

Evaluations EIDHR

Fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination

human european consultancy in partnership with the Netherlands Humanist Committee on Human Rights and the Danish Institute for Human Rights

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This report is the outcome of an evaluation commissioned by the European Commission on projects financed in the field of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The EIDHR is a European Union programme that aims to promote and support human rights and democracy in third countries. Information on activities and actions can be found on the EIDHR website: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/index_en.htm

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The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.



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NB. The appendices 3 (field visit reports), 4 (deskstudy) and 5 (Call for Proposals Review) are not included in this publication.



Executive summary

As the second in a series of three reports, this evaluation assesses the relevance and effectiveness of the European Union EIDHR funded projects in achieving the European Union (EU) objectives in combating racism, xenophobia and the discrimination against minorities. It also assesses the relevance of the priorities set for 2002-4. The first report was a desk study that was presented in March 2005 providing the foundations for this report. Its summary is included in this report in section 3. The third report in this trilogy of studies is a critique of the Calls for Proposals (CFP) system for this programme and its Summary and Suggestions are also included in section 3 of this synthesis report.

This is the first evaluation of the EIDHR (RXM) programme; consequently a new methodology was designed. It is based on a series of 4 reports written after short field visits to 17 carefully selected projects in Asia, the Balkans, Georgia, the Russian Federation (RF) and Israel, accompanied by detailed analysis both before and after the visits. This reinforced the team's view of the importance of understanding the local environment and how EIDHR can maximise its potential added value.

This report sets the scene with the Introduction, a description of the context and a summary of the desk study findings. The study explores in some detail non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their capacities, analysing the relevance of the projects, which are the crucial mechanism by which EIDHR meets its objectives, and studies the effectiveness of the projects. One chapter is devoted to NGO and EU communications and funding partnerships. Additionally the limitations of this short study are recognised.

It was evident that many of the projects were operating in very difficult circumstances, usually in the wake of a war or where there were high tensions or a low level of violent conflict. Long-term changes of attitudes and approaches are clearly needed to bring about equality, tolerance and peace through processes of change that are sustainable.

Many of the projects could show substantial results, undoubtedly improving the lives of those who are victims of racism and discrimination. The projects are reaching people and communities, who are not reached by governments, and are pioneering initiatives to redress injustices and bring communities together. The Consultants saw that this work can only be undertaken by NGOs that can win the trust of those minorities, who are excluded and marginalized or are victims of direct racist and xenophobic actions. The large majority of projects, almost without exception, are targeted at the most marginalized communities and the most vulnerable within them.

The projects that appeared to have the most impact and the best prospects of sustainability are those with a coherent design, based on a sound in depth analysis of the country situation and that were able to respond to changing circumstances. Those that had good local partnerships, experienced management and a participatory methodology, that understood the local environment and complex inter-ethnic relations, are often better equipped to do this. Linking the local and national was also important. In this area of work people, processes and partnerships are crucial ingredients for success.

It is evident that those projects that consciously used human rights standards and adopted a rights based approach are more relevant and effective in tackling the root causes of racism and discrimination against minorities, and they are likely to have a significant and sustainable impact in the long term. Sustainability is underpinned by long term planning and longer term funding. Additionally the report shows when projects focused around a single theme they are particularly valuable, while it is important that all projects should seek to build up the strength of local NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs). It is also recommended that in some circumstances, five rather than three year funding would have distinct advantages.

Other strengths and weaknesses are noted, however the effectiveness of projects needs to be judged over time, when the processes have taken root and the long-term impact and its sustainability can be measured. This may come three years or more after a project has ended, hence the review of the effectiveness of projects must be read with caution, noting the limitations that have been identified.

The programme's insistence on mainstreaming gender and children's issues into projects is rational and sound. However it needs to be strengthened in practice, inter alia more attention being paid to the specific ways in which women, men and children from minority communities are subjected to and have experience of discrimination.

There are some specific recommendations exploring practical ways of helping to transform the EU's relationship with NGOs from being the recipients of E.U. funds to being a genuine partner combating racism and discrimination together. It also identifies a number of ways in which EU parliamentarians should be involved and suggests means of bringing Commission staff and project staff closer together to strengthen their combined impact.

The funds have given some NGOs the strategic freedom and financial stability to implement innovative projects that often reach out to change the lives of the most marginalized and excluded in society. NGOs were able to pioneer projects and challenge discriminatory policies in specific and effective ways. Their participative methodology and human rights principles add real value and promote trust across ethnic divides, where governments often cannot work.

There was very considerable goodwill by NGOs towards the European Union. Additionally NGOs recognise that EU funding is often crucial in helping to support and maintain a vibrant civil society that combats racism and discrimination against minorities. However, some of the procedures, delays, lack of transparency, and lack of flexibility cause immense frustration and limit the effectiveness of crucial work, damaging the E.U.'s reputation and reducing its opportunity to achieve results in this field.

The report suggested that the EU should use this programme strategically. The funds and projects selected should be selected strategically. Different approaches are needed for country based, regional or global projects and different roles for macro and micro projects should be established. They should not be based on short-term pressures. The experience of the projects themselves should be used to inspire EU policies, while the projects' methodology and the rich experience developed by these projects should be embraced by the EU and deployed in other projects that the EU funds in those countries.

The EIDHR RXM programme reached some of the most vulnerable members of discriminated communities in some of the most challenging environments in the world. Many important initiatives are being taken supporting dynamic local civil society organisations. The European Union should take pride in these achievements and seek ways to enhance them, inter alia by stimulating a constructive debate on the recommendations of this study and by exploring ways to expand this work.



1. Introduction

1.1 Methodology of the review

Early in 2005, The Human European Consultancy was invited by the Commission to undertake an evaluation to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the EIDHR funded projects in achieving the EU objectives concerning the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minority rights. Additionally the evaluation should assess the relevance of the priorities that have been identified for the period 2002-2004. Clear recommendations were expected on how the EIDHR programming and implementation need to be modified to achieve the EU objectives. Projects benefiting indigenous peoples were specifically excluded from this study. Dr. Alan Phillips was appointed as the project Team Leader and Anne Bouvier as the Desk Researcher.

This is the first such evaluation of the EIDHR (RXM) programme, consequently a new methodology has been designed to help establish whether the funded projects are achieving the objectives and priorities of the EU in the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minority rights.

The first phase of this evaluation was a desk study. The projects that were funded in 2001 and 2002 by EIDHR (RXM) were reviewed using documentation available at the Commission. This provided an initial assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the projects in achieving the programme objectives and gave an early view on whether the 2002 priorities are relevant¹.

One of the key elements of the desk study was to propose a list of the most relevant projects to be visited, to recommend key questions to be explored during the visits, and to suggest any necessary revisions to the ToR of the evaluation.

It was important for the evaluators to talk to the key staff at the Commission to help place the funded projects in the wider context of the EU policy and the Commission's Calls for Proposals, and to learn from the experience of the Commission. Once the draft of the Desk study was produced, a meeting was held in Brussels between some key Commission staff, the Project Team Leader and the Desk Researcher on 23 March. There were wide discussions ranging from the procedures and management challenges in the Calls for Proposals to the evidence that is emerging on specific projects.

This was developed in phase two by visits to 17 projects during June 2005 to verify the accuracy of the desk study, to identify additional information and to clarify various issues. Anne Bouvier visited four projects in Israel, Dr. Berthold Kuhn visited three projects in South Asia, Marjorie Farquharson visited four projects in Georgia and the Russian Federation and Alan Phillips visited 6 projects in the Balkans.

1 Projects designed to benefit Indigenous peoples were excluded as they will be part of a separate study.

Four field visit reports were prepared analysing the projects in the context of the programme. These led to this synthesis report, its conclusions and the set of recommendations on how to modify the programme to meet the objectives more effectively.

Phase three of this evaluation is a short study of the EIDHR RXM Calls for Proposals system. The Summary and Suggestions on the CFP system are included in section 3.4 of this final synthesis report.

The study had a number of limitations as the time spent in each location and with each project was very short, the documentation of monitoring and evaluation of projects was very limited while regional and global projects were challenged to maintain good communications and visits would be needed to a set of locations.

1.2 The contents of this report

This evaluation of the EIDHR (RXM) programme is provided in stand-alone reports, the first is the Desk study that was presented in April 2005 and is summarised in chapter 3.1 of this report. The second component is the review of the Calls for Proposals system that provides a link between the objectives that are set out for EIDHR (RXM) and summarised in chapter 3.4 of this report. This chapter also shows the projects that were selected by the European Commission (EC), of which 17 were visited during this programme review. The third component is this synthesis report, which contains important findings both in the main body but also in appendices, which provide the detailed review of the four sets of field visits.

Chapter two sets the context. It includes a brief, general overview of the global situation of minorities, the major areas where international standards seek to protect them and the definition of racial discrimination agreed under international law. This is supported by Appendix 2 that provides the text of the UN International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). It also provides a brief overview on the objectives of the EIDHR (RXM) programme.

Chapter three contains the main findings of the desk study. It includes the summary of the Desk study, an analysis of the distribution of funds geographically and by the size of project grants. It also includes the summary and suggestions from the Calls for Proposals review.

Chapter four is the beginning of the analytical component of this report, covering the capacity, competence and value of various kinds of civil society organisations including domestic Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in tackling issues of racism, discrimination, the denial of minority rights and in being project holders² administering EIDHR (RXM) funds.

Chapter five explores the relevance of projects reflecting on the use of a rights based approach that is exemplified in Appendix 2 with extracts from a training manual on human rights and rights based programming from one successful project holder. A review of the conceptual approaches adopted is followed by reflections on whether those most vulnerable to racism and discrimination were targeted by the programme, how projects mainstreamed minority participation in all aspects of the project and includes the important issue of mainstreaming gender and children's issues.

Chapter six provides an examination of the effectiveness of projects exploring their methodologies, the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation as well as the impact and sustainability of the work. This was problematic as the projects were still operational; it was often difficult to obtain evaluative reports. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" and this will take time.

Chapter seven is somewhat narrow and specific to the European Union, exploring communications and NGO/EU funding partnerships, where the use of the word partnership was controversial.

The recommendations in chapter nine follow the conclusions in chapter eight though the analysis in earlier chapters is not repeated and nor are all the implied minor recommendations.

1.3 Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the outstanding contributions of my colleagues Anne Bouvier, Marjorie Farquharson and Dr. Berthold Kuhn. It once again showed that in any human rights project, programme or evaluation the experience and the competence of those involved matters. Personal interactions and successful partnerships are crucial.

The field visits of the team were the bedrock of this report and they were inspirational in drawing together this report, including invaluable insights and recommendations from each member. Although there was never any intention to create a consensual document, interestingly the team agreed the major findings on the important issues in the recommendations, which are specific and in some areas calling for significant changes.

² The neutral term project holder is used, as a significant number of NGOs that were managing projects disputed whether any partnership existed and suggested that what existed was a donor/ client hierarchical relationship.

I also valued the intellectual support offered by Marcel Zwamborn and the logistical support offered by Human European Consultancy in Utrecht.

The commitment of information, advice and time given to this evaluation by Commission staff in Brussels and by staff in Delegations and EC offices in Belgrade, Delhi, Tel Aviv, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur, Moscow, Pristina, Skopje, and Tbilisi was remarkable. They could not have been more helpful and these constructive inputs played a crucial part in the success of this evaluation.

Nevertheless this report is an independent report and remains the responsibility of Human European Consultancy and in particular the project team leader.

2. Context

2.1 A global perspective-the situation of minorities

Ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities are often among the poorest of the poor, suffer discrimination, are frequently the victims of human rights abuses and experience racism and xenophobia. The large majority of violent conflicts in the world today are conflicts within states, with groups polarized across ethnic and religious divides and not across borders. The situation of minorities is, then, a matter of major international concern, and it is essential that good programmes are developed both to protect minorities and to bring communities together to prevent conflicts.

Although the concept of “race” is discredited today, combating racism remains a crucial issue. The United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) provides a working definition of racial discrimination in its first article³:

In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

This remains as valid today as it was in 1969, when the Convention came into force. By March 2004, 169 States had ratified this Convention, with the obligation to provide major reports to the treaty monitoring body every 4 years on conditions in their country and how they are addressing issues of racism. The treaty monitoring body of independent experts then reviews this and other evidence and produces a report on its findings. An inspection of the Treaty Body's web site and its findings shows how widespread racism is globally.

It is difficult to assess accurately what proportions of the world's population identify themselves as belonging to minority communities. Conservative estimates place this above 10 per cent, and some suggest that more than 20 per cent of the world's population belongs to several thousand different minority groups and subgroups. National statistics are often skewed for political reasons, and there is no universally accepted definition of ‘minorities’. The word has different interpretations in different societies throughout the world, while the United Nations General Assembly has not sought to reach a definition beyond that implied in the title of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted in December 1992⁴.

3 For the full text see http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm

4 This Declaration is shown in Appendix 2 alongside ICERD and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Many NGOs focus their work on non-dominant ethnic, religious and linguistic communities, whether or not they are numerical minorities. The concept thus relates to any self-identified community that is marginalized, without power, unable to take decisions over its destiny and often experiencing high levels of illiteracy, under-education and overt or covert discrimination. The basic rights of such communities need protection and promotion. They include a wide range of groups from Roma and Jewish communities in Europe to Arabs in Israel and Dalits in South Asia.

There is, however, a danger of generalizing about minorities and forgetting the complexity of their social composition, including the rural poor, urban migrants, older people, women and children. These groups may be considered as doubly vulnerable. What makes their situation particularly problematic is that there is often a deliberate political policy on the part of majorities and states not to give due regard to the legitimate interests of minorities, while members of minorities see their identity as central to their social and economic situation. They are often excluded from political power and decision-making in the development process, without equal opportunities to secure a better quality of life.

One further danger may lie in regarding ethnicities as fixed, rather than as the potentially fluid phenomena that they often are. 'Situational ethnicity' does occur, and individuals and groups do modify their self-identifications depending on circumstances.

Some of the key issues that international standards cover include

- The freedom of choice of identity,
- Prohibition of discrimination
- Full and effective equality
- Maintenance and development of culture and identity
- Spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue
- Freedom of assembly, association and expression
- Freedom to manifest a religion
- Freedom of expression and access to media
- Use of minority language with authorities
- Minority language names, signs and topographic indications
- Education for tolerance and understanding cultures
- Minority education establishments
- Learning a minority language
- Effective participation in civil, political, economic, cultural and social issue.
- Effective participation in development planning and programmes.
- The protection against population movements.

- Establishment of minority organisations and contacts across borders
- Inter state bilateral agreements.

These issues manifest themselves in different ways in different states and locations within states and require careful consideration in project planning.

2.2 EIDHR (RXM) programme

The EIDHR was created in 1994, and the legal bases adopted in 1999 highlighted thematic priorities, including 'support for minorities [and] ethnic groups...'

In 2001, the Commission agreed a Communication on the EU's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries.

The fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities (RXM) and indigenous peoples was identified as the fourth priority (out of four)⁵ of the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy at that time and consequently has been included in general and specific Calls for Proposals in 2001 and 2002, as the Commission could then plan more effectively its allocation of resources by themes and geographical regions.⁶ The programming document highlights instruments to be used for selecting EIDHR activities, which included Calls for Proposals. These instruments

'allow the Commission both to receive new ideas about activities and methodologies of implementation and to support projects that ensure ownership on the side of the implementing agency. [They are] used to mobilise a range of actors (especially int'l and local NGOs) when their objectives coincides with those of the EU. [They] facilitate not only a transparent selection process but also the wider participation of civil society as a partner in achieving the EIDHR aims'.⁷

The EIDHR supports a variety of actions at global, regional, country and local levels, through different actors. It has also defined 29 'focus countries' for half of which the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities is a priority.

Gender and children's issues have been mainstreamed as they constitute 'key areas of concern for the EU'⁸ along with the fight against poverty, which should lead to a 'focus on the most disadvantaged members of society as beneficiaries'.

5 Other priorities include: 1. Support to strengthen democratization, good governance and the rule of law; 2. Activities in support of the abolition of the death penalty; 3. Support for the fight against torture and impunity and for international tribunals and criminal courts.

6 as the EIDHR programming document 2002-4 purports to do.

7 EIDHR programming doc 2002-4, p.12

8 ibid. p 6 and also 'the inclusion of a gender perspective is an over-arching characteristic for all projects and programmes'

The EIDHR embedded in a wider policy framework⁹

In May 2001, the European Commission adopted a landmark Communication on The European Union's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries. This Communication identified those areas where the Commission could act more effectively to implement the European Union's policy in the fields of human rights and democratisation:

1. Through promoting coherent and consistent policies in support of human rights and democratisation;
2. Through placing higher priority on human rights and democratisation in the EU's relations with third countries and by taking a more pro-active approach, in particular by using the opportunities offered by political dialogue, trade and external assistance;
3. By adopting a more strategic approach to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, matching programmes and projects in the field with EU commitments on human rights and democratisation.

The policy approach laid down in the Communication places the EIDHR in the wider framework of the EU's policy on human rights and democratisation in the world. Consequently, the EIDHR is not merely a financing instrument, but also a policy instrument, which underpins and complements the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in the fields of human rights, democratisation and conflict prevention. As such, it must be put to use as effectively as possible, in the interest of the Union and, above all, of civil society in third countries.

The added value of the EIDHR identified in the programme document

"The EIDHR is uniquely placed to promote the founding values of the European Union and serves as a conduit for those values by channelling financial and moral support to civil society working on human rights and democratisation in third countries. The EIDHR can frequently provide the only effective basis for such support.

In this context, the EIDHR has one particular strength, which makes it specific and different from other, in particular geographic cooperation programmes: (1) EIDHR funding is awarded overwhelmingly to non-governmental, civil society based organisations active in the field of protecting/promoting human rights and democracy and (2) no prior consent or involvement of any authorities of the country of intervention is needed.

Thus, the EIDHR allows human rights and democratisation concerns in third countries to be addressed by supporting relevant civil society stakeholders directly. This provides for the necessary independence to develop and implement civil society projects, while building on the instrument's inherent ability to tackle problems at grassroots level.



It also provides for measures which may be politically sensitive in some instances and allows EIDHR funds to be used as seed money for positive change.”

All continents, and the vast majority of modern states, host minority populations. Europe itself is home to about a hundred national minorities. Minority rights are not often fully respected. The most common problems encountered are racism from the majority population; discriminatory treatment from institutions, particularly at the local level; educational and cultural disadvantage; and unsatisfactory level of participation in decision-making and economic prosperity. Some communities, like the Roma, even experience social and economic exclusion. Minority issues can entail a threat to peace and stability when they translate into nationalistic tendencies, or when peaceful coexistence with the mainstream population, or between different minorities, can no longer be *ensured*.

Minorities¹⁰

10 From Terms of Reference



3. Findings of supplementary studies

3.1 The desk study summary

This desk study has been designed to help establish whether the funded projects are achieving the objectives and priorities of the EU funded programme in 2001 and 2002 to fight against racism, xenophobia and promote the rights of minorities. It is the first phase of a two phase evaluation, where documents have been studied to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of 25 projects in achieving the objectives, to see whether the priorities determined for both years are relevant and make proposals for the second phase.

This report provides a simple historical background on the origins of the programme. It is followed by a brief overview of the geographical location and size of the projects that have been undertaken, where the largest 6 projects spent about 37% of the funds (E 6.31 million) and the smallest 6 spent about 14 % of the funds available. It explores the communities that have been targeted, with an assessment of the apparent performance of each project and classification, aspects of racism, xenophobia and minority rights, including participation, the objectives of each project, its duration and the exit strategy. It notes the skewing of the projects towards three countries where 13 of the 25 projects are located in Serbia/ Kosovo, The Russian Federation and Israel.

The study explores more of the details within each project and reviews specific issues that are referred to in the Terms of Reference (ToR). They include the apparent effectiveness and impact of each project, whether gender and age issues are mainstreamed, the project's visibility and its relevance, and the different prioritised methodologies employed. The nature of NGOs involved is explored where it notes that one international NGO, Caritas, attracted support for 4 of its projects.

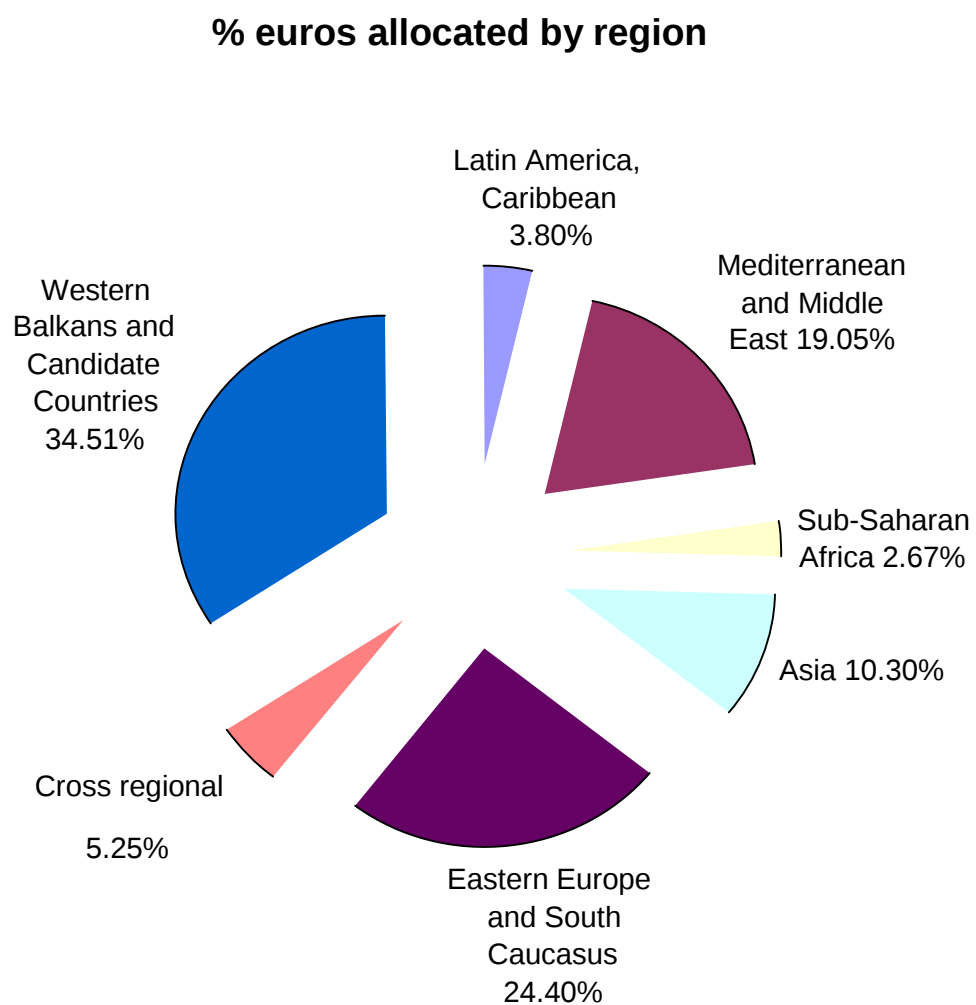
This report recognises the limitations of the Desk Study, in part due to the lack of comprehensive documentation and the paucity of independent or participative evaluations of projects.

The report makes proposal to visit 6 projects in the Western Balkans and Candidate Countries, 4 in Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus, 3 in the Mediterranean and Middle East and two in Asia, closely matching the geographical balance of the projects that were funded to help contrast methodologies. Specific projects are chosen to ensure that a range of different methodologies in a variety of environments are explored and that projects with the highest and lowest scores of effectiveness in the desk study are investigated to see whether this form of review is substantiated in practice and what lessons may be learnt from them. They will look at the synergy with other local EU initiatives, the responsiveness of projects to changed circumstance, the contribution of sustained experience and what understanding there is of minority rights and inter-community cooperation.

It proposes adjustments to the evaluation questions indicated in the ToR, proposing that issues of participation, project integration with other initiatives and the indirect benefits of projects are also explored. It suggests that the next phase of the evaluation should include proposals on ways of strengthening the call for proposals, as it is a crucial intermediary step between the objectives and priorities and the selection of projects.

3. 2 Overview of allocations of funding

Continents A high proportion of the projects selected and funds allocated were for European initiatives. The analysis shows that 60% of the 25 projects and 65% of the expenditure of the total sum of € 17.1 million allocated were based in the Western Balkans and Candidate Countries, Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus, with 34.% of projects in the Western Balkans and Candidate Countries, 24.% of projects in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus, and 5.% on a project spanning those two regions. There were 20% of projects in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 12% in Asia, 4% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 4% in Sub-Saharan Africa. (See Figure 1) Under € 1.3 million is being spent through this budget line, in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia - the poorest and most populous continents of the world. However there were 4 indigenous peoples projects in Latin America and 1 in Asia that were excluded from this evaluation and will be included in a separate study.

Figure1

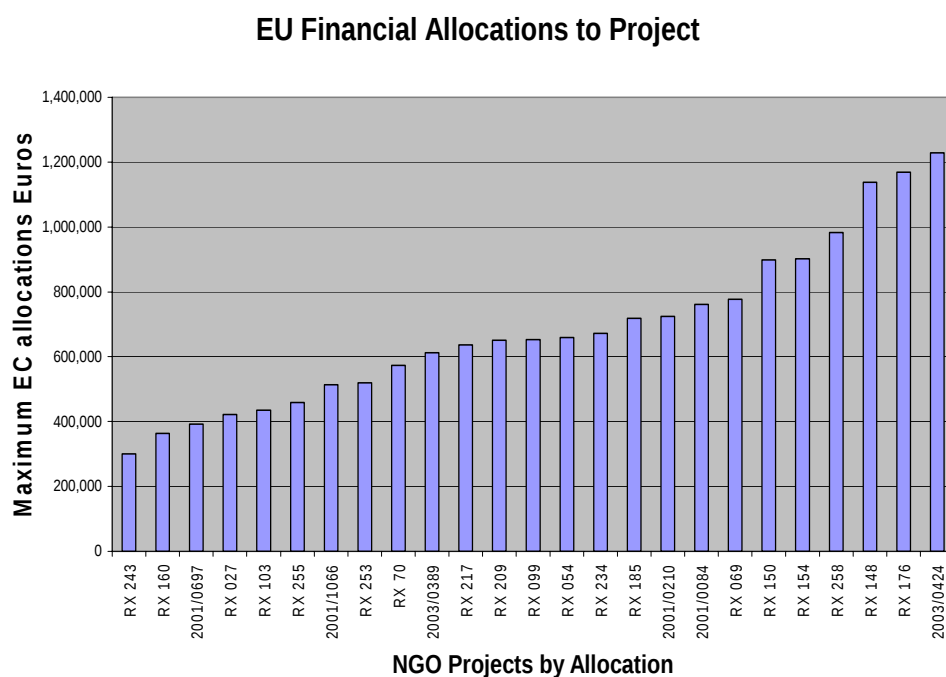
Geographical

Further analysis shows that almost half of the projects were in three States. There were 6 funded projects in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (2) and in Kosovo (4), 3 in Russia and 4 in Israel. Another 6 of the total of 25 projects were regional projects, two of which were also being implemented in South Eastern Europe. Consequently there were only 7 projects due to spend under 4 million euros for all the remaining countries of the world. There were three country projects in Asia and Africa (Nepal, Malaysia and Democratic Republic of Congo) and one cross-regional project.

Those three states are three of twenty nine focus countries and this programme has been identified as potentially beneficial to a majority of them. However in this study it was not appropriate to review this skewing and the reasons for it, which may be due to a variety of factors including the system of Calls for Proposals.

3.2.3. Scale

The scale of the EU contribution over three years ranged from a little over €300,000 euros per project to €1,200,000 per project. The 6 (24 %) smallest projects received € 2.37 million (3.7 %), the middle 13 projects were allocated € 8.46 million (49.4%) and the largest 6 (24%) projects received € 6.31million (36.9 %) of the funds available. The size of these grants is very large for most human rights organisations based in any single country compared to their normal annual expenditure. Although these expenditures are often phased over three year projects they present significant challenges of growth at the outset and reduction at the end. One indicator of this challenge is the difficulty project holders have in conducting effective needs assessments and partnerships before the outset of the project and the difficulty in preparing viable exit strategies that lead to the sustainability of the work. This is complicated by the Calls for Proposals excluding the funding of existing projects and excluding the continued funding of successful EU supported projects. (See figure 2)

Figure 2

3.3 The study of projects in field visits

The desk study assessed the projects to be visited using the following criteria:

- High or low score of a project in the desk study analysis.
- Geographical location
- Whether the region is a conflict area
- Themes addressed by the project
- Inclusion of 'high cost' projects and 'low cost' ones
- Inclusion of projects with emphasis on gender and age differentiation.
- Inclusion of projects addressing especially vulnerable groups e.g. Roma and Dalits.

Following the presentation of the Desk Study's analysis and recommendations and following a meeting between the Consultants and staff from the Commission, it was agreed that the following projects in four geographical areas would be visited by four international experts, each was to be accompanied by one local expert.

South Asia	Three projects were visited during the field evaluation from 20 June to 2 of July 2005: 1. The regional advocacy and experience sharing project of the South Asia Forum for Human Rights (RX 160), 2. The Oxfam project on combating discrimination against Dalits in Nepal (RX 027) and The Friedrich Naumann Foundation project targeting the minority community of Tamil women in Malaysia (RX 258).
The Balkans	Six projects were visited during the field evaluation from 6 to 17 June 2005 Visits were made to: 1. Care Germany/ Serbia that with local partners had established a Roma Community Advocates project in Serbia;(2 RX 185) 2. The Serbian Helsinki Committee that was implementing an inter ethnic human rights education project in Serbia. (3RX 389) 3. CARITAS Germany/ Skopje that had implemented a Roma Community Advisers project in six locations and five countries of the Balkans.(1RX 0210) 4. CARITAS Austria/ Kosovo that with its local partner had implemented two wide-ranging interethnic projects in western Kosovo. (1RX 1066 & 2RX103) Care Kosovo/Germany that, together with four local partners, was implementing a focused inter-ethnic education project in Southern Kosovo. (3 RX 424).
Israel	Four projects were visited during the field evaluation from 19 to 26 June 2005: 1. Shatil, an NGO based in Israel, working in the Negev on a project to advance Bedouin education. (2 RX 054) 2. MADA Al Carmel, providing original research material and political analysis an NGO based in Haifa Israel, (2 RX 150). 3. MOSSAWA, an NGO based in Haifa, is implementing a campaign against discrimination in Israel, (2 RX 209). 4. Community Advocacy, an NGO based in Israel and working in the Negev on a project to promote the equal rights of Bedouin (2 RX 243).
Georgia and the Russian Federation	Four projects were visited during the field evaluation in June 2005: 1. The Media Diversity Institute in Tbilisi: a region-wide training and capacity-building project; (RX176) 2. International Youth Centres set up by World Vision along two borders of Georgia: a training and capacity-building project with a rural focus; (RX234)

3. European Dialogue's project with its local partner in Moscow, the Inter-Ethnic Centre: a localized urban training project coordinated from Moscow; (RX70)
4. The Moscow Bureau for Human Rights: a nationwide monitoring network. (RX148)

The project holders were told that this was a programme evaluation, the projects were being visited to provide insights on the programme as a whole and to guide future programming. It was explicitly stated that this was not intended to be a project evaluation and to confirm this it was also noted that in the very short time available (one day per project) it would be unreasonable to conduct a project evaluation or place significant weight on any one project visit. Consequently the findings of the field visits have not been shared first with the project holders at this stage, as would be the custom in any project evaluation.

During the short visits, meetings were held with the European Commission Delegation or local representation and where possible conversations were held with senior government officials or junior ministers, and other civil society organisations and informal conversations were held with members of minority communities.

The outputs of these field visits are the reports on these missions, which are provided in full in Appendices 4, 5, 6 and 7. These field visits took advantage of the initial desk study and its preliminary review of each project; they tested and added substantially to the initial findings. These field reports and the subsequent discussions between the Consultants was the building block of this synthesis report.

3.4 Study of calls for proposal system.

Summary of "How to make the (CFP) system more effective".

This short review of the Calls for Proposal (Calls) system of EIDHR (RXM) for macro-projects emerged as part of a wider evaluation of the EIDHR RXM programme. This review does not claim to be comprehensive but it took advantage of field visits to 17 NGO project locations in June 2005, conversations with EC Delegations during these visits and the understanding accumulated from reading the documentation for the wider study. Additionally three collective meetings were held with INGOs based in Europe and a questionnaire was sent to a wide range of relevant NGOs.

This review, primarily focusing on the views of NGOs, may have greatest value when it is read in context with other internal and external studies of Calls for Proposals.

It highlights the links between existing EIDHR programme policy and the procedures set in place to fulfil them. This review has several distinct sections that include the key components of the best projects, how to enhance the initial application stage, how to improve the selection of the best applications and how to share information on the decisions made and the rationale for them. This report continues with a review of programming, partnership concerns and other management issues ending with some conclusions, end notes and annexes. The twenty five Suggestions made follow the Summary.

It became clear that there are serious problems being experienced by many NGOs with the Calls for Proposal system. In 2002, one third of all applications under the EIDHR (RXM) programme were deemed to be ineligible for technical reasons and only 15% of the technically eligible EIDHR (RXM) projects were selected for funding.

The number of days used by human rights staff in NGOs in preparing and processing highly complex applications for projects that were not funded must have been immense. It is not uncommon for several staff to spend much time over a few months in different locations to prepare funding application. It represents a substantial loss to human rights NGOs and the Commission itself. This has demoralised staff and led to tensions that are harmful for cooperation between the EU and NGOs, who should be natural allies in promoting human rights.

The current system is neither seen to be transparent nor seen to be objective throughout by NGOs. The system unfortunately limits both judgments on the quality of proposals and dialogue between the Commission and potential partners. Many other major donors value the good judgment of experienced staff and their sensitive dialogue with applicants.

It is widely agreed that there is an immediate need for better communications. Beyond that, many NGOs argue for a fundamental reform of the system to help serious, high quality applications that are promoting equity, tolerance and peace rather than a system where most of the EIDHR applications are rejected on minor technicalities.

The current system is failing to meet the ideals of the European Union and the human rights principles it stands for, it is taking resources away from important human rights work and requires a radical new approach. A range of new approaches is identified in the following twenty five suggestions. They could radically improve the system and form the basis of a new partnership between the EU and NGOs on human rights programming.

This was a short report consequently the 25 Suggestions listed below are not given the status of recommendations, as it has not been possible to explore the viability of each one of these in sufficient depth. Nevertheless it is the view of the consultants that these are all serious suggestions some of which come from Commission staff and some from the consultants themselves. Most of these Suggestions come from highly experienced NGOs, who have worked conscientiously with the Commission, who wish it and the EU well. Many were determined to be constructive and to be genuine partners in searching for much better ways of working together with the European Union.

Summary of suggestions

1. One NGO suggested the setting up of a "List serve" for informing NGOs of the publication of Calls for Proposals and system for NGOs registering to receive other information on Calls for Proposals.
2. The EC should let NGOs know as far in advance as possible that a Call for Proposals will be launched, providing information on the 'campaigns' selected for each country.
3. The EC should seek to establish a programme framework that is valid for several years and avoid annual changes, unless these are essential.
4. The 2 stage calls for proposals system should be maintained and decisions should be made promptly (8 weeks) on whether applicants have passed the first stage. Applicants should then be advised on how to submit a full application for the second stage.
5. The Commission should create a central database of eligible NGOs. The Commission should inform NGOs of any gaps in the information they have provided as soon as possible, while NGOs should be responsible for reviewing and updating their information.
6. The EU should revise grant application forms and guidelines to ensure that they are brief, avoid repetitive language, and that they use plain language suitable for non-native readers. The eligibility of NGOs to receive grants should be managed separately. (see 5 above)
7. An acknowledgement form should be designed listing all the required documents from applicants. This should be completed first by the applicant NGO and then by The Commission. One copy should be held by The Commission. One copy, a confirmation of safe receipt, should be returned to the applicant NGO as soon as the application package has been opened.
8. The selection and training process for the external "assessors" of project applications should be reviewed:
 - The assessors should receive training on assessing project documents and how to use the evaluation grid to ensure a consistent assessment of all aspects of all applications by all assessors.
 - A meeting of assessors with NGOs might be helpful to ensure that assessors have a better understanding of the nature of NGOs and their work.

Pre- application
procedures

Selecting the best
applications

Following the selection of
the best applications

- A data-base of evaluators and assessors should be established with a system devised to ensure they are of the right calibre to undertake this work.
9. The Commission should set maximum time limits for the two stage application procedure, these should be realistic but new systems of staffing are required to ensure they are met. The suggested time limits may be:
 - In first phase to review applications and make decisions on eligibility 8 weeks
 - In second phase to make awards 12 weeks.
 10. There should be some flexibility built into the approval of projects to allow them to be adapted, or partial funding approved, if one element takes place in a country not falling within the list of priority countries.
 11. On request, the EC should provide information to all applicants on why their project application was successful or unsuccessful. This may be done on the basis of the assessors' notes (who should remain anonymous). This answer should be provided within 15 working days in line with the Code of Good Administrative behaviour.
 12. The EC should hold a dialogue with each project holder on why projects were accepted and how they could be strengthened. This should be undertaken on the basis of anonymous assessors' notes.
 13. EC Delegations should take quick decisions on administrative issues and changes of project design/implementation, upon the written request of the principal partner organisation. The Commission in Brussels should review how to speed up its decision making when Delegations depends on Head Quarters for a derogation.
 14. The EC should ensure that all project files, whether paper or computer files, hold all the key project information. This would include yearly reports of progress and a trail to show the logic of all stages of decision-making. These should be open to E.C. Delegations, other Commission staff, relevant consultants, and Auditors.

Innovations in
programming

15. The EC should consider the possibility of awarding targeted funds for successful projects to enable their continuation beyond the 3 years planned for projects. A maximum of three years is a short duration for projects to promote minority rights and tolerance.
16. Levels of co-financing required from NGOs should be more consistent between the different EC funding programmes. These should be as low as possible to avoid burdening smaller NGOs. The rationale for any differences should be clearly explained.
17. The EC, in particular EC Delegations, should explore ways of seeking synergies between projects and bring together project holders and potential project holders to learn from each other. Wider discussions should be held on the EIDHR programme in Brussels and locally.

18. The EU should rethink, consult and reformulate the nature of its relationship with its grantees to create a genuine partnership. This would increase the effectiveness of its EIDHR programme and create considerable goodwill for the European Union.
19. The Commission should set up a formal consultation structure with Human Rights NGOs to promote a comprehensive, constructive, sustained and well-organised dialogue. This should take place in Brussels and in the field (see 24 below).
20. The E.U. should consider Framework Partnership Agreements for Human and Minority rights work. Beneficiaries of such agreements may be entrusted to provide grants to support local minority based NGOs, within agreed parameters.
21. The EU should propose innovative ways to support minority based NGOs. This might include the allocation of modest amounts of funds for EC Delegations to provide targeted support to promote the effective participation of minority communities.
22. There should be careful consultations with different actors in the field, including DG Relex and E.C. Delegations, before a programming document or a Call for Proposals is agreed.
23. EC Delegations should be more closely involved in the formulation of Calls for Proposals and the selection of projects. Their judgements should be valued, emphasizing constructive engagement rather than the exercise of a veto. They should meet NGO project staff/ partners to undertake local assessments, helping to identify their experience, understanding and commitment.
24. E.C. Delegations should initiate meetings in the field with the different actors involved, to address operational issues around each of its campaigns, and around regional issues. The objectives would be to identify strategic priorities and to find practical ways to address them in each region. Such links will enhance real partnerships and show the EU support for human rights. (see also 19 above).
25. EC Delegations may be assisted and the concern of governments may be allayed by regional discussions on EU global human rights objectives. Some of the language of international standards and agreements (e.g. ICERD, FCPNM, CRC) should be used to reinforce confidence in the programme in future Calls for Proposals.

Partnerships

E.C. delegations



4. NGOs and their capacities

4.1 Capacity of INGOs

Two of the three projects visited in Asia were managed by international NGOs founded in Europe that had strong management capacities, and one by an Asian region INGO network, which had little experience of managing large programmes.

The Malaysian project was managed by an INGO with a strong management capacity. It operated from abroad, which may have adversely affected the cost effectiveness of the project. However, this appears to have been offset by the commitment and the competence of the team.

Five of the six projects reviewed in the Balkans were managed by international NGOs with local bases, and a number of years' experience of managing resettlement and development projects in the region. The sixth was a well-known local NGO in Serbia active in campaigning. It had limited experience of large operating projects and was often in conflict with the government on its policies. Consequently its work would be strengthened by partnerships with other NGOs, which has now begun, and advice from those with broader programming experience.

The two projects visited in The Russian Federation had RF project holders and the two projects visited in Georgia had INGO project holders based in the country.

All organizations funded in Israel are Israeli organizations. Out of the four project holders, two were Jewish organizations.

In general those projects that were managed by INGOs with many years of experience in human rights and with minorities appeared to have good management capacities that made a significant difference. They had capable and experienced staff that, as a team, had shown themselves able to fulfil the aims and goals of similar projects producing valuable outcomes. This included organisations like OXFAM, CARE, and the Media Diversity Institute.

Those that had a good teamwork approach, with good local partner organisations enhancing local ownership, appeared to be the most effective. However there was one project working in Nepal that had a more limited capacity to act effectively, as it was in an area of violent conflict that had not been highlighted in the project proposal.

Additionally there was one regional project with insufficient management capacity for implementing such an ambitious regional project¹¹. This was identified in the initial assessment and, once again, was apparent during this study. Although the project was highly relevant, it had significant coordination problems.

Location

Management capacity

11 Regional or global projects are those that have a constant theme through many countries within a continent or globally.

There were internal conflicts within its local partnerships that could be resolved by experienced good managers, by closer external monitoring by the Delegations collectively (though this is complicated) and helped by an independent evaluation/ support from a Consultant.

The documentation and project management of many of the current projects (e.g. in Serbia and Kosovo) was impressive. They provided up to date information and analysis, presented issues thoughtfully and cooperated well with their local partners. The good management of one local partner in Kosovo today contrasted sharply with the reports of its predecessor that had failed within a year. It had been a newly founded local NGO that had been led by an international manager who apparently had poor management skills for NGO development or rights activities.

In most cases, local partners would have benefited from greater capacity building support by the INGO, alongside greater transparency and dialogue on key aspects of project development and funding. In some cases systematic training was provided on aspects of NGO management, gender analysis, and communication skills inter alia but in a number of cases this was not evident in needs assessments within the project proposals. It was disappointing to find that in many INGO managed projects there was no plan for their gradual disengagement over the duration of the project, with responsibility passing to local NGOs and local staff. One reason for this may be the comparatively short duration of projects that consequently emphasised timetabled products rather than continuing processes.

4.2 Local NGOs

There was great diversity throughout the programme in the nature and experience of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Some NGOs were substantial and had considerable experience and a fine reputation, with staff having managed complex, though usually smaller, projects in difficult environments for many years. At the other end of the spectrum there could be small community based organisations, whose strength came from their base in minority communities with the commitment and understanding that this brings, but who lacked the experience to manage the large grants and project activities associated with EIDHR macro funding. Some but not all the local partners were visited during the field visits, as time permitted. On one occasion, security considerations limited the scope of the mission.

Many of the INGOs had involved local partner organisations as real partners. They had ensured that the local partner had a real sense of ownership and provided help with their capacity building.

They had engaged each other in a dialogue on the project, carefully discussed the modalities looked to using each other's strengths, were participatory and transparent in their decision making and monitored and evaluated the progress of the project together. Nonetheless even in the best projects it was not clear if the local partners were involved in all phases of the project design, in open decisions on the use of resources and in all elements of the fundraising.

In a number of projects it was difficult to see a real partnership in place and this could only be tested by an evaluation of the project. In some cases the role of the INGO appeared to be too controlling, sometimes understandably as there is a fear of mistakes made by people learning on the job, as disagreements between communities and between local government can have severe consequences in a highly sensitive environment.

Conversely there was another case in the Balkans where an INGO seemed to have delegated almost all of the work to the local NGO and appeared to be adding little value. Since the budgetary allocations were not transparent to all parties it was not possible to judge if there was a fair distribution of funds and responsibilities.

A number of local NGOs in Kosovo and the Russian Federation had developed significantly through the experience of managing part of the project and gone on to apply successfully in their own right for other grants from other donors. This may have put them in competition with INGO funding applications, particularly those that maintain a local operational presence. Conversely one NGO in Nepal seems to have become dependent on its partner INGO (itself a development donor) for possible future funding.

One project holder that had been highly sensitive to the resources of local partners was an INGO in Georgia that had bought and renovated buildings as youth centres, transferring them to the local partners. All partners hoped that this would protect them from eviction and give them an income generating capacity in future.

The project holders usually built upon the contacts and relations that they already had in societies. In some regions like the Balkans, where local funding is very hard to come by, there is no long-standing experience of NGOs. However the artificial creation and demise of one local "partner" in Kosovo run by an international is a salutary lesson of the high risks of working with untested individuals and organisations to implement a new, large project.

Similarly, one local Russian Federation NGO unexpectedly acquired complete ownership of its project, after its disagreement with its original INGO partner.

With the help of the EC Delegation it has engaged another local NGO to help implement the project, but this appears to have been a marriage of convenience that neither side has yet invested with a sense of “shared ownership”.

One INGO project in the Russian Federation had devised a “re-granting” scheme, which enabled local partners to allocate small grants to other NGO projects in the field of minorities’ access to justice. This was also designed to encourage a sense of ownership and may in part have been successful.

In Israel, civil society is vibrant and professional, which has enabled organisations to attract significant funding from the EC through the Calls for Proposals and previously through the MEDA democracy programme.

These projects’ varied experience highlights the need, in any partnership between INGOs, NGOs and community based organisations, for transparency throughout the operations, good project management skills and trust that has been built overtime between INGOs, local NGOs and CBOs, where all parties know each others’ strengths and weaknesses.

INGOs are often paid more attention by the authorities in environments where democracy and the rule of law are weak and an international force is present. This can be disempowering for local NGOs and needs to be addressed sensitively by INGOs. Additionally the relationship between INGOs and local NGOs can be based around funding agreements, where the INGO is the dominant party, and the relationship is not rooted on a longstanding and shared commitment to ensure that rights and enduring partnerships are promoted throughout the project and its relationships.

4.3 NGOs and regional/global projects

The three regional / global projects that were reviewed all came within the lowest scoring group when assessed in the desk study. During the field visits it proved most difficult to arrange meetings with their project managers and there were problems with meetings with local partners. There are high costs associated with international travel and with mechanisms including international conferences, seminars and workshops. Coordination and management is challenging, complicated by the timetables of academic life that often affect these projects, and in one case the INGO that was managing the project did not appear to be up to the task.

Local activities of regional projects can be isolated, lose the economies of scale of a concentrated macro-project and, unless rooted in well established vibrant local organisations, they may be unable to keep pace with the local agendas and evolving practices that are essential to be influential in promoting change.

The projects were difficult to assess during the field visits as it proved impossible to visit more than two local partners and in one case it was impossible to make contact with the organisation managing the project.

The multi country location of the projects not only made them more difficult to manage in a coherent way with shared values and approaches, but also proved challenging for the Commission and its Delegations to monitor and support. It is clear that if resources were available, a specific evaluation should be undertaken on these three regional/global projects at several of their operating locations.

The projects visited were inherently top-down in their character and in one of the projects there were major unresolved tensions evident. Additionally the strong academic character of two projects raised questions concerning the projects' impact or processes they would facilitate in meeting the challenges of racism and discrimination against minorities.

The Consultants see an important role for research and analysis in understanding aspects of racism and minority rights. In general, however, such an approach does not fit comfortably into the EIDHR programme, unless it is a modest part of action research (e.g. baseline studies) or evaluative analysis that leads to a direct improvement in combating racism and the discrimination against minorities.

This analysis is a heavy criticism of regional and global projects based on a limited sample of such projects and it should not be inferred that the Consultants are opposed in principle to such projects, providing additional criteria are taken into account. The organisations must show that they have a good proven track record of coordinating international projects with the same practical theme of combating racism or discrimination against minorities in a set of countries. They should have been exposed to independent external evaluations from major donors to test if the fine words of project descriptions are met by equally fine actions to benefit minorities. However, if one Delegation alone believes that the initiative in their country is inappropriate, they should not be rejected in totality, rather at most this component should be removed from the project.

There needs to be a clear rationale behind supporting regional or global projects that is able to provide substantial added value to overcome their inherent weaknesses. They should be judged on whether they are seeking to have a direct impact regionally or globally using regional or global mechanisms.

Consequently projects that promote the understanding and the practical implementation of regional or international standards locally, like ICERD, and advance the knowledge and understanding of regional or global treaty monitoring bodies on issues such as the economic participation of minority women (an issue that is covered by two of the projects in Kosovo) should be supported. Similarly global projects may also be relevant and have an impact in responding to the causes and consequences of the migration of discriminated and persecuted groups of minorities.

Similarly it would be highly advantageous if a project brought together regional project partners and key EU actors, including the Commission, Parliament and Presidency, to explore their models of good and bad project practice in a specific field (e.g. NGO multicultural projects for minority youth). It could also explore the practical ramifications and the policy implications of this work for the partners and the EU creating synergies and sustained concern. These are two theoretical examples as the Consultants are not aware of any such projects being developed.

4.4 Project management and the efficiency of INGOs and local NGOs

Size and experience matters

One of the largest grants in the Russian Federation, – over €1 million – and another grant to a regional project in Asia (€ 400,000) -were awarded to project holders that had limited managerial experience. No capacity building element had been built into the proposals and the subsequent managerial difficulties have been felt by the organization itself and by the EC Delegations, which have tried to assist with the project implementation. It is not clear to the Consultants how these decisions were taken.

In contrast, another project holder had successfully anticipated the possibility of uneven local partner capacity. It had factored into its budget money and time for ‘capacity building’ and ‘team building’ for the local staff it had hired, and this was felt to be beneficial by all partners. The element of team-work was visible to the Consultants.

With hindsight, several other project holders recognised that capacity building would have laid an even ground for their projects – and would sometimes have helped to bring all their local partners to a level of awareness needed for carrying out work with ethnic minorities.

Many of the project holders employed staff from different ethnicities. However on occasions this appeared unbalanced with the leadership and senior management either composed narrowly around international staff or those from the dominant group in society, while the trainers and community workers were from the minority communities. There were exceptions in Israel where two project holders had exclusively Arab staff. This exclusivity can also present challenges in creating wider alliances, though it appeared not to be a difficulty in these specific cases.

All RXN funded project holder should maintain confidential self-identified data on the ethnic, linguistic, age and gender composition of their staff at different levels. Any disparities should be analysed and if necessary targeted recruitment implemented. This data should be provided in project proposals and in mid term reporting as an indicator that this issue is being considered.

It was not within the remit to look at the financial transactions and cost effectiveness of the projects. Nevertheless it should be reported that a number of NGOs told the Consultants that they had significant cash flow crises caused by delays in funding from Brussels. This led to considerable anxiety, delays in activities, delays in the recruitment or retention of staff and inefficient use of staff and management time. No judgement is made on the reasons for these delays, which may be due to the systems in place or through the working methods of individuals and projects. However it was reported as a serious problem for some.

One area that clearly does need careful planning is management training of local partners leading over the length of the project to self-reliance. There was a specific request for this from the partners of one of the Serbian projects and this should be inbuilt into projects initially.

The importance of capable and committed staff working within countries cannot be overstated. To achieve this it is important to show a commitment to local staff effectively, and make plans to support staff that are working in areas of former conflict or high tension. Support is needed in tackling the traumatic circumstances they can face daily and the danger they may face from time to time. The latter is true for all human rights workers in areas where human rights are being abused by State and non-State actors.

Some project holders showed a creative synergy between the experience of international actors and local partners, which may change over time as the local partner is mentored by the international NGO and develops its own experience and capacity and the INGO develops a new role for itself avoiding creating any dependencies.

Staffing and resources

Management training and staff support.

Human rights INGOs

This should be encouraged in future programming, recognising that in some countries there is already sufficient capacity for local NGOs to manage their own micro and macro projects.

Some project holders took a “rights” based approach, rather than a “welfare” based one. They involved serious training for beneficiaries in the international human rights standards and mechanisms most relevant to them and provided advice and opportunities for using these in their work. The two projects in Serbia were particularly strong here.

All projects and their staff would benefit from training on the international standards on minority rights and the elimination of racial discrimination, their implementation elsewhere, while knowledge of domestic and international monitoring mechanisms would have been of benefit to their practical work in promoting minority rights. This should be built into projects in the future. It will also be proposed later in this report that all projects should have a rights based perspective even when they include service delivery components in their work.

In some NGOs there was sometimes a lack of experience due to the number of young graduates involved in NGO work and because organizations can be new and learn as they go along. Minority based organizations made up in enthusiasm, commitment, energy and a sense of urgency to their work what they didn’t always have in institutional capacity and NGO management experience. However sometimes they may offer an overly discrimination sensitive reading of every event or action taken by a government authority or other organizations. It can be challenging in any society to determine the motivation behind various actions. An outsider may understand the same issues as the simple consequences of certain political and economic decisions that may impact minorities disproportionately, but are more likely to affect any poorer people regardless of their ethnicity.

When there is considerable polarization in society it is often useful to encourage funding projects with an international NGO partner working with local NGOs. This would bring a broader perspective and experience from other regions, while they may also help perform some advocacy function among civil society in Europe and help strengthen links with the EU and its policy makers.

Project applicants should be aware that an international NGO partner might play a supporting and sometimes advisory role and not always play a leading role. They can also offer political support and elements of protection to local NGOs.

INGOs can provide a good framework for bringing together professionals working in similar ways on inter ethnic issues in different countries.

This can add real value when states have been at war together or there is animosity between the governments of each state.

One project in the Caucasus allowed people working on media issues in Armenia and Azerbaijan to meet in neutral Georgia. Disappointingly another regional project in the Balkans had two sections bringing people from Serbia and Macedonia together, and another bringing people from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo together on Roma issues, but missed an opportunity to build links between people from societies that had been at war.

4.5 NGOs and macro projects

The size of the funding available for any one macro project is substantial (300,000 – 1,400,000 Euro) even for international human rights organisations. This provides opportunities as well as risks. This funding should be used in a different way from micro project funding. It is significantly large to pilot initiatives in a range of locations to trial a methodology supported by government, possibly with EU help through other funding streams.

It can be particularly advantageous where there is not a tradition of active NGOs managing projects (e.g. Kosovo) and where a project has the wider value of strengthening the existence and reputation of civil society and human rights initiatives.

Such funding can help create international networks. These are particularly valuable for those who have been isolated through repressive governments in the past (e.g. Serbia) and obstacles caused by visa regimes that make travel to EU states or within a region very difficult. It can also bring in external expertise to draw on personal and institutional experience of managing large human rights initiatives and, importantly, to train local staff and, through practical devolution, build up a capacity of local NGOs. The large amounts of funds for projects can be used to pay for European staffing costs in Europe or locally, which are modest for European based professionals. It enables essential tasks to go ahead that cannot be undertaken by local staff and can be crucial for the success of a project.

The same large sums can be given to locally based organisations and, apart from the risk of failing to take advantage of the unique opportunities available through a macro (rather than a micro) grant. These large sums outside Western Europe have many times the purchasing power and can be very difficult to absorb efficiently in 3 years. Additionally they can create jealousy and resentment rather than solidarity and support among other local NGOs (for instance in the Russian Federation). This can be damaging to the human rights movement locally, leaving a weaker structure once EU funding ends.

One response has been to look at funding more partners or subcontractors locally. This is possible but it takes time to develop mature relationships, testing each others' strengths and weaknesses and finding a good *modus operandi*.

Another option favoured by a number of organisations, which were asked about this issue, would be to extend the funding over a longer period, e.g. five years. There are clearly many advantages in this, though it would be crucial to tackle issues that were strategic and likely to be relevant over 5 years and it would be essential to be able to adapt the project to respond to mid term evaluations and major political changes.

It was outside the terms of reference of this consultancy to look at expenditures and cost effectiveness. As a matter of principle, it is important that all the financial arrangements of a project are transparent to the operating staff of NGOs and partners working within a country. There should be no embarrassment about the higher costs needed to purchase the same standard of living in Western Europe and the costs needed to bring in international expertise. However, over time these costs should be significantly reduced, as local staff is trained and measures are taken to strengthen the capacity of genuinely locally based NGOs.

5. Relevance of projects

5.1 Introduction

This chapter endeavours to establish the relevance of the projects based on the local context and the objectives of RXN that have already been described. The sections include targeting the most vulnerable, focusing on rights, the nature of the NGOs, the projects, participation, gender and children's issues, and visibility and communications and are all issues that were explicitly or implicitly identified as key areas for review either by the original terms of reference or by the subsequent desk study. The methods by which the NGOs who were awarded grants then took the opportunity of strengthening their capacity are examined in section 6.

A variety of different approaches were displayed in the organisation and day to day running of the projects visited by the Consultants. In many cases, the issues to be tackled are structural, complex and politically sensitive, and the chosen methodology must have the valuable aim of ensuring access to citizens' rights. The title of the programme is the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, consequently a primary aim should be to promote democracy and human rights. Minority rights are an integral part of human rights and a wide range of INGOs and IGOs adopt a rights based approach in their programming to promote the progressive realisation of rights. These include agencies like CARE and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

A rights based approach has many advantages though it is evident that the title of the programme, "The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights" demands the use of democratic and human rights methodologies. This implies the effective participation of "beneficiaries" within the projects and a human rights based approach (see Appendix 2). It leads to the empowerment of those who have suffered discrimination and enables the principles set out in the programme document to be realised by domestic legislation and policies and measured against international standards. Once these rights are recognised by a state they should be inherently sustainable through domestic redress and the pressure exerted by international monitoring mechanisms. There is a need to ensure that these rights are well known and the mechanisms for claiming these rights are simple and accessible to all. Precedents and examples of good practice promote the effective enjoyment of these rights. Rights based social and economic projects can be placed in a wider context and aspire to an ultimate goal, through the gradual realisation of rights within a state.

The Georgian projects focused on rights issues that are amongst the most relevant to ethnic minorities in the countries today - namely access to economic and political life, and fair representation in, and access to the media.

They involved serious training for beneficiaries in the international human rights standards and mechanisms most relevant to them.

The Russian Federation projects also focused on issues that were highly relevant: relations between police and ethnic minorities, and access to justice for victims of racial abuse, but the projects could have only limited success because of the institutional context in which they took place. This inevitably lessened the overall relevance of the outcome. Until the government achieves institutional changes, these NGO initiatives may not seem to be fully relevant and appropriate. However by the project taking forward issues to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and the potential of raising issues through the monitoring of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, external pressures are a longer term strategy for helping to overcome domestic inertia.

One NGO in Serbia had consistently challenged governments on their human rights record and had consequently made them unpopular. However they have not engaged their trainees in rights campaigns and a question was raised on whether a politically controversial organisation from the majority community was best placed to advance inter community cooperation. This criticism may be a little harsh as they received funding under another EIDHR “campaign”.

For two of the projects in Israel, the projects’ relevance was less visible in practice than had appeared from the documentation. Both projects aim at providing equal access for Bedouin people to education facilities and social benefits, which is valuable in itself but might not be sufficient to address the root causes of the problems faced by the community.

A selection process involving the local EC Delegation more fully might have drawn greater attention to the institutional context and the realistic prospect of how to promote rights, which could in turn have allowed for adjustments to be made that might have increased the projects’ relevance.

5.2 Conceptual approach

There is a particular challenge in using a minority rights based approach in an area where ethnic identity has been emphasised by different factions to create solidarity in a violent conflict and to demonise the other. Consequently in Kosovo there was an emphasis on tackling key issues that were of concern to all communities including education, training, income generation and bringing together people from different communities that shared common concerns and wanted to build a future together.

One project made efforts to put the caste-based discrimination of Dalits in a wider national and international context, without primarily concentrating on legislative changes or government policies. It was suggested by the project holder somewhat controversially, that an explicit rights based approach would require a level of awareness and education among the Dalits that most of the community members, especially the most marginalized, have yet to achieve.

There were two projects, one in Israel and one in Macedonia, that undertook important advice work to vulnerable members of minority communities, but failed to address systemic institutional discrimination. In one case the project holder failed to challenge the divisive and poorer quality separate education system and in the other case the project holder failed to address the system that denies state support to those who have failed to reach a certain grade in the education system.

A project in Malaysia complements the more service-oriented development approach with specific rights based interventions, for instance by encouraging and supporting women to properly register their status for better protection under the law and access governmental benefits such as access to free and subsidised health and education. Importantly the project also lobbies for changes in discriminatory laws, regulations and government policies by organising seminars, campaigns and other awareness activities.

Two projects in Israel address minority rights issues, and place an emphasis on exploring and defining identity issues of the Arab minority. In one project a range of Arab organizations and tendencies have been brought together to discuss the issues and formulated positions, using international human and minority rights standards as reference points.

One NGO with projects in both Serbia and Kosovo had a clear rights based approach, with partners in Serbia also being trained and highly motivated to use this methodology. They had a participatory methodology and engaged members of minorities as staff. One weakness in an otherwise impressive use of this approach was the failure to plan linking their work more closely with international standards and the relevant monitoring mechanisms, possibly by training of key staff by specialists.

Similarly, a project in Asia had an explicit rights based approach analysing arrangements for minorities. The project partners also lobbied for new legislation at national and international level, for instance covering the issues of disappearance of suspects. The organisations were involved in active advocacy work in many areas but not in the form of a well-defined project

Although all the projects in the Balkans planned to provide some limited training in human rights for their beneficiaries it was disappointing to see that only half of the projects were developed on a rights based approach. Additionally it was the exception to find the explicit use of international standards and international mechanisms for the protection of rights in the work of the projects.

5.3 Targeting the most vulnerable ethnic minorities

The Consultants believed that all three project holders in Asia had a good understanding of the situation of vulnerable groups in the local, regional and national context. They all addressed relevant issues of discrimination but issues and approaches differed between the three projects. Two of the three projects worked directly with the vulnerable groups, whilst one project tackled legislation relevant to vulnerable groups.

Five of the six projects in the Balkans targeted the most vulnerable communities and with considerable sensitivity they identified the most vulnerable within the communities. Two projects were designed exclusively to provide access to crucial local services to Roma, who are generally the most marginalized and vulnerable in society¹² The three projects in Kosovo sought to reach out and bring together the most isolated and vulnerable within the ethnic Albanian, Serbian and Roma communities. The sixth project that did not target the most vulnerable had been funded under the democracy and rule of law budget line and therefore had different aims.

All four project holders visited in the Russian Federation and Georgia targeted some of the most vulnerable ethnic groups in their societies. Religious minorities were included in the range of activities which also gave media training to sexual minorities and groups of people with disabilities: both constituencies that are usually shunned in Caucasian society. These were not strictly within the criterion of RXN but should certainly be included in a wider EIDHR remit.

By targeting the Arab Minority in one way or another, all four project holders in Israel addressed vulnerable minorities within Israeli society. The two projects that operated in the Negev addressed a community, which is highly marginalized, and the most vulnerable within it.

It is satisfying to note that the project holders often went well beyond the minimum requirements of the programme criteria and often reached out to the most vulnerable and impoverished within these communities. They provide high quality evidence of the extent of the exclusion and practical examples of how the vulnerable communities may be reached by other funding streams of the EU, such as the geographical budget lines like CARDS, TACIS, MEDA.

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They were highlighted at the Durban World Conference against Racism in 2001).

These may find inspiration from these good EIDHR practices that reach out to include the most vulnerable within marginalized groups in society. One example is the EU funded TACIS and CARDS programmes that promote structural reforms in the Russian Federation and the Balkans. They should take advantage of EIDHR RXN projects and their experience in promoting the registration of members of minority groups including the Roma.

5.4 Mainstreaming minority participation

The full participation of minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them is an important international standard. Consequently it is essential that project holders remember this in their own work and manage projects to ensure that it is meaningful. In general there was more scope for improving the direct participation and involvement of minority groups in the design and implementation in all projects visited. Often the integration of minorities in the management structures of the implementing organisations themselves, especially at the middle and senior levels, was limited and lacked a systematic approach to recruiting, training and supporting ethnic minorities in these roles.

One project in Nepal made pronounced efforts at group formation and leadership development at the local level, but the current conflict had a serious effect on the scope for this.

In the Balkans there was considerable diversity in the way that the various project holders handled minority participation. One INGO working in Kosovo had impressive institutionalised procedures for involving community based organisations in the programming while its sister project in Serbia demonstrated a highly challenging but dynamic process of participation of local communities, based on organisations drawn from highly vulnerable Roma communities. In the past they had often been in conflict with each other.

Similarly one project in Israel succeeded in the challenging and time consuming task of bringing together all factions- itself a valuable process.

These models of good practice should be widely shared.

5.5 Mainstreaming gender and children

There appeared to be significant country differences in the approach towards gender issues that transcended NGOs and Delegations, however there was a more consistent approach and a greater readiness to embrace children's issues.

In the Asia field study it was found that sensitivity to gender and children varied across the projects depending on the kind of activities and form of interaction with the target group. The more direct the interaction with the community members, the more special attention was paid to the situation of women.

All but one regional project in the Balkans appeared to give considerable sensitivity to gender issues going well beyond promoting gender balance in training and in staffing, with five of the six projects being managed by women with a good mix of both men and women among their staff. Furthermore one project holder was particularly successful in helping empower women by deliberately designing the project to be non confrontational, gradually providing an environment for women to organise and be confident for them to add value to the family resources and was consequently widely accepted by men and women.

They were highly critical of another INGO, not funded by the EU, which had adopted a confrontational approach to women's rights that had apparently been divisive in a difficult post conflict environment, and subsequently had to end its work.

In Kosovo, project holders found it considerably more difficult to work on bringing women together across communities that had been polarised during the conflict than in bringing children and young people together. This is not surprising as there are major cultural differences in gender roles in Serbian, Albanian and Roma communities, which are complex and vary between rural and urban settings and can depend on levels education of communities.

In Georgia and the Russian Federation there was an instinct among NGOs in both countries that women and children were the most vulnerable people among ethnic minority groups. Because no hard information is available, it is unsupported by evidence that might help design effective projects, if they were needed. This should be rectified here and in similar situations, where action research linked to needs assessments may have an important role to play in future project planning. One project addressed women's issues in particular, without an ethnic minority focus, but this was not visited.

Once again in this post conflict environment in Georgia it was thought that young people would have fewer ethnic prejudices than an older generation. This proved to be a reasonable working assumption, as some boys attended some events only after the staff had overcome parental opposition. However parents forbade girls from the same background from attending these events.

Gender mainstreaming was largely absent from the two Russian Federation RXN projects, where the staffing was traditional, with male directorship and female service staff.

Few project holders mainstreamed gender issues effectively in Israel and there was little awareness of how to produce a gender analysis and why it was necessary. Some organizations mentioned that they were aware the expertise existed in the country, but were unsure about how to access it or that help would be easily and readily provided.

It was found that the EU gender guidelines were not widely circulated and used in the projects, although some organisations had their own guidelines, which they used.

There is a continuing need to ensure that all project holders are aware of the importance of conducting gender analyses and to ensure that project holders are gender sensitive so that specific ways in which women and men from minorities are subjected to discrimination, and the consequences for their lives as well as the life of their community was addressed by the project. This does not suggest that the project holders should be promoting women's rights rather than minority rights, but they should ensure that intersectional issues of multiple vulnerabilities are adequately addressed. Although all project proposals gave due deference to gender mainstreaming and on many occasions went beyond this to promote women's rights, both these issues were singularly lacking in most progress reports of projects.

The project holders agreed that focusing on children and youth was often one of the best ways to begin good inter community relations, as they were less likely to be burdened with prejudiced propaganda and direct personal experiences of violence and conflict. Young people were seen as the vectors of values for the future, often sharing common interests and common concerns for the future that spanned communities.

Caution is needed in generalising and in finding simplistic solutions, as neither children, nor women nor men live in isolation. Changes are often needed across a family or a community or a State and measures may therefore need to engage a range of actors.

In some of the projects visited in former conflict zones, young people were open in recognising the need and valuing the prospect of living and working alongside each other, irrespective of ethnic differences and past violent conflicts. However young people can often feel frustrated if their energy is not channelled constructively and if their future appears bleak.

They can feel they have little to lose and their potential volatility makes a laissez faire policy in inter ethnic relations a high-risk policy, particularly if children grow up in divided societies isolated from other communities and taught in separate schools in different languages.

Whenever projects mainstream children's activities, the project holders need to have a rights based focus, using the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a primary consideration on "the best interests of the Child " (Article 3) and the rights of the minority and indigenous child (Articles 29 and 30).

Similarly ILO Convention 169 provides a valuable legal standard for a "rights-based approach" to programming with Indigenous Peoples.

6. Effectiveness of projects

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores key elements of the methodologies used in the projects funded by this programme. It examines how the projects have been monitored and evaluated and identifies their impact and sustainability, as far as can be judged at present. All projects are 'work in progress'. When a project in the human rights field is apparently over, it may be possible to measure products and outputs but it is much more challenging to identify the impact and sustainability of long-term processes that have been set in motion. These projects are unlike those that only seek immediate, tangible material outputs.

In exploring the effectiveness of the programme the Consultants did not attempt to evaluate individual projects in the very short time available. This problem was compounded by the lack of mid term evaluations available and as all of the project holders visited were still implementing their projects. However it was possible to identify lessons that might be learnt from them for the funding of future projects. The areas explored were the meaning of partnership, project management, methodologies, monitoring and evaluation, enhancing impact, and sustainability.

It was possible to see valuable impacts in every project, and those that have specific programming implications have inspired this report. Others can be seen in the progress reports submitted to the European Commission. These achievements range from providing support and training to many thousands of people, to training the trainers of the future, and from ensuring the provisions of direct services of health, education and housing to highly vulnerable individuals and communities, to encouraging and facilitating governmental authorities to provide services in the future. The list of all achievements would be a long one.

In the longer term the projects may have a multiplicity of impacts that cannot be seen at present. For example, the ways in which a number of projects have engaged local authorities in the success of the projects, involved police in training initiatives and deployed government officials to provide training within projects have created good will and a deeper understanding of these issues. Experience shows that these processes will in due course lead to other unplanned long-term achievements.

6.2 Effectiveness of methodologies

General observations

It was possible to examine two similar focused and unfocused projects both run by capable managers, showing the focused project to have more impact, while some training and employment projects were unimaginative and not targeted at contemporary job opportunities.

The timing, duration and process established by trusted NGO staff contributed significantly to the success of projects, but there were missed opportunities of sharing experiences locally and regionally. Furthermore, all projects could have been enhanced by more effective relations with the Commission and Parliament and by working with international treaty monitoring bodies monitoring racial discrimination and observing the promotion of minority rights.

The RXN projects reviewed involved a wide range of methodologies: from monitoring, reporting, academic teaching, education, workshops, play, seminars, and press conferences, through to study visits, training, employment initiatives, advisory services, and domestic advocacy to name but a few.

Some projects were implemented on the basis of a well-drafted logical framework, good baseline studies and a detailed action plan. This ensures the overall coherence of the project when combined with a good teamwork approach including committed and competent local partner organisations of different natures, and when the project activities are planned and implemented in a participatory manner it can be a powerful methodology.

The track record of NGOs working on similar activities previously with a rights-based approach held them in good stead for developing their project. Two smaller locally based NGOs were open in suggesting that they would have benefited from the exchange of ideas on project methodology, including monitoring and evaluation from others who were more experienced.

Project holders that engage in pioneering new services and use this experience to promote institutional changes and the consolidation of rights were seen to have considerable enthusiasm among their staff and were effective in their work.

This practical work helped them conceptualise and target their advocacy while gaining respect from their beneficiaries and the State alike. Nevertheless this rights based advocacy is more challenging and demands more input to achieve potentially greater gains as it seeks to promote institutional changes.

One regional project with different partners each with different perspectives in different countries appeared to have an overall coherence but may fail to meet its implementation plan. Such projects can be difficult to manage in these circumstances unless there are good experienced managers with a well-structured management framework and detailed action plan. There may be confusion, delays and opportunities for tensions.

A real dilemma exists for the management of all the projects, where the complex issues demand substantial processes of confidence building in highly volatile atmospheres, yet they need to show products and tangible achievements to justify the major funding received.

However there are no simple ways of identifying how outputs in projects like these that depend on lengthy processes have been transformed into beneficial sustainable outcomes. The fact that these issues are being tackled by human rights organisations working in highly challenging environments deserves considerable praise.

It could be seen that there were many ways to achieve an impact and those seeking behavioural changes, benefited from a range of approaches with clear specific messages delivered in targeted ways to specific audiences.

It should always be remembered that people matter and that they are usually the most important ingredient in human rights projects. The calibre of people and the quality of their organisations often transforms weaknesses in projects by listening and learning, while inadequate staff can fundamentally damage an apparently good project. This should be a crucial ingredient in selecting a project for support.

One local partner NGO in Kosovo was able to transform a failing project due to an apparently weak manager, by transparency with staff, establishing trust by the delivery of promised activities and was helped through the regular visits of the INGO project holder.

Another project holder in Malaysia had initially failed to recognise the importance of legal documentation for vulnerable minorities but was able to transform a project through their staff's project management experience and commitment to high quality outcomes.

To varying degrees all the project holders would have benefited from more planning with the communities or individuals that were targeted. This could have led to more synergies and mutual support and so that a multiplier effect of training the trainers or of local CBO and NGO activists was encouraged.

Project planning

Projects that are built on well-established partnerships or actors, that have rich experience in the themes covered and the minority communities reached, have a significant advantage.

Effective planning can be inhibited by not wanting to unduly raise the hopes or expectations of the beneficiaries, when funding is still being sought. However several projects were initially poorly targeted. They failed to engage the beneficiaries effectively in both the needs assessment and the design of the project. In future this can be largely overcome by tried and tested partnerships and complete transparency, but even in these cases tension can be exacerbated by long delays in the decisions on the grant. However one hidden benefit of the programme was that it provided an incentive for NGOs to look at opportunities to work together and to be allies rather than competitors.

Log frames were seen to be useful tools only when used judiciously, for example where indicators can be varied and where quality and quantity, process and product, subjective and objective measurements are both identified and valued. They can be valuable in planning and useful in monitoring progress, so long as their limitations are recognised by all who use them and they are widely owned. The interesting work of one project holder in Kosovo was attempting to measure changes of behaviour that appeared to be far sighted, pioneering work, particularly in a post conflict environment.

In view of difficulties in planning projects that successfully mainstream age, gender and the most vulnerable within ethnic minority communities, some future EIDHR projects might usefully include a strong participatory and inclusive social research methodology that empowers communities. These could focus on basic data collection, or where data is available, try to identify the best methodologies for action.

Project focus

One project in Kosovo was designed around integrated broad programming, contrasting with another project in Southern Kosovo for similar beneficiaries that was narrowly focused on education and training. Each approach has its merits in different circumstances. In these comparative cases it was seen that the extensive range of project activities led to their isolation, a lack of expertise in some areas and often ineffective follow up –despite the size of the funding and the diligence of staff.

Furthermore it often became too challenging to draw people together from communities that had been in conflict.

Conversely the second project has the size and focus to create educational synergies, draw teachers, professionals, NGO activists and CBO together around educational themes, draw on its international experience, respond to emerging educational and training needs and target their advocacy locally. The project holder was able to learn significant methodological lessons that will be of value elsewhere in the future.

This Southern Kosovo project and the focused project on community advocates in Serbia spoke strongly for focused rather than broad ranging projects.

In minority rights a careful balance needs to be struck between promoting the rights and identity of minorities and enhancing cooperation between all communities. There are no easy answers, but two projects, one in Georgia and one in Israel, showed the challenges of minority communities being marginalized and isolated on the one hand or losing their dignity and identity on the other. One project holder sought to redress the isolation of minorities, while another needed to take care that it was not promoting assimilation.

Another project holder in Kosovo focused in the public arena on emphasising common human values and concerns. It promoted minority rights and cooperation in practical ways and it targeted people within various ethnic groups, without publicly proclaiming a potentially divisive overt 'minority rights agenda'. This seemed to be a wise approach after a violent conflict that polarised communities; it was effective, while not compromising their practice of advancing the rights of vulnerable communities. It is also suggested that this might be a wise approach in similar circumstances elsewhere in Georgia and the Russian Federation.

In one project in Israel political vision and strategic direction were clearly demonstrated in striving to further the rights of the Arab Minority in Israel. The project worked with other Jewish groups, who also faced discriminatory attitudes and systemic discrimination due to their origin or politico-religious attitudes. These approaches of drawing together alliances are robust and sustainable. The issues of integration, separation or assimilation are particularly delicate after a high intensity violent conflict where parties have been polarised around ethnicity, and where common values and common needs, that transcend ethnicity, should be reinforced in a culturally sensitive and participatory way, limiting the scope of ethno nationalists or religious extremists.

It is suggested that EIDHR is not the appropriate instrument during a high intensity violent conflict as its programme implementation depends on a stable environment and genuine partnerships and participation is greatly hindered by violence as the Nepalese project showed.

Projects, separation or assimilation

Structural changes and project relations with government

EIDHR funding cannot be effective where there is a high intensity violent conflict, where the security of personnel and project participants cannot be assured, where the rule of law is not enforced and where it might be impossible to spend funds efficiently and without any sense of sustainability.

However the EIDHR funding may have an important role to play, when tensions are growing and only NGOs are able to bring together different communities to promote common development objectives. Similarly EIDHR funding has successfully enabled INGOs to bring members of different communities together in Kosovo and elsewhere, when the government is not trusted as an “honest broker.”

There is a dilemma of NGO human rights projects being compromised by governments and a careful balance is necessary to achieve between effective liaison and dialogue rather than isolation from or control by government. The EC Delegation may be able to offer advice and support to project holders, as they steer this delicate path, though the Delegations themselves know that they must avoid going beyond advice and support.

Some government officials highlighted the importance of contacting central and local government officials was highlighted early on. This can help NGOs develop a good understanding of where cooperation is possible, learning from experiences elsewhere. NGOs should take care to identify the most capable and responsive individuals in the most appropriate institutions or ministries. NGOs are then better placed to target any services they provide to maximise the value they can add and, by establishing a rapport with good officials, help in the advocacy for change.

In all regions of the world there are countries, where members of central and local government are not supportive of human rights projects. However remains important that human rights is promoted by the E.U. in a constructive and authoritative manner.

In Serbia the Federal Ministry of Human and Minority Rights has always been supportive of EIDHR and the EU, however some ministers are well known for their nationalist rhetoric and have threatened journalists and civil society organisations. One project holder was clear that EU funding increased the status of its human rights work and, indirectly, offered it some protection.

In the Russian Federation and other states that do not value civil society and on occasions try to undermine it and its democratic agenda, EU support for NGOs raises their status significantly and ensures that human rights issues are kept on the agenda.

Two project holders in Israel did not want to raise more widely the issue of discrimination that they had revealed in court. Interlocutors suggested these practices of discrimination should have been discussed publicly and created some good will towards the victims. The prevalence and wide acceptance of discriminatory attitudes and actions in society appeared to mean that successful court decisions on their own had little impact on discriminatory attitudes.

One project holder in the Russian Federation had developed its work by taking a case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, though there was a sense that this was not central to their activity or competence and it is not clear if the petition will be admissible. It was apparent that from this example and others there is scope for precedent setting on discrimination issues that the Strasbourg Court offers and policy support that the Council of Europe can offer through the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

A wide range of projects successfully pioneered a new approach to vulnerable members of minority communities and central and local governments were sufficiently impressed by the success so far to be looking closely at continuing the pioneering work with their own resources.

One example was in Malaysia where a successful project encouraged and supported poor Indian Tamil women to register their status for better protection under the law and to enable them to access government health and education benefits inter alia. A government minister is looking seriously at ways of continuing the work when the project ends. Another example was in Serbia where a successful project had developed teams of Roma Community Advocates to work with government officials and with Roma to ensure that local housing benefit and health services were available to excluded impoverished Roma and to help them register. As this project is coming to an end, this model of good practice is being imitated elsewhere and local authorities are employing some of the Roma Community Advocates.

One project in Kosovo has pioneered new methodologies in education that have been absorbed by the local education authorities and their advice is being sought on Kosovo wide reforms of the school curriculum. Similarly the work of a project holder in Israel has led to the restructuring of the education authority in the Negev.

Other projects have played a dynamic role in encouraging new legislation. One specific example came to the attention of the Consultants where a project holder had inspired and supported the new legislation on public television broadcasting.

Innovative approaches

A test case taken to the Supreme Court in Israel that was led by a local project holder has resulted in the recognition of Bedouin single mothers as legitimate beneficiaries of social service support.

Two projects, one for Tamils in Malaysia and a second for Roma in Serbia evolved creatively. Although they were designed to provide services for these communities they also pressed for changes in discriminatory laws, regulations and government policies by drawing on their practical experience. This brought, the confidence brought to their staff and the communities in which they worked, as they organised seminars, campaigns and other awareness activities.

A significant number of projects responded to the lack of “official registration” of members of minority communities and their consequential denial of rights. Only those projects that tackled the root causes of discrimination impressed the consultants as having a sustainable impact.

Two other project holders took innovative approaches that might have wider application in EIDHR programming. One of these projects in the Russian Federation included micro “re-granting” for two projects on access to justice proposed by new partners they had found in the course of their core activities. De-centralised re-granting of this sort would seem to increase the sustainability of the original project, and extend the reach of the EU programme to new groups of ethnic minorities.

A wider scheme of NGOs being funded by EU to make grants to smaller minority based NGOs in the target countries, could have useful application, where civil society structures are weak, where a diversity of partners are needed and flexibility is required. However, care is needed to ensure that the project holder retains authority for the management of the grant and works closely with E.C. Delegations.

The second innovation concerned geographical scope. One INGO found that a training programme for media in the Caucasus region was incomplete without involving Turkey. This would indeed seem to be a case in which the “implementation of activities in other countries” could be justified under the EIDHR guidelines. Broader programming of this sort might also be justifiable in projects involving ethnic migrant labour - or other problems arising from systematic cultural or economic transfers, or a shared history of ethnic conflicts.

Project duration

When the project start up time, organisational learning and the time needed to close down a project responsibly is taken into account, the effective operation time for a project was between 18 months and 2 years.

Many Project Directors would have preferred a significantly longer time to spend the same funds more effectively, preferring 5 years to 3 years. Longer-term projects would require some added flexibility to respond to changing environments and mid term evaluations to confirm successful progress.

One organisation highlighted the need for modest funding for an additional three to six months after the end of the project for reflection and sharing their experience with others.

6.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Once again there was a wide variation in approaches from different project managers.

Some projects, usually managed by experienced development agencies, were well monitored and had planned for an independent evaluation. Indicators of achievements were set and regularly reviewed against progress and they were well prepared for the EIDHR evaluation.

All of these, and some local partners, were happy to engage in a very open, self-confident and constructive way in discussing possible opportunities and recommendations to improve project implementation. However, less experienced staff, usually in smaller NGOs, often lacked the knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate activities effectively and did not know of the substantial benefits that this could bring if undertaken in a constructive and participatory manner. External evaluations were sometimes seen as a threat rather than an opportunity.

The Consultants could see from their own visit the value of new thinking emerging from simple participatory dialogues between local partners and beneficiaries and ourselves as external facilitators.

Some project holders had devised a highly participatory method of engaging partners in monitoring and evaluation and it may be valuable to use their experience both as a model of good practice. The processes created greater commitment to the project, led to qualitative improvements, and enhanced the management and policy analysis skills of local partners.

Some points that emerged from discussions were that good evaluations:

1. Involved many people.
2. They were time consuming and led to some programming delays.
3. The need to use oral records for semi literate or illiterate minorities.
4. The use of focus groups could be developed.
5. The Evaluation needed to be internal and external.

6. External support might be an advisory group or an informal conversation.
7. A continuing relationship is needed with any evaluator.
8. The methodology needed to accept quality and quantity indicators.
9. The indicators need to be responsive to changing circumstances.

The EIDHR project procedures demand regular reporting. However they do not call for in-built participatory monitoring and evaluation systems that involve external actors, playing a supportive rather than audit role. These procedures should be rectified.

In some places the EC Delegation has helped by closely monitoring projects and evaluated specific project activities. The EC Delegations' involvement can be most valuable, though Delegation staff pointed out that they must tread a careful path in helping to strengthen the quality of programming while respecting the value and autonomy of NGOs.

6.4 Impact

At the time of the visits all of the projects were still in progress and some have only completed their first year, and so their impact is hard to assess. Impact is often difficult to measure in the field of minority rights projects, as they should seek to measure the gradual realisation of rights over a long period of time for people and communities. These can come about through products and processes as well as by individual and structural changes.

The impact of a project will depend on the political and institutional context in which it operates. Those that feed into government policy and legislation have much better prospects of entering the social fabric in the long term. Local activities that are interlinked to national and international initiatives can be a powerful and effective combination. However in countries where the political climate is hostile to both ethnic minorities and NGOs, the impact of the RXM initiatives is likely to be reduced. In these circumstances some project holders showed how their use of international mechanisms placed discrimination against minorities on the international agenda and raised the profile of these issues at home.

It was seen that maximising a project's impact demanded trusting the judgment of experienced managers and EC Delegations and allowing flexibility in the design. Some projects, that had originally been designed to support service delivery to vulnerable minorities, matured to take on the challenge of why these services were not provided by the states for minorities since they were for the majority of society. These changes were seen to be essential and effective.

Flexibility in the project design is essential in responding to the rapidly evolving political and social environment, in which many cutting edge human rights projects are placed and correctly given funding support by the EU.

These projects merit different procedures from those activities that are product orientated and are able to predict inputs and outputs in a stable environment.

Maximising a project's impact demands trusting the judgment of experienced project managers and EC Delegations, as well as finding ways of reducing the financial bureaucracy surrounding any necessary changes in financial plans. Project managers spoke of debilitating delays of up to 6 months for modest changes, which they stated added significantly to the project holders' workload while seriously inhibiting the flexibility that the EC properly demands of project holders. Consequently it is proposed that ways should be explored of simplifying and speeding up these procedures.

A number of projects provided access to services for vulnerable communities like Roma in the Balkans, Tamils in Malaysia and Arab Bedouins in Israel. These projects had an immediate and positive impact on the local communities, who now have easier access to legal and other counselling services. They also assisted community members in obtaining legal documents such as birth certificates and identity cards, which are crucial for gaining employment in the formal sector and in gaining access to government services including educational, health care, development programmes and other facilities.

There were a number of focused projects, concentrating on one area such as education, where time was spent listening in depth to the needs of the community, adapting and responding sensitively using the INGOs experience that lead to a clear impact with local ownership and good will. In a number of cases the quality and the professionalism could be seen and others were motivated to follow the good examples set.

Some projects provided skills training, enabling marginalized women earn incomes and be more independent. They also nurtured local community members to take the initiative and assume leadership, networking with local councils and government departments to resolve local-level community problems.

Although training and employment initiatives appear attractive, their impact may not be sustained. Training projects were sometimes unimaginative and not targeted at the needs of the contemporary society or its new markets (e.g. computer skills) or failed to target realistic income generating opportunities.

Some projects reinforced training in traditional handicrafts and manual skills for which there appeared to be few markets. These have an immediate psychological impact on participants making them feel valued. However this can be undermined if these employment initiatives are tackled in an inexperienced and somewhat amateur way and fail to lead to income generation.

Publications are likely to create some sustained impact though good communication planning is essential if their impact is to be maximised. The audience's needs and how to reach it require careful consideration. Too often non-commercial NGO publications are seen as ends in themselves. However, some positive examples were given of how high quality literature can be used by renowned international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, or presented directly to international conferences of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The impact of some projects would be much greater if civil society further strengthened their internal linkages and overcame some of the unduly competitive and sometimes personal conflicts between organisations. Here bodies like INGOs and EC Delegations can use their resources either to be divisive or to promote cooperation. In the field visits a number of examples were seen where the large funding for macro projects had been divisive. These contrasted with other examples where INGOs had used the incentives of shared funds to reconcile differences between CBOs.

The Consultants were highly impressed by the way that one project holder acted highly sensitively in bringing members of different communities together in a natural way to rebuild trust and respect for each other's dignity that had existed before the conflict. The EC should do its utmost to provide additional resources – financial and political – to reinforce these remarkable initiatives.

Some projects were clearly much more impressive on paper than they were in practice. Proposals to bring people together from different communities for education, training, to form women's and youth groups, where there had been a violent conflict dividing communities were sometimes unrealistically ambitious. They failed as they sought quick outputs according to the targets and schedules of the project. Those that consulted carefully, took their time and responded sensitively were more successful in the long term.

The timing of interventions is crucial in this environment where from time to time windows of opportunity for influencing major government legislation and policies (e.g. multiculturalism in the curriculum) may suddenly emerge in response to changing political circumstance. This demands flexibility but also the presence of capable experienced NGOs that can draw in the necessary expertise.

One of the significant impacts of the funding is to strengthen the capacity and ensure the continuity of the selected NGOs. Longer projects, that have an element of flexibility make good sense as it is challenging and often impossible to ensure the impact of processes and behaviour changes in a short intensive two or three year project. In a number of countries there is clear evidence that EU funding has helped build up important NGO infrastructures that challenge discrimination against minorities and need to continue their activities. In three years the work cannot be completed and too often there are few prospects of other funding to sustain the organisations or these valuable initiatives that have developed a good momentum.

There are clearly some missed opportunities, particularly due to the design of projects, which have failed to challenge structural discrimination although they provided ameliorative services. In oppressive environments or in areas in conflict, such challenges will be very difficult or impossible. However when a conflict has ended there may be a window of opportunity for radical change. These possibilities should be taken into account in determining which projects to support when and where.

In the more stable countries NGO coalitions were able to promote legislative and policy changes even in sensitive fields. It is essential that, if long-term sustainable gains are to be made, such projects develop a coherent strategy and activities to change governmental policies and practices that are institutionally racist.

In all cases, the medium-term impact of EU funded projects could be enhanced, if the local officials serving on European agencies, embassies from EU member states, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and others - knew about the projects and supported them. In the long term, the impact would increase if discriminatory mechanisms, laws policies and practices were removed with their help, and possibly through the agency of other EU co-operation programmes with governments.

In order to promote the EU policy against racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities it could be helpful for the EC, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, to learn from the practical experience of the projects it supports through EIDHR and look at what additional role it can play with supportive flanking initiatives.

6.5 Sustainability

The sustainability of project initiatives to combat discrimination against minorities also hangs on the political and institutional context in which projects operate. At a micro level, the sustainability of any given project can be enhanced by an international partner's good exit strategy, when it ensures a smooth transfer of ownership. Good exit strategies are significantly more important in countries where the context is favourable.

Where the context is not favourable, the EU should consider how to sustain and expand its own funding and how to redress the situation politically with the support of the Parliament and Council of Ministers.

At the outset of a project there is a sense of delight by the NGOs that the grant has been approved at last and an added relief when the funds are transmitted. The sums of money are large even for major international human rights NGOs though the size and speed of financial transfers from the Commission in Brussels were described as highly problematic. The major priority is to recruit capable staff and ensure there is the infrastructure to implement the large and complex project, which may take up to 6 months to get into its stride. However what is also needed at the outset is recognition that, though this is a major injection of funds, subtle methods need to be devised to plan detailed exit strategies and key elements of sustainability. This may include using the funding for three years as strength in negotiations with central government institutions and others to attract forms of matching support. Long term planning and funding underpins sustainability.

One organisation was surprised by the Consultants' question asking how it was to ensure sustainability of the project beyond EC funding. It pointed out that after 3 years of activities, the communities with which they work have just started to trust the organization, as they have had some small but concrete successes. They observed that truly empowering methodologies require more than the two or three year funding periods currently provided by the EU as a donor.

The economic, social and political marginalisation of many of the minorities seen in these field visits calls for sustained support from the EC, at least until some of their development and social and economic factors can be addressed by the State.

EU funding also carries with it a status and added local respect, wider access to institutions in difficult environments, and provides some protection for the organisation and its project management. This is reinforced when the EC is unambiguous about the reasons for its support for human rights and minority rights organisations.

Advocacy and experience-sharing projects are more likely to be sustainable, when they focus on the dissemination of information, networking, and empowerment through participative campaigning. These projects do not require cost intensive continuing structures.

A comprehensive exit strategy is not needed, when well established advocacy INGOs and NGOs are involved and when they, along with activists, continue to be involved in policy dialogue and campaigns with or without external funding. Their involvement in an earlier project will increase their opportunities for success and the chances of the mobilization of further resource from different donors in circumstances where they exist.

Advocacy initiatives that have involved international monitoring mechanisms, particularly treaty monitoring bodies, already incorporate a degree of sustainability and cost effectiveness. These monitoring bodies are permanent and will return to issues that have been raised with them by NGOs. They continue to question the government on whether it has found remedies for the issues and continue to report on their findings publicly, helping to exert peer group pressure on governments.

It is important for international NGOs to build training and advice into projects, drawing on their experience to strengthen local capacities in a systematic way. They may assist project partners with organisational issues including leadership development activities to strengthen the capacities of local organisations to run the projects and to raise funds after EU funding comes to an end.

In all the projects there was an element of automatic sustainability where the staff had matured and enhanced their and the organizations' capacity, while training provided was always of benefit to those who had enjoyed it.

However there was little evidence of training for trainers or a clear targeting of the budget to prioritise those who were committed to community based work and NGO activities. Furthermore more effort could have been given to pressing local authorities, education authorities or universities into making their own contribution and assuming responsibility for some degree of continuity of use of trained personnel, other resources and the experience gained.

The implementing NGOs should also think laterally and consider various options for the long-term financial sustainability of the work. This may include the recruitment of more volunteers, charging service fees from the fairly well to do members of communities or from government institutions to cross subsidise the support needed for the very poor.

Additionally, the implementers should consider devising a thoughtful and transparent strategy to earn income or raise funds from the local communities to help themselves.

Only local NGOs based in the community that were seen to provide a valuable anti discrimination activity could attempt this. This contrasts sharply with some INGOs that were content to withdraw and work in another country, when EC funding ended.

In some projects a new methodology was devised for working in both the local authority and in minority settlement, providing tailor made training for community advisers and advocates that involved government officials at the outset and whose methodology may now be institutionalised elsewhere.

In similar projects in the future it should be possible to use the incentive of EU funding for 3 years to strengthen projects that include a service delivery component to vulnerable minorities. The funds may be used strategically to provide phased financial support through partnerships with relevant helpful authorities. The project holder would gradually withdrawing the EU financial support, as the authority values and incorporates the work undertaken by the project. Here the E.C. Delegation may usefully deploy its diplomatic talents, its goodwill and its strategic position to assist in the negotiations.

7. NGOs and EU communications and funding partnerships

There is a desire by the EU and NGOs to strengthen their relationships and to improve their communications. Delegation staff often enjoyed the new perspectives and fresh approaches that NGOs could bring while NGOs were often pleasantly surprised by the human and practical contacts that they had with Delegations.

7.1 Funding partnerships and the support of EU

Some organisations questioned the use of the word partnerships in their relationship with the EU. They asked if this was a euphemism for donor / recipient relationship or if there were other partnership aspects of this relationship? Partnership implied a long-term relationship that promoted a level of dialogue, tackling issues together with flexibility surrounding organisational and policy issues. It was argued that this was distinctly lacking from EIDHR funding unlike some other international donors. (See section 6.3)

It should come as no surprise that all the NGOs involved believed that there was much important work on minority rights and inter ethnic relations to be undertaken over many years, found it hard to understand why EU funding priorities for focus countries changed from one Call for Proposals to another (e.g. Serbia/Kosovo, Israel and Georgia) and requested consistency and transparency in this area.

EU support of civil society activities in the promotion of human and minority rights in Israel was much praised, with one NGO describing the discontinuation of funding to macro projects in Israel in the 2005-6 programming as 'a disaster', especially as the EU's multi-year funding of projects was felt to be very valuable. Similar views were expressed in Serbia and Kosovo. Several NGOs described EU support, both financial and at the policy level as 'essential' and 'vital'.

One INGO in the Caucasus praised EU funding policy for giving it strategic freedom to 'think big' and to work in areas where other foreign funders would not venture because of the political implications – like the contested states of Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia. 'Thinking big' had given it the benefits of being an important organization in the region, and had allowed it to reap economies of scale.

Macro projects are particularly useful when the capacity of local civil society organisations (NGO) is weak and when they have not been exposed to much international support and exchange of experiences internationally. They offer an opportunity for large amounts of funding for NGOs and the bringing about of institutional changes.

Partnerships

	The EC Delegation in Tbilisi would welcome future projects of regional outreach and suggested the appointment of a regional human rights officer to identify key areas of relevance for regional interventions and supervision of activities.
Development programmes	It is difficult to draw any conclusions on EIDHR and development programmes as so few country specific macro projects were funded in developing countries- Nepal, Malaysia, DR Congo and the Dominican Republic. Consequently the following observations are unique and country specific, noting that India has not been a focus country for EIDHR (RXN). The EC Delegation in India manages a large cooperation programme with increasing focus on economic cooperation and little emphasis on human rights. There are a large number of projects under various thematic budget lines. It is difficult for the Delegation of the European Commission to be involved itself in monitoring of the many projects and handling the many requests of applicants. The EC Delegation in Delhi voiced some criticism on the way the EIDHR functions at present. The critical comments concerned the limited opportunity to receive substantial funding support under the EIDHR macro projects. This makes the EIDHR just another small budget line operating next to many other budget lines in as large a country as India. Furthermore, handling the high number of expected proposals in an unrestricted open call for proposals is almost impossible. The EC Delegation would welcome restricted Calls for Proposals, focus on macro projects, and earmarking of minimum support. In Nepal the situation is different where human rights concerns are very high on the agenda in situations of armed conflict with serious human rights violations. The Delegation believes that the EIDHR provides important opportunities appropriate for development oriented human rights work. It can work in parallel with the rapid reaction mechanisms (RRM) and the bilateral programme focusing on conflict mediation. The newly established EC Delegation in Malaysia (2003) eagerly welcomes project support in the field of human rights and development. It is aware of the challenge to justify EC project support in a middle-income country with a growing economy, although there are communities that are in considerable poverty.
Participation in programming	Participation of EC Delegations in EIDHR programming is limited. Major themes for Calls for Proposals are decided in Brussels.

Although the Delegations have a say in selecting priorities it is not clear to the Delegations how the final decisions are made. In a significant number of cases they had requested the inclusion of their country as a focus country and this had been rejected. However, specific consultations with national stakeholders do not appear to take place before determining which campaigns to support, in which locations, and whether they should include macro projects.

One EC Delegation had rejected participation in Calls for Proposals due to lack of involvement and foreseen problems of managing the large number of incoming proposals. Taking into account the wide range of funding they manage from different budgets, they favoured restricted Calls for Proposals, the earmarking of an approximate funding amount, and more scope for recruitment of external assessors.

Other Delegations requested more flexibility in selecting eligible proposals and in procedures, with a specific suggestion by one for allowing for contingencies in the budget.

The role of the Delegations should be central for coherent local programming, particularly when they are pressing for EIDHR programming, which will make their work more challenging. It would be valuable to strengthen the role of the Delegations in this decision-making and if necessary use their critique inter alia to see if more funds are required for EIDHR or specific campaigns in future budgets. However there are potential risks in this de-concentration. Communication may not get beyond the Delegation to Brussels and there are issues of consistency, accountability and transparency that require careful attention.

During the implementation of projects, the EIDHR and RXN projects are monitored by the EC Delegations, but in non-deconcentrated Delegations and in liaison offices the limitations of resources mean that opportunities for synergy are missed at both the design stage and in the implementation of projects.

7.2 Visibility and communications

EC Delegations and NGOs were often poorly informed about each others' activities and how best to communicate with each other. NGOs knew even less about how best to communicate with MEPs and EC in Brussels. NGOs were mostly uninformed about what other mechanisms, people and institutions they might have access to with the Commission's help or what common agendas they and the Delegation may have in promoting human rights with the government.

Governments and security

Almost all of the projects publicised the support they received from the EU. Those that did not fell into two categories, those with problems in coordination and those that were working in highly sensitive environments where they did not want to draw attention to themselves. Most, however, welcomed the association with the EU, as it enhanced their status, displaying logos on their promotional and training literature and with displays in meeting rooms. In one case small flags were put out at a dinner that was being held in a public restaurant with the Consultants and stakeholders. However the European anthem was not played.

In the field in Nepal, signs mentioning the EIDHR have not been erected as the local project managers wanted to keep a low profile, and to display support from Europe would also raise security concerns. Similarly in India, at times the government reacts very sensitively to international support for human rights issues, especially if targeted at activities in conflict regions.

In the Russian Federation, hostility towards foreigners extends to EU-financed initiatives and so local project partners were cautious not to advertise the source of their funding too prominently. Both officials and trainees had often suggested that EU funding was intended to provoke a further "Orange Revolution" and this was felt to be a serious suspicion that the local partners said they were ill equipped to counter. Such an example of prejudice towards human rights initiatives is an indicator of why the EU should continue to fund projects to combat prejudice and fund projects to promote human rights in the Russian Federation.

In Kosovo the presence in mountain villages of someone associated with the EU in one case led to a boycott by one small village of an inter-ethnic youth meeting but in most cases the Consultants' meeting began with requests for funds from the EU. It was seen almost exclusively as a donor, with little understanding of the values it held and was promoting through projects.

EU policy

Too often the EU was seen as a project donor by the wider public, by many officials, and by the aid sector without any understanding of why the funds were being given and the principles it stood for. Many local NGOs ranging from those in Israel to Malaysia would like the EU to articulate its position more fully, using the publicity of summits and other high level meetings supported by the local Delegation. Similarly several of the NGOs consulted in the Balkans would like a clear position of support for the democratic movement from the EU.

Staff in the Delegations recognised that in non de-concentrated Delegations, with low levels of staff and with EU funding being administered outside the Delegations, the principles behind EU funding were often unpublicised.

Whereas the EU's work is comparatively well known within the aid sector, NGOs stated that they would like to see the EU more actively engaged in promoting relevant human rights standards and the Copenhagen criteria to the wider public.

Similarly in the Russian Federation and Georgia the EU's policy on minority rights and why it finances anti-discrimination in third countries had very low visibility. The implementing partners said they were unable to explain it because of a lack of information. However there may also have been a conceptual difficulty: governmental initiatives to support minorities are a novelty in both countries.

Many NGOs see the EU as an ally in maintaining pressure for the implementation of human and minority rights standards. It was suggested that the EU should be more insistent on including monitoring of minority and human rights standards not only in the EU 'accession countries'.

One RXN project had integrated European institutions and policies into its work in a highly effective and visible way. A Russian Federation based organisation had addressed an OSCE meeting on xenophobia; held a high-profile meeting with the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner; and ensured inclusion of its information in the report of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Monitoring The Russian Federation's Honouring of its Obligations on Accession, which was likely to ensure continuing concern about the issue. It also maintained links with selected MEPs and had tracked down EU positions on fascist symbols and other relevant issues, which it disseminated through its network. The Consultants felt that this was an exceptional approach that ought to be followed by others funded by EIDHR.

An Israel based organisation has also organised a meeting at the European Parliament in June 2005.

In general, there seemed to be little communication between the project holders and the European Parliament, the European Commission in Brussels and ways of rectifying this should be found.

It was suggested by some NGOs that the EC should consider ways of involving European Parliamentarians, particularly chairpersons of committees and those with specific competences in the programme, in regional conferences, and in visiting projects in the field. It was recommended that they should be kept informed of the progress of human rights in focus countries and help monitor the safety of project holders, as human rights defenders and partners of the E.U. in combating racism and discrimination.

Advocacy

EC Delegations and good practice

NGOs argued that it was important that de-concentration should not distance NGOs from influencing the way the EU conducts its human rights business and raises human rights concerns with a state. They felt that they needed more than ever to maintain, or establish a presence in Europe to ensure their advocacy efforts towards the EU do not remain confined to their country but reach policy makers in Brussels. It was suggested that project holders might be brought to Brussels ensuring that by sharing their experiences as partners they can enrich E.U. work.

Constructive advocacy in other international fora should also be encouraged.

In Malaysia there is a highly responsive and proactive relationship between the INGO, the local NGO and the EC Delegation, member states representatives, government and the national corporate sector. They have already shown project activities to two missions from EC Brussels. The Head of Delegation has attended various events and recently hosted a dinner with ambassadors of Member States to give the project more prominence.

Similarly the Community Advocates Programme in Serbia has a positive relationship with the Delegation whose deputy has been praised for his forthright public statements and given television interviews proclaiming human rights and EU democratic values.

In Israel the Embassy has invited some NGO project “partners” to receptions to other functions, and convened a meeting of all project holders. These provided good opportunities for making contacts and also show simple but practical support for human rights organisations, thereby helping to boost their morale.

- In the Russian Federation the Delegation has been particularly supportive of local projects that have been funded by the EIDHR, helping offer advice and management expertise, while the Delegation in Georgia was acclaimed and has organised training projects for human rights NGOs. These models of good practice deserve to be fully documented and shared among other Delegations as examples of what may be done.

When Delegations become deconcentrated this has advantages as it can become easier for NGOs to talk directly with the person managing their project. It also becomes easier to organise visits to the EC or for the EC project manager to visit their programmes, which was generally been found to be valuable.

EC Delegations were said to be more 'approachable' than local and state administrative bodies, well informed about the country context; and ready to give both structural and detailed help. The Consultants also found Delegation desk officers to be well informed about the projects in their brief and personally engaged. EC Delegates had attended several activities carried out under each of the projects and were seen as being integral to the RXN programme.

Strengthening
communications

Both the project holders and the Delegations welcomed the existing communications and suggested practical ways of strengthening them. These included

- Letting the public know about what it supports, its values, both in an informational and educational way and not as PR.
- Training and support of all project holders on dissemination and dialogue on EU values and activities.
- Sharing experiences with other EU beneficiaries to strengthen networking and civil society relationships with government.
- Meetings with other EU funded project holders with similar initiatives.
- Networking on common themes by project holders on the web or by e-mail.
- If there are new projects being funded by other means of the EU ensuring that the experience and capacity built from EU funded project is drawn upon.
- Promoting opportunities to interact with key MEPs and Relex staff.
- Receiving constructive advice on strengthening existing projects.

The goodwill and experience of both parties could and should be maximised particularly with a local EC inter agency communication strategy.

Several local partners/NGOs felt they would have welcomed contact with the Commission in Brussels to discuss programming issues.

In general project holders would welcome a dialogue with someone of experience on the perceived weaknesses and strengths of their (approved) project applications and ideas on how to strengthen them. However in this a careful balance would need to be struck to safeguard the independence of NGO human rights projects.



8. Conclusions

8.1 Relevance

The EIDHR RXM funding programme reached some of the most vulnerable communities in the most challenging environments in the world. Although this study did not explore the projects that were not funded, it was apparent to all the Consultants in the team that there were many important initiatives being undertaken ranging from those that were usefully spending European funds on providing services for two years to mitigate the effects of racism and xenophobia, to those that were outstanding, working in the most difficult circumstances and yet applying cutting edge programming that was locally owned and potentially sustainable. The European Union should take pride in these achievements and seek ways to enhance them.

The funds have given some NGOs strategic freedom to implement innovative major projects that would have been impossible without EU support and which could become models for future practice by central and local government, domestically and internationally, who have the primary long term responsibility for their people.

NGOs were able to pioneer projects and challenge discriminatory policies and practices in specific and effective ways. Their participative methodology and human rights principles add real value and promoting trust across ethnic divides, where bureaucracies may not be trusted and conversely where governments may be constrained and do not have the confidence to take risks on unpopular minority rights issues.

This work could not be undertaken by funding governmental initiatives as the institutions of government, their policies and their methodologies, as well as the dominant majorities, their attitudes and their actions, are often the problem. Consequently it is important that these projects do not require the prior consent of the government of the host country.

In areas with weak or impoverished governments and where governmental projects would be politically impractical (e.g. parts of Georgia or enclaves in Kosovo) there is often sufficient stability for NGOs to work effectively. Furthermore in countries where even the majority is not effectively participating in society, activities by NGOs that reinforce a culture of civil society participation and human rights are crucial for long-term peace and stability and deserve support.

The EU is able to demonstrate in practice the principles of human rights and interethnic cooperation for which it stands, while showing its commitment to civil society and a diversity of approaches in a state.

Strategic perspective

On occasions this may be uncomfortable for relations with a state and be unpopular with some ambassadors in Brussels who come from focus countries. Through this programme the EU is reaching out to civil society and enhancing its reputation with them for honouring the principles it advocates. Interestingly, and to their credit, none of the Commission or Delegation staff argued against the programme in principle, rather they were disappointed that the programme was not more continuous and consistent and made practical proposals on how to overcome certain bureaucratic hurdles.

8.2 EU strategic perspective and local delegations

Taking advantage of the strategic position of the European Union can enhance the programme. Its global influence, its authority in states seeking closer ties with the European Union, its economic power and its political authority with its 25 democratic states should not be underestimated. Furthermore internally its member states are fully committed to the Directive to combat discrimination and have ratified key international human rights instruments like ICERD and European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

It is in a position of strength and should remain strong and uncompromising in promoting human rights, non-discrimination and full and effective equality in all its programming worldwide and in all relevant public statements. This can be inspired by EIDHR (RXN) programme and the rich experiences in the projects it funds.

In this programme the EU should also be strategic and look carefully where it can add the most value by taking into account the different roles that macro and micro projects can play and the general advantages of country specific projects and the separate strategic role of regional and global projects, which should not be the sum of a set of small country sub projects.

Macro projects are particularly valuable, when a significant pioneering initiative is needed to help transform attitudes, policies and practices. They can play a key role in building up the capacity of local civil society organisations (CBOs). A system of "re-granting"- the major project holder also making smaller grants to local CBOs- may have a valuable role here and help reach groups the EU does not presently reach, but are crucial in tackling discrimination locally.

The strategy should be a long term one recognising that processes of change may be slow except when there is a specific window of opportunity.



It should avoid changing priorities from one year to another and maintain a broad list of focus countries mindful and guided by the work and opinions of Treaty Monitoring Bodies. This reveals that projects are required in many countries of the world, and the work should not be confined to a limited number of countries immersed in low-level dangerous conflicts or emerging from high-level violent conflicts.

Flexibility is required to respond to changing circumstance, but the need to change attitudes, policies and practices is a long-term challenge.

In the desk study report the imbalance of the skewing of the programme towards three countries was noted where 13 of 25 projects were located in Serbia/Kosovo, the Russian Federation and Israel. In the programme proposal for 2005 neither Serbia/Kosovo nor Israel will benefit from macro projects, though the continuing need for these remains clear to the Consultants. Additionally only 13% of the funding was allocated to projects in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, although there are more possibilities of support from other donors here.

Many lessons have been learnt from individual projects and from this programme evaluation. These are likely to be of relevance to other similar programmes of projects funded under different budgets within a country. Such an exchange of experience should be encouraged.

The European Commission staff that the Consultants met, was capable, understood the logic of the programme and were committed to the programme. However those E.C. Delegations working in certain locations (e.g. Non-deconcentrated Delegations with very limited resources) were not able to use their talents and their strategic position as effectively as was needed.

E.C. delegations

Challenges remain in some Delegations of finding ways of integrating each project into the country strategy, while at the same time safeguarding the independence of NGOs that challenge existing governmental policies and practices. This complicates any work being undertaken by Delegations to bring together civil society organisations that share the values of the EU programme. However it is clear that synergies may be achieved and there may be opportunities to add substantial value at little cost, if this can be accomplished simply and successfully.

Similarly the expertise and commitment of the EC staff needs to be brought more into play by helping to provide and receive information and advice that would strengthen the programming.

There can be no substitute for a good knowledge of local organisations and structures or for a good knowledge of the political and social environment. Both of which change with time and vary in locations that may only be a short distance apart.

Often local NGOs and sometimes INGOs are poorly equipped to meet the demands of an international project with EU financial reporting requirements. Capacity building training is often needed and here the EC Delegations may be able to assist.

In most of the field visits there was a request by project holders for the EC to ensure that it made clear to the government and local community, why it was supporting the EIDHR (RXM) programme and that was based on global standards agreed by the international community. This would lend weight to these principles and to those NGOs working against racism and for minority rights.

8.3 Projects

The projects, almost without exception, were targeted at the most marginalized communities and the vulnerable within them.

The projects that appeared to have the most impact and the best prospects of sustainability were those with a coherent design, based on a sound in depth analysis of the country situation and that were able to respond to changing circumstances. Those that had good local partnerships, experienced management and a participatory methodology, that understood the local environment and the complexity of inter ethnic relations, were often better equipped to do this.

There was a marked contrast in the ownership, coherence, outcomes and the potential impact and sustainability of the projects that were rights based than those only providing service delivery, without seeking changes in the existing discriminatory environment.

The full and effective participation of minorities in development programmes and issues that directly affect them is an important human right and needs to be a central tenet in any project combating racism and promoting minority rights.

On a number of occasions the focused nature of a project around a single theme allowed the strength and experience of international NGOs, which needs to be more than a managing agent but less than the sole operative, to be a great asset. They can add real value locally and help build up local capacities, with their coherent design and participatory methodology.

In cases where this happened one of many positive outcomes was the way local organisations became empowered to continue the challenges in the long term.

When an INGO and local partners are working together, it is important to emphasise the processes of partnership as well as outputs and impacts to ensure sustainability. Here an exit strategy is crucial. Several projects showed their comparative strengths, by building up genuine partnerships and recognising openly the need for a changing and reducing engagement of the INGO, as the capacity of local NGOs are strengthened.

One of the ways to increase civil society initiatives on minority rights and to widen the catchment's area of beneficiaries may be achieved by INGOs using project grants from the EU to provide "re-grant" funding to other civil society organisations and form new transparent partnerships. Some experienced NGO development agencies have already received block grants from the European Union, under different budgets, and they have successfully managed small grants schemes within specific parameters. This model is worth exploring to see if it may be applied to the EIDHR.

Transforming attitudes and approaches after a conflict and combating institutional discrimination demands good, sustained programming. It is important to be ready to take advantage of windows of opportunity that may appear, ensuring the embedding of international human rights standards and mechanisms in the system of government (e.g. constitutional reform or the engagement of treaty monitoring bodies).

In an environment where differences have led to victimization rather than celebrations of diversity, long term processes need to be established that build trust, reinforce common values and promote the dignity of all. In these circumstances, and in particular where donors providing emergency assistance soon end their funding, a good case was made for longer term funding. This would need to be responsive to changing local circumstances and reinforce projects that had been successful in practice.

Although regional projects have a high potential for disseminating good practices, sometimes the top down approach to different situations makes them unresponsive to local environments and lacking in sustained commitment. The challenge of coordination of activities across different countries and involving organisations of different character is an ambitious management task that requires good steering capacity with the help of external monitoring. Some failures were apparent during this study.

Consequently there were substantial reservations on the value of regional or global projects, unless they had a clear focus and simple tried and tested methodology that emphasised their wider geographic ambit. Projects that brought professionals together to cooperate on inter-ethnic issues in regions where tensions were high, or promoted the implementation of international minority rights standards in practice would be examples of regional or global projects that took advantage of their strategic position.

A number of NGO project holders were very open to constructive suggestions. It was heartening for the Consultants to be invited to share their views on the strengths and weaknesses of their funded project. NGOs had not been made aware of the insights of the original assessors on the strengths and weaknesses of the project proposals and several NGOs made it clear that they would have welcomed this expert advice. Similarly a number of organisations welcomed the possibility of a constructive mid term independent evaluation, but they would not welcome a narrowly based audit.

8.4 Mainstreaming

The programme's insistence on mainstreaming gender and children's issues into projects is rational and sound. However it is not working fully for a number of reasons. In some situations insufficient information is available about the different issues confronting women and men or the specific needs of children. Sometimes the information is there but insufficient attention is given to a gender analysis and the implications for the project. In many places the project staff were not aware of the EC programming Guidelines. Attention is paid to this in the proposals by the fundraisers, but often little attention is paid by project staff or in the mid term reporting or evaluations. Sometimes in areas of violent conflict there are major differences in the role men and women play in different communities. Furthermore women may be seen as psychological symbols and mothers of cultural continuity. Consequently it was found to be much more difficult to bring women together across communities than young people and a gradualist long term approach engaging men and women was important.

In the E.C. application forms men are not included in the gender analysis, and women receive mention only in the context of children. Furthermore the mainstreaming requirement itself is mentioned only at the foot of the main body of text.

More attention needs to be paid to the specific ways in which women, men and children from minority communities are subjected to and experience discrimination.

Additionally the different consequence for their individual lives, as well as the life of the community, also merits careful attention in initial analyses and programming activities.

8.5 Calls for proposals

The additional language detailing the kinds of projects that might be proposed in the 2002 Calls for Proposals undoubtedly favoured rights based projects and may have led to the right based projects being given extra weight in the selection. However the language also referred to projects that provide services, without the need for them to plan any advocacy initiatives to promote rights and the sustainability of the work. This was unfortunate.

Only one project holder impressed by taking advantage of the international monitoring mechanisms of minority rights standards. These standards and mechanism, if handled correctly, possibly through regional or global projects that could ensure that there was no suggestion of double standards or singling out one state for attention, would ensure a continuity of concern domestically and internationally through treaty monitoring bodies and State reporting well after the closure of the funded project.

Many interlocutors found it difficult to understand why the EU funding priorities for focus countries changed from one call for proposal to another. They asked if this was based on long-term human rights objectives or short-term political expediency. Some of these changes were seen to undermine civil societies' long term efforts to combat racism and to promote minority rights. At a minimum, greater transparency is needed inside and outside the EU to explain why these decisions were taken and by whom.

There are mixed views on whether the current calls for proposal system is a good system that needs greater flexibility and adjustment or if the system itself is flawed by attempting to mechanise and quantify judgements on the grounds of transparency and objectivity when the system is not transparent. Subjective judgements of experienced local assessors are important.

It can be argued that the system needs to be made completely transparent with information on the assessors' scores, precisely why projects were accepted or rejected being provided to applicants, and an information trail to be held on file with details of who took the decision and its rationale, which is then open to independent audit.

Alternatively it may be agreed that there should be both subjective and objective elements in the decision making that take due account of the quality of the work of both individuals and organisations and meetings with applicants of short listed projects with expert advice offered on how to strengthen short listed projects.

A radical proposal suggested was to allow a small number of projects and organisations to be funded solely at the discretion of the European Commission.

It could be seen that in some circumstances organisations applied for grants for projects that they were already carrying out or suited to implement while in other cases projects were created to meet project funding guidelines. In these cases the international and local organisations did not have a track record of successful work and the projects were often unfocused.

Applications for funding are time consuming but often have to be completed in a short period of time. NGOs would welcome a much speedier decision making by the Commission. The shorter two-stage application procedure was in principle welcomed by INGOs but local NGOs would welcome a shorter one written in understandable English.

It is often difficult for NGOs to understand that the EU has very elaborate and strict procedures and the reasons for this. At a minimum there is a need for better communications on this while some argue for a fundamental reform of the system to help serious applications and not to allow minor technicalities to lead to proposals failing.

This system of Calls for Proposals is the subject of a separate short report and the conclusions above only come from evidence collected during the field visits. The summary of this Calls for Proposals report is provided in chapter 3 with a set of suggestions on improving the system.

9. Recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from the evidence accumulated and the analysis undertaken during this study. They are not comprehensive in covering all the issues raised, nor are they detailed in describing precisely how they would be operationalized, as this is beyond the scope of this study.

9.1 Programme objectives and minority rights

1. The programme should continue to support country based project as well as regional and global projects, with major priority to country based projects. In countries, the programme should aim at maintaining a spread and coherence of projects supported.
2. It should be strategic, avoid changing priorities and focus countries from year to year unless exceptional circumstances arise, as well as being clear and concise on the human rights principles that the EU stands for.
3. Regional and global projects should seek to have a regional or global impact and be more than a series of small country projects collated together. Emphasis should be placed on regional projects that bring together professionals to cooperate on inter-ethnic issues in areas where inter-ethnic tensions are high and cooperation between professionals in different countries is difficult. Emphasis should also be given to global and regional projects that strengthen the implementation of the global and regional standards and mechanisms that are designed to protect minorities and eliminate racial discrimination¹³.
4. EIDHR as a whole programme should address diversity and discrimination issues throughout all its campaigns, including the issues facing the disabled and sexual minorities, though this campaign should retain its focus on ethnic minorities, their rights and the racial discrimination they and others face.
5. The programme's aims should emphasise a rights based approach and not the provision of ameliorative welfare or social services.
6. Projects that provide services to minorities that are the government or other actor's responsibility should only be supported if they are designed to demonstrate how this work can be done and if they are explicitly designed to pass on the responsibility to the government.
7. Projects should make clear references to the international human and minority rights standards, which they are seeking to promote. Where possible, there should be links with international legal standards and their monitoring mechanisms.
8. Projects should be expected to address systemic and structural discrimination and to encourage or support government institutions to change their approach.

13 e.g. United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (UN ICERD) and Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE FCNM)

9. The focus of projects should be on the effective equality between citizens or residents, and redress for cases of discrimination should demonstrate that the objective of the project is to obtain real equality, rather than formal equality for its beneficiaries. The project should be planned to have long term effects for the entire community rather than just for the individuals targeted during the project life.
10. The EC should encourage all projects to involve NGOs and INGOs with specialist knowledge of minority rights and inter-ethnic relations internationally and domestically.
11. The EU should consider supporting projects that discuss and promote a minority's identity and effective participation in the context of integration and cooperation between communities. They should not support projects that attempt to promote assimilation and loss of identity.

9.2 Models of good practice

1. Proposals should show clearly that there are genuine partnerships, which are robust, empowering, and which display full transparency.
2. The EC should give priority to projects that are based on a local assessment of needs, that focus on a specific subject, selected target group, and can receive quality expert support from the international NGO.
3. The EC should give priority to projects that demonstrate the full and effective involvement of minorities in their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
4. The EC should encourage project holders and organisations to work with a multi-cultural staff and invite all project proposals to provide data on the ethnic, language, and gender composition of its staff at various levels of its operations.
5. Project proposals should be encouraged to allocate modest sums of money to facilitate networking among similar projects to learn lessons from each other and to develop synergies in their work.
6. The EC should seek to learn lessons from pioneering projects, locally and internationally, and publicise the lessons learned. Funds are required to hold regional and national workshops to share experiences across relevant EU funded projects.
7. Project holders must ensure that there is a transfer of know how, resources and responsibility over the duration of the project from INGOs to local based NGOs.
8. All projects should have an exit strategy that is implemented from the outset of the project.

9.3 Project management

1. Project proposals should only be considered when an organisation shows that they clearly have the management capacity to cope.
2. The EC should ensure that project proposers and other local partners have a track record of success in this field of work and that they have appropriately experienced staff, including staff at all levels drawn from minority communities.
3. The EC should provide support and guidance, with models of good practice, on how to meet the EC administrative requirements. A review appears necessary on the time taken in agreeing amendments to projects and in transferring funds.
4. Project proposals should include an element of capacity- building if there are partners who are unused to EU reporting requirements or other project demands.
5. The EC should ensure that there is practically orientated training for project staff on the EU guidelines and on mainstreaming children's rights and gender issues. This should be built into each project and supported through relevant resources and discussions in regional seminars.
6. The EC should provide guidance and support on the production of a gender analysis by projects and in local gender training. When projects are assessed, the EC should question the underlying assumptions of the gender analysis and gender specific activities proposed.
7. The current EC wording on gender needs to be revised as it may undermine the message the EU intends to convey.
8. The EC should encourage and facilitate the training of project holders on participative monitoring processes, ensuring that these are an integral part of project proposals.
9. The EC should allow a modest sum of money to be set aside in project budgets for up to three months after the end of operations for NGOs to complete project reports and to share their own evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project to the EC, project holders and other relevant parties.

9.4 Monitoring and evaluation

1. The assessments of the external Consultants (assessors) who assess whether a project should be funded should be taken seriously and used constructively. When a project is approved these assessments should be shared (anonymously) with the successful project holder and they should be invited to comment on them by the local Delegation.
2. EIDHR Guidelines should incorporate a clear formulation on the requirements for monitoring and evaluation of EIDHR projects.

Regional projects need closer external monitoring, either by Delegation staff or an external consultant, as the problems of coordination and the relationships between partners are likely to be more difficult.

3. All projects should have an independent mid term and final evaluation. These should be constructive and participatory with the evaluator chosen by the project holder, with the mid term evaluation designed to support the NGO project management rather than be a major external audit adding substantial extra bureaucracy.
4. The EC should set up a database of independent project evaluators, from whom its grantees and Delegations may seek help and support.
5. EC guidelines could be more detailed mentioning the timing of monitoring/review missions (it is suggested between 15 and 20 months of implementation), the possibility of extraordinary project visits. Funds are needed to finance this from within the project budgets and applicants should anticipate this at the outset.
6. Guidelines and contract documents should specify that all project partners need to keep themselves available for short notice visits by EC Delegations, members states representatives, EIDHR Brussels and Consultants. Two weeks notice should be sufficient for well-run projects.

9.5 Role for international (European) NGOs

1. In societies where there is a significant polarisation between groups or when the government does not respond positively to human rights projects, the EU should support projects where European NGOs are working in partnership with local NGOs and groups.
2. European NGOs' project partners should be encouraged to play an important role informing the public in Europe about the project and encouraging support amongst European decision makers.

9.6 Role of the EU as a donor

1. The EC should provide easily accessible information on why the EU takes the problems of minorities, racial discrimination and xenophobia seriously and why its new campaign promoting equality, tolerance and peace is important. It should be included in all references to RXM and in all its related materials. Additionally this rationale should be publicised in conferences and seminars by EC and project holders. The EC proposals should explain the EU's EIDHR programme in the context of how this and how other EU programmes contribute to the same aims.

2. The EC should consider a system of block grants to tried and tested human rights INGOs on specific themes and within specific regions, for them to develop a mechanism of providing subsidiary grants to a range of smaller local NGOs, especially indigenous and minority based NGOs that promote effective participation.
3. The EC should consider supporting a limited number of targeted projects as well as CFP projects, through adapting and developing existing projects.
4. The EC Delegation should have an allocation of funds for additional activities to extend successful projects and to respond to emergencies rapidly. The EC should explore a simple method of extending successful projects from 3 years to 5 years.
5. In appropriate circumstances, where there are tried and tested methodologies and NGOs, the EC should consider making grants for up to 5 years, subject to satisfactory evaluation reports and subject to a degree of flexibility in the second half of the project to respond to the lessons learned and the changing environment.
6. The EC should explore ways of strengthening the involvement of EC Delegations and national stakeholders in identification of EIDHR priority areas for its programming, allowing for some flexibility towards contingencies.
7. The process of how decisions are reached and the reasons why certain focus countries are selected for micro and macro projects needs to be made more transparent; these include potential beneficiaries, European Union Institutions (the Council, the Commission and the Parliament), and other stakeholders. The selection criteria used need to be reviewed regularly, using the inputs from beneficiaries and other stakeholders to facilitate a consistent human rights approach.
8. EC headquarters should communicate the future reasoning on the EIDHR instrument as soon as possible to allow for its integration into the next Country Strategy Paper 2007. (See earlier comments on Country strategy papers)
9. The EU should clarify the nature of its relationship with its grantees. If it is decided that the relationship goes beyond a simple contractor fulfilling terms of references and should be a partnership, then a dialogue should be established with project holders to find ways of being responsive and learning from each other.
10. The EC should identify simple cost effective ways in which it can enhance the way its grantees can communicate with European Union Institutions in Brussels (the Council, the Commission and the Parliament), and can advance human rights issues together.
11. The EC should organise meetings of grantees, in countries, in regions or internationally on thematic issues to share experience and where necessary to provide information and training. Resources should be allocated to allow appropriate Parliamentarians and Commission staff to travel from Brussels.

12. The EC should hold information meetings/seminars for its project holders and other relevant civil society organisations on the principles and practicalities behind EIDHR programming.
13. The EC should encourage cooperation between NGOs within a country where this is possible, finding opportunities to promote networking and the sharing of information.
14. The EC Delegations should make plans for the ways they may be able to offer some protection to support staff within EU funded projects, particularly those who are working in areas of high tension.
15. If funding permits, the earmarking of funding amounts for major countries such as India, should be considered to give Delegations an indication of how many projects may eventually be granted support.
16. The EC should consider the recruitment of Regional Human Rights experts to be involved in programming, overlooking the implementation of selected projects and be available to provide appropriate human rights advice to Delegations and project holders.
17. The EC in Brussels should ensure that Delegations are well informed of the logic and the nature of EIDHR programming as well as the rationale behind making decisions to include or exclude countries as focus countries for macro and micro projects.

9.7 European parliamentarians

1. The advice of European Parliamentarians (MEPs) could be sought on how they may efficiently and effectively contribute to the programme and support projects.
2. The European Parliament could be informed of the results of the EIDHR (RXM) programme, its projects and, as a partner, celebrate the successes that are achieved.

Appendix 1: Terms of reference

(revised after desk study 12/05/2005)

TITLE: Evaluation of the 2001-2004 EIDHR priorities and projects on the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities¹

General background

The fight against racism and xenophobia is an internal and external priority for the EU. The fight against discrimination has been a competence of the European Community since the treaty of Amsterdam entered into force in 1999. An active policy to fight discrimination of all kinds within the EU has been put in place, managed by DG Employment and Social Affairs. In addition, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights adopted in Nice in 2000 prohibits discrimination on any ground (Article 21), and requests the Union to protect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

This commitment is reflected in the EU's external relations. Individual EU countries, as well as the Commission, are actively involved in UN, Council of Europe and OSCE activities in this field. The fight against racism and the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples are also raised on a regular basis in political dialogue with third countries.

At the international level, key tools in the fight against racism include the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination (CERD) and the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. A landmark event was held in 2001: the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), which set out action-oriented and practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures of prevention, education and protection and the provision of effective remedies. This conference dynamised the EU's approach to the issue of racism and xenophobia. For the EC's part, anti-discrimination legislation and programmes (including a €100 million action programme for 2001-2006 managed by DG Employment and Social Affairs) are an important aspect of its response to WCAR. The WCAR Declaration and Programme of Action also included provisions for international action and co-operation to tackle racism and the funding extended under the EIDHR serves to promote peaceful co-existence amongst different ethnic groups in several regions of the world.

EIDHR background

Already in 2001, a general call for proposals was launched with many broad priorities including **"Support for measures to combat racism and xenophobia and to protect minorities and indigenous peoples"**. No further guidelines were given to applicants and 11 projects were selected for an overall amount of 9.174.392 €.

¹ A further similar evaluation dealing with the promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights will be launched as soon as possible in the line of this present evaluation.

In its Communication to the Council of May 2001 on the EU's role in promotion of human rights and democratisation in third countries, the Commission proposed a more strategic use of the EIDHR resources. In particular, it recommended focusing financial support on four thematic priority areas, including **"Combating racism and xenophobia and discrimination against minorities and indigenous people"**.

In addition, the Communication proposed the identification of a limited number of "focus" countries on which the Commission should concentrate EIDHR support.

In December 2001, the Commission adopted an EIDHR Programming Document which, implementing the recommendations of the Communication, set out in detail the main thematic and geographic priorities of the EIDHR for the period 2002 – 2004.

In 2002, according to this programming document, a specific call for proposals was launched on **"Combating (i) racism and xenophobia (ii) discrimination against ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples"**. This time, clearer guidelines were given to the applicants. It resulted in 32 projects selected for an overall amount of 21.066.323 €.

1. Overall objectives of the evaluation

This evaluation focuses on the EIDHR projects running from 2001 until 2004 and dealing with the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minorities' rights (29 projects - cf Annex 6). It does not touch upon the projects dealing with indigenous peoples that will be subject to a further specific evaluation.

The core objective of this evaluation is to assess the **relevance and effectiveness** of the EIDHR funded projects in achieving the EU objectives concerning the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minorities' rights.

A further objective will be to **assess the relevance of the priorities** that have been identified for the period 2002-2004 concerning the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minorities' rights...

At the end, the contractor is expected to make clear recommendations on how the EIDHR programming and implementation need to be modified to achieve the EU objectives, whether in terms of the types of activity that should be supported, or the specific objectives aimed at, or the types of organisation with which the Commission could be working...

2. Issues to be studied

Verify the relevance of the financed activities to meet the objectives of the programme.

Relevance

In particular the evaluators should assess if the activities have been designed in a way to relevantly address the fight against racism, xenophobia and the promotion of minorities' rights. They should also check if the gender and children perspective have been relevantly mainstreamed.

Assess the degree to which the project objectives have been achieved - what difference have the EIDHR projects made in practice?

Effectiveness

Evaluators are expected to focus on:

- The coherence of the intervention logic.
- The extent to which the methods of intervention were effective. The evaluators may suggest improvements to the methods of intervention that the Commission should incorporate in future projects.
- The extent to which the external environment (political, economic, security) have affected the achievement of the project objectives.
- Have the expectations of the different stakeholders (EC, civil society, target groups) been met?
- Have the rights and the needs of the target groups been advanced and met?
- Any unintended side-effects of the interventions?
- Any multiplier effect of the projects?
- The contribution of the EIDHR projects to the creation of social capital (capacity-building of local partners)
- The extent to which flexibility (if necessary) was applied in the implementation of activities
- The effectiveness of the women and children mainstreaming
- Did some projects have changed any laws or administrative practices regarding the fight against racism, xenophobia, and minorities' rights
- The way in which the target group/ beneficiaries actively participated in the intervention and in monitoring progress.

Impact and sustainability	The evaluators are expected to review the following: • In what way have the EIDHR activities contributed to the fight against racism and xenophobia in the countries where projects have been implemented, bearing in mind EIDHR's specificity (ie grants to civil society etc) ? • Were the beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in any form of mid programme evaluation? • Was the capacity of the beneficiaries/rights holders strengthened to claim their rights from duty bearers in the future? • Were the most excluded groups, e.g Roma, prioritised within programmes? • To which degree and in which way have the objectives been directly or indirectly achieved? • Which unforeseen positive or negative effects of the programme are evident? • To which degree the mainstreaming of women and children has achieved some positive or negative results?
Mainstream priorities	Assess the degree to which the project has managed to mainstream children and women rights. And provide recommendations to improve mainstreaming of these issues in future projects.
Visibility	Analysis of whether the recipients/partners/beneficiaries involved in the programme were aware of the role of the European institutions involved and whether the NGO implementing the projects make sufficient efforts to publicize EC funding and EC policies? • Were the beneficiaries (beneficiaries of grant in one side and beneficiary of projects/ wider public on the other side) aware of the role of the European Union in the field of the fight against racism, xenophobia...? • Were the beneficiaries aware of the overall intervention logic? • Did the EU communicate with the beneficiaries in a coherent manner? • Were the outputs of mid programme evaluations then publicised to key actors?
Expected conclusions	The evaluators should come up with some concrete and clear conclusions dealing with the implementation of the projects: • Which lessons can the EU draw from EIDHR racism, xenophobia related activities since 2001? Were the beneficiaries aware of the overall intervention logic? • Main factors of success and failure • Possible comparative analysis between different projects in one given region or between similar projects implemented in different regions

In addition, the evaluators should provide concrete recommendations concerning the programming of the EIDHR:

- Is there an added value to have detailed terms of reference (comparison of the impact of the 2001 and 2002 Calls for proposals)
- Are the priorities identified and the activities made eligible in the 2002 CfP relevant to meet the objective of the EIDHR? And if not suggestions for improvement?
- How could the guidelines for applicants be improved (cf also 2004 CfP)
- How can participatory monitoring and mid programme evaluation be strengthened?

3. Methodology

The evaluation process, techniques and research methods will be the following.

Steps in the process:

1. Desk-study, including the selection of projects on the basis of the findings of the desk study
2. Field study
3. Reporting.

The methods to be used include:

- Study of documents/ materials of each projects (interim or final reports) + programming documents including the “guidelines for applicants” of the relevant calls for proposals
- Discussion with the relevant project managers (EC) to identify the list of relevant projects for site visits.
- Interviews with former participants in the project activities (projects to be identified in close cooperation with the EC desk officers). A proposal for a programme of interviews will be made by the expert before the evaluation takes place.

The main reference documents will be the project documents, contracts and the EIDHR activity reports and programming documents. The EuropeAid Task Managers of these operations will be available to discuss and provide further documentation on the projects before the evaluation takes place. Number of projects to be evaluated = 25.

Desk study

At the beginning of the desk-study phase a preliminary categorization of (types of) projects will be made according to geographical situation (regional, country), performance (good, bad) and classification according to the objectives of the project (awareness raising, educations, developing enforcement strategies, capacity building, etc).

On the basis of the findings of the desk study phase the evaluators have discussed a list of the most relevant projects for which a site visit would be relevant. The total list of projects which were agreed to be included in the field visits has been added

Based on the results of the desk study the following point were added to the specification of the Terms of Reference:

To strengthen the analyses of effectiveness:

- When reviewing effectiveness, impact and sustainability the evaluators should consider how far projects have led to changes in policies, programmes and funding by other actors, in particular by central or local government.
- The evaluators should also look at whether there are apparent ways in which the projects have had indirect benefits for example enhancing the capacity of organisations to work together and the constructive criticism of projects and the sharing of good practice and problematic issues across projects in a country, region or the programme.

To enlarge the scope of the evaluation:

- The evaluators will include recommendations on improving the system of calls for proposals would be particularly helpful, drawing on some of the experience of this study. It would be possible to undertake a simple review that included meetings with relevant Commission staff, some successful project holders, some unsuccessful project holders reinforced by some limited desk work around the calls for proposals on issues of Racism, Xenophobia and minorities. This would not attempt to be comprehensive and would emphasise NGO views.
- The way in which the funding of this budget line has been heavily skewed toward projects in only 3 countries and Kosovo (an area emerging from a violent conflict) is an important issue and deserves a careful review of whether this meets the Commission's proposal for a more strategic use of EIDHR resources. The evaluation will consider if the balance of projects selected meets the EIDHR priorities.

The output of the field visit will be reports on the missions, which will be the building blocks for the synthesis report which will be written in the reporting phase.

Reporting

The output of the reporting phase will be a synthesis report of the overall finding with annexes reports of the different missions to the regions. The main author of the synthesis report will be the teamleader.

The report, its findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented and discussed with AIDCO and RELEX's services at the end of the reporting period.

4. Expertise

The evaluation will require the following expertise/ resources.

Desk study phase:

- team leader
- desk researcher.

The team leader will have overall responsibility for the production and quality of the output of the desk study phase.

The team leader will have ample experience in managing evaluation teams and will have knowledge of / experience in programs and projects related to the fight against racism and xenophobia.

The desk researcher will study the project documents, interview relevant project managers and identify the preliminary criteria/list of projects to be visited, the latter in close consultation and under the supervision of the team leader.

The desk researcher will have experience in desk research with a view to program or project evaluation and preferably also knowledge of/ experience in programs or projects related to the fight against racism and xenophobia.

Field visit:

- 1 international expert for each region, one of them being the teamleader
- 1 local expert for each country

Experts will be recruited and number of days for experts will be set once the selection of regions/ projects has been agreed between beneficiary and evaluator.

Experts for the field visit will work under the supervision of / report to the teamleader.

Experts will have

- evaluation experience
- knowledge of the region
- knowledge of the fight against racism and xenophobia.

Overall requirements for all experts:

- fluency in English
- fluency in English and French (teamleader and desk researcher only)
- knowledge of activities in the field of human rights, related to the area of non-discrimination and equal treatment
- insight in the operations of the European Union, preferably the EIDHR
- gender awareness.

5. Workplan

Phase I:

Activity	Number of days	
	Teamleader	Desk researcher
Inception and preparation: preparation and start up interview with taskmanager	1	1
Study of documents, interviews with project management AIDCO and RELEX staff. Preparation includes identification of relevant groups of stakeholders for interviews.	2	18
Producing/ reviewing outputs	2	3
Discussion/ finalization with representatives of the beneficiary	2	1
Total	7	23

Phase II:

Field visits	Teamleader	International expert	Local expert	Desk researcher
SOUTH EAST EUROPE		24		
Kosovo			10	
Serbia			9	
Macedonie			9	
ASIA		24		
Nepal			9	
Maleisia			7	
MIDDLE EAST		17	13	
GEORGIA AND RUSSIA		21		
Georgia			9	
Russian Federation			9	
OVEALL MANAGEMENT	25			3
REVIEW CALL FOR PROPOSALS	11			16
Total	36	86	75	19

b) Time schedule

Deadline for draft outputs:

- synthesis report: 30 August
- recommendations system call for proposals 30 September



Appendix 2: International standards and rights based programming

1. International standards on combating racial discrimination and protecting minorities

The following two instruments of international law, one global ratified by 169 States and one European ratified by 36 states, alongside the UN Declaration on the Rights of ...minorities are the key standards for combating racial discrimination and protecting minorities

1.1 International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination

Adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965

Entry into force 4 January 1969, in accordance with Article 19

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm

1.2 United Nations declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

Adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm

1.3 Council of Europe framework convention for the protection of national minorities

Adopted and opened for signature and ratification by the Committee of Ministers' Deputies, November 1995.

Entry into force 1 February 1998

http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/

A 2 .2 Human rights and rights based programming

Human Rights and Rights-Based Programming:

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A number of projects of CARE are supported by EIDHR, two were visited in the Balkans.

Frequently asked questions about adoption of a rights-based approach

Note: These represent an initial set of responses, intended to assist colleagues' thought processes as they internalize a rights-based approach. Of course, these responses do not and cannot claim to be definitive; rather, they require further debate and, as our understanding increases, refinement. In addition, there undoubtedly are and will be more frequently asked questions emerging in the process. These will have to be addressed in subsequent versions.

Definitions

1. How do we define human rights? What is our frame of reference?

CARE's definition of human rights has evolved over the past several years. A current working definition is the following:

"Human rights are entitlements all people have to basic conditions supporting their efforts to live in peace and dignity and to develop their full potential as human beings."

Our primary frame of reference is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the subsequent International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural and on Civil and Political Rights (ICESCR and ICCPR, respectively). Together the UDHR and the "twin Covenants" form the International Bill of Rights. The International Bill of Rights identifies these basic, minimum conditions and states that all human beings are entitled to their fulfilment.

Further human rights treaties elaborate on the International Bill of Rights and provide specific protection to vulnerable groups, such as refugees, women, children, and indigenous groups. These treaties are also important reference points for our work with such groups. In addition, in armed conflict zones, rights (especially civilians' rights) specified in international humanitarian law (also known as the laws of war because they regulate the conduct of war) are also an important point of reference.

2. Are human rights really universal, or are they just western notions being imposed on the rest of the world?

If human rights are valid at all, they are valid for everyone, on the basis of our common humanity. Human rights comprise what is essential for humans - no matter who we are or where we reside - to live with basic dignity and self-worth. In this sense, they are, by their very nature, universal.

At the same time, we all must acknowledge that western perspectives have been disproportionately represented in the formulation of internationally agreed human rights and recognize that human rights lack, to one degree or another, cultural legitimacy in many parts of the world. We thus support bottom-up dialogue with local communities in countries where we work, to glean what they understand to be fundamental human rights and responsibilities and to make links to what are internationally agreed principles and standards governing human relations. This is with the aim of broadening and deepening the ownership of human rights, while at the same time promoting greater inclusion and participation of developing countries in the ongoing identification and articulation of such rights.

3. Where do human rights find meaning?

Human rights find meaning "in small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet, they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world" (Eleanor Roosevelt, 1958).

4. What do we mean when we say human rights "are entitlements all people have to basic conditions supporting their efforts to live in peace and dignity and to develop their full potential as human beings"?

This means that human rights are preconditions that must be met for people to have the opportunity to enjoy a fully dignified human existence. Even though people whose rights are violated may live with dignity, they will be leading an existence that is, in some way, less than human.

Where people's human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, their humanity is not challenged or undercut, giving them an opportunity to live with full dignity and self-worth and to develop their full potential as human beings.

5. What is the difference between needs and rights? How does a rights perspective change the way we view our work?

There are two critical distinctions between rights and needs. First, rights always trigger duties, or responsibilities, whereas needs do not. One cannot talk about rights without automatically raising the issue of who has responsibilities in relation to those rights. The concept of rights is inherently relational. Second, rights inherently imply objective standards against which responsibilities can be measured whereas needs do not. To recognize the human rights of others is to recognize their entitlement to certain standards of service and access, standards that, when met, support their efforts to live in peace and dignity and develop their full human potential.

A rights perspective requires us to view our "beneficiaries" as rights-bearers who, simply by virtue of their humanity, hold claims to minimum levels of treatment, services, and opportunity, and who exist in a wider societal context within which such claims are either respected or ignored. A rights-based approach demands that we view our work in this broader context.

6. How do we define a rights- based approach (RBA)? How is it different from our current programming?

A rights-based approach deliberately and explicitly focuses on people realizing their human rights. It does so by exposing the root causes of vulnerability and marginalization and expanding the range of responses. It empowers people to claim and exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities. A rights-based approach recognizes poor, displaced and war-affected people as having inherent rights essential to livelihood security - rights that are validated by international standards and law.

To CARE, a rights-based approach means:

- We stand in solidarity with poor and marginalized people whose rights are denied, adding our voice to theirs and holding ourselves accountable to them.
- We support poor and marginalized people's efforts to take control of their own lives and fulfil their rights, responsibilities and aspirations.
- We hold others accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities toward poor and marginalized people.

- We oppose any discrimination based on sex/gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, age, physical ability, caste or sexual orientation.
- We examine and address the root causes of poverty and rights denial.
- We promote nonviolence in the democratic and just resolution of conflicts contributing to poverty and rights denial.
- We work in concert with others to promote the human rights of poor and marginalized people.

The central difference between "good" programming and RBA lies in the "deliberate and explicit" nature of a rights-based approach. This is an essential element without which just about everything CARE does could be labelled rights-based. RBA calls for purposeful and transparent engagement - with communities and other relevant actors - on peoples' rights and responsibilities, with the aim of assisting their realization.

7. Is this just the latest fad or buzzword in international relief and development?

It is true that a rights or right-based approach is en vogue to the extent that it is increasingly preached and practiced by international donors, relief and development agencies, and a range of civil society organizations dedicated to advancing human well-being. What gives RBA staying power is the fact that it has a growing, global movement and the force of international law behind it. The rights contained in the UDHR - and the treaties described above - are generally agreed to be fundamental to human existence. Internationally agreed human rights represent a unifying framework for a range of actors to pursue complementary action promoting life with dignity for all.

8. Is it rights-based approach or rights-based approaches?

Actually, both. It is singular (i.e., RBA) in the sense that we are talking about a conceptual approach based on human rights. It is plural (i.e., RBAs) in the sense that we are talking about a range of applications, depending on context, capacities, opportunities, risks, etc. of a rights-based approach - in other words, a range of rights-based approaches. There is no one blueprint for rights-based programming that can or should be followed across the CARE world.

Conceptual linkages

9. What is the relationship between RBA and HLS?

The link between rights realization and secure livelihoods is a close one. To achieve a sustainable impact on poverty and household livelihood security, we need to address not only the immediate causes and effects of poverty but also its more fundamental underlying causes. These are often related to the abuse or neglect of human rights in the form of discrimination, exploitation, or exclusion from the development process and generally are not limited to the community level. Household livelihood security has helped bring to light the relative power and relationships within and among households and authority structures.

RBA reinforces this by focusing us on the responsibilities we all have - especially those in positions of power - toward each other and calling for analysis of who is doing what, at multiple levels, to enhance or, alternatively, impede poor people's prospects for development and rights realization. In calling us to focus more closely on people's positions - in their homes, communities, and societies - and not just their conditions, RBA incorporates an awareness and appreciation of the importance of relationships between people and among the organizations that serve, represent, and have significant impact on their lives. By emphasizing people's rights to life with dignity, equality, participation, and accountability of those exercising power, a rights-based approach enriches our HLS framework.