



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

**EVALUATION REPORT**



**UDF-IND-08-253 - Strengthening the Leadership of Women in Local  
Democracy - Gram Panchayats (Village Councils in India)**

**Date: 12 March 2012**

**Acknowledgements**

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**Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

**Authors**

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role in making women understand and apply their proper right to address gender inequality and to improve their community's living conditions through an EWR mandate.

*f* The project has brought about change, as it added the gender perspective to previously male-dominated norms and values in local governance. Women, in particular from the marginalized SCs and STs, gained the confidence to stand as a candidate for election and to challenge existing patriarchal / socio-cultural practices, such as the practice to nominate women standing in as proxy candidates for men to access reserved village council seats.

*f* Once elected, EWRs use their representative authority to organise collective actions, e.g. against corruptive practices and gender-based discrimination/violence. There is evidence of growing and effective involvement in the decision-making processes of the village council particularly with respect to income-generating initiatives and budget expenditure. Some EWRs managed to renegotiate the division of labour within the household.

*f* Overall, based on our findings related to impact and sustainability, the empowerment of those EWRs that benefitted from the project's training programme has initiated distinct democratic development at grass-root level, which evaluators consider irreversible.

#### (iv) Recommendations

*f* Evaluators recommend to concentrate on progress tracking to maintain strategic focus. It will be important to assess remaining (and new) needs among EWRs before embarking on new training activity supporting the activation of the recently established block-level federations.

*f* A deepened relationship with the media is also recommended to secure it as a continued partner for women's empowerment. More frequent reporting about individual stories of leadership will help to sustain the debate of persistent issues and thus foster the democratization process and social change.

**II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

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evaluators suggested to follow up on several issues they had identified during their preparatory work. These included:

- f Growing levels of resistance originating from male representatives, government officials and the EWR's own families: did these weaken the EWR's acceptance and leadership, i.e. affect the project's **relevance**?
- f The ways Panchayats were chosen for the '6 W U H Q J W K H Q L Q J : R P H Q ¶ V ( P S R Z H through the Electoral Process' (SWEEP) campaign; the selection criteria for participants in the Training of Trainers (ToT), the Women Leadership Workshops (WLW), the media workshops and the training method and materials, to determine **effectiveness**.
- f 7 K H P D Q D J H P H Q W R I W K H S U R M H F W ¶ V d i d p a r t n e r s h i p a r r a n g e m e n t s a c t u a l l y p r o m o t e **efficiency**?
- f 7 K H H [ W H Q W W R Z K L F K µ V X F F H V V V W R U L H V ¶ H [ L V W W K D W D achieved through the work of individual EWRs in their Gram Panchayats, in order to determine the project's potential **impact**.
- f The existence of arrangements supporting continued learning and sharing of knowledge to ensure **sustainability**.
- f 7 K H F R P S D U D W L Y H D G Y D Q W D J H J H Q H U D W H G E \ 8 1 ' ( ) ¶ V U H partnership, as well as the positioning of the partner V K L S L Q 5 D M D V W K D Q ¶ V V R F I determine **UNDEF-added value**.

### (iii) Development context

The Indian constitution includes provisions for political, social and economic freedom. However, bodies ensuring local governance in rural areas were initially not included in India's constitution. Its article 40 then stated that the States of India shall take the necessary steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government.

For Mahatma Gandhi the village represented the fundamental unit of India's governance V W U X F W X U H <sup>3</sup>, Q G H S H Q G H Q F H P X V W E H J L Q D W W K H E R W W R P ´

Prevailing conditions such as social inequality and discrimination against marginalized groups and women prevented effective realization and remained an area of concern for a long time, until in 1992 the parliament passed the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment, establishing rural local self government in India, also known as 'Panchayati Raj'. The amendment of the Indian constitution came into effect in 1993 and mandated the establishment of democratically elected Panchayats at village, district and intermediate levels throughout India, including provisions for (a) their regular elections, powers, resources; and (b) for the representation of the socially and politically marginalized sections of scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) and women.

A constitutionally guaranteed minimum female representation of one third of Panchayat seats ended the practice of nomination or co-option<sup>2</sup> of women primarily originating from influential families belonging to the ruling political party. The reservation refers to the overall

non-reserved seats.

The geographical distribution of reserved seats changes after each electoral cycle. In a village, in which a seat was reserved for SC, a reservation for women may apply during the next election. Or, in a village in which a reservation for women existed, no reservation at all may apply in the following election. This is to ensure that every weak section in every village gets a chance to participate in local decision making at some point within a given period. In villages with only one or two P197ith e one ETC



the end of the UNDEF-supported period. It is understood that the support of UN Women has now been secured for activities aiming at the development and activation of the 'Federation'.

Given the geographical outreach of the project, THP chose to implement the project through a partnership, which was formalized through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed with each partnering CSO. The MoUs included reporting duties and obliged partners to provide audited financial statements. Conditions were strict, allowwowowowoacje.wowcort and adigram( )-1

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates THP's programmatic approach into a structured and very detailed plan of project activities and intended outcomes, which is geared towards the achievement of the project's three key objectives. The framework below aims to capture the project logic systematically, also attempting to eliminate confusion between intended outcomes and outcome indicators evaluators at times observed in the Project Document's result framework.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Medium Term Impacts	Long Term Development Objectives
(a.1) Planning workshop for SWEEP to build a Civil Society Alliance launching a pre-election campaign Z L W K D I R F X V R C leadership	CSOs across the state of Rajasthan promote Z R P H Q ¶ V S D U W L especially marginalized women, in the pre-election campaign.	The Civil Society alliance developed a common strategy, succeeded involving the wider community and other stakeholders & increased women's participation	: R P H Q ¶ V empowerment is strengthened through the electoral process  Elections are carried out without violence exercised against women
(a.2) Training of Trainers workshop for SWEEP campaign	CSOs play a key role in mobilizing and raising awareness Conceptual clarity among CSOs		
(a.3) SWEEP campaign development workshop with 7 CSOs and local creative artists/ professionals	Uniform, focused campaign messages & material are developed & adopted,	Enhanced understanding of Z R P H Q ¶ V participation and leadership. Legitimization of women leaders	
(a.4) SWEEP campaign in 700 Gram Panchayats   Women, especially from			

<p>follow-up refresher ToT</p> <p>(b.2) Block-level meetings in 14 blocks, where WLWs are planned</p>	<p>women representatives to become empowered leaders</p> <p>Mitigate/address rumors, myths &amp; mindsets associated with women stepping out of their traditional roles/private domains</p>	<p>democracy,</p> <p>apt conduct of WLWs</p> <p>An enabling environment is created: the community / stakeholders welcome newly H O H F W H G leadership ↑ V</p>	<p>encouraged to actively participate in the village council meetings (Gram Sabhas)</p> <p>EWRs take informed leadership in processes related to budgetary and development plans in their Panchayats</p>
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campaign materials by the Election Commission of the State of Rajasthan to ensure correct contents. Information material distributed carried a help-line phone number (bottom line of this poster), to report e.g. cases of misinformation or coercion. The THP partnership informed the State Election Commission about such cases. Materials were also distributed to the twenty District Magistrates and the State Election Officers related to the 1,071 Panchayats of the 46 blocks, in which the campaign took place, together with an explanatory letter introducing the SWEEP campaign activities that were going to be undertaken by THP's 40 local partners

Typical myths included: (i) women take passive interest in politics, (ii) their presence in politics is due to their connections with powerful political families or politicians and (iii) they are proxy members who do not or rarely attend panchayat meetings.



**Public rally during the SWEEP campaign and the use of banners carrying slogans advocating the women's right to participate in Panchayat elections: 'Time has changed, now it is the time of women'; 'Long journey, destination far. Yet we will live our vote'; 'I will become a voter and candidate. I will become a nominator and polling agent'.**

Such assumptions were contested through simple but definite slogans that were expressing

THP also secured the support of former female village council members, whose experience and knowledge helped the campaign to enter into the households of prospective candidates and to generate discussion with their family members. Thus they played an important role of as advisor, social communicator and counsellor, thus adding to the credibility of the campaign and the project.

#### Post-Election Support

THP's baseline survey established that EWRs were keen to address local issues, which they have mainly identified in the context of their traditional household roles. Water/road





### (ii) Effectiveness

The project produced almost all of the outputs foreseen in the Project Document and in many cases these surpassed the initial plan. This was most importantly to the benefit of the project's end-beneficiaries, as the outreach of the SWEEP campaign and the number of EWRs trained post-elections clearly exceeded the original plan.

#### Pre-election Support

SWEEP campaigns were implemented by timely trained trainers and awareness raising materials were developed and disseminated in higher numbers than planned. SWEEP activities reached out to 1,071 (planned: 700) Panchayats of 46 blocks in 20 districts. Media workshops involving more journalists than planned were held and contacts were established

The identification of workshop programme participants was based on the participation of 1,056 EWRs in the project's 14 pre-WLW meetings held at block level (700 participants planned). In addition, field staff of the project partnership informed about the WLW opportunity by informing existing Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and making personal visits to EWRs and their families, at times accompanied by former female village council members. Female Village Council presidents were encouraged to bring along other EWRs from their Gram Panchayat.

A pre-condition for the success of EWR training was to 'break the ice', which is why WLWs at the outset always aimed to establish trust among participating EWRs and between them and their trainers.

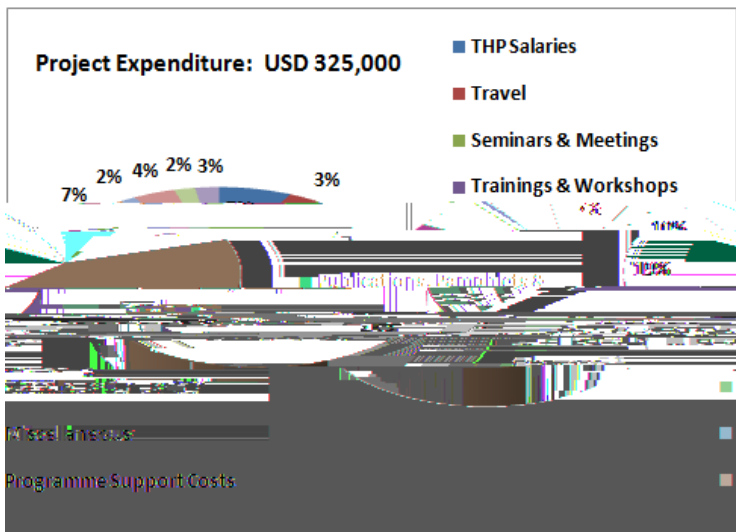
Participatory methods, such as plays and songs, helped EWR trainees to get to know each other in a comfortable and non-intimidating way. In a next step WLWs then addressed the rights linked to citizenship and issues related to patriarchy. This subject usually prompted the trainees to talk, as they were given the rare opportunity to speak about the limitations and restrictions they experience.

To make the trainee groups cohesive, an exercise followed, during which the typical daily routine, roles and responsibilities of male and female family members were compared. Thus, trainees realised and appreciated their multiple capabilities, which led to the basic conclusion: 'If we can run a household and organize the family business, we certainly can also be members of the village council'. Ample time was given to take up issues the trainees wished to share and discuss, to reassure them that their role and what they do is important.

The THP partnership sent 150 media workshop invitations to freelance journalists (50) and newspapers (100), with the latter identified through the results of a National Readership Survey. Newspapers with largest circulation were repeatedly contacted to ensure participation. The actual participants were nominated by the newspapers themselves.

### (iii) Efficiency

Timely implementation of planned activities by the THP partnership and solid reporting(t)-4(he)3( )-199(l)



As a matter of fact, the project had to cope with a lean budget, considering the outcome it has delivered.

Equipment was not budgeted for, as THP and its implementing partners managed to cut costs using their existing infrastructure. The budget also reveals that the input of the implementing partners' field staff has not been budgeted for, i.e. it was provided free of charge.

Costs associated with the implementation of (i) SWEEP campaign, (ii) seminars and meetings

and (iii) trainings and workshops, absorbed 72% thus representing the project's main expenditure. Breaking the total amount spent for trainings and workshops (USD 141,000) over the total number of WLW trainees (which includes the participants and hence the costs of the other elements of the project's training cycle) provides an average cost of USD 65 per EWR. Advocacy and outreach expenses covering the campaign material, advocacy and State Convention costs corresponded to an expenditure ratio of 13%

THP's staff costs, which related to inputs for project management, partnership coordination and M&E, represented 7% of project expenditure. This was highly efficient given that THP's partnership involved the management of 40 CSOs pre-election and of 11 CSOs as implementing partners throughout the duration of the project.

The documented outputs lead evaluators to the conclusion that the collaboration between State Programme Officer and National Programme officer, who coordinated and monitored the project, was excellent. Management and coordination of the sizeable partnership was facilitated by the project's reporting and monitoring system, which required partners to submit monthly narrative and financial reports. In addition, partners were obliged to provide quarterly M&E reports. The State Office recorded data of the latter via intranet on THP's internal database.

Joint review meetings were held every quarter to take stock of programme implementation, enable shared learning and resource availability. The meetings made effective use of the monitoring reports generated by the THP database, and considered presentations by and exchange among partners as a basis for the planning of the quarters ahead. According to THP, the joint review meetings helped improving the partners' reporting skills, as they initiated exchange of best practices and competitiveness.

The potential for inefficiency was further minimized through quality assurance efforts of THP's State Office, which included unannounced spot checks in the field. As reported in the strategy section, this led to the replacement of implementing partners who were found to be not performing up to expectations.

(iv) Impact





can be probably best compared with an informal tool for cooperation on a specific theme or





## V. CONCLUSIONS

i. The project's territorial targeting and its partnership with 11 CSOs secured outreach and acceptance, thus significantly enhancing the project's relevance and impact .

has initiated distinct democratic development at grass -root level, which evaluators consider ir reversible

**IX. ANNEXES**

## ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### UNDEF

- f* Final Narrative Report, including Annexes
- f* Mid-Term/Annual Progress Report
- f* Project Document
- f* Project-specific Evaluation Note
- f* 2 Milestone Verification Reports

### THP

- f* Baseline survey presentation
- f* Form for collection of Baseline Data from Elected Women Representatives
- f* Photographs of project activities
- f* Print Media Coverage
- f* Project results presentation
- f* SWEEP Campaign material
- f* SWEEP Campaign: Quotes from the field
- f* THP presentation ' 6 W U H Q J W K H Q L Q J : R P H Q ¶ V 3 R O L W L F D O / H D G H U V K L S L Q /
- f* ToT Handouts

### Other sources

- f* Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, Issue 3: May 2009: Rethinking The Rotation Term Of Reserved Seats For Women In Panchayati Raj, Nupur Tiwari
- f* Democratisation, Vol.8, No.3, Autumn 2001, pp.162: Increasing Participation in Democratic Institutions through Decentralization: Empowering Women and Scheduled Caste and Tribes through Panchayati Raj in Rural India, E. Bryld, Pub: Frank Cass
- f* Harijan weekly newspaper, 28 July 1946, p. 236
- f* National Institute of Advanced Studies-Gender Studies Unit (NIAS), : R P H Q ¶ V 9 R L F H 1 D W L R Q D O Alliance of Women (NAWO) and Initiatives-Women in Development (IWID): Baseline Report Women and Political Participation in India
- f* ResponsesFof the Member State India to the questionnaire on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995)Fand the outcome of the 23<sup>rd</sup> FSpecial Session of the General Assembly (2000)
- f* Study on the Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution, Shashi Kaul and Shradha Sahni, Department of Community Resource Management and Extension, Government College for Women Parade, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir

### National Legislative acts, policies

- f* National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001)
- f* Right to Information Act (2005)
- f*

## ANNEX 3: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Mr. Rishi Singh, Programme Officer M&E (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>)  
Ms. Ruchi Yadav, Senior Programme Officer  
Mr. Virendra Shirmali, Programme Officer  
Mr. Darshan S, Programme Officer M&E (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>)  
Ms. Ranjana Kumari, Programme Officer (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>)  
Mr. Anand Kumar, Programme Officer (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>)

Ms. Shanti Bai Bhil, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Girwar, Block: Abu Road, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Keli Bai, Ex Panch, Gram Panchayat: Girwar, Block: Abu Road, District: Sirohi

**SARD staff members & trainers (December 14<sup>th</sup> 2011)**

Mr. Brijmohan, Secretary, SARD Sansthan  
Ms. Sunita, Trainer, SWEEP Campaign, WLW, Refresher Training, Needs-based Workshop  
Mr. Nemi Puri, Trainer, Needs-based Workshop

**Elected Women Representatives (December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

Ms. Pooja Rajpurohit, Up-Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Malagaon, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Gelu Devi, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Rohua, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Kamla Devi, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Udvadia, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Hanja Devi Bhil, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Bant, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Hanifa Banu, Ward Member, Gram Panchayat: Mandar, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Paras Kanwar, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Padar, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Deepa Rajguru, Up-Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Udvariya, Block: Reodar, District: Sirohi  
Ms. Paru Devi, Ward Member, Gram Panchayat: Datani, Block: Reodar District: Sirohi

**Jatan Sansthan staff members & trainers (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

Mr. Goverdhan Singh, Trainer, SWEEP Campaign  
Ms. Tara Begam, Trainer, SWEEP Campaign  
Ms. Manju, Trainer, WLW, Refresher Training, Needs-based Workshop  
Ms. Pinki, Trainer, WLW, Refresher Training, Needs-based Workshop

**Elected Women Representatives (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

Ms. Vardhini Purohit, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Oda, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand  
Ms. Lakshmi Sharma, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Pachamta, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Geeta Raigar, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Junda, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Sunder Bai, Up- Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat Gogathala, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Fatima Begum, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Panotiya, Block: Railmagara, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Amrit Kanwar, Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat: Kotadi, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Sundar Bai Salvi, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Relmagra, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Barkat Begum, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Relmagra, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand, Ms. Rekha Baishnav, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Relmagra, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand , Ms. Kesar Devi, Ward Panch, Gram Panchayat: Relmagra, Block: Relmagra, District: Rajsamand

**Astha Sansthan staff members & trainers (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011)**

Ms. Girija Swami, Trainer, WLW, Refresher Training, Needs-based Workshop  
Ms. Veena Saini, Trainer, WLW  
Ms Sumitra, Trainer, WLW

## ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

BC	Backward Castes
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EWR	Elected Women Representative
FUW	Follow-up Workshop
GP	Gram Panchayat
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

## ANNEX 5: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Schematic overview of the five-year strategy for support to EWRs. The UNDEF-supported project supported activities displayed under years 5 and 1 of this scheme (source: THP).

