



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

**EVALUATION REPORT**



**ETH-08-227: Enhancing the Functional Protection of Human Rights in Ethiopia**

**Date: 30 May 2012**

**Acknowledgements**

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**Disclaimer:**

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The project was **efficient** in the sense that activities were implemented within budget and, bar some initial delays, within the planned timeframe. However there were significant concerns with project management, which hampered the achievement of project outcomes and of its objective. Project management could have been improved by hiring all the trainers early in the project, consulting them regularly during implementation and ensuring that their feedback was systematically shared with other trainers.

The project has had an immediate **impact** on the professional skills of its direct beneficiaries, who broadly report satisfaction with the learning they derived from IDLO support. It is also likely that the project had a positive impact on the operational capacity of the EHRC, partly because it contributed to the establishment of effective procedures, for example in relation to management processes for the individual complaints caseload. It is also likely that the IDLO project has enhanced the capacity of the EHRC to provide appropriate human rights advice to the government in relation to draft legislation.

However it is premature to speak of impact in that respect at present, because the Ethiopian authorities have not yet (publicly) sought such EHRC advice. Indeed, the main reason why the pr  
which the EHRC operates has not changed that is, the government has yet to display

followed up, while others were reported to have been insufficiently planned (study tours). See chapter IV (ii).

Training was generally excellent, particularly where combined with technical assistance on specific Commission tasks. These activities resulted in genuine added value. See chapter IV (ii) and (iv).

Project management was more remote than anticipated due to the impossibility of setting up a permanent IDLO presence in Addis. However the failure to involve the consultant trainers closely in the management of the project led to a loss of effectiveness and impact. See chapter IV (iii).

The project achieved a positive impact on the professional skills of staff and on the development of appropriate internal management mechanisms and guidelines. However, impact could have been enhanced through closer relationships between project managers and the EHRC and by harnessing the skills and knowledge of the trainers. See chapter IV (iii) and (iv).

ess, primarily because the future evolution of the EHRC depends on factors largely outside its own control. However





The 1993 Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions (Paris Principles);

Key informants, including:

- Staff and managers of the EHRC, including staff who underwent training as part of the IDLO project;
- IDLO staff and consultant involved in the project;
- Representatives of donor institutions and NGOs supporting the capacity building of the EHRC, including as part of the DIP;
- Ethiopian NGO and academic observers of the work of the EHRC.

The evaluators were mindful of the fact that the political context in Ethiopia was not conducive to open discussions of human rights-related issues. Ethiopia is a one-party state in which the activities of civil society organizations and the exercise of public freedoms are strictly curtailed (see section iii below). The EHRC does not meet the international standards of independence set in the Paris Principles for national human rights institutions. It was therefore clear that some informants were constrained in what they could tell the evaluators. Nevertheless, the evaluators believe that they compiled sufficient information to build a fair and evidence-based report.

**Training session for Reporting and Monitoring staff, September 2010 © IDLO**

### ***(iii) Development context***

#### **Political and legal background to the EHRC**

Ethiopia is the most populous country after Nigeria with a total population of more than 80 million<sup>2</sup>, of whom over 80% lives in rural areas. It is a nation of more than 70 ethnic groups who speak more than 80 languages. The economy is based on agriculture, which contributes 42% of GDP and more than 80% of exports, and employs 80% of the population.<sup>3</sup> Ethiopia has recorded some of the highest economic growth rates worldwide over the last 6-8 years as well as impressive progress towards many of the MDGs.

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<sup>2</sup> A report of the World Bank indicates that estimated size of the Ethiopian population in year 2009 was 83,824,732, World Bank, World Development Indicators Report 2010; <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators/wdi-2010>.

<sup>3</sup> US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

However, the country still remains one of the least developed countries in the world, ranking 157th out of 169 countries in the 2010 UNDP Human Development Index.

centralized imperial government was replaced by a socialist oriented military dictatorship after a popular uprising in 1974. A coalition of rebel forces under the name Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overturned this government in May 1991 and has essentially ruled the country since then.

The Constitution, promulgated in 1995, provides for a federal government and a parliamentary democracy. In addition to the Federal Government and two federal city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa<sup>4</sup>), nine Regional States enjoy significant powers to establish their own legislative, executive and judicial branches.<sup>5</sup>

The federal legislature includes the Council of People's Representatives (HPR) elected for five-year terms in single-



### **Other initiatives**

The IDLO project was launched a few months after the formal start of the large, multi-donor, UNDP-managed, Democratic Institutions Program. The 5-year DIP (2008-2012) sought to develop the capacity of seven Ethiopian institutions including the EHRC (other beneficiaries included the Electoral Board, the Ombudsman, the anti-corruption commission, etc.). DIP expenditures have varied each year; in 2010 – the last year for which public figures were available – they amounted to US\$9.77m, of which US\$1.47m was allocated to the EHRC. The DIP included the following EHRC-related outputs<sup>11</sup>:

Enhancing the management and coordination capacity of the EHRC:

- Enhancing outreach and access to citizens;
- Improving human rights for indigent people.

Enhancing human rights protection in Ethiopia:

- Increasing human rights monitoring and reporting;
- Raise awareness about human rights challenges in Ethiopia;
- Promote the right to political participation.

Enhance knowledge of human rights in Ethiopia;

Report under international human rights treaties ratified by Ethiopia.

This program, which started about a year before the IDLO project, covered similar ground



That plan had to change when it became clear that the Ethiopian authorities would not grant IDLO permission to establish an office in Addis. Instead, the project was managed by local representatives and consultants. Alternative project management approaches were not considered, according to IDLO documents.

**(ii) Logical framework**

Coaching and mentoring  
to all technical staff on  
operational management  
tools and work processes

## IV. Evaluation findings

The following findings stem from the evidence gathered by the evaluators.

### *(i) Relevance*

The project correctly identified the weak institutional capacity and skills shortage of the EHRC, and described accurately the context of weak human rights safeguards and widespread human rights violations in Ethiopia. This context was appropriately seen as lending urgency to building EHRC capacity. Another element contributing to the relevance of the project was that it responded to needs expressed by the EHRC itself: the project was designed after consultations with the Commission, including its then chairperson in late 2007, and was clearly informed by the organizational development and substantive skills needs expressed its managers.

The context at the time of the design of the project also helped its relevance. Following the 2005 controversial elections, pressure grew on the Government of Ethiopia to engage in more depth with the international community and to address human rights concerns. The pressure was compounded by the views of civil society organizations in Ethiopia, which had played a key role in highlighting the violence and fraud surrounding the elections.

One way in which the project was most relevant was that it did not only focus on the development of human rights protection skills, but prioritized in its initial phase the development of t

widely seen as addressing a key need, as the EHRC was a relatively young institution where management systems were under-developed and (where they existed) were copied on the processes used in other Ethiopian administrations. There was a clear capacity gap,

competence, and in terms of organizational processes and systems. These included processes for monitoring investigation teams, following up queries to relevant authorities, etc.

The project design was appropriate and rational, in that it started with developing organizational capacity and moved to addressing specific areas of expertise investigation, report writing, etc. The project was ambitious, in the sense that it sought to



**(ii) Effectiveness**

There is evidence of the effective implementation of many of the planned activities, particularly those related to training. However it is not clear that the implementation of

an issue discussed at the end of this section.

The quality of the training provided by IDLO representatives (or consultants hired by IDLO) was good – some EHRC staff had specific, high praise for training sessions on monitoring and reporting, and for the report writing training and support given by IDLO. It was also noted by participants – and confirmed by the evaluators – that the training materials developed by the various trainers were excellent: they were comprehensive, well written and up-to-date.

Here is an overview of effectiveness for each area of activity listed in the summary logical

could have drawn on IDLO experts in Rome to respond to specific requests for support. In the absence of a permanent office in Addis, IDLO representatives who made short visits to Addis took over this function to a and needs.

The impact of this shortcoming on the rest of the project was significant, according to EHRC staff. The operational capacity development resulting from the project was not as substantial as staff expected; this early weakness of the project may also have influenced the way staff viewed other IDLO activities. Above all, staff and managers reported that they lacked the support needed to implement some of the good practices they learned about in the initial training sessions.<sup>13</sup>

- Although some mid-level managers underwent a training of trainers (ToT) session on operational capacity building, they did not actually implement any further training sessions themselves. According to EHRC staff, the expectation that they should implement future training courses was conveyed by IDLO to the participants in the training of trainers course, but was not taken on board by the management of the EHRC.

The failure of the EHRC to use the skills learned by participants in the ToT session was illustrative of a broader challenge to the effectiveness of the project, which also affected its impact. The EHRC did not pro-actively seek to

concerned conflicts within families, such as allegations of domestic violence. By

result, some trainers had only a diffuse understanding of work done by other trainers – a pattern reinforced by the fact that the trainers were mostly consultants, not based at IDLO headquarters and working from different locations.

### ***(iii) Efficiency***

The project was efficient in the sense that activities were implemented within budget and, bar some initial delays, within the planned timeframe. However there were significant concerns with project management, which hampered the achievement of project outcomes and of its objective.

Initially, the long delay between project design and start of implementation contributed to some of the challenges faced by IDLO. The delay (seven months between project signature in September 2009 and launch in April 2010) was primarily due to staff change within IDLO, and to the need to reconfirm activities with the EHRC as a result of the implementation of the DIP by UNDP. The delay in operational start was further lengthened

When the original plan for Addis-based project management turned out to be impractical, IDLO decided to place project management responsibilities in the hand of a senior staff member based at its Rome Headquarters. That staff member subsequently travelled on several occasions to Addis to initiate activities and take regular stock of the project with EHRC senior representatives and other stakeholders such as DIP managers. However, there were several changes in staff responsible within IDLO, following the departure from the organization of managers who had been involved in the original project design.

Trainers were recruited to design and implement specific capacity building activities. Recruitments were spread over time, with experts involved solely in specific tasks under the overall project design. Recruitments were implemented as summarized in the table below:

recommended that remedial action be taken, primarily by re-hiring one of the consultants to ensure a degree of follow-up on previous activities. However it is clear that this action could not by itself compensate for the fact that project management had been excessively remote for most of the project period and that feedback from trainers had not been adequately sought or followed up.

mostly related to a failure to anticipate project-related risks, political and institutional. A more realistic risk assessment and mitigation strategy at project design stage could have made clear the need to ensure close coordination between the IDLO project managers and the trainers. This could have been achieved by hiring all the trainers early in the project (irrespective of the timing of their input) consulting them regularly during implementation and ensuring that their feedback was systematically shared with other trainers.

Informally, some stakeholders and outside observers have described the project as a means to advance a long-term agenda, summarized as follows: by building up the professional capacity of key EHRC staff and the operational capacity of the EHRC as a whole, the project helped create a structure that may be able, if and when allowed, to investigate human rights violations and report about them effectively and competently. In the current context, it is almost impossible to know whether this informal goal has been achieved. But the fact that it was suggested as a possibility is itself a positive sign.

Clearly, the EHRC is not in a position to influence decisively the advancement of a human

that the authorities could seek to silence it, precisely because it has started to produce results) cannot be discounted, though it should also not be overstated. Until the political environment improves, the maintenance of a support network for the Commission, including through further capacity building projects, would be an appropriate way to mitigate the political risk. Future projects should help enhance strategic planning at

## V. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here are based on the findings set out in the previous section and on the contextual information presented in section II.

**(i)** The project responded to a clear need and addressed it with appropriate activities. However its relevance was hampered by a loss of coherence related to the need to avoid overlap with activities implemented under the DIP. This conclusion follows from chapter III and IV (i).

**(ii)** The relevance of the project also suffered from insufficient risk analysis and mitigation in the original design, particularly in relation to the political environment in which the EHRC was operating. See chapter IV (i).

**(iii)** The capacity building activities were effectively implemented, despite difficult conditions. However some activities (training of trainers) were not adequately followed up, while others were reported to have been insufficiently planned (study tours). See chapter IV (ii).

**(iv)** Training was generally excellent, particularly where combined with technical assistance on specific Commission tasks. These activities resulted in genuine added value. See chapter IV (ii) and (iv).

**(v)** Project management was more remote than anticipated due to the impossibility of setting up a permanent IDLO presence in Addis. However the failure to involve the consultant trainers closely in the management of the project led to a loss of effectiveness and impact. See chapter IV (iii).

**(vi)** The project achieved a positive impact on the professional skills of staff and on the development of appropriate internal management mechanisms and guidelines. However, impact could have been enhanced through closer relationships between project managers and the EHRC and by harnessing the skills and knowledge of the trainers. See chapter IV (iii) and (iv).

**(vii)** se the  
future evolution of the EHRC depends on factors largely outside its own control. However there is a clear continuing need for capacity development support, which IDLO and its trainers would be well placed to deliver.

**(viii)**  
a national human rights institution operating in a sensitive political environment. There is scope for similar support to be developed in other countries. See chapter IV (v) and (vi).

**VI. Recommendations**

situation in Ethiopia remains a source of concern. As part of the UN family, UNDEF has appropriate credentials to provide support on relevant projects. It should encourage applicants to submit proposals, including based on partnerships between domestic and



## Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

### UN documents

OHCHR documents on Ethiopia UPR, 2009  
United Nations Human Rights Council, UPR, Submission of Jubilee Campaign, April 2009  
EHRC Monitoring and Reporting Handbook

### Project documents

UDF-ETH-08-227 Project proposal, mid-term evaluation report, final report

Human rights reports on Ethiopia: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, *Fédération*

### Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

Name	Position & Organization
Amira Abdella	Junior Legal Expert, Investigations Department, EHRC
Yonas Assfaw	Investigator, EHRC
Sumit Bisraya	Project Manager, IDLO
Erin Connors	Project Manager, Freedom House
Faris Esete	Monitoring Department, EHRC
Ahmed Hussein	Monitoring Officer, EHRC
Mohammed A. Kediro	Monitoring Officer, EHRC
David Omozuafoh	Manager, DIP, UNDP
Aster Seyum	Human Rights Researcher, EHRC
Prof. Lyal Sunga	IDLO Trainer
Tara	Investigator, EHRC
Abneh R. Tesfaye	Monitoring Directorate, EHRC

# Annex 4: Acronyms

CPR