

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

UDF-TUR-08-268: Monitoring and influencing the Central Budget
By Civic Empowerment in Turkey

Date: 27February 2012

Acknowledgements

The evaluators would like to thank all those who provided assistance to the Evaluation Team, in the course of the field mission to Turkey. Particular thanks are due to Mr. Fikret Toksoz, National Consultant and Director of the Good Governance Program at TESEV, and Ms Oyku Ulucay, TESEV Program Coordinator, for their assistance. Ms Ulucay provided support to the Evaluators

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The limited role of civil society as a recognized partner in consultation public decision-making; and, Despite a number of legislative initiatives in recent years, which have reduced the disadvantages of women in law, the continuing absence of an understanding of gender equality and the priorities of women in government decision-making.

The initiatives undertaken by the project were all relevant responses and worthwhile contributions in addressing the four key issues listed here.

The emphasis on the budget for the social sector was particularly relevant as a step towards drawing attention to, and seeking to improve, the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The selection of the Urban Council and Women's Assembly (WA) as a focus for strengthening the role of civil society in monitoring the performance of municipal government was a relevant and appropriate choice, given the project objectives. The key products developed by the project, the Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG) and the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Manual were both directly relevant to the plans to which they were directed and were well received.

Concerning Project Effectiveness, there was a clear logic to the project design, which blended applied research with training and advocacy, while also combining efforts at national and local level. However, the pursuit of multiple objectives lent a measure of complexity to the design which also went along with greater risks to project results. The decision to add a gender equality component to the project by providing special training to Women's Assemblies reflected the recognition of a significant capacity gap in local civil society.

Overall, the project demonstrated an admirable ability to adjust and adapt its plans as circumstances changed and new challenges emerged. However, adding new elements to an already multifaceted project gave the project an openness and lack of completeness, particularly in its efforts to support civil society capacity development. From this perspective, the project is best appraised as a beginning, a catalyst, further action.

If the project were a stand-alone effort in a resource-starved environment, the Evaluation Team would regard this as a serious problem. However, the UNDEF project takes its place as one of a continuing series of initiatives undertaken singly and collectively, by members of the Permanent Monitoring Group (PMG), and more work is already underway. Accordingly, this may not amount to a negative comment on the project's effectiveness.

The project was highly effective in drawing attention to the importance of "the social budget", demonstrating the value of budget monitoring, emphasizing the need for civil society to take an active role in local governance, and in supporting efforts to address the gender gap in government decision-making. It was less effective in achieving those of its specified results which required the building of civil society capacities, though it did make positive contributions in this sphere. At the same time, it also supported the achievement of other results, beyond those initially indicated.

engagement with budget monitoring at local level. It was less effective in its efforts to build the capacity of the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies, though it made contributions towards results in this sphere.

7KH SURMHFW¶V DSSURDFK WR Wadd the @ ZDV LQF clear need for TESEV to strengthen its expertise in capacity development , beneficiary needs assessment and the development of training plans.

Partnership was a real strength of the project. The Permanent Monitoring Group (PM G), where organizational members have worked with each other for some time, over a series of projects, is an excellent institution. The partnerships that TESEV established with local beneficiaries were also strong, and are likely to continue beyond the project.

It is apparent that

Region, where meetings were held with the Urban Council and the Women's Assembly. Municipal officials also took part in the discussions.

iii. Development context

In Turkey, the democratic process and political culture remain heavily influenced by earlier decades of authoritarian rule. In an unusually centralized and bureaucratized political system, old habits persist, and institutions of accountability are relatively weak. While in most democratic states, the budget process is a focus for public debate and dialogue, this has not been the case in Turkey. Rather, the budget is an internal matter for public officials in the Ministry of Finance and the State Planning Commission, and in negotiation with counterparts from line ministries and other state agencies. At the local level, the budget is assigned to municipalities by the national government, based on a formula.

There is little provision for public consultation at either national or local level. Under current conditions, The Budget and Finance Committee of the Grand National Assembly (GNA), or Parliament, is unable to perform its role of holding the executive accountable. This project represents one component of a broader effort to draw public and media attention to the importance of budgeting, while building the capacity of civil society to engage with government on budget matters, thus enhancing public accountability.

Increasingly, the responsibility for administration of the social sector budget, or the "social budget", including health and education, as well as social protection, 4()-14(ann7(an)3)-69

representatives of public-

III. Project strategy

i. Project approach and strategy

TESEV is a public interest research and advocacy organization, focusing on social,

While the project sought to provide direct assistance to civil society at local level, it also intended to make a difference at central government level. Hence, two sets of beneficiaries were defined:

Civil society and “social stakeholders”; and,
Parliamentarians.

According to the Project Document, there were three aims guiding project strategy:

- a) To involve socially excluded groups in the budget process, at both national and local level;
- b) To increase the effectiveness of Parliament in the budgeting process; and,
- c) To increase public awareness on social protection related (the social sector) components of the central budget.

The major components of the project's methodology were as follows:

The PMG would develop a set of tools packaged into a Social Budget Monitoring Guide, a mechanism for tracking social expenditure at local level.

This work also involved the task of determining an appropriate, practical definition of “social expenditure” as a basis for data collection;

Local Monitoring Units (LMUs) would be established under the aegis of the Urban Councils of pilot municipalities;

Training on budget monitoring would be provided to LMUs by members of the PMG;

With the support of the LMUs, The PMG would collect data on allocations from the national budget to local government. The findings of a comparative analysis of the data would be shared with parliamentarians, the mass media and national and local stakeholders;

The LMUs would meet with local members of Parliament and provide local feedback on issues arising from the analysis of the budget;

Project activities would culminate in a national conference, where information on the Budget Monitoring Guide and what had been learned from its application in the pilot municipalities would be shared with other local and national stakeholders.

The pilot cities selected were: Kocaeli, Bursa, Denizli and Diyarbakir, along with the Istanbul urban district of Kadikoy. It had proved necessary to make changes to the initial list of five. Following local elections, which took place early in the period of project implementation, there was a change in the majority party in one city, which now indicated that it had no interest in participating in the project. In a second case, continuing political difficulties and controversy precluded attention to the project. Accordingly, two replacement cities were identified.

Resources : Of the planned project budget \$207,000, the largest portion (\$90,250) was allocated to travel and related costs.

Social Budget Monitoring Guide, in consultation with the PMG. An Austrian gender studies expert was recruited to develop a Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Manual, and to provide training, based on the manual. The contribution of office costs was assessed at \$19,250, with a further \$5,000 allocated to hardware (two computers).

Assessment of the Strategy : There was a clear logic to the project design, which blended applied research with training and advocacy, while also involving efforts at national and local levels. This lent a measure of complexity to the design which also went along with greater risks to project results. A lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Finance and State Planning Commission in releasing data on expenditures at local level obliged TESEV to obtain most of the required data from local government sources. Difficulties in engaging with parliamentarians caused the project to switch its focus to Urban Councils as the main beneficiary and target area.

The decision, following implementation, to add a gender equality component to the project by providing special training to Women's Assemblies, attached to Urban Councils, reflected the recognition of a significant capacity gap in local civil society. While it strengthened the ability of the project to reach "socially excluded groups", at the same time, it also stretched the project's budget and reach, and broadened the range of objectives to be addressed.

Overall, the project demonstrated an ability to adjust and adapt its plans as some dooain ai5n(oai)cSionj fZ` <L4-o4(ocu)3(s ()-4(b4>14)->4o0s8>13<0046e)-4 1 0 04

national conference was of value principally to publicize the SBMG, using illustrations from data obtained from the pilot municipalities. Within this logical framework, it is the SBMG which takes centre stage.

The second logic underlying the project and its strategy focused on civil society at the local level, via the Urban Councils (UCs) and Women's Assemblies (WAs). The concern here was to develop tools to support them in monitoring local budgets and to train them. Related to this were efforts to enable the civil society at local level to forge closer relationships with decision makers at local and national level to provide a basis for ongoing dialogue and discussion on budget priorities and allocations to the social sector. In terms of this logic chain, it is the building of civil society capacity which is at the centre of things, with the tools developed serving its needs.

The "unfinished" and "open-ended" quality of the project, referred to in the consideration of Project Strategy above, mainly derives from the less systematic approach adopted in addressing the requirements of this second logic chain, and the somewhat awkward blending of the two logics in project plans. As noted above, this is less problematic than it might otherwise be, since TESEV and its partners are already engaged in other efforts to build, at least in part, on what was accomplished in the UNDEF project.

IV. Evaluation findings

The evaluation is based on a set of Evaluation Questions or EQs, designed to cover the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; plus the issue of UNDEF value added. Evaluation Questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

i. Relevance

The project responded to a specific weakness in the practice of democratic governance in Turkey: the absence of effective mechanisms through which citizens may hold government to account for budgeting and for efficiency and effectiveness in allocating funds in response to the needs of vulnerable groups. Particular attention was given to the local level, where municipalities bear increasing responsibility for social spending, and where institutions of accountability, including elected municipal council are notably weak.

The emphasis on the budget for the social sector was particularly relevant as a step towards drawing attention to, and seeking to improve, the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In a highly centralized system, there is weak input and feedback from the local to the national level. The lack of transparency in budget making, along with weak monitoring by government (the Finance and Interior Ministries, and others with responsibility for the social sector) of allocations to expenditures has led to duplication, inefficiencies and a lack of fit between funding and social needs. The problems are exacerbated by the lack of data at either the Ministry of Finance or

The addition to the list of direct beneficiaries of the project of the Q1V Assemblies (WAs) was a response by TESEV to an opportunity to engage with a group that represented a focus for women's organizations and women prominent in local activities, and whose members are normally very active in local affairs. WAs take on additional importance in view of the fact that, despite the high level of involvement of women in voluntary organizations, typically, they are represented poorly as municipal councillors, senior officials or mayors.

Within the broader civil society sphere, women's organizations seem to face particular challenges, in terms of organization, finance and staffing, depending largely on volunteer efforts. Any effort to strengthen the capacity of the representatives of these organizations who are members of WAs, and of the ability of WAs, as institutions, to influence the public agenda represents a positive development. The poor representation of women in public life and at senior decision-making levels represents a serious deficiency in Turkish democracy, while also reducing the potential pressure on policymakers to adopt a gender

focus in local government to the needs and of women, and made the case for adopting a gender equality perspective in considering social and other expenditures.

There were two key products developed by the project as a means toward its work. The first of these was the **Social Budget Monitoring Guide (SBMG)**. The second was the **Gender-Responsive Budgeting Manual (GRBM)**.

The Social Budget Monitoring Guide : The Guide is a comprehensive report rather than a guide or manual, where the trainee can actually learn how to monitor, through examining and analyzing case study data in a workshop setting. It presents the main elements of the budgeting process and explains social budgeting and gender responsive budgeting, with actual examples from all the pilot cities of the TESEV project, as well as a comparison of selected expenditures for all Turkish cities. It also provides a rich bibliography on the subject.

The main sections of the Guide are as follows:

- Structural aspects of budgeting
- What is social expenditure
- The “Social Budgeting” concept

used very loosely. Any meeting where there is an explanation of the “social budget” and the concept of budget monitoring was termed “training.”

Preliminary meetings in each municipality with the leadership of the UC, the mayor and local officials, were devoted principally to obtaining support for the project and explaining the need for budget data on social expenditures. Subsequently, there were some formal meetings in each locality, followed by open sessions, attended by a range of those interested from the UCs, where presentations were given on the social budget and the concepts presented in the SBMG. A smaller group, normally including at least one municipal official, was selected to attend the Istanbul workshop.

The outcome of this process was not the establishment of a core group of those capable of monitoring the government budget. Rather, a number of the civil society members of the UC, or its Steering Committee, had received exposure to the idea of the concept of the social budget and had gained an idea of its importance. They had also contributed to the SBM

officials or councillors, had any appreciation of the idea of gender mainstreaming. Women's activities were viewed as something separate. Further, the local budget does not readily lend itself to gender analysis. Accordingly, it was decided that, in working with WAs, it would be necessary to start with the basics: how to do gender analysis; understanding the gender implications of policy; and, what is required in making an analysis of the budget from a gender perspective. The organization is building on this initial effort in other projects.

Beyond this, TESEV came to recognize that GRB was perhaps more valuable as a sensitizing device than as a technical tool to equip women civil societies with the means to do detailed budget analysis. What may be more important as a focus for continuing work will be on ensuring that social policies and programs respond to women's needs.

Key local stakeholders are brought together with MPs and senior local politicians and administrators and constructive dialogue takes place; appropriate arrangements made for dialogue between PMG and Parliamentarians

One of the discoveries of the project in the first months of implementation was that it would be more effective to focus efforts on influencing decision-makers at local, rather than at national level. In considering the effectiveness of the project in contributing to this outcome, it must be appreciated that TESEV and its PMG partners have considerable credibility in the local governance sphere. It is apparent that their involvement in initiatives with specific local government units stimulated interest on the

issue of the lack of budget transparency in Turkey attracted considerable press interest. Press conferences were held in Ankara with parliamentary journalists in October 2010 and with the Economics Journalists Association in July 2011, also in Ankara.

The National Conference, intended to be a key event in introducing the Guide to a broad range of local and national decision makers and civil society peers, and to bring it to the attention of a wider public, was a disappointment. There was a major conflict of dates, with the Conference coinciding with the national general election campaign. As a result, attendance was much lower than had been expected, and the profile of participants was not in line with what had been desired. There were 40 participants, most of whom were delegates from the Urban Councils and Women's Assemblies of the five pilot cities. The project had already received a three-month extension from UNDEF, and the request for a further extension to accommodate holding the Conference at a later date was turned down.

iii. Efficiency

Given the scope of activities undertaken, the project budget was reasonable. TESEV was careful in management of both human and financial resources. There was a full time Project Assistant, and the project also covered the costs of the "National Consultant", paid at a modest level, given his level of both expertise and experience. The project was guided through

iv. Impact

and expenditures benefit women, or serve to perpetuate disadvantage. Both municipal officials and civil society also gained an understanding of the value of bringing together all budget items which contribute to social sector spending as a means of tracking expenditures and comparing them with commitments made in municipal strategic plans.

Beyond this, the project succeeded to some degree in explaining the idea of monitoring the local government budget on the public agenda drawing public and media

In Diyarbakir, the already strong relations between the UC and local government were reflected in the participation of the UC in budget planning. As a result of the exposure of local officials, along with leaders of the UC, as well as the WA, to GRB, through the project, the WA has also been invited to take part in budget discussions. In addition, the Social Services Department of the

In addition, with the support of the EU Delegation to Turkey, TESEV had begun to implement an initiative utilizing the tools and methods developed in the UNDEF project in providing training to additional WAs and in twinning more established Assemblies with less experienced counterparts in other municipalities (see feature story below).

It should also be noted that The Social Budget Monitoring Guide is being used by TESEV and other members of the PMG in their continuing work. The Gender Responsive Budget Manual is also being used by TESEV in its new initiatives. Finally, as noted above, the partnerships forged with local beneficiaries are likely to continue beyond the project.

vi. UNDEF added value

Having the name of UNDEF and the UN associated with the project was certainly helpful to TESEV in ensuring the full cooperation of the Urban Councils, local government and the President of the Equality Commission of the Parliament. Political polarization in Turkey and the tendency of the government to be suspicious of European donors and international foundations engaged in support for democratization causes difficulties for local civil society partners, in some cases. From this perspective, the UNDEF label was a plus for the project.



A second benefit to TESEV related to the nature of funding, where UNDEF covered the full cost of the project over an extended period. Most donors will only pay partial costs. This enabled the TESEV team to concentrate on implementing the project, rather than on scrambling to find additional financial assistance.

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(Prepared by Aylin Yardimci)

Pairing experienced, successful and proactive Women Assemblies with more pas-
timid and inexperienced ones was a major component of our ~~project~~ attempt to
induce a learning process between different Women's Assemblies, and educate them to
be more able and willing to monitor and influence their local budgets. For this p
we took the Women Assembly (WA) of Edirne to Diyarbakir to ~~introduce~~ them to the

vi. Partnership was a real strength of the project. The PMG, where organizational members have worked with each other for some time, over a series of projects, is an excellent institution. The partnerships that TESEV established with local beneficiaries were also strong, and are likely to continue beyond the project.

vii. It is apparent that involvement of TESEV and its partners in initiatives with specific local government units stimulated the ideas promoted by the project on the part of mayors and senior local officials, as well as with the

xv. In the sphere of advocacy, the project's principal impact was through the stimulus it provided to local activists, working through the UCs and WAs, to press municipal authorities to establish Municipal Equality Commissions (ECs) as sub-committees of elected municipal councils. The project supported its civil society partners to act on this opportunity. All five municipalities have now either set up, or are planning to set up, ECs.

xvi. The initiative to set up the ECs as an outcome of the closer working relations the project nurtured between civil society and local government. These enhanced working relations had other payoffs, including an opening for the UCs to take part in budget planning.

xvii. In turning to plan for sustainability of the gains accomplished through the project TESEV and its partners are involved in a series of additional projects which build on the experience of the UNDEF project, and begin to address the gaps and lack of completeness in capacity development for local civil society.

xviii. The two principal products of the project are also being used in other initiatives. The Social Budget Monitoring Guide is being used by TESEV and other members of the PMG in their continuing work. The Responsive Budget Manual is also being used by TESEV in new projects.

VI. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i. TESEV considers cooperating with a capacity development specialist in project planning and design (or cooperates with an already existing organization with the necessary expertise);
- ii. TESEV undertakes a careful organizational needs assessment of beneficiaries at the inception stage of a project as a basis for developing detailed capacity development plans;
- iii. TESEV's approach to "training" has been somewhat vague, and, in this project, the training component seemed incomplete. It is recommended therefore, that a basic training plan be developed as part of a project's capacity development component, based on learning objectives, reflecting organizational needs and capacity gaps;
- iv. It is also recommended that, in approaching project design, TESEV give careful attention to avoiding unnecessary complexity and setting potentially conflicting objectives (in other words, develop a design for a manageable project).

VIII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to the context and needs at the	

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

European Commission, *Turkey 2010 Progress Report*, Commission Staff Working Document: Brussels, 9 November, 2010, SEC (2010) 1327

Icduygu, Ahmet , Meydanoglu, Zeynep and S. Sert, ~~De~~ S., April, 2011, *Civil Society in Turkey: At a Turning Point*, CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) Project, Country Report for Turkey II: Istanbul, Turkey, TUSEV Publications.

Kader, *For Equal Representation: Women and Politics Programme*, Istanbul, Turkey, 2011.

Oktem, Kerem, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989*. London: Zed Press, 2011.

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

October 12, Wednesday

1. Preliminary meeting with Oyku Ulucay, Program Coordinator TESEV for evaluation to take place the following week during program for a second UNDEF Evaluation, held in Turkey).

October 17, Monday

1. Fikret Toksoz, TESEV National Consultant and Oyku Ulucay, Program Coordinator
2. Ms Aylin Yardimci, former Project Assistant
3. Ms Oyku Ulucay (continued)

October 18, Tuesday

1. Ms Hande Ozhabes, Coordinator, Transparency International Turkey
2. Ms Basak Saral, Secretary General
3. Professor Nurhan Yenturk, Director Civil Society Centre, Bilgi University
4. Basak Ersen, Program Director, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV)
5. Aytug Sasmaz, Program Officer, Education Reform Initiative (ERI)
6. Skype Interview with Principal Expert (Public Finance), Murat Seker

October 19, Wednesday

Travel to Kocaeli (ferry, taxi and intercity bus)

Meetings with:

- x Sedat Yucel, Secretary general of Kocaeli Urban Council
- x Ms Emel Ceylan Balioglu, President of Kocaeli Urban Council, Women s Assembly (WA)
- x Ms Gulcar Kocubiyik, Assistant WA
- x Kenan Gocer, Head of Financial Services, Municipal Department of Finance
- x Ms Mucahit Arslan, Director, Social Services, Municipality
- x Cihan Alkan, Municipal Department of Finance
- x Ms Mehri Tufon, Human Resources, Municipality

October 20, Thursday

Meeting with Kadikoy Women s Assembly

- x Ms Serep Ophon, President
- x Ms Nezil Ozen, Secretary General and Member, UC
- x Ms Sabahat Gulen, Member and Member, UC
- x Ms Yesira Menderes, Member

