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

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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.

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The project strategy of undertaking a local-level diagnosis of the problem, then providing training on the issues identified and developing an agenda for action proved to be an effective . The agenda provided a focus for the groups working in this area and allowed for the development of constructive discussions with local authorities on issues in the sector. Linking the provision of health and education to basic human rights was seen by participants as an effective approach as it increased the importance of the advocacy efforts and receptiveness of civil and political actors to the messages of the project. However, the diagnosis focused on the quality of health and education and lacked information on policy making, citizen interaction in that process and what needed to be addressed to strengthen their voice and advocacy efforts to improve services which was the intended outcome for the project. The cascade nature of the programme was a good means to reach larger numbers of persons however, the extremely decentralized nature of the project resulted in the project being implemented more as three separate efforts than one integrated programme which limited its effectiveness.

This degree of decentralization and separation between the CSO partners also affected the efficiency of the project as it did not take advantage of the expertise of the partners and resulted in duplicated efforts. Administrative support from Oxfam México did appear help ensure a smoother administration of the multi-level project, and most project participants felt there had been a good use of time and resources. The three sub-grantees used networks to help implement the activities which increased efficiency, but the lack of a formal agreement on their working relationships affected the project as not all had the same sense of project purpose or obligation to participate regularly.

The project reported on activities and outputs but lacked the performance indicators needed to assess impact. Anecdotal information suggests that the project did make a difference, particularly at grass-root levels, but the impact could have been greater had the project been implemented as one and included the national component. It appears that the relationships between the civil society groups and the local officials are better and more constructive now than they were at the start of the project and that some public officials are more receptive to their messages. Most project participants expressed a feeling of empowerment from the training and work on the agenda. In some cases, the evaluators heard of health and education issues being given more attention in local government planning and in several cases, the activities were reported to have resulted in improved services.

The grass-roots nature of the project means the knowledge and experiences of the project are likely to remain within the targeted communities. The CSO partners are still working on the issue of equitable services in their respective areas of focus and see the agenda created by the project as a long-term planning tool. Their main sustainability issue deals with the lack of financial resources which is a critical issue for most of the CSOs that participated in this project. There was UNDEF value-added to this project. Many of the participating CSOs felt the funding from a UN agency gave their organization and project more credibility and visibility with the government officials and increased their access and receptivity to their messages.

(iii) Conclusions

The S U R M fhcEsVaffdVa ctivities were relevant and important within the Mexican social and democratic context as it addressed issues of social equity and empowerment of marginalized populations. The use of local level CSOs was an effective approach to implemenp(h)66.55 545.83] TJ ET BT 1 0 0 1 70.824 254.9 Tm [(t)6(h)-8(i)5(s)(-8( )7( )-210(goT 1 0 0 1

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required more focus on issues of voice and civic participation which were the main objectives of the project. The project strengthened advocacy efforts for more equitable health and education services in its targeted areas in Chiapas, Hidalgo and Guerrero. In particular, it increased individual knowledge, capacity and leadership among participating CSOs and community members, strengthened their relations with local authorities on these issues and in some cases resulted in improved services. However, the extent of results is unknown due to the lack of outcome data. Changes are likely to be sustainable at the level of personal empowerment and relationships built with some public officials and the agenda provides CSOs with some of the key health and education issues to raise with officials in the future. UNDEF-funding provided significant value added as it provided a sense of neutrality and legitimacy to the rights-based discussions and to the CSOs that participated in the effort.

(iv) Recommendations

For similar projects in the future, the evaluators recommend that civic participation and advocacy projects be more

II. Introduction and development context

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

The Civil Society Advocating for Quality Education and Healthcare with Equity in Mexico project was a two-year USD 375,000 project implemented by Oxfam México. The project ran from 1 November 2009 to 29 February 2012 which included a four month no-cost time extension. The project worked to strengthen the collective voice of civil society to demand quality and equitable education and healthcare services for women, indigenous people and youth in three of the poorest states in Mexico: Chiapas, Guerrero, and Hidalgo. It worked through three state-level Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Colectivo de

(ii) Logical framework

PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENTS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS			
x Develop 3 territorial & 1 national diagnostic analyses	x 3 state & 1 national diagnostic analyses	Identification of needs & priorities in health/ ed sectors	More equitable services and increased access for marginalized groups
x Comparative analysis of state-national problems	x 1 comparative analysis to use as baseline	Better understanding & priorities in health/ ed sectors	Improved quality & transparency of state institutions & services
x Training of local leaders and CSO representatives as trainers	x 150 local leaders & CSO representatives trained as trainers, 75% female x 4 outreach & capacity building manual developed per state	More knowledgeable, skilled & active CSOs advocating for & monitoring rights to education & health care,& on use of media for public information Strengthened voice of women, indigenous groups & youth	Increased civic participation & demand for equable serves More equitable services & increased access for marginalized groups
x Local, regional & global networking	x Inventory of contact & initiatives x Participation in regional/ global forums x Funds raised for exchange visit		

worked with 25 CSOs that also worked primarily on gender and Z R P H Q¶V issues.

The project ¶V R E M H F W Z D V directly relevant to Oxfam México ¶V institutional mandate and vision of strengthening civil society and enabling people to exercise their rights to create a more equitable and democratic society. However, the extremely decentralized approach used for project implementation

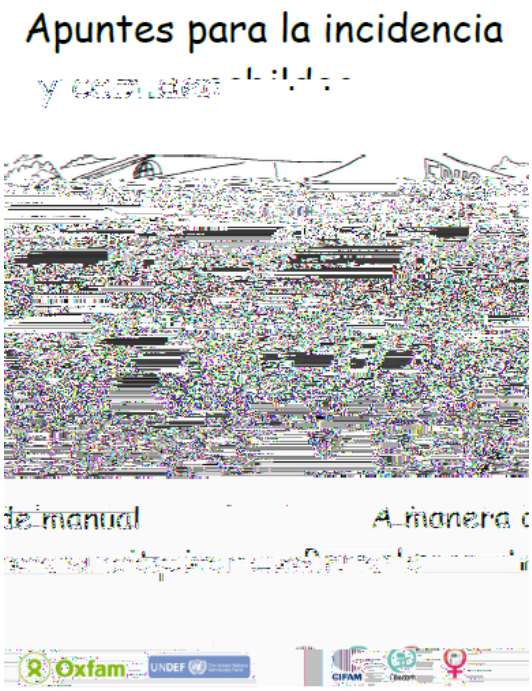
Participants credited the rights-based approach and UN funding with increasing the effectiveness of their messages with civil and political actors, a positive point for UNDEF value added. This helped to develop relationships with local government officials that did not appear to have

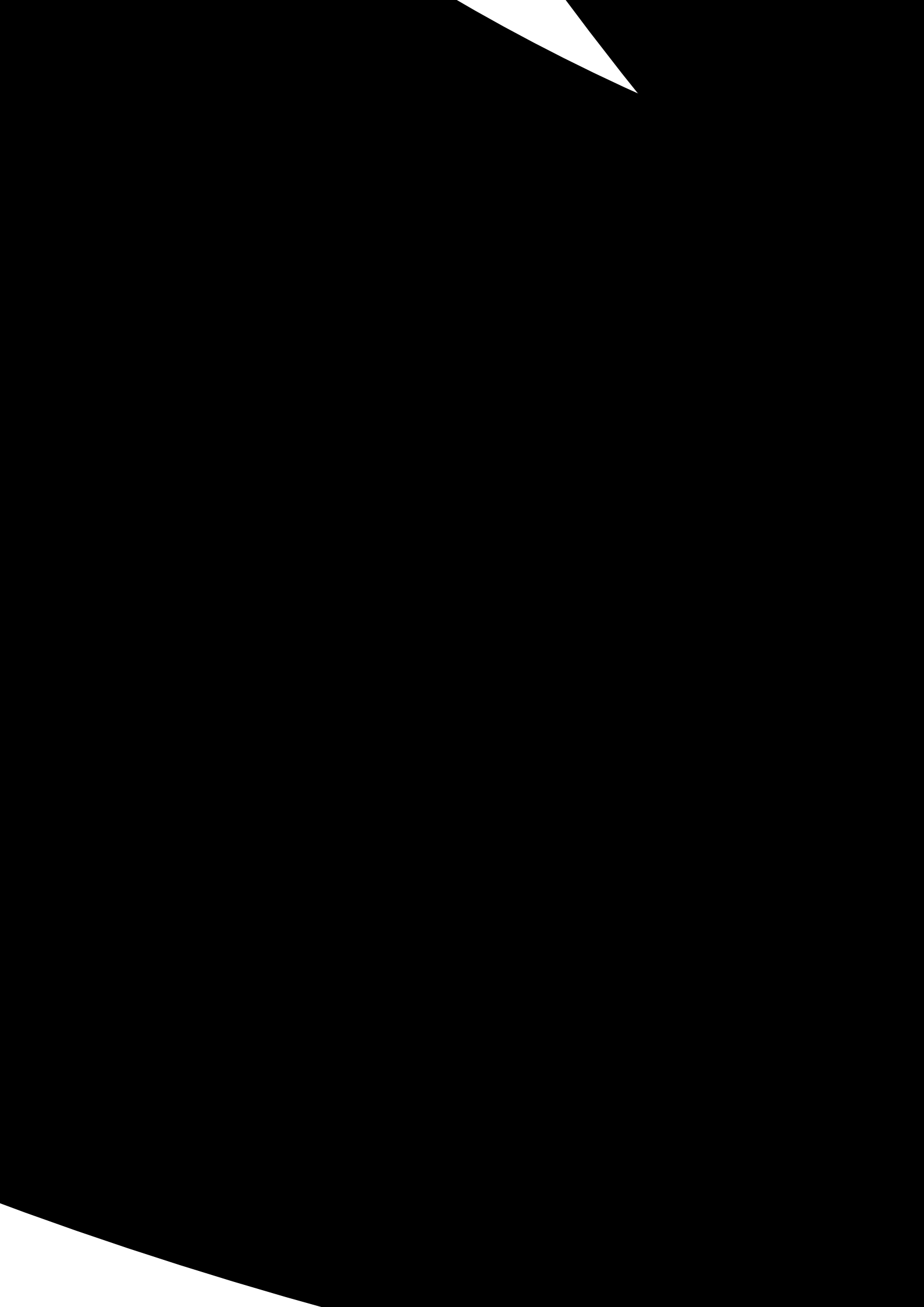
The lack of work at the national level anticipated in the project document reduced the effectiveness of the programme. In addition, the project did not take advantage of .the internet or social media to develop a common platform for the project to connect d t

the remaining 60% equally among its three CSO partners. The Novib funding was used to help cover other Oxfam México project-related staff and administrative costs. They also felt that a two-year timeframe was needed to implement these types of activities. However, even though the project document was signed well in advance of the official start date of the project (signed end September 2009 for a 1 November 2009 project start date) they were

contributes to the consolidation of democracy and improved governance in a country context such as Mexico, where the level of public attention on access to public services for marginalized groups and more participatory decision making is still uneven.

> The UN funding opened doors. It gave us more visibility. This is very important for a project trying to do public reform in the human rights sector. I give UNDEF a 10.
>
> CIFAM





include: increased scores on a knowledge, attitude and practices survey of promoters/participants/officials at the end of the project compared to scores at the start of the project (or compared with a control group of non-participants); number/type of policy changes resulting from project activities and of persons affected by this change; and increase in services for the marginalized group by the end of the project. This recommendation follows from conclusions (iii), (iv), and (v).

(iv) Formalize relationships between subgrantees and their implementers

VIII. Limitations, constraints and caveats

The evaluation took place well after the end of the project and relied on project documents and interviews to make its assessments. Reporting tended to be general and lacked data on results. Interviews also provided some anecdotes that the team used to extrapolate findings. There was difficulty reaching the persons who participated in Guerrero. The contact information for all but the project coordinator was questionable. The team worked through nine persons listed on the contact sheet for Guerrero as project promoters or participants before finding one that knew the project or the CSO partner. The evaluators were also only able to reach a limited number of public officials who knew of the project in the three states which also made assessment of the advocacy and dialogue activities with these officials problematic. However, overall the information provided from the different sources and locations was consistent, which with all of the documents provided by Oxfam Mexico, which K H O S H G W R Y D O L G D W H W K H H Y D O X D W L R Q ¶ V I L Q G L Q J V

IX. 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?	ƒ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ƒ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ƒ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed :

ACADERH. Agenda por la Educación y Salud con Calidad y Equidad para las Mujeres, Jóvenes e Indígenas en Hidalgo. Hidalgo, 2011

ACADERH Informe Final de Proyecto. Iniciativas Temáticas y Sectoriales. Hidalgo, octubre de 2011.