalized women's participation in policy dialogues and decision-making in target communities.</p>	<p>Number of listeners of each radio program (target: 30,000)</p> <p>Number of stories produced by trained journalists (target: 100)</p> <p>Number of women receiving the SMS number every quarter (target: 2,000)</p> <p>Number of human rights abuses reported from women on the Women Speak website (target: 200)</p> <p>Number of women participating in radio listeners club (target: 650)</p> <p>Percentage of trained women on social media able to use the platform within Women Speak website (target: 80%)</p> <p>Number of advocacy action campaigns conducted by participating women (target: 10 [1 per province])</p> <p>Number of women participants in the 20 roundtable discussions (target: 1,000 women)</p>	<p>To provide women in project areas with knowledge and skills that will enable them to engage in peaceful, safe and effective human rights activism.</p> <p>To promote access to information for women living in Zimbabwe's marginalized communities.</p> <p>To address inequalities and [political] participation gaps among women as a result of unequal access to information.</p>

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 relevant in that it was based on a good analysis of the gender inequalities faced by marginalized women in relation to access to information, awareness of their rights and exercise of political participation. Nevertheless, the project's relevance was marred by its overambitious design and a lack of prioritization among its various objectives and approaches.

Response to needs

The sources interviewed by the evaluators, as well as independent reports on the situation of the media in Zimbabwe, and on the situation of women in the media, confirmed that the project was based on a sound analysis: the media are highly controlled and have difficulty addressing controversial issues and contributing to policy debates. This is even more the case in relation to gender issues, partly because of the lack of awareness on the part of journalists and editors.

There was also ample evidence that the situation of women in the media remains problematic, both in terms of women's role in media houses (number of women journalists and editors, and also differences in the prominence, role and visibility of women journalists compared to male colleagues) and in terms of the lack of gender-sensitivity of media contents: not just that they give little coverage to "women's issues" – they also fail to give fair representation to women as interviewees and sources of information more generally, irrespective of their experience and expertise.

The marginalization faced by women was clearly set out in the project documents, particularly in relation to rural women. The impact of their marginalization on their exercise of their rights was also appropriately described. The relevance of the project was enhanced by the fact that it also sought to address these issues.

All these elements confirm that the Media Centre had correctly identified needs to be addressed in relation to gender sensitivity in the media, and in relation to marginalized women's access to information and exercise of their rights. However, the needs identification was weakened by the fact that the project document never clearly explained what was meant by "marginalized women". The document did suggest that this notion concerned women living in suburban or rural locations, but did not elaborate on this point. As a result, it could be inferred that virtually all women living outside urban centers were potentially belonged to that group, but the document did not provide evidence or additional analysis. (In practice, as will be seen below, the project addressed women who were relatively educated and had a modicum of disposable income to spend on a mobile phone and data use. Most of the women who participated in training activities were existing members of the project partner organizations. They were not among the "most" marginalized in their communities.)

The project document also suggested that, once trained on reporting techniques and the use of social media, marginalized women would focus on reporting human rights abuses at local level.

This was not the case – there were reports of abuses (early marriages, land issues, etc.) but the majority of posts were unrelated to human rights. This was neither surprising nor an indication of the project lacking effectiveness. However, the needs analysis should have picked up on this point.

The third concern related to needs identification was that the project document did not explicitly prioritize the identified needs from the point of view of marginalized women. As a result, despite the sound analysis highlighted above, the project's relevance was hampered by a tendency to spread activities too thinly across a broad range of issues. The project was trying to address many different problems, all genuine concerns, but ones that could not *all* be addressed effectively on the project's financial resources. The lack of prioritization among the issues of concern led to a design in which many activities were planned, not all of which were directly relevant to the situation of marginalized women. This point is further discussed below.

Project design

The project design responded to the identified needs with a multi-pronged strategy. As indicated in the logical framework table in the previous chapter, the project effectively had a triple development objective, summarized below:

- To enhance the knowledge and skills of marginalized women;
- To promote access to information by marginalized women;
- To address unequal political participation stemming from lack of information.

To fulfill this triple objective, the project sought to achieve four outcomes:

- To enhance gender-sensitive reporting in mainstream media;
- To provide marginalized women with alternative sources of information;
- To train marginalized women in the use of social media;
- To support the participation of marginalized women in policy dialogues

These outcomes were to be achieved through eleven different activities, ranging from radio broadcasts to training workshops and campaigns. While this design was generally relevant to

Views of some community women

M., Epworth:

The project gave us women confidence to petition the authorities, for example to ask them to facilitate our livelihood in the informal sector [cross-border trading].

Women gained in self-esteem. Men also recognized that we're important and were glad we questioned politicians. I became better known in the community, this gave me confidence. The workshops helped me gain the courage to talk directly to my local counselor

J, Chinhoyi:

Politicians are quick to consider you an opponent. In some areas, you know you shouldn't go wearing a Media Centre or UNDEF T-shirt. [Another woman] was observing an electoral incident, people came up to her and asked her what she was up to. She reported the incident.

F., Chinhoyi:

It can be a bit suspicious if you take part in a radio listening group. Getting together around a radio seems suspicious; some women abstain from taking part because of the risk. People want to be sure that the local headman approves.

D., Chinhoyi journalist (male):

I grew up in a rural area, witnessed the abuse of women, that went unreported. I am digging into issues that disempower women. But political leaders do not want me to publicize issues affecting women. So I use social media to disseminate stories, hiding the names of victims.

the needs of marginalized women, it lacked focus and prioritization. For example, Media Centre staff knew full well (as interviews with them demonstrated) that marginalized women had virtually no access to the printed press or TV, since newspapers are relatively expensive and are distributed almost exclusively in urban centers, and TV coverage in Zimbabwe is reduced. As a result, it is questionable whether improving the gender sensitivity of such media was of significant benefit to marginalized women. It might have made more sense to focus the gender-sensitivity training on radio journalists, for example. Similarly, it is difficult to see how an activity such as internships for four students journalists was likely to help achieve any of the project's desired outcomes. A similar question arises concerning the media monitoring activity.

With regards to the situation of women in the media, the project design also lacked clarity of purpose and prioritization: it was not clear whether the Media Centre's intention was to improve gender sensitivity in reporting, to give a bigger role to women in the media, or to encourage alternative, more gender-sensitive channels of information. In practice, the project attempted to do all of these things. It would have been more relevant, had it focused more clearly on only some of these issues, prioritizing the needs of women in suburban and rural areas.

The evaluators also found that, although the Media Centre is a very credible organization, it did not fully reflect on the strategic implications of supporting citizen journalists or bloggers. In at least some locations, professional journalists perceived citizen journalists as competitors, and there were reciprocal accusations of plagiarism and misuse of images, pitting bloggers/citizen journalists against professional journalists. The concerns expressed on both sides were made sharpened by the very precarious economic situation of many journalists, professional and citizen alike.



Social media training, Mutoko, August 2014. ©Media Centre

Partnerships

The Media Centre proposal was presented as a partnership with three other NGOs and a private commercial radio station. The radio station was not involved in the project proposal, which was understandable in the sense that the role of the station was limited to advising on the production, and above all to broadcasting, the proposed radio programs. The three NGO partners were reputable organizations, and the skills and expertise of the partner representatives interviewed by the evaluators were impressive. All of them are well known in the women's movement: for example, most had been involved in activities supported by UNWomen, which also provided positive feedback about the partners.

The partners clearly brought added value to the proposal, because they had long-standing experience working with women in the project areas. Indeed, most of the project beneficiaries interviewed by the evaluators were members or otherwise associated with the partner NGOs. By working with these partners, the Media Centre could help ensure that the project would “hit the ground running” in the selected areas, thanks to the partners’ established links. It was also clear that the Media Centre and its partners had complementary skills – all the partners interviewed recognized that the training on reporting and use of social media brought new skills to the participants, which the partners could not have delivered on their own. In that sense, the project presented the partners with an opportunity to acquire new skills. Strategically too, an organization like the Women's Trust stated that the project had opened their eyes on new practices and on the potential use of new media, which they were not familiar with before.

However, the evaluators found that the partners had been insufficiently involved in the design of the project, and that they were presented with a set of activities to implement but had had little say in defining the project’s strategy. They were also concerned that the Media Centre took sole charge of project management and monitoring, with only occasional consultations with partner organizations.

As is often and understandably the case with such concerns (in a context in which all NGOs struggle to raise funds for their own survival), they also had a financial dimension. Partners provided the Media Centre access to their contacts, and undertook the task of organizing activities at local level, for which they needed to devote human and financial resources that they felt were not fully compensated by the payments received from the project budget.¹¹

The concerns expressed by the partners in this project are similar to those encountered by evaluators working on other UNDEF-funded projects. This suggests that UNDEF should possibly work to ensure that partnership arrangements are more explicitly described at project proposal stage, and that appropriate project management consultation processes are implemented. UNDEF could require that the project proposals clearly set out each partners’ roles and responsibilities, and that a draft MoU among the proposed partners be submitted alongside the proposal, setting out the modalities for project management and ensuring that partners be involved in ways appropriate to their input in the project, and be adequately informed about the proposed budget of the project.

(ii) Effectiveness

The project was generally effective, in the sense that three of its four anticipated outcomes were achieved, and that significant steps were taken towards achieving the fourth. This was done by implementing most activities as planned, and was documented on the basis of a detailed set of indicators. Nevertheless, there were some concerns relating to effectiveness, which will be detailed in this section:

- Not all the outcomes were directly related to the achievement of the development objectives;

¹¹ For example, the organizing of a training workshop required sustained exchanges with local authorities to obtain formal authorizations, involving costs in staff time and logistics. These were not covered by the project budget, which simply provided for a lump sum to be paid to the partners involved.

- Some of the indicators related much more to activities than to outcomes, and were therefore inadequate for the purpose of assessing the achievement of outcomes;
- Some of the activities bore little relevance to the achievement of outcomes;
- The capacity-building activities lacked appropriate follow-up: skill development would have been more effective if some activities could have been repeated.

Effectiveness at outcome level

The degree of achievement of the anticipated outcomes can be summarized as follows:

- *To increase and improve gender-sensitive media coverage in mainstream media.* The two indicators concerning this outcome were met (see below), and the project doubtless made progress towards its achievement by contributing to the production of relevant media stories. Nevertheless the activities of the project in this respect did not amount to a *durable* increase and improvement in gender sensitivity: stories and broadcasts produced were appropriate but only made a short-term difference, and the number of journalists trained in gender-sensitive reporting was too small to constitute a critical mass.
- *To create tools and utilize non-traditional media to disseminate and exchange information.* This outcome was fully achieved, in the sense that the SMS platform was established, and above all that the participating women were trained in the use of WhatsApp, and used it to disseminate information, including concerning human rights.
- *To increase the capacity of marginalized women to use social media to access human rights information and express themselves.* This was also achieved, at least in the case of those participating women who had access to smartphones – by all accounts a rapidly increasing proportion of women. While not all messages disseminated by participants on social media concerned human rights or economic, social or cultural issues, the evaluators could see that sustained strings of messages referred to such issues at several

Stembeni's story

Stembeni Rusike is a woman from Epworth, a town near Harare. She is a longstanding member of Zimrights, a major human rights defense NGO. She has also worked for the medical NGO Doctors without Borders. The Media Centre (MC) trained her as a citizen journalist. Here are excerpts of the statement she gave the evaluators (in Shona):

“Although I had known about human rights before, the project taught me how to report cases. For example, the case of a 15 year-old girl who was raped, then forced by her family to marry her rapist. We made the case public on the [Whatsapp] platform and on the radio, the girl could get help.

“Some people don't like us, you have to do things stealthily due to politicization. We faced some threats, but we have learned to make pictures and videos [to gather evidence]. That protects us.

“I observed the 2013 elections. Some politicians didn't distinguish between observers and opposition political party agents. I did the observing on behalf of Zimrights, but posted the findings on the MC platform, to get more impact.

“I want to continue to work with the MC. It helps making stories from Epworth appear in the mainstream media. We need the MC's support to talk to local officials. Some councilors are changing, they listen to us more, and we ask more of them.”

points in time during the project, and that the SMS platform and WhatsApp continued to be in use at the time of the evaluators' visit, several months after the end of the project.

- *To increase marginalized women's participation in policy dialogues.* This outcome was also achieved in the sense that meetings at community level between participating women and local decision makers were held twice in each project location. Participating women told the evaluators that these meetings had often constituted their first opportunity to debate with elected officials and other office holders. They also reported that the skills they acquired through training and as a result of the advocacy activities undertaken ahead of the roundtable helped enhance their self-confidence and sense of self-worth – an unforeseen but important effect of the project.

Could the outcomes have been achieved to a higher standard?

- The first outcome was almost unachievable as formulated. It should have been written in a more realistic way, by referring to improved gender sensitive reporting by those journalists that were trained (and not in the mainstream media in general).
- The last three outcomes were achieved to a degree consistent with what the project document anticipated. However participating women and partner NGOs made clear that more follow-up activities, including repeat training sessions, would have improved their capacity further. A single training session was held in each project location, which was hardly enough to entrench the newly acquired skills.

Effectiveness at activity level

The project activities were implemented, to a very large extent, as planned. The breakdown of effectiveness at project activity level is as follows:

- *Production of radio programs.* The project document provided for the production of 20 programs, but this was reduced to ten for budget reasons, with UNDEF's agreement. The programs were produced and broadcast on a commercial channel. The programs met the requirements in terms of topics covered, and were by all accounts a significant success in terms of audience reach and interactivity of contents (listeners could phone in or provide input by text or through social networks).
- *Training workshops for journalists, and subsequent articles.* These were also implemented as planned; the content of the workshops was consistent with plans and feedback from participants demonstrated that they served their purpose well. The main weakness of these workshops is that they only marginally addressed editors and producers, who make decisions on which stories get published and therefore play a key role in ensuring enhanced media gender sensitivity. The Media Centre stated that 100 stories were produced and published by participating journalists, but could not evidence this fully: in the 6 to 7 months following the training workshops, the Media Centre could trace about 28 stories published on the websites of mainstream newspapers or radio stations. Other articles were published on the Media Centre's own website, while further stories may have been published in newspapers without appearing on websites, or in journalists' own blogs, or broadcast on community radio stations. Still other articles by participating journalists may have been published after the 6-7 months period following the workshops.
- *Internships for four student journalists.* These took place and led to the production of relevant stories. However, the benefit of this to marginalized women was marginal.
- *SMS platform.* This was implemented, and functioned as planned. The platform was to some extent overtaken by the use of social networks, partly because more participating women had access to smartphones than was originally expected at project planning

stage, and partly because of usage costs: text messaging was significantly more expensive than the data subscription allowing access to the Internet and the use of WhatsApp and Facebook. The SMS platform was nevertheless used by many participants owning an ordinary phone, though contributions were necessarily shorter than those made through the social networks.

- *Internet platform and database.* This was established (www.zimwomenspeak.com), though the domain name had expired by the time the evaluation took place. The intended database of cases of human rights abuses was not developed. Doing so would have required extensive human resources to verify the reports, and could have placed sources at risk.
- *Media monitoring reports.* Monthly monitoring reports were compiled, and quarterly syntheses prepared – however these were quite simple and did not contain detailed analysis of media contents. The usefulness of this activity was debatable.
- *Women’s radio listening clubs.* Ten such groups were established (each was given a radio receiver). However, the exact number of meetings held is unclear, and the effectiveness of this activity was debatable. The Media Centre documented 20 meetings, which makes an average of just two meetings per listeners’ club. Interviews with partner NGOs suggest that there were more meetings, since at least some of the clubs met monthly. However, some women were reportedly dissuaded from participating in meetings because of the risk that they be seen as “political” and supportive of the opposition. Some women were also concerned about security and practical arrangements, because some meetings took place in the evening. There were also reports that the financial compensation offered to the women hosting the clubs at their home were insufficient to cover the cost of providing participants with a modicum of food.
- *Training workshops on the use of social media.* Two one-day training workshops were held in each of the ten project locations. They were implemented as planned, and feedback from participants was extremely positive. The only concern they expressed was about the need to continue/deepen the training on issues such as reporting techniques.
- *Advocacy campaigns.* These were implemented in each project location, in accordance with plans. However, the activities were one-off (such as a march on the occasion of International Women’s Day, as illustrated in a photo reproduced in this report), and not sustained actions as suggested by the term “campaigns”.
- *Policy roundtable with decision-makers.* These took place as planned, and constituted a major achievement. Many participating women stated that the roundtables were their first opportunities ever to debate with local officials and elected local politicians.
- *Video conferences with other women’s community groups.* These also took place as planned, and appear – according to Media Centre reports – to have discussed issues relevant to the situation of women in Zimbabwe. However the conferences involved only a fraction of the participating women (since the participants had to be able to travel to the Media Centre’s office in Harare). There were no specific suggestions about follow-up, and the evaluators are concerned that the conferences, though interesting in themselves, did not lead to plans for future action.

The main lesson from this roundup is that some of the activities (internships, media monitoring in particular), though effectively implemented, were not directly relevant to the needs of marginalized women. In other cases (advocacy actions, video conferences) the activities were also effectively implemented but lacked follow-up. Nevertheless, the bulk of the activities were implemented in an effective and successful manner.

Overview of outcome indicators

The project document provided eight outcome indicators, complemented with quantitative targets. This was generally helpful in terms of project monitoring, and in assessing the effectiveness of the project. However, some of the indicators lacked precision or were difficult to assess in quantitative terms. Above all, most of the indicators focused on *activities* and not on the desired *outcomes*. Here is a review of the eight indicators:

- *Number of listeners to radio programs (target: 30,000)*. This was an activity indicator. The listenership figures that the radio station provided to the Media Centre were consistent with the presenter's belief that the programs had been widely listened to, but the figures were not compiled scientifically.
- *Number of stories produced by trained journalists (target: 100)*. This too was an activity indicator. The number produced may have been reached or even exceeded but it is not clear how many of those were actually printed or broadcast. A number of journalists told us that they wrote stories that would have qualified, but only published them on their own blog or on website because their own media house (or media houses they offered the stories to, in the case of freelancers) did not publish them. This seems to have more to do with the precarious economic situation of the media sector than with political pressure - but it remains that the indicator was perhaps insufficiently precise.
- *Number of women participating in radio listeners' clubs (target: 650)*. This (activity-based) indicator was difficult to assess because membership in the clubs varied, and was informal.

Together, the above three indicators give a general sense of the achievement of the desired outcome of enhancing gender sensitivity in the mainstream media. However an indicator based on a survey of the media might have been more appropriate. Alternatively, the project proposal should perhaps have defined a less ambitious outcome.

A citizen journalist in Chinhoyi

Anna Tagarira is a citizen journalist and blogger. She told the evaluators:

"I move a lot in rural areas, talk to a lot of poor people, some can't afford a single meal. Women need to know their rights, for example the right to get [clean] water; it's not a privilege, it's a right. The same goes for sewage, the council must collect sewage. Leaders know that if we meet them and ask them, we will inform the community. We want to raise community issues and we stay away from political battles. After we complained to the councilors about lack of water, they started distributing it with a truck. But still, we can go for two or three days without water and need to use water treatment chemicals.

"Women's issues are not properly handled at local level. For example, a girl was raped back in 2008, the court case keeps being postponed, the rapist is intimidating the girl. In some areas, intimidation is rife. People don't want to tell about incidents.

"Here the MP and the local councilor are from different political parties. They didn't used to cooperate, but now they do and that contributes to peace. Now we can discuss our problems without being labeled a partisan.

"Men don't think women have problems, because most women are involved in trading to support their families. Men simply assume this system is working OK."

- *Use of the SMS platform (target: 2,000 women receiving SMS messages each month).* This indicator was outcome-related, but was overtaken by technological developments, and specifically by the spread of smartphones and the wider-than-expected use of WhatsApp. At the time the project was written, it was perfectly reasonable to expect SMSs to be the main medium of information exchange, because text messages can be exchanged on ordinary (not "smart") phones. However, as the project was implemented, the availability and affordability of phones that can access the internet was growing fast, and the economics of phone use also changed: sending text messages became comparatively more expensive than using app-based messages such as WhatsApp, because phone service providers charge proportionately much less for data use than for texting. As a result, the use of text messages did not grow much, while the number of WhatsApp users grew well beyond the target of 2,000 women. However, the "quality" of the users was not always clear, in the sense that some users were merely reading/approving what others wrote, while only a minority actually contributed contents along the lines that were expected.

In this regard, the evaluators noted that the notion of "marginalized women" was used without much rigor by the Media Centre. That notion had not been defined clearly in the project document. In effect, most of the women (other than professional journalists) who participated in activities were from rural areas, and as such might be considered marginalized. However, they were also, in the main, members of the partner organizations: many had therefore had some years of experience as activists, and to that extent were not personally "marginalized", even if they were in contact with much poorer and less educated women. On the whole, it can be said that the women who participated in the activities were intermediaries who could relay the views and concerns of more marginalized members of their communities, but were not themselves the worse off (almost all, for example, had a mobile phone).

- *Use of the Women Speak website to report abuses (target: 200 reports).* This (mostly activity-based) indicator was also overtaken by the exponential rise in the use of WhatsApp. The website certainly did not gather as many as 200 reports of abuses, and it is difficult to say how many abuses were reported on WhatsApp: this is because many posts on WhatsApp were merely reproducing reports of abuses published elsewhere, or could not be clearly substantiated. This indicator, therefore, cannot be considered to have been met. However, as mentioned in the Launch Note, the indicator was perhaps inappropriate, in the sense that it was not clear what should be counted (for example, is a general WhatsApp entry complaining about early/forced marriage a "report of abuse"? The evaluators think not.)
- *Percentage of trained women able to use the Women Speak platform (target: 80%).* As with the SMS platform, this indicator was overtaken by technology, in the sense that most posts appeared on WhatsApp and Facebook. It was clear that virtually all women who took part in the training (and had access to a smartphone) were able to use the social networks, irrespective of whether they also used the website.

Taken together, the above three indicators gave an appropriate overview of the achievement of the second and third outcome (establishment of and capacity to use non-traditional and social media). The two outcomes are basically two aspects of the same thing.

- *Number of advocacy campaigns (target: 10).* This indicator is purely activity-based and does not add value.

- *Number of women participants in roundtable discussions (target: 2,000).* This indicator is also largely activity-based and provides a basic sense of the achievement of the fourth outcome (participation in policy debates).

In conclusion, it can be said that the requirement for grant applicants to provide indicators was a positive development, but that in this case the Media Centre should have exercised more rigor in formulating both the outcomes and the indicators – making sure in particular that the indicators focus on outcomes rather than activities.

It remains, however, that the project largely achieved the range of activities and outcomes it set out to achieve, which is no mean feat in view of the complex logistical situation in Zimbabwe. In hindsight, however, it appears that the standard of achievement of the desired outcomes could have been higher if activities had been better targeted to meeting the needs of marginalized women.

(iii) Efficiency

The project was broadly efficient, both in terms of value for money and use of funds, and in terms of project management. In terms of budget, the funds were used very much as planned in the original budget, which itself provided for a sound allocation of funds. There were some, minor, concerns at local level about the use of funds: for example, some journalists who underwent training were under the impression that they would be paid by the MC for stories they would produce after the training, which was not the case.

Spending on the project broadly followed the budget outlined in the project document, though some relatively minor changes were made. The main single heading of the budget was for meetings and training sessions (61% of the budget). Some of the activities, as mentioned above, were of relatively little relevance to the needs of marginalized women (internships, media monitoring).

These represented about 3% of the total budget. Similarly, the lack of follow-up of some activities, such as the video conferences, reduced their relevance. Additional spending on following up these activities could have improved the overall efficiency of the project



Epworth women working on their blogs in Media Centre offices, May 2014. ©Media Centre

Project management

While project management was generally of a good standards in terms of accountability to UNDEF and responsiveness to changing circumstances at local level, the partner NGOs were not adequately involved in the management of the project: each dealt separately with the Media

Centre, and there was little collegiality in the management approach. It must also be said that the three partner NGOs between them received US\$6,000, or less than 3% of the budget: this suggests that their relationship was less that of partners than service providers. By contrast, the radio station was paid US\$11,000 (\$8,000 for production costs, 3,000 in fee for the presenter). In this context, it is questionable whether the partnership with the three NGOs was authentic.

UNDEF could encourage applicants to develop more balanced forms of partnerships by requiring them to submit, as part of the proposal, a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the partners, setting out all partners' roles and responsibilities, specifying how each partner will be compensated.

(iv) Impact

Among the elements of impact that can be identified, the key one must be the very palpable boost that the training has achieved in terms of self-confidence among the women who participated in training. Almost unanimously, the women praised the extent to which the awareness-raising about their rights and about the duty of authorities to be accountable to citizens, and the training on the use of social media and on citizen reporting, had given them a degree of self-confidence that they did not have before. Some have become activists on behalf of their community as a result of this. Others described how they "dared" to ask questions to local officials, an attitude they would not have had without the project.

The capacities of citizen journalists have also been substantially improved, and some women have clearly acquired skills that enhanced their notoriety at local level and continued to spur their posting of information on social networks. There was also a clear impact on some of the participating journalists, who pointed to their newly acquired knowledge on gender-sensitive reporting.



Roundtable discussion on women in the media, Harare April 2014. © Media Centre

Nevertheless, the impact of the project was hampered by its design: too many activities were carried out, some of which lacked relevance to the desired outcomes: this also reduced their impact. Impact on the mainstream media could have been greater, for example, if a critical mass of several hundred journalists had undergone training on gender-sensitive reporting. Similarly, it would have been possible, if the project had given up on training journalists, to carry out more in-depth training for community women on human rights reporting and the use of social media. But by attempting to do some of all these things, the project spread its resources thinly, and took a toll in terms of impact.

(v) Sustainability

The key element of the project sustainability related to the use of social media. The project has ensured that a critical mass of women in the 10 communities across the country have acquired skills necessary to use social media, and the evaluators could see that the WhatsApp group created as part of the project continued to be active at the time of the evaluation. The (relatively minor) task of moderating this group continued to be undertaken by Media Centre staff.

Some of the women trained as citizen journalists have clearly gained experience, and have continued to post information on WhatsApp. A minority (mainly women based in Epworth, a community within bus riding distance of Harare) even started blogs, which they could work on using Media Centre computers.

The sustainability of the work on gender-sensitive journalism is less clear. It would appear that this work needs significant follow-up to achieve a durable influence on the mainstream media, and that editors/producers should be specifically targeted, rather than (mainly) journalists.

Going forward, the Media Centre should also review its strategy concerning citizen journalists. If those are to be nurtured and mentored, it will be necessary to provide them with further training,

including on basis reporting techniques. However, the sustainability of citizen journalism itself is a complex matter, because of the precarious economic situation of the country: in at least some cases, reports and photos posted on WhatsApp by citizen journalists have been reproduced in print newspapers, without acknowledgement or payment (similarly, professional journalists have sometimes based stories on reports by citizen journalists, without necessarily quoting them as a source).



Training session, Mutoko, August 2014. ©Media Centre

An Media Centre staff member with IT expertise noted that the project, if it was done today, should not use WhatsApp (and still less text sharing, for cost reasons), but should develop a dedicated "app" for users to share information, using Shona and Ndebele. Such an app could be developed for less than 5000US\$ and, with sponsoring from a phone provider, its use could be free.

(vi) UNDEF added value

It is important to note that the project benefited from the perceived neutrality of UNDEF as a UN agency donor. In the sensitive context of Zimbabwe in relation to the media, the Media Centre managers noted that the fact that the project was funded by a UN agency helped local authority accept it and even buy into it, for example when it came to organizing meetings between local officials and community women.

V. CONCLUSIONS

(i) The project was relevant. It had a good analysis of the situation of women in the media and of the needs of “marginalized” women, though this concept was used without sufficient rigor.

(ii) The project design was over-ambitious, and included too many disparate activities. The project effectively sought to achieve three objectives and four outcomes, through 11 different activities. There was a lack of prioritization, which hampered its relevance, effectiveness and impact.

(iii) The project was broadly in meeting its anticipated outcomes, though not all of those were directly relevant to the situation of marginalized women. In particular, the project spent significant resources training mainstream journalists on gender-sensitive reporting, a worthy objective in itself, but one that made little difference to marginalized women. With fewer activities, the project could have achieved greater impact in more limited fields.

(iv) The project design included several indicators, but these did not always focus on assessing project outcomes. Many of the indicators were re-statements of activities, and only indirectly related to assessing outcomes. It will be important in future for the Media Centre to develop more rigorous outcome indicators.

(v) The project was efficient and represented good value. Over half the budget went on training and workshop activities, while personnel costs were kept relatively low.

(vi) Project management was appropriate in terms of accountability to UNDEF, but partner NGOs were marginalized. The three NGOs that partnered with the Media Centre (in addition to a commercial radio station) received just 3% of the total budget between them, and were not substantially involved in project management.

(vii) The project achieved some elements of impact, particularly on the self-confidence of rural women in relation to political debates. Several participants reported that the project enhanced their sense of self-worth and motivated them to keep local authorities accountable. Other elements of impact were related to the use of social media, where the project achieved significant changes.

(viii) The training on social networks enhanced the project’s sustainability. The participants made heavy use of the social networks, and the dissemination of information on issues of concern to marginalized women continues beyond the project’s end.

(ix) The project benefited from UNDEF's perception as a neutral donor. In the highly sensitive political environment of Zimbabwe, this project enjoyed a degree of buy-in by local authorities, which was in part enhanced by the perception of UNDEF as a “neutral” donor, not influenced by political considerations.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) The Media Centre should make more rigorous use of the denomination “marginalized women”. This denomination should not be used to refer indifferently to non-urban women.

(ii) When supporting the emergence of citizen journalists, the Media Centre should ensure that it takes a strategic approach. In particular, it should ensure that it does not contribute to a worsening of the already precarious economic situation of professional journalists, and ensure that citizen and professional journalists respect each other's rights and intellectual property.

(iii) The Media Centre should give further consideration to ways it can help enhance gender sensitivity in mainstream media reports. Training for journalists needs to be done on a sufficient scale to achieve critical mass, and awareness raising activities should also address media proprietors, managers, editors and producers.

(iv) Future Media Centre projects should be more focused. Projects should have fewer objectives and activities should be more directly linked to desired outcomes. Indicators should focus on outcomes and not on activities.

(v) The Media Centre should consider developing an “app” better tailored to sharing and disseminating news on women's rights in Zimbabwe. The opportunity of developing this “app” should be considered, in particular if it can add value in terms of language and accessibility, and if it can be free to end-users.

(vi) In case of project proposals submitted by groups of NGOs, UNDEF should consider requiring a clear commitment, as proposal stage, to collegial project management. In particular, it should consider requiring applicants to submit a draft Memorandum of Understanding setting out partners' respective roles and responsibilities, and the allocation of funds among partners.

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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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-ZIM-11-432:

- Summary of articles on gender issues
- Project Document
- Mid-Term Progress Report
- Milestone Verification Reports
- Sample workshop program
- Final Narrative Report
- Media Centre publications

External sources:

- Reports on Zimbabwe by Amnesty International (annual reports 2013 to 2015) and Human Rights Watch (news releases)

ANNEX 3: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

21 September 2015	
Harare	
Earnest Mudzengi	Media Centre Director
Rumbidzai Machingura	Finance and Administration Officer
Linda Nyama	Programs Officer
Talent Tapera	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
22 September 2015	
Harare	
Serah Njanji; Nomatter Bandera; Plaxedes Cement; Petronella Letani; Martha Bazario; Stembeni Rusike; Barbra Fundisi	Project beneficiaries, Epworth District
Sharon Spencer	UNDP
Doreen Nyamukapa	UNDP
Emmanuel Manyati; Michelle Chifamba; Jairos Saunyama	Journalists
23 September 2015	
Visit to Chinhoyi District	
Chipo Mukondiwo; Anna Tagarira; Naomi Magorimbo; Susan Makoni; Theresa Mazinga; Shupikai Ziyambi; Sharon Milward; Lucia Nzwere	Project beneficiaries
Nunurai Jena	Gender reporter
Harare	
Tsitsi Mhlanga	Communication and Advocacy Officer, WIPSU
Fungai Machirori	Gender reporting trainer
24 September 2015	
Harare	
Barbra Ncube	Programs Officer, Women's Trust
Chris Musodza	IT Manager, Media Centre, social media trainer
Gamuchirai Masiyiwa	Social media trainer
Samuel Takawira, Metelin Tsama	Student interns
Ruvheneko Parirenyatwa	Zi-FM Radio Presenter
25 September 2015	
Harare	
Richard Chidza	Journalist
Debriefing with Media Centre staff and Board Chairperson	
Departure of international consultant	
1 October 2015	
Dudziro Nhengu	UNWomen (Belinda Musanhu alone)

ANNEX 4: LIST OF ACRONYMS

MC	Media Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WiPSU	Women in Politics Support Unit