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**POST PROJECT EVALUATION
FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND**

EVALUATION REPORT

**UNDEF Funded Project / UDF-COL-13-579
Strengthening Democracy through Freedom of Expression and Peace Agenda for
Journalists in Colombia (Colombia)**

Date: 17 August 2017



Advert for FLIP's documentary *En El Medio* ("In the Middle – The Silences in Colombian Journalism"), highlighting the challenges faced by journalists, especially radio journalists, in rural areas most affected by the conflict in Colombia. Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF_YB5sJtw4&t=42s.



Cover page of FLIP's "Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace: How to Implement the Peace Agreements in terms of the Freedom of Expression", presenting recommendations for debate by policy makers and civil society actors. Available at:

<http://flip.org.co/index.php/en/>.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report. Any errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the author.

Author

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I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled “Strengthening Democracy through Freedom of Expression¹ and a Peace Agenda for Journalists in a post-conflict Colombia”. It was implemented by the Foundation for the Freedom of the Press (Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, FLIP) from 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2016. The project coincided with the culmination of the peace negotiations in Havana between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo, FARC-EP or FARC), with the Final Peace Agreement ratified in November 2016. It benefited from a UNDEF grant of USD 175,000 (excluding USD 8,750 set aside for external monitoring and evaluation costs) to achieve the following three outcomes:

- Increased participation of Colombian journalists and civil society in an open, plural and democratic debate about the challenges and the role of media in a post-conflict peace time Colombia.
- Increased awareness among the Government, FARC and civil society of the impact conflict has had on the media’s ability to exercise the freedom of expression.
- Increased understanding among journalists in conflict zones on thematic areas related to their work.

The project aimed at reaching the following two main groups of beneficiaries: journalists operating in conflict areas² who would be actively engaged in the process of developing an Agenda for the Freedom of the Press and Peace; and other journalists with online access (through FLIP’s website) to documented resources/tools. Additionally, the project sought to benefit Colombian civil society as a whole who would profit from previously inaccessible information such as testimonials by journalists and expert reports; and peace negotiators and policy makers.

The project was effective in achieving its key results including:

- Open and inclusive consultations (roundtables, workshops, online campaigns) on the role of freedom of expression and access to information in the post-conflict context in Colombia, drawing on national and international experts and practitioners.
- Production and dissemination of outputs (audiovisual documentary and documented resources/tools) that have contributed to the national policy debate and can be expected to continue to do so in the context of the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement.
- The project has been of strategic importance to FLIP by producing work and raising new issues and priorities that have served as a catalyst - originally unintended - to develop into more of a think tank, through its new Centre of Studies, without losing

¹ The terms Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press are used interchangeably throughout the project documentation, consistent with the general agreement that there is no substantive difference between these two rights – as established in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Similarly, the right to the Freedom of Information is also referenced in this context.

² As “core beneficiaries” 300 journalists from the Departments of Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, Cesar, Córdoba, Guajira, Guaviare, Nariño, Putumayo and Santander.

its core mission of support and protection for journalists at risk or under threat. This has enhanced its standing with the Government of Colombia as a “consultant body”.

The evaluation’s key recommendations were:

- Maintaining political and institutional independence will continue to be an essential part of FLIP’s success.
- When re-launching the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace, later in 2017, precise timing and modalities will need careful consideration.
- Robust risk mitigation measures sometimes require thinking the unthinkable when drawing up project proposals. To facilitate this in the future, FLIP should use its new Centre for Research.
- UNDEF and the UN Country Team in Colombia could consider ways of raising the profile of UN support for civil society organizations in Colombia active in the field of democracy and human rights, in the new post-conflict context and in advance of potential political fragmentation resulting from elections in 2018.

Lessons learned that could be applied to other projects in this context were:

- Communication and information are key tools in implementing peace agreements. Civil society, through the media, can play an important role.
- Think the unthinkable when managing risks related to a peace process, or other sensitive volatile context-related projects, and include relevant mitigation measures in planning from the earliest stage. Project design and implementation can be improved by innovative and creative thinking processes to identify risks, challenge received wisdom, and apply flexibility to problem-solving.
- In the event of exceptional external circumstances, production and/or dissemination of key outputs should be re-examined to ensure that timing is appropriate.
- Civil society organizations with particular specializations and strengths in a given field should not shy away from being a “consultant body” for government, if the opportunity arises, provided institutional independence is preserved.
- When implementing projects with multiple activities combining logistical, analytical and presentational challenges, strong co-ordination and synchronization mechanisms can ensure effective delivery and flexibility.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT

Development context

Colombia is at a critical juncture in its history. After 52 years of conflict³ between Government of Colombia forces and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo, FARC-EP or FARC) a peace agreement was signed between the Government and the FARC on 24 August 2016, but unexpectedly and narrowly rejected in a referendum on 2 October 2016. A revised

³ Making this the Western Hemisphere’s longest conflict in modern times – generally acknowledged to have caused 220,000 deaths and 8 million displaced people.

Final Peace Agreement was signed on 24 November 2016 and subsequently ratified by Colombia's Congress on 30 November 2016. This complex agreement, the result of four years of negotiations in Havana, runs to over 300 pages and focuses on six areas, or "points": rural reform; political participation; end of conflict; illicit drugs; victims; and implementation.

Freedom of expression and the media were debated by both parties during the negotiations. FARC-EP initially proposed a model similar to practice in Ecuador and Venezuela, with a high degree of state property and intervention over media operations and content. The Government of Colombia argued in broad terms for maintaining the status quo with existing media networks involving a high proportion of private ownership.⁴ Agreements were eventually reached in areas such as strengthening community, institution, public and regional media, public advertising and transparency.

Although the success of these negotiations won President Juan Manuel Santos the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2016, the initial rejection of the agreement through the referendum has had difficult political consequences for its implementation, which remains controversial. Debate is polarized. Large sectors of Colombian society, especially those living in large cities that have been relatively unaffected by the conflict, are opposed to any concessions for the FARC. 2017 is being seen as a crucial year for making tangible and positive progress in implementation of key provisions of the agreement ahead of legislative and presidential elections in 2018 – for which some of the potential candidates are already threatening to reject the agreement if elected.

Many of the commitments made in the agreement (such as development and enhanced State presence in remote areas) will take years to deliver. Immediate priorities for the Government include: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of some 7,000 FARC members; transitional justice; amnesty; and political reform. This is creating a heavy legislative workload for Congress.

The number of social leaders and human rights defenders killed has risen - reflecting new security challenges relating to other armed groups such as the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), former paramilitary groups and criminal gangs moving into spaces previously occupied by the FARC. While recent data suggests that physical violence against journalists has decreased over the last two years, threats and risks remain.⁵ Journalists throughout the country, particularly in rural areas, risk harassment (or worse) when dealing with sensitive topics such as corruption, organized crime, drug and human trafficking, land conflicts, indigenous rights, and extrajudicial executions. A climate of fear has led to self-censorship, particularly in rural settings and during election periods. A

⁴ Media ownership in Colombia is highly concentrated. According to Reporters Without Borders in 2016 three private corporations controlled 57% of the market in print, television and radio.

⁵ The primary source for such data is the Index for Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Colombia on the website of the Proyecto Antonio Nariño, available at: <http://www.indicelibertadexpresion.com/>. The development of this Index in 2010-2013 was supported by UNDEF through FLIP. FLIP's survey on journalists conducted as part of the project under evaluation provides more detail and will contribute to the next version of the Index. This is not to imply that violence against journalists has not remained a major concern in Colombia. In the making of the momentary *En El Medio* in September 2015 the film crew visited a community in Putumayo where a young journalist reporting on local corruption, Flor Alba Nuñez, had just been killed.

growing concern is that community radio journalists in areas affected by the conflict are often overly-dependent on support from local authorities for running their operations and can resort to self-censorship to avoid trouble with sponsors. The term used in Colombia to describe such support is the *Pauta* - covering a variety of activities including publicity, advertising and campaigns.

Given the complexities and sensitivities of the issues receiving most attention for implementation of the peace agreement in the short term, freedom of expression is not currently a high priority for the peace process in Colombia. It is, though, an important cross-cutting issue whose importance is expected to grow in the coming period. Under Point 2 of the Final Peace Agreement (political participation), for example, there is a commitment to expand community radios for zones most affected by conflict to democratize information and to foment a culture of peace with social justice and reconciliation.

The conflict in Colombia broke the social fabric in many places, causing blood, death and pain. It generated fear and lack of trust in relationships, and I think communication plays a key role here: recovering communication is a way to recover that social fabric.
Catalina Botero - Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2008-2014), speaking on the FLIP documentary *En el Medio*.

The United Nations has an important role in this context. On 19 January 2016 a joint communiqué was issued by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP with a request to the Security Council to establish a political mission composed of unarmed international observers. On 25 January 2016 the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2261 to establish a political mission of unarmed international observers to monitor and verify the laying down of arms, and to be part of the tripartite mechanism that would monitor and verify the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. On 10 July 2017 the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2366 on the reintegration of FARC-EP and the implementation of security guarantees for ex-combatants and conflict-affected communities, establishing a new UN Verification and Monitoring Mission from 26 September 2017, after the mandate of the current UN Mission in Colombia ends. One of the co-leads of the UN Security Council Mission to Colombia in May 2017 noted that there was an overall view that peace was irreversible and that the situation in Colombia was a “ray of sunlight” on the Council’s agenda.⁶

Project objectives

The project “Strengthening Democracy through Freedom of Expression and a Peace Agenda for Journalists in a post-conflict Colombia” was implemented by the Foundation for the

⁶ Briefing on the Security Council mission to Colombia (3-5 May 2017), 7941st meeting, 16 May 2017. (S/PV.7941)

Freedom of the Press (Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, FLIP) from 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2016, within a total grant amount of USD 175,000 (USD 8,750 retained by UNDEF for monitoring and evaluation) and without extension. The project objective was: to increase the level of debate and awareness and commitment among journalists, civil society, government and other actors on achieving the right to freedom of expression in a peace time Colombia; and to promote the rebuilding and growth of Colombia's media network to facilitate improved freedom of expression in civil society.

FLIP was founded in 1996 by journalists in Colombia as a technical body to monitor the violations of freedom of expression which have frequently included threats and assassinations of journalists. FLIP is now a non-governmental organization that monitors violations of the freedom of the press in Colombia and works to protect journalists, media, and other citizens exercising the freedom of expression on matters of public interest in Colombia. It also promotes access to information. It has established an effective liaison network of 30 correspondents across the country to report any concerns, provide support to local journalists, and to promote the work of FLIP. This has given it unrivalled knowledge and insights of the regional realities, as they affect journalists. It is widely-respected in Colombia as the leading civil society organization in this field, with full independence. Its supporters are active and recognized personalities in the media world in Colombia.

FLIP's main advantage is its independence. It is a trustworthy actor that knows the realities on the ground. Its work is serious and rigorous and it has a strong ability to influence.
Gabriel Levy - Coordinator, National Television Authority, ANTV.



FLIP team working on the UNDEF-supported project "Strengthening Democracy through Freedom of Expression and a Peace Agenda for Journalists in a post-conflict Colombia". From left to right (back row): Pedro Vaca, Emmanuel Vargas, Sebastián Salamanca; (from row) Jonathan Bock, Diana Severiche, Viviana Ordóñez, Diana Ruano.

The project carried out the following activities:

- an international forum to create a debate on challenges faced by the media in post-conflict contexts with international media experts experienced in conflict to peace transitions. Countries considered were Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and South Africa;
- a survey of journalists across the country (with questions relating to the negotiations in Havana such as official advertising, and public and community media) that also provided additional data for the next Index for Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Colombia;

- production of a short audiovisual documentary detailing the experiences and challenges faced by journalists in Colombia in conflict zones;
- a report supporting the documentary submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace;
- an Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace (Agenda de Libertad de Prensa y Paz) submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, to help enhance the peace dialogue in Havana, notably on the freedom of expression in the media;
- a series of other documents detailing the analysis and summaries of discussions held throughout the project, especially five thematic round tables, in preparation for the Agenda.

All planned activities were completed and planned documents produced. However, given the political importance and sensitivities of issues other than freedom of expression and access to information being discussed in Havana in 2016 and the referendum results of October 2016, the grantee decided, after informing UNDEF, to postpone publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace. This was subsequently published on FLIP's website in February 2017, and distributed widely to key stakeholders on social media. The Agenda is a high-quality document that synthesises the many discussions and contributions conducted by FLIP throughout the project. It is written to be used by policy and decision makers in future debates on the freedom of expression in the context of implementing the peace agreement. It seeks to identify areas of continuing divergence between the parties and offers recommendations and possible solutions. It does this in two main chapters covering: pluralism and diversity; and non-interference.

Intervention rationale

Freedom of expression in Colombia has been negatively impacted by the conflict to date as a result of the country's history of violence against journalists. In some areas affected by the conflict, journalism has become weak or has stopped operating completely. There has been a lack of open and inclusive debate about the future challenges for the media and journalists in the transition period from conflict to peace.

During the negotiations in Havana the role of the media was debated in various contexts, including: information policies; property and concentration of ownership; strengthening public and community media; administration of broadcasting; rights to reply; public resources, and access to the internet. The overarching strategy of the project was to seek to open the debate on how the media could enhance peace and also help to rebuild damaged professional and media networks – especially those in areas affected by the conflict, which

There are many challenges coming out of the negotiations in Havana, relating to freedom of expression. There is talk of creating new media, but it is clear where these will be put. There is reference to "organized communities" benefiting, but it is not known what this means. Churches? Neighborhoods? Local community councils? The future of Army and Police media is also uncertain.

Pedro José Arenas - journalist from the Department of Guaviare, speaking at FLIP's International Forum on Dialogues and Freedom of the Press, May 2015.

mostly meant remote rural regions. Supporting the rebuilding of a strong media network in Colombia would benefit the public need for access to information and enhance democratic dissemination of quality information by civil society.

The intervention logic used in the project was to analyze, initially in an international forum, how other countries that had transitioned from conflict to peace had included their media networks in the peace process, and how media networks had enhanced the peace process. Colombian journalists, media experts and academics would then intensify debate and discussions through five round tables (covering community media, broadcast administration, public media, transparency, and debate) to produce research products and audiovisual outreach materials that would form the basis for an Agenda for the Freedom of the Press and Peace – to serve both as a constructive contribution to the ongoing negotiations in Havana, and subsequent to an eventual peace agreement.

The overall development goal of the project was to create an agenda where the right to freedom of expression can be fully realized and to build a strong media network that can advocate in a post-conflict Colombia without retaliation or restriction.

The challenge for journalists now is greater than before. The priority is to explain the benefits of peace. The battle against corruption will be the main campaign.
Javier Jules – RCN Radio, Bogotá.

The project also sought to highlight the situation of other marginalized groups including indigenous, Afro-Colombians, women, and land claimers – to help empower those vulnerable groups who had been negatively affected by the conflict to increase their participation in the democratic process. The documentary showed the experience of journalists from Choco, an Afro-Colombian region, and the work of female journalists. The international forum included Indigenous and female journalists as panelists. Land claimers were not so directly involved but all these groups stand to benefit from the Agenda for the Freedom of Expression and Peace, as local community media would be formed by or directed to them.

Key partners included: Cifras & Conceptos, Forum Syd, International Media Support Javeriana University, Los Andes University, Mission of Support to the Peace Process of the Organisation of American States, National Endowment for Democracy, Proyecto Antonio Nariño, Reporters Without Borders, Rosario University, Swedish Embassy, UNESCO, and USAID. This was a broad range of civil society, academic and donor organizations that provided valuable support to the various activities organized under the project, by direct participation and/or official sponsorship.

III. METHODOLOGY

The evaluator was contracted by UNDEF through open competition.

The evaluator conducted this assessment according to the Terms of Reference received and the latest guidance on post-project evaluations provided by UNDEF through its Evaluation

Operational Manual dated May 2017. A pre-field mission Launch Note was submitted and approved by UNDEF containing identification of issues, key evaluation questions in line with OECD-DAC criteria,⁷ and a draft schedule for the field mission. The evaluator also conducted a desk review of project documentation and Internet search and examination of relevant contextual materials related to the project, as well as preliminary discussions with the grantee and the UNDEF Programme Officer. This desk review included project documentation and evaluations relevant to UNDEF's earlier support to FLIP during 2010-2012: "Monitoring freedom of expression and democracy in Colombia" (UDF-COL-09-341). This project developed a methodology to create an index of freedom of expression and access to information aimed at highlighting the restrictions and violations in this area.

In Colombia, during the field mission of 4-10 June 2017, the evaluator spent four days in Bogotá and one day in Popayán (Department of Cauca, a region heavily affected by the conflict) interviewing the following categories of persons:

- FLIP senior management and project implementation team;
- Beneficiaries, principally journalists based in regions affected by the conflict and working in community radio;
- Academics and other media specialists;
- Government and security officials.
- Representatives of international organisations and other countries supporting human rights and strengthening democratic processes in Colombia.

There were no serious challenges or problems in collecting and reviewing the data, though several meetings during the field mission needed to be rescheduled due to inaccessibility of offices in central Bogotá on two days resulting from industrial action by teachers, involving some inevitable loss of time.

The evaluator sought meetings with the FARC-EP, which did not materialize. This was not entirely surprising given that the FARC-EP leadership was at the time prioritizing internal discussions relevant to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and political representation in the upcoming elections.

The evaluator also conducted interviews by telephone and email after the field mission. Annex 2 contains the complete list of persons interviewed.

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). Criteria for evaluating development assistance available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

1. *Relevance*

The evaluator addressed the following main question: To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to the context and needs at the grantee, local and national levels? A related question included: Was the strategy adopted (mainly focused on producing documents) the most effective one to achieve the desired outcomes? The evaluator also considered whether the target groups selected (journalists in rural areas affected by conflict – where 80% of recorded attacks on journalists take place) were the most appropriate and how such selection was made.

Main findings:

- The project was devised and implemented in accordance with FLIP's strategic objectives and plans. Freedom of expression and access to information were covered in detail during the negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP in Havana. The Final Peace Agreement includes provisions relating to strengthening community, institution, public and regional media, public advertising and transparency. Implementation of these areas of agreement, and using the media to support the peace process through dissemination of information, especially in the rural areas, will be challenging. The project supported by UNDEF was timely in that it both contributed to the debates and discussions during the negotiation phase of the peace agreement, and it produced resources and tools designed to assist with implementation of the Final Peace Agreement and promote and protect a freer press in Colombia. FLIP also acknowledges that, in the event of a fractured peace process that could result from the elections in 2018, the project has helped it develop understanding of media challenges in conflict areas in Colombia that would need to remain at the centre of any future awareness campaigns.
- The evaluator heard from multiple sources (journalist, media specialist, academic, government, donor) that FLIP's track record of support to the media over recent years, and especially its engagement with journalists in conflict zones, is highly respected. This activity includes the two projects funded by UNDEF. The Minister of Telecommunications, Information and Communications wrote to FLIP in May 2017 to thank them for information passed to the Government concerning areas of the country with poor access to media; acknowledging that this was information that the Government itself should have had. There can be no doubt that the project's focus was correctly directed at these evolving realities in the regions and consequences for future policy in the post-conflict period.
- It follows that the target groups selected were appropriate, based on the areas of the country most affected by the conflict, identified by FLIP's knowledge of the regions and using data from the Index for Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Colombia, and FLIP's extensive network of correspondents.
- Was the use of documents the best way of achieving the desired outcomes? The evaluator studied the documented resources/tools in detail, and discussed them

with many of the contributors and intended beneficiaries. There was consensus that they are of high technical quality and that the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace will be a significant contribution to the national policy debate, when it happens, on freedom of expression and access to information in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. FLIP's excellent relations with the relevant authorities, especially the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, should guarantee this. As one journalist put it: "The work has been done. Now we need to turn it into action!"

2. Effectiveness

The evaluator addressed the following main question: To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals? Taking into account the volatile political context within which this project took place, the evaluator also assessed the extent to which the project's objectives had been reached and how this had been measured. The evaluator also assessed whether the activities of the project linked up and provided the best approach to achieving the objectives, and whether there was an adequate risk/mitigation strategy in light of the volatile political context and the close links between this and the success of the activities.

Main findings:

- All resources and tools (documents and the documentary) were produced and promulgated within the timeframe of the project, with the exception of the publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace – which is covered in more detail below, under Sustainability.
- Given the production and dissemination of the resources and tools associated with this project, and the involvement of a large number of journalists, media experts and policy makers in Colombia, the evaluator assesses that the overall project objective of **increasing the level of debate and awareness and commitment among journalists, civil society, government and other actors on achieving the right to freedom of expression in a peace time Colombia** has been met. Though it is worth underlining that the policy debate within which the project's main output (the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace) will add most value has yet to gather much momentum. This is likely to remain the case over the coming months due to the beginning of political campaigning for elections in 2018.
- Social media was used effectively by FLIP for dissemination of the products related to the project. For example, ongoing impact of the audiovisual documentary is evidenced by a FLIP campaign, through Facebook, to show clips from the documentary to encourage wider viewing of the full documentary now uploaded on YouTube. Issues relating to the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace have been highlighted using Facebook and Twitter.
- There were multiple strands of activity in this project, which required careful coordination and synchronization to ensure that the analysis and findings all contributed to the production of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace. This was done to a high standard, with the FLIP Director coordinating through

team meetings on a monthly basis, and sometimes more frequently. The close attention paid by the Director can be explained by the fact that he saw the project as “the most strategic work undertaken by FLIP in recent years”.

- The project was implemented in a period of intense political activity around the negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the FARC. The project began with the assumption that these talks would be successful, though FLIP acknowledged that even without a peace agreement the value of the work produced by the project would be high and worth having in a Colombia still in conflict – and with the peace building process remaining a longer term objective. This risk and mitigation strategy was covered by FLIP in their initial project submission. What FLIP did not foresee was the rejection of the agreement by popular referendum on 2 October 2016. Neither did the Government. Neither did the political movement behind the “No” campaign. Although this meant postponing the publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace the project objectives relating to awareness and debate around the use of media and post-conflict challenges for journalists remained highly relevant.

3. *Efficiency*

The evaluator addressed the following main questions: To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts? Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? Was the budget designed and then implemented in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?

Main findings:

- The project was completed on time and within budget and no major changes or problems were recorded. From an administrative and financial standpoint, prudent and transparent management were observed. Where there were challenges or delays in the early stages of the project, such as the organisation of the round tables, resources and efforts were adjusted sensibly and flexibly. Similarly, after the decision to delay the publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace towards the end of the project, time and resources were redirected to support the outcome related to the online media campaign to promote access to information. FLIP’s Director conducted monthly meetings with the implementing team, and more frequently when needed. Operation plans for the project were reviewed in February and September 2015 and internal evaluation mechanisms were in place and used successfully, for example, to consider the impact of the rejection of the peace agreement in October 2016. The final report and annexes presented to UNDEF provided a clear and detailed account of the project’s inputs and outputs. The activities (logistical, analytical, and presentational) that led to the outputs required effective coordination and synchronisation and the project benefited from the close attention and pro-active leadership of the Director.

- During the project, FLIP's organisational capacity was developed to create an enhanced administrative team. This is covered below in more detail under UNDEF added value.
- FLIP's use of its country-wide network of correspondents, for participation in discussion and analysis and dissemination of products using social media, was a cost-efficient way of ensuring impact of the resources/tools created by the project, beyond Bogotá.
- The quality of the institutional relationships between FLIP and implementing partner organisations (national and international media experts, academics, other civil society organisations, government officials) contributed to the project's efficiency.
- Overall, the project's efficiency and cost-benefit ratio were highly satisfactory. One donor familiar with the project commented to the evaluator: "FLIP is an NGO which knows how to administer resources, and it can achieve much with few resources".

4. *Impact*

The evaluator addressed the following main question: To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to the objectives of the project and democratisation more broadly? The evaluator also sought to understand whether the objectives were too ambitious considering the volatile political context. Interviews with journalists based outside of Bogotá were used to see how far these journalists felt a part of the analytical research process and were made aware of the subsequent recommendations.

The evaluator also sought to understand how the project has enhanced FLIP's technical professionalism, independence, objectivity and constructive attitude to become a "consultant body" (a term used in the Final Narrative Report) for the Government of Colombia.

Main findings:

- Based on the evaluator's discussions with key stakeholders in media and Government, this project has made a significant contribution to enhancing the role of media, and freedom of expression and access to information, in the context of the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia. As noted by one donor with a strong track record of supporting FLIP over recent years and familiar with the project: "The project gives 'voices' to local journalists. They have the opportunity to give their opinions, to participate in dialogues related to freedom of expression, to talk about their difficulties with being a journalist in regional areas with complex situations. The proposed Agenda for Freedom of the press and Peace covers interesting subjects considered in local context. All of this is a support for civil society and the democratization agenda".
- The outcomes were ambitious given the scale and scope of the challenges identified and anticipated for the media in a post-conflict Colombia, especially those relating to journalists operating in remote conflict-affected areas with vulnerabilities relating to operating bases and sponsorship. This was not helped

by the volatile political context, and the unexpected rejection of the peace agreement in October 2016, but “volatile political context” has arguably been the norm in Colombia for much of its history. Given the historic importance of the peace agreement, and the associated opportunities for promoting and protecting the freedom of expression and access to information in Colombia, the evaluator considers that the project’s objectives were neither too broad nor too ambitious.

- Journalists outside of Bogotá were used extensively by participating in the events covered by the project and through FLIP’s network of correspondents in the regions. This had important impact beyond what has traditionally been an overly centralized media culture based on and in the country’s capital.
- FLIP has not had to negotiate its space with Government. It has based its strategy on maintaining a technical professionalism, independence, objectivity and a constructive attitude, backed up by the media sector and positioning it effectively in the national debate. It enjoys excellent access to Government departments and agencies, and law enforcement bodies. It has proven its influence in many ways. For example, in May 2016 FLIP was called to participate in a public hearing in the Constitutional Court regarding the implications of the law that established the referendum of 2 October 2016. Its intervention was focused on the balance that should exist in the Government’s powers to use the electromagnetic spectrum to give outreach to the contents of the peace agreement. The Constitutional Court reached a decision in line with FLIP’s arguments. In terms of FLIP being used by the Government of Colombia as more of a “consultant body” in the future (a term used in the Final Narrative Report submitted by FLIP), this was not an intended result of the project but an additional unplanned impact that has added value to the project. The identification of support from local authorities for community radios (the *Pauta*) as a priority for regulatory adjustment – and the proposals that have followed from the discussions and analysis, and already presented to the Government and in the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace, have all contributed to this consultant body role. This will have positive impact on policy and legislative debates relating to regulatory adjustment (through the drafting of a bill) and other issues that are prioritized in the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace, while necessarily preserving FLIP’s institutional independence.

5. Sustainability

The evaluator addressed the following main questions: To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development? To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact, and are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own?

Due to the volatile political situation the project ended without the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace being published or distributed, though the document has been on the FLIP website since 20 February 2017. The evaluator sought to understand what further steps

FLIP intends to take in distributing and discussing the Agenda, including within its new Centre of Studies launched at the project closure forum in November 2016.

Main findings:

- The project has set the scene for what will be an important debate around freedom of expression and access to information in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. It has raised awareness of the major challenges ahead. It has produced valuable documents and resources that will be used by media practitioners and policy makers alike. As such, the evaluator assesses that the project will have continued impact on the parties involved. As one interviewee from the Ministry of the Interior put it, the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace is “100% relevant”.
- The grantee decided to delay the publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace due to political circumstances surrounding the rejection of the peace agreement by popular referendum on 2 October 2016. The expectation was that the peace agreement would need to be changed in some areas and it was not clear if freedom of expression issues would be modified. (In the event, modifications concerning the freedom of expression turned out to be minor.) The Agenda was eventually published on the FLIP website, and passed to key interlocutors in Government and widely disseminated through social media, in February 2017. A higher-impact and more formal “launch” of a possibly updated and amended Agenda is currently under consideration by FLIP for December 2017. Such timing would demonstrate sustained momentum as it would serve to maintain awareness of the challenges facing the media in post-conflict Colombia before the country enters, effectively, a six-month election period in the first half of 2018. As argued elsewhere in this report, the evaluator came across no evidence to suggest that the Agenda will lose relevance in the coming period. Indeed, a more fragmented national political scene as a result of the elections in 2018 would arguably only increase its importance as it would become the independent reference document to turn to when implementing related provisions from the Final Peace Agreement.
- Using time and resources freed up by the postponement of the Agenda, FLIP decided instead to increase its communication strategy and campaign for keeping the profile of the freedom of expression in the peace agreement. It advocated changes from the first agreement, where it saw opportunities to do so - such as lobbying the Government over radio frequencies for the FARC, which needed more clarification and qualification. FLIP also found other subjects which were not in the first agreement but needed to be brought into the debate – such as the high number of police and army radio stations (over 100) that should be passed to civilian control over time. These and other issues are now being looked into by FLIP’s new Centre of Studies which has attracted additional support and funding from other donors. This demonstrates sustainable impact.

6. UNDEF added value

This was the second UNDEF grant awarded to FLIP. The first under Round 4 (2010-2012) “Monitoring freedom of expression and democracy in Colombia” (UDF-COL-09-341) developed a methodology to create an index of freedom of expression and access to information aimed at highlighting the restrictions and violations in this area. The evaluator looked for any lessons learned from this earlier project.

The evaluator addressed the following main question: To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors? The evaluator sought to understand this UNDEF value-added through interviews with UN staff in Colombia and other donors.

Main findings:

- FLIP has undergone important organizational capacity development in recent years, thanks to support from UNDEF. At the time of the first UNDEF-supported project FLIP’s internal administrative arrangements were relatively limited: one administrative assistant. This had been difficult to manage. By the time of the second project, due also to FLIP’s expansion with projects supported by other donors, the administrative team had been strengthened to an administrative officer, an administrative assistant, and three accountants (part-time and contracted externally). The evaluator was able to observe the smooth-running of this team which is located in a small but suitably resourced room separate from the main open-space working area. Additional capacity also now includes the Centre of Studies, which came about as a consequence of the additional work and priorities for FLIP prompted by the project, now supported and funded by other donors.
- The evaluator observed that contacts between UNDEF and the grantee continued to be, in the words of the grantee, “respectful but intermittent”, and understood to be the logical consequence of UNDEF’s bureaucracy in New York. During the evaluator’s visit to Colombia, a Programme Officer from UNDEF visited FLIP on 9 June 2017. This was the first face-to-face contact with UNDEF in three years, and this was much appreciated by the grantee.
- In a previous evaluation, FLIP noted that UNDEF demanded more than traditional donors and this process was formative because it required them to develop abilities and competences. “We don’t have this kind of learning process with other donors.”
- The human rights agenda in Colombia, and interest of most donors, is predominantly focused on challenges faced by human rights defenders. For FLIP, until recently, it had not been so easy to obtain funding for the subject of freedom of expression.
- It is worth repeating another observation from a previous evaluation: “In middle-income countries, the availability of international funds has drastically reduced, leading to a situation where different sectors of the society have been limited in

the opportunity to express their voices. In terms of UNDEF, the possibility to fund for longer periods of time and to maintain a stronger presence in middle-income countries are two of the lessons learned from the two FLIP projects in Colombia". Thanks to UNDEF's understanding of the grantee's work from the first project, especially the contextual knowledge provided by the Index for Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Colombia, UNDEF's support for the second project successfully built on the achievements of the first. This also proved to be catalytic in terms of helping FLIP develop internal organizational capacity (administrative and research), and prompting other related areas of interest for the grantee that were subsequently supported by a broadened donor base.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>FLIP's leading role in promoting and defending freedom of expression and access to information in Colombia has been enhanced by this project, which produced outputs (an audiovisual documentary and documented resources/tools) that have already contributed to the national policy debate in these areas and will continue to do so in the context of the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. The project has also been of strategic importance to FLIP in helping it develop into more of a think tank, through its new Centre of Studies, without losing its core mission of support and protection for journalists at risk or under threat. This has enhanced its standing with the Government of Colombia as a "consultant body".</p>	<p>Maintaining political and institutional independence will continue to be an essential part of FLIP's success. This is well understood by the grantee.</p>
<p>The main output, the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace, is of high quality and is expected to serve its intended purpose of enriching the national policy debate around freedom of expression and access to information in the context of the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement – when this becomes more of a priority for the Government, probably later in 2017. However, operationalizing the Agenda will require sensitive handling –</p>	<p>FLIP acknowledge the need to "launch" the Agenda more formally, and are aware of the sensitivities. FLIP should take careful soundings with key stakeholders (e.g. members of its Board, its network of correspondents, and the Government of Colombia) before deciding on the final timing and modalities.</p>

<p>given the political context and likely timing before presidential and legislative elections in the first half of 2018.</p>	
<p>FLIP did not anticipate that the peace agreement would be rejected by referendum in October 2016, resulting in the delay of the publication of the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace. FLIP was not alone. Neither the Government of Colombia nor the campaign behind the “No” had expected this outcome either. In the event, the Final Peace Agreement as eventually ratified by Congress did not undergo major changes in the area of freedom of expression or access to information.</p>	<p>Robust risk mitigation measures sometimes require thinking the unthinkable when drawing up project proposals. FLIP should use its new Centre for Research to best effect to provide time and space for thinking and reflection to support future project design and implementation.</p>
<p>UNDEF support for projects in Colombia is well established. This is the second time that UNDEF has supported FLIP since 2010, and there are two other UNDEF projects currently being implemented by other civil society organizations. Despite this, UNDEF is not widely known in Colombia in public, donor or political circles.</p>	<p>UNDEF and the UN Country Team in Colombia could consider ways of raising the profile of UN support for civil society organizations in Colombia, active in the field of democracy and human rights – especially in the new post-conflict context. UNDEF could also consider ways of having more frequent face-to-face contact with grantees in the field – either through regional visits, as evidenced by the evaluator during the evaluation of the FLIP project, or remotely using web-based technology.</p>

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

Based on this evaluation, the following key lessons learned from the project could be applied to other work by civil society organizations in the world with a similar focus on freedom of expression and access to information, or more broadly.

- (1) Communication and information are key tools in implementing peace agreements, especially in countries where political debate remains relatively polarized, and with remote and marginalized regions affected by conflict. In addition to government communication campaigns, that should not just focus on capital cities or other large urban centres, civil society, through the media, can play an important role in educating society about peace processes and bringing debate and behavioral change. International community donor support for such organizations can provide much needed encouragement and legitimacy, and should not be overlooked.

- (2) Think the unthinkable when managing risks related to a peace process, or other sensitive volatile context-related projects, and include relevant mitigation measures in planning from the earliest stage. Though easier said than done in today's volatile and rapidly-changing world, project design and implementation can be improved by innovative and creative thinking processes within civil society organisations to identify risks, challenge received wisdom, and apply flexibility to problem-solving.
- (3) In the event of exceptional external circumstances, production and/or dissemination of key outputs (such as the Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace in this project) should be re-examined to ensure that timing is appropriate.
- (4) Civil society organisations with particular specialisations and strengths in a given field should not shy away from being a "consultant body" for government, if the opportunity arises, provided institutional independence is preserved.
- (5) When implementing projects with multiple activities combining logistical, analytical and presentational challenges, strong coordination and synchronisation mechanisms can ensure effective delivery and flexibility.

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Documents Reviewed

Project documents

- Project Document UDF-COL-13-579, 21 October 2014.
- UDF-COL-13-579 Milestone Verification Report 2, 31 July 2015.
- UDF-COL-13-579 Mid-term Narrative Report, 15 January 2016.
- UDF-COL-13-579 Milestone Verification Report 3, 20 April 2016.
- UDF-COL-13-579 Final Narrative Report, 30 December 2016.
- Final Audit by Interamericana de Auditores y Consultores I.A.&C. Ltda. - 2 February 2017.

Materials published in the framework of the project

- Audiovisual documentary *En el Medio: Los Silencios en el Periodismo Colombiano* (In the Middle: The Silences in Colombian Journalism). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF_YB5sJtw4&t=42s.
- Agenda de Libertad de Prensa y Paz: Cómo Implementar los Acuerdos de Paz en Clave de Libertad de Prensa (Agenda for Freedom of the Press and Peace: How to Implement the Peace Agreements in terms of the Freedom of Expression). Available at: <http://flip.org.co/index.php/en/>.
- Informe Foro Internacional Diálogo y Libertad de Prensa 2015 (Report of the International Forum on Dialogue and Freedom of the Press, 2015). Available at: <http://flip.org.co/index.php/es/publicaciones/informes/item/1844-foro-internacional-dialogos-y-libertad-de-prensa>.
- Third Survey on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, conducted by FLIP and other partners. Available at: <http://flip.org.co/index.php/es/publicaciones/informes/item/1855-tercera-encuesta-nacional-periodistas-sobre-libertad-de-expresion-y-acceso-la-informacion>.
- Reports of five round tables used to prepare for the production of the Agenda for Freedom of Expression and Peace. Not published on the FLIP website.
- One document on the peace processes of El Salvador and Guatemala, and another on community media in Latin America. Not published on the FLIP website but used for preparation for the Agenda for Freedom of Expression and Peace.
- Cartography document with diagnosis of the media in eight regions. Not published on the FLIP website but used for preparation for the Agenda for Freedom of Expression and Peace. The cartography tool has since been developed for wider coverage of the country and with more detail, supported by another donor, and is available at: <http://flip.org.co/index.php/es/centro-estudios>.

Other documents reviewed

- UNDEF, 2017, Operational Manual: Post-Project Evaluations for the United Nations Democracy Fund. May 2017.

- Evaluation Report of Project UDF-COL-09-341, Monitoring Freedom of Expression and Democracy in Colombia, 27 November 2013. (UNDEF support for FLIP during 2010-2013.)
- Case Study 19 & 20: Strengthening Democracy through Freedom of Expression and Peace Agenda for Journalists in Colombia and Monitoring Freedom of Expression and Democracy in Colombia (UDF-13-579-COL and UDF-09-341-COL). As part of an external review of UNDEF, conducted in 2016.
- Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia, 14 March 2017. (A/HRC/34/3/Add.3)
- Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia, 24 March 2017. (S/2017/252)
- Briefing by Security Council mission to Colombia (3-5 May 2017), 7941st meeting, 16 May 2017. (S/PV.7941)
- Guidance Note by the United Nations Secretary-General on Democracy, 15 September 2009.
- *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, 24 November 2016. This and other documents relating to the negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) available at:
<http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/Prensa/Paginas/2017/Mayo/El-Acuerdo-de-paz-en-ingles.aspx>.
- Amnesty International, 2017, *Colombia: Spike in killings as activists targeted amid peace process*, 7 February 2017.
Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/02/colombia-spike-in-killings-as-activists-targeted-amid-peace-process/>.
- Freedom House, 2015, *Freedom of the Press 2015 – Colombia*,
Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/colombia>.
- N. Cosoy, 2017, *Why has Colombia seen a rise in activist murders?*, BBC News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-39717336>.
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Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/060-shadow-no-peace-after-colombia-s-plebiscite>.
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Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/news/concentration-ownership-inhibits-media-pluralism-colombia>.
- C. Vasquez, 2017, *The Hardest Part is Yet to Come for Colombia’s Peace Agreement*, World Policy Blog, 7 March 2017.
Available at: <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2017/03/07/hardest-part-yet-come-colombia%E2%80%99s-peace-agreement>.

Annex 2: Persons Interviewed

5 June 2017 – Bogotá	
Pamela Obando	Interior Ministry Liaison for Peace and Post-Conflict
Diego Mora Sindy Cogua	- Director - Liaison for Journalists National Protection Unit (Unidad de Protección Nacional, UNP)
Pedro Vaca Jonathan Bock Emmanuel Vargas	- Executive Director - Head, Centre of Studies - Adviser Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)
Gabriel Levy	Executive Director, National Television Authority (Autoridad Nacional de Televisión, ANTV)
6 June 2017 – Bogotá	
Javier Jules	Journalist, RSN Radio and FLIP correspondent for Bogotá
Blanca Cardona	Head of Governance, UNDP Colombia
Gloria Castrillón	Journalist, El Espectador, Bogotá
Afternoon	Meetings in central Bogotá cancelled due to demonstrations and blocked access
7 June 2017 – Bogotá	
Ivonne Pico	Journalist, Department of Santander
Carlos Cortés	Media consultant and journalist at online Silla Vacía
Gabriel Gómez	Journalist and academic at University Foundation UNINPAHU
Mario Ruiz, Yunkyung Lee, Luke Mennigke	Desk Officers for Governance and Human Rights, UNDP Colombia
Adam Forbes Andrés Urrego	- First Secretary (Development and Peacebuilding), UK Embassy - Human Rights Officer, UK Embassy
8 June 2017 – Popayán (Department of Cauca)	
Sonia Godoy	Journalist, academic and FLIP correspondent in Cauca
William Abella Herrera	Journalist and University of Cauca
Alfonso Luna, David Luna	Journalists, Proclama del Cauca
9 June 2017 – Bogotá	
Sergeant Edgar Sanchez Major Luis Quinche	- National Police, Human Rights Directorate - National Police

Esmeralda Ortiz	Culture Ministry, Communications Directorate
Paca Zuleta	Director, Colombia Compra Eficiente (Public Procurement Office)
Colonel Mauricio Patiño David Aponte	- National Police representative, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace - Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace in the disarmament and demobilisation zone at Buenos Aires, Cauca
Pedro Vaca, Jonathan Bock, Emmanuel Vargas	Wash-up meeting at FLIP
Thomas Liebault	First Secretary, French Embassy
10 June 2017 – Bogotá	
Hannah McGlue	Programme Officer, UNDEF (visiting Colombia)
By phone and email, 14-22 June 2017	
Ricardo Corredor	Executive Director, Gabriel García Márquez Foundation for New Journalism in Iberoamerica (Fundación Gabriel García Márquez para el Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano, FNPI)
Angela Suárez Alexandra Montoya	- Programme Manager, USAID. - Response Component Coordinator, Chemonics (operating USAID's human rights programme in Colombia)