



**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND**

**META-EVALUATION REPORT
TUNISIA**

Date: 31 May 2021

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Disclaimer

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

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1. Executive Summary

The Tunisia meta-evaluation of UNDEF-funded projects implemented between 2013 and 2021 shows positive trends at two principal levels: (1) with respect to Tunisia's overall development context and needs; and (2) with respect to local democracy-building (sub-national, sub-regional, and in marginalized areas) via projects that commit to a participatory CSO-centric approach.

Most successful UNDEF project strategies fall within two broad categories: (1) project designs based on regular participation by partners and stakeholders, especially when these are engaged in finetuning activities and their content; (2) participatory models connecting citizens, CSOs and local authorities (as seen in joint activity designs). Gender and youth elements are prioritized and integrated throughout the projects and within activities, albeit at different levels of effectiveness. A critical element of the meta-evaluation is the identification of synergies across projects, as well as trends that have slowed, stalled, or provided implementation challenges to projects, with recommendation to alleviate these in future.

Coherence and Relevance

To date (2013-2021), UNDEF has funded 17 projects that have buttressed Tunisia's democratic transition by supporting government strategic priorities and aligning with broader democracy-assistance funding trends. UNDEF-funded projects have a clear CSO focus and stress participatory and dialogue-based project designs. UNDEF has a niche advantage of funding geographically diverse projects, implemented at the local level by smaller CSOs with solid areas of expertise and ability to work effectively within marginalized areas, where need is highest.

At the time of implementation, and under the framework of the priorities defined by government-donor strategic plans, all projects addressed relevant and urgent democracy needs, and responded to the needs of target groups. UNDEF projects which were geographically diverse, with a significant focus on local communities and marginalized areas, were relevant.

Effectiveness

With nearly all projects facing contextual and institutional delays, effectiveness depended on three main factors: (1) the capacity, expertise, and issue-specific strength of the UNDEF's grantees, (2) the adaptability of project design (elasticity) and clearly identified project objectives and activities, (3) as well as timely communication and consultation with all partners and stakeholders.

Three trends can be highlighted. First, trainings were seen by most project participants as useful and successful but could sometimes have been more effective had they been clearly articulated around the other project components, especially advocacy, during the design phase, to better harness the newly acquired knowledge. Second, UNDEF's grantees successfully identified a niche area of working directly with newly established municipalities on participative democracy and several projects were effective in achieving their objectives. Third, positive

results were also obtained when well-defined methods, such as coaching and mentoring, or techniques for establishing new participatory budgeting processes were applied.

Efficiency

Efficiency varied widely among projects and was largely impacted by institutional delays and a continuing depreciation of the local currency. The increase in funds resulting from this depreciation missed opportunities in optimizing budget use and enhancing the projects' general efficiency. Efficiency was neither improved nor impaired by low utilization rates or extensions. Nevertheless, and despite the limited amounts allocated to partnerships, the latter generally enhanced efficiency, especially in finding solutions to implementation and contextual issues.

Impact

We found highest impact at the CSO-level, where civil society was strengthened through its engagement with local authorities and citizen trainings, broadening of CSO networks, and expanding in geographic reach. UNDEF-funded projects have positively impacted citizen trust in local democracy by augmenting participation in local governance beyond elections. Activities that included participatory and dialogue-based elements across project designs showed positive effects, as did projects that work at multi-scalar levels or focused on niche-expert issues. Gender-specific activities also yielded positive impact.

Sustainability

Projects that supported long-term processes and mechanisms, that produce activities and materials adaptable over-time and in different geographic regions, have the highest potential for achieving sustainability. We found sustainability trends in participatory mechanisms at the local level especially in municipalities, among local partners who continued their partnership beyond the life of the UNDEF-grant pro-bono or with new funding, and in some platforms and materials that are adaptable over time. We also found sustainability among CSOs and partners that were able to secure new funding streams after the completion of UNDEF-grants and expanding their activities thematically and geographically.

UNDEF-Added Value

A critical value is that UNDEF-funded projects are not affected by Tunisia's polarized political context. The range of grantees shows that UNDEF works well with partners across political and ideological orientations. UNDEF-projects also complement larger development initiatives by working at the expert-local level, with a (self-evident) focus on marginalized areas where development need is highest.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The meta-evaluation concludes that UNDEF-funded projects carried out by knowledgeable grantees with technical expertise relevant to the scope of activities have demonstrated strongest project designs and problem-solving skills, enhanced by what this evaluation refers to as "project elasticity." These qualities result in effective, efficient, coherent and context-relevant

initiatives. Projects that build strategies to transfer ownership of processes to participants and stakeholders have the highest potential for effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

This evaluation proposes a set of recommendations around processes to further strengthen UNDEF-funded work in Tunisia in the future. UNDEF is at a competitive advantage to continue funding both local expert CSOs (e.g., capital-based), as well as smaller grassroots organizations. Recommendations for processes include on-going reviews of activities as they function coherently in project designs, and as these relate to contextual needs in the near future, in which Tunisia is moving towards democratic consolidation. Project implementation partnerships play an important role in varying degrees throughout all grants and are critical to the transfer of ownership and sustainability – recommendations specifically address this process and relationship. The evaluation also recommends a centralized platform of all UNDEF-funded materials, as these are useful for future project designs and contain critical information for future grantees.

2. Introduction

This report is the meta-evaluation of nine UNDEF-supported projects implemented in Tunisia. Its purpose is to assess UNDEF's overall engagement in Tunisia. The projects were implemented between 2013 and 2021; they lasted between 18 and 24 months. The total budget of the nine projects was US\$1,886,000. All projects were implemented by local civil society organizations and cover most of UNDEF's focus areas.

2.1. Development context

Tunisia embarked on its democratization process with the departure of Zine El-Abedine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011 following a month-long nation-wide popular uprising known as the Tunisian Revolution and the onset of the Arab uprisings. Tunisia's twenty-seven year-long dictatorship has been replaced with a mixed parliamentary-Presidential system, combined with administrative de-concentration and decentralized political decision-making through the expansion of municipalities led by democratically elected municipal councils.

This decade-long political transformation has been supported by multi- and bi-lateral partners,¹ with significant funds invested at the intersection of political and economic reform. Broadly, development assistance has been allocated toward democracy building through the strengthening of institutions at national, regional, and local levels, increasing citizen trust in democracy, and fighting widespread unemployment and faltering social service delivery

¹Based on a partial survey of development cooperation funds sent to Tunisia, assistance overwhelmingly comes from the World Bank and European Union (including bi-lateral member-states), followed by the United States, GIZ, and United Nations Development Program.

through robust economic and public sector reforms. Since 2011, Tunisia has held six cycles of free and fair elections,² with an expansive list of over two hundred political parties and independent candidates.

A significant percentage of development and cooperation programs have worked through Tunisian civil society organizations (CSOs). This has both expanded the burgeoning associational field, and made significant contributions to the capacity of organizations, strengthening their programming, strategies, as well as their position as a mediator between citizens and political authorities and institutions.³ Mistrust of political institutions, a lingering effect from the dictatorial era, has been a key issue in galvanizing citizen support of Tunisia's new democracy.⁴

Between 2012 and 2021, three principal trends have marked the intervention of multi- and bi-lateral donors in Tunisia around funding opportunities targeted at NGOs. From 2011 until 2012, donors targeted programs around election sensitization, technical assistance to reform political institutions, particularly the Constitution,⁵ rule of law, transitional justice, political party training and election observation, as well as media training and sensitization. In the second phase from 2014-2018, democracy-assistance centered on decentralization and de-concentration (both elections and decision-making channels), countering and preventing violent extremism via CSOs, especially local-level CSOs, increased youth participation in political processes and job creation as part of economic reform and encouraging citizen trust.

Since 2018, most donor priorities have shifted almost entirely to the economic side of democratization,⁶ allocating funds to job creating programs, public sector reform and efficiency,

² For final results on the 2011 National Constituent Assembly, 2014 and 2019 Assembly of the Representatives of the People, 2014 and 2019 Presidential, and 2018 Municipal elections, see: <http://www.isie.tn/>.

³ At the fall of Ben Ali, Tunisia had an estimated 9,000 registered CSOs. As of March 2021, there are 23,855 registered CSOs. Source: http://www.ifeda.org.tn/fr/index.php?lang=fr&id_page=5.

⁴ Citizen trust in the government, parliament, and political parties has been falling since the debut of the democratization process. According to the Arab Barometer, 31.5% of the population has little or no trust in government in 2011, falling to 57.2% in 2013, 64.3% in 2016, and 74.1% in 2018. Faith in parliament has similarly fallen from 63.8% of the population having little or no trust in the Assembly of Representative of the People in 2013 to 71.8% in 2016, and to 78.5% in 2018. Not surprisingly, confidence in political parties has also declined from 56.2% of the population with little or no trust in 2011 to 80.1% in 2016, and 84% in 2018. However, while Tunisians are increasingly disenchanted with their representatives and representative institutions, most agree that 'A democratic system may have problems, yet it is better than other systems. The percentage of Tunisians who strongly agree or agree with that statement has increased since the revolution from 68.2% in 2011, to 70.1% in 2013, and 85.2% in 2016, before slightly dipping to 78.7% in 2018. Source: <https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/>

⁵ The Constitution drafting process began following the election of the 2011 National Constituent Assembly, and was ratified on 27 January 2014.

⁶ This aligns with the influential study buttressing large global development programs, developed by democratization experts Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi in *Democracy & Development* (2000), both structural and procedural elements are key to achieving sustainable consolidation. The authors admit that while forecasting the emergence of democracy is nearly impossible, predicting its survival is quite straight-forward. The strongest indicator of democratic consolidation is per capita income, while education, balance among political forces, and parliamentarism are key for democratic survival.

as well as elections and youth participation. This latest trend is linked to a significant increase in social protests,⁷ with high levels of youth support, demanding jobs, redistribution, as well as for achievements of the Revolution.

As this meta-evaluation will show, UNDEF' support to grantees in Tunisia has a clear CSO focus through implementing organizations' networks and project partners, with activities designed to overcome mistrust in political processes and actors via sensitization work, as well as participatory models linking citizens, CSOs, and local public authorities and elected representatives. UNDEF's work in essence focuses on strengthening local democracy via multiple prongs, and also contributes, albeit less predominantly, to local-national scales.

A principal challenge to the overall democracy-support development context and thereby the role, effectiveness, and impact of future projects is Tunisia's lingering political crisis caused by persistent infighting in both parliament and government. To date, the Tunisian government has been changed, either via elections or reshuffling, ten times. These multiple political crises have impacted citizen trust in democracy, in political parties, and political elites.⁸ Recent international and local public opinion surveys have additionally registered an increase in popular support for the army,⁹ a strong centralized political system around the institution of the Presidency, and old-regime political figures. This means that programs that integrate mechanisms to build citizen trust through participation and sensitization are critical to supporting Tunisia's prospects for democratic consolidation.

2.2. Evaluation scope and objectives

UNDEF has funded seventeen projects in Tunisia since the 2011 Revolution to support the process of building a new democratic political system (for a full list of projects see Annex 1). Over the years, UNDEF has sought to support decades-old and newly emerging civil society organizations (CSOs) as part of democratization, encouraging political participation and citizen trust in democracy, protection of human rights and the rule of law.

The purpose of this meta-evaluation is to assess UNDEF's overall engagement in Tunisia. The meta-evaluation assesses what project strategies worked well and identifies trends that might be useful for project designs in countries undergoing similar stages of democratic patterns and political transitions. It provides conclusions and recommendations for improved project selection in Tunisia. The core data for the meta-evaluation is drawn from analyses of UNDEF projects in Tunisia that have undergone independent and external evaluation processes. The analyses and

⁷ For a breakdown of social movements and protests in Tunisia, see: Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux, www.ftdes.net. For a thought piece on the explosion of social movement in the Middle East and North Africa, see: 2018. "This big factor is at the heart of political protests all over the Middle East." *Washington Post, The Monkey Cage* (Oct. 25, 2018): <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/10/25/why-social-policy-is-at-the-heart-of-political-protests-in-the-middle-east/>

⁸ See the Arab Barometer results, above.

⁹ Given its role in the 2011 Tunisian revolution, the military remains a highly trusted institution. In 2011, 88.9% of Tunisians had a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the military, comparable to the 90.1% that made the same claim in 2018. Source: <https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/>

subsequent findings are positioned within relevant broader donor trends in Tunisia over the last decade. Most critical trends identified from within the analysis of projects and initiatives are scrutinized in greater detail to draw relevant, feasible, and realistic recommendations and conclusions.

This meta-evaluation covers almost a decade's worth of UNDEF grant-making in Tunisia, from 2013 to 2021, and focuses on seven projects that were the subject of a post-project evaluation and two that ended recently (spring 2021) that were not evaluated, as seen below:

Project	Project Title	Organization Name	Start Date	End Date	Focus
UDF-11-443-TUN	Projet d'accompagnement de la transition démocratique et de Promotion de la citoyenneté en Tunisie	Association Nationale de Développement Durable	1/4/2013	31/03/2015	Electoral Processes
UDF-14-606-TUN	Support for Civil Society and Constitutional Processes in Decentralization and Governance	Développement Sans Frontières	1/8/2016	30/04/2019	Strengthening Civil Society Interaction with Government
UDF-14-607-TUN	Promoting Local and Participatory Democracy	Observatoire CHAHED	1/2/2016	31/08/2018	Electoral Processes
UDF-15-661-TUN	Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia	Tamkeen For Development	1/4/2017	31/10/2019	Youth Engagement
UDF-15-662-TUN	Eyes on the budget: Building Public Participation, Trust and Transparency in Local Government in Tunisia	Action Associative	1/4/2017	30/09/2018	Strengthening Civil Society Interaction with Government
UDF-16-710-TUN	Women and Men as Equal in Partners in Local Government in Tunisia	Lam Echaml	1/3/2018	29/02/2020	Gender Equality
UDF-16-711-TUN	Observatory for Minority Rights in Tunisia	Association Pour la Promotion du Droit à la Différence	1/4/2018	31/03/2020	Rule of law and Human Rights
UDF-17-759-TUN	Feyza: Promoting Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Six Regions of Tunisia	Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability	1/5/2019	31/05/2021	Gender Equality
UDF-17-760-TUN	Kif-Kif: Women and Men	Free Sight Association	1/4/2019	31/03/2021	Gender Equality

Figure 1: List of projects reviewed in the meta-evaluation

2.2.1. Overview of focus areas

The total amount of the nine grants included in this meta-evaluation was \$1,886,000 and is representative of all UNDEF grants in Tunisia as follows:

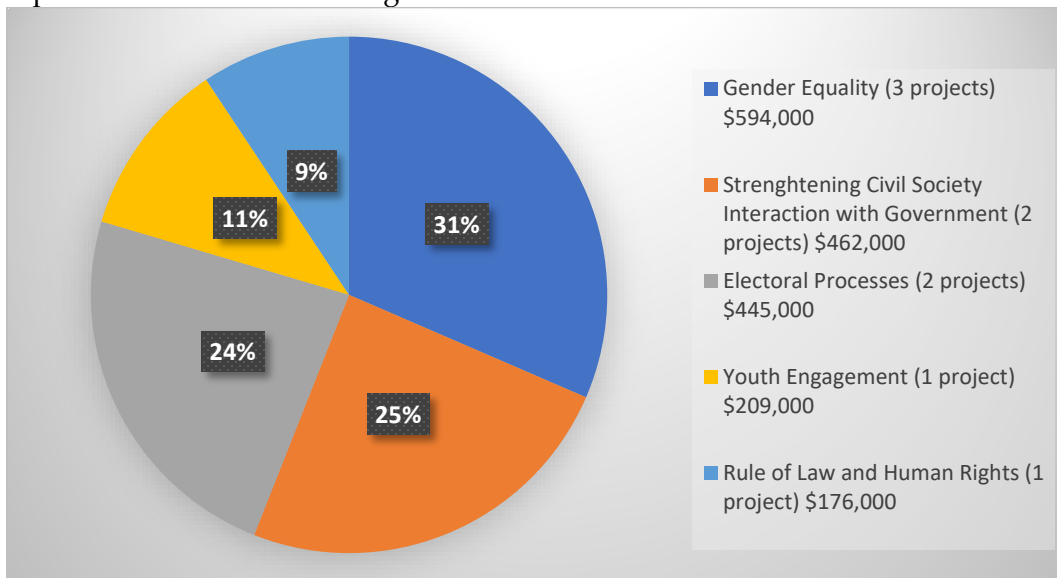


Figure 2: Meta-evaluation focus areas

2.2.2. Overview of the geographic scope of the nine projects

The nine projects were implemented nation-wide with a balanced distribution across the regions. A stronger focus can be perceived in the North (with four different projects implemented in each of Jendouba, Kairouan and Grand Tunis), but with three different projects overlapping in five other regions in the center and south of the country.

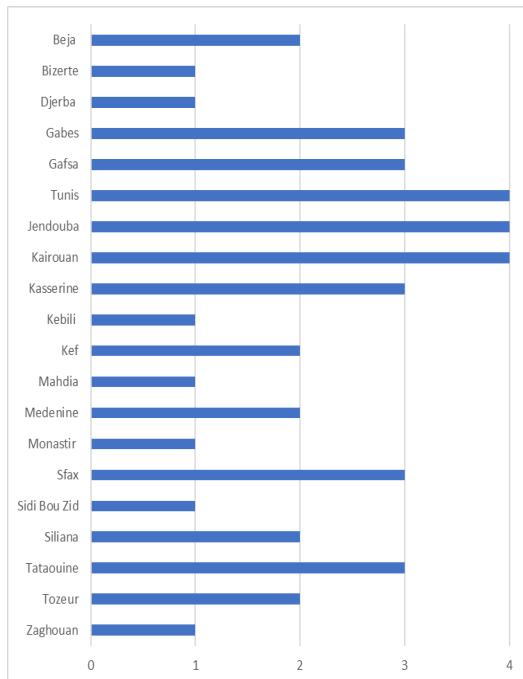


Figure 3: Number of projects per region

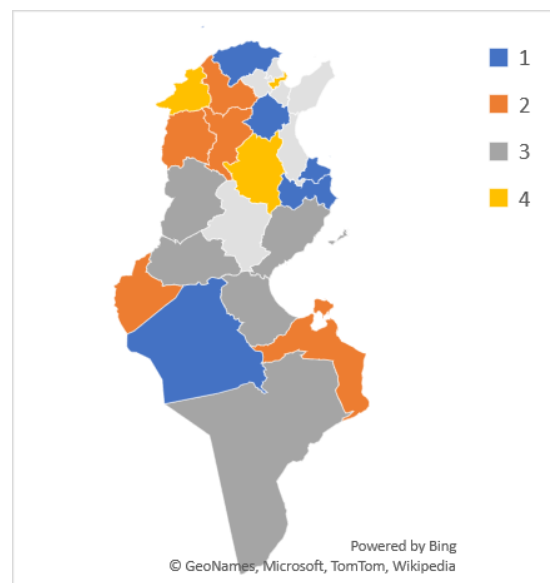


Figure 4: Projects' geographic overlap

2.3. Evaluation methodology

A team composed of three evaluators first undertook a desk review of a set of evaluations and documentation from UNDEF projects in Tunisia and formulated a launch note. Thereafter, the team included in the analysis a study of major donor trends, government-donor strategic plans, as well as interviews with former grantees.

The methodology is two-fold:

- a) First, the meta-evaluation will consider the impact of UNDEF-funded projects in Tunisia in each of the eight UNDEF focus areas and alignment with the implementation of SDGs in this country.
- b) Second (and to a larger extent), the meta-evaluation will compare different project approaches and results to identify common trends and variables (such as context, approach, partners, management styles, needs assessments, timing, networks, etc.) that led to more successful outcomes and results among UNDEF-funded projects in Tunisia.

The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the Norms and Standards for Evaluations developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group, the OECD criteria of evaluation, and the UNDEF operational manual.

The main section of the evaluation focuses on the nine key projects listed above. It describes UNDEF's strategic approach in the area and summarizes this in the form of a logical impact diagram. It then analyzes the factors that contributed to the successful or unsuccessful achievement of the DAC criteria of coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability for the projects within the cluster. This is followed by conclusions and recommendations, which are intended to strengthen UNDEF selection criteria for its grants in this sector, as well as to guide applicants, grantees, and implementing partners in the design and implementation of projects in Tunisia. A compilation of lessons learned from the seven evaluations is presented in Annex 6.

3. Project Strategies

3.1. Project objectives and approaches

UNDEF's actions in Tunisia aimed at supporting the democratic transition and can be summarized as pursuing three main outcomes:

- Building the capacity of the growing number of civil society actors in Tunisia to engage in the process of institution-building during the democratic transition phase.
- Enabling these actors to engage with both the general public and the government (with a high emphasis on local authorities) on issues pertaining to democratic processes.

- Raising the awareness of youth, women, and men towards equal participation in society and institutions.

All projects addressed issues relating to democracy-building at the local level, some with special emphasis on target groups like youth or women depending on the NGO's expertise or scope of work. Objectives mostly revolved around enhancing the knowledge and mobilization of citizens within their communities with scopes ranging from general mobilization (project 606) to specific themes like participatory budgeting (project 662), and women participation (project 710). Whether directly or indirectly, all projects converged towards the importance of political decentralization in the context of the democratic transition.

Project #	Focus Area	CSOs	Local authorities	Citizens	Others/Comments
443	Electoral processes	√		√	High school teachers
606	Strengthening CS Interaction	√	√	√	
607	Electoral processes	√	√	√	
661	Youth Engagement		√	√	
662	Strengthening CS Interaction	√	√	√	30% women participants in the project.
710	Gender Equality	√	√		Journalists
711	Rule of Law	√		√	Journalists; government officials at the ministerial level; MPs and political parties.
759	Gender Equality	√	√		70% women CSO representatives and 40% women civil servants.
760	Gender Equality	√	√	√	

Figure 5: Typology of project participants

Overall, projects were able to clearly define the general issue they wanted to address and designed analogous strategies, outcomes, and activities. Nonetheless, there were weaknesses related to the precision of problem identification at the local level (a presentation of different socio-political local dynamics¹⁰ where projects were taking place was missing from most project documents).

There were two trends in project strategies employed to describe the projects. First, most successful project designs strongly encouraged intra-project participation, with partners and stakeholders ensuring consultations to fine tune the subject of initiatives and activities (where

¹⁰ While project documents all mention the fall of the former regime, with a few exceptions, very few appropriately analyze the current socio-political dynamics as it relates to the project design.

partnership plans were involved). Second, there was a commitment to participatory models in activities themselves (e.g., regularly and meaningfully linking citizens or CSOs with local authorities for joint activities, conducting joint dialogue sessions, forums, participatory mechanisms). All nine project strategies highlighted the need for participatory approaches to ensure the success of their initiatives through a triptych of civil society organizations, local authorities, and citizen activists' collaborations.

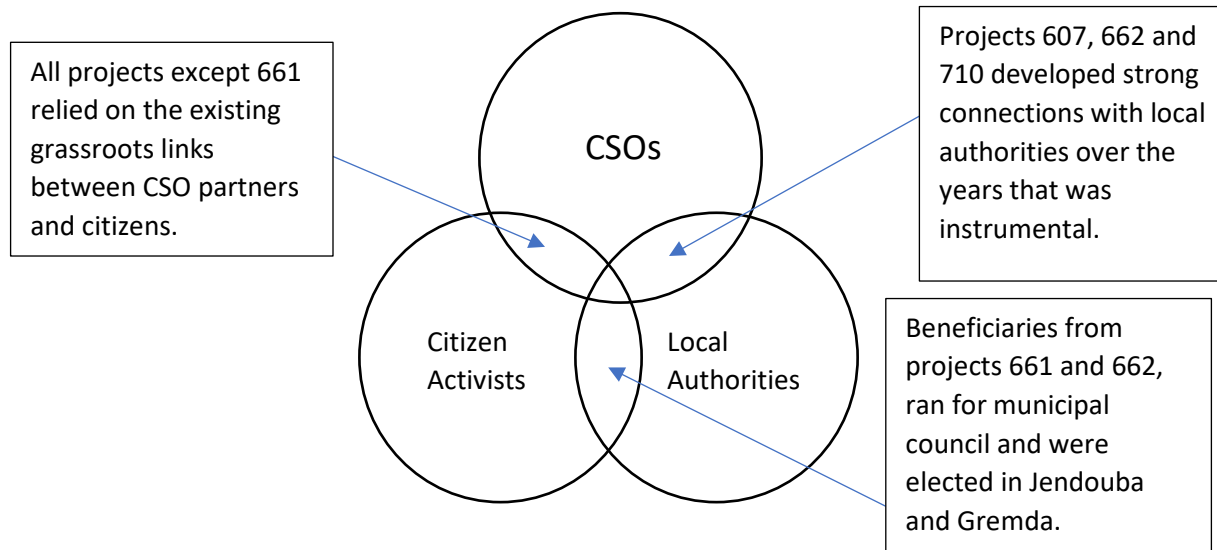


Figure 6: The triptych CSOs/Local Authorities/Citizens

In practice, as we show in more detail below, consulting with and including partners and participants in all project cycle management steps was not systematic and mostly based on the NGO's experience and presence in the regions, either through regional coordinators or a strong pre-existing network. Across the projects, especially those with multiple local partners, there were limited opportunities to gather and share lessons learned or experiences outside the planned activities (which may or may not have happened). There were also limited opportunities for internal reviews of implementation aimed at assessing, planning, or re-designing activities in remaining components. Similarly for joint activities, analysis provided further in this meta-evaluation, through different criteria, also indicated a wide difference in upholding this commitment.

3.1.1. Gender mainstreaming in project approaches

As seen above, the general typology of participants across the projects was similar: CSOs, local authorities, and citizens, with a gender and youth mainstreamed approach. Unless otherwise stated, a gender balance commitment was made by all UNDEF grantees in relation to project participants and stakeholders.

In practice however, gender mainstreaming varied greatly from project to project. Women from all walks of life took part in the projects, whether they be CSO representatives, activists, local

council members, or from the general public. Even in projects that were not focused on gender equality, the thoughtful inclusion of women at different stages of the project implementation improved the general progress of project activities. It is worthy to note however that gender balance within the project implementing teams was not systematic. In one project (project 710) men were managing the project and five out six trainers were also men.

While some had exceeded their targets in ensuring the participation of women (project 606), others were able to respect their targets (project 662) and one other fell short of their own commitment despite the visibly positive impact of the project on women participants (project 661). Taken as a whole, the seven evaluations noted enhanced impact towards women (especially rural women) in comparison to men. Opening spaces to them generated higher confidence in taking on more public roles (projects 443, 661, 710) and led to enhanced impact of their involvement in their communities, as will be further discussed in this meta-evaluation.

In Gremda (Sfax), a newly elected woman mayor in Tunisia's first free local elections, was a previous beneficiary of L'Action Associative's (AA, project 622) participatory budget trainings. Thanks to town halls facilitated by AA, she was previously elected as a neighborhood delegate. By the time she took office as mayor, she was already well-versed in participatory budget mechanisms and legally-stipulated CSO and citizen participation in local democracy.

In projects focusing on gender equality, one entirely lacked a gender analysis (project 710), while another aimed at producing a survey and report on the perceptions around masculinities (project 760) but only as part of the last component of the project, and not as part of a baseline study to better adjust the project. Support to local NGOs to develop five advocacy strategies around gender equality took place in project 759, but there were limited means to verify the presence of baseline analysis for the development of such strategies.

3.2. Logical frameworks

Several evaluations mentioned the challenge of using logical frameworks (or logframes) as a tool to rigorously evaluate the projects' achievements. The observed trend indicated that activities and short-term expected results in logframes were mostly, although not entirely, achieved. There were also some issues arising with logframes themselves. In one instance, the project's design was somewhat confusing, and in addition to other reasons, the implementing team was unable to keep track or follow the initially set indicators and expected results (project 661¹¹). In others, objectives and logframe indicators and means of verification were evaluated as unrealistic or unattainable from a practical perspective (projects 443, 607, 711). Finally, some projects focused on completing the legal requirements of the agreement with UNDEF with intended outcomes formally achieved, however with significant missed opportunities that limited the potential for catalytic impact (project 606).

¹¹ For more information, please see separate post-project evaluation of project 661, https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/tunisia_tamkeen_for_development_undef_evaluation.pdf

Activities	Intended outcomes	Medium-term impact	Long-term development objective
<p>Capacity Development Trainings, Training of Trainers Coaching and mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project cycle management + proposal writing + NGO management • Advocacy • Communications • Participative democracy • Participative budgeting • Decentralization • Gender equality, gender mainstreaming • Minorities' rights 	<p>Increased understanding developed of concepts and approaches</p>	<p>Increased engagement of stakeholders in covered topics</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of stakeholders</p>	<p>Institutionalization of processes within NGOs, CSOs and municipalities.</p>
<p>Awareness Raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys¹² • Training manuals • Manuals on good practices • Guide on citizen mobilization • Topic-focused manuals (participative budgeting, governance, gender equality, • Reports • Awareness raising campaigns (art expositions, theater, conferences) • Website/App • IEC materials • Media engagement 	<p>Knowledge spread to the general public.</p>	<p>Reduced informational gaps between citizens and authorities (mostly local)</p>	<p>Consolidation and dissemination of knowledge that contributes to the strengthening and maintenance of democratic practices.</p>
<p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative mechanisms: Joint projects with municipalities • Community engagement campaigns • Draft laws and direct evidence-based advocacy 	<p>Opportunities created for collaborative action on local issues.</p>	<p>Enhanced engagement of relevant stakeholders in democratic processes.</p>	<p>Institutionalization of democratic processes.</p>

Figure 7: Condensed logframe¹³

Common assumptions and trends related to logframes revolve around an enabling institutional environment whereby training of CSOs may lead to broader training of activists or specific

¹² Surveys were used in three main different ways: (1) diagnose current local contexts at the beginning of the project (projects 443, 711), (2) fine tune project design or as content for trainings, (3) as a mitigation strategy when other activities were impossible (project 607).

¹³ For a full list of activities, products, and outputs per project, please see: Annex 3 and Annex 5.

target categories such as local civil servants or journalists, in turn leading to enhanced engagement with the general public and relevant stakeholders. However, the translation of greater participation into local democratic processes took place in some projects but not in others (for more information see section 4.3.4).

4. Evaluation Findings

4.1. Coherence

Within the development context (described and analyzed in section 2.1), UNDEF's programming since 2012, has fit squarely within the priorities defined by government-donor strategic plans,¹⁴ as well as thematic development trends. It was certain that the projects objectives were entirely consistent with the different efforts of several actors supporting the democratic process in Tunisia.

Projects awarded with UNDEF grants contribute to three niche areas and thereby complement Tunisia's broader development priorities: (1) implementing organizations that would otherwise serve as sub-grantees or partners are now principle implementers; (2) project designs that address more detailed issues relying on contextual and thematic expertise within broader development trends; and (3) a diverse regional reach in areas outside of the capital which positively affects varied groups of beneficiaries. With this strategy, UNDEF projects complement larger democracy-related development initiatives by empowering smaller and local CSOs, with a focus on micro-processes accompanying democratization. Examples include the support of participatory budget mechanisms in municipalities as part of the broader political decentralization program, designing region-specific gender programming as part of broader legal inclusiveness programs, and a variety of political participation initiatives.

UNDEF-funded projects in Tunisia over the last decade have a clear CSO focus, either building new CSO networks or locating CSO work at the center of participatory project designs. UNDEF projects are geographically diverse, with a significant focus on initiatives in the most marginalized areas. A significant bulk of activities (and project design elements) is devoted to awareness-raising (or sensitization) of newly drafted and passed laws (electoral laws especially), codes, regulations, institutions and the overall Constitution, and legal stipulations for inclusiveness and participatory mechanisms. Overcoming political mistrust to encourage political knowledge and participation is an overall trend for projects, as is a focus in gender inclusivity and to some extent youth participation.

¹⁴ 2016 Carthage Agreement with government of national unity (July 2016, focus on encouraging development, growth, employment, decentralization), 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan (focus on decentralization and improving marginalized areas economically).

By offering an open application process to all non-governmental actors, UNDEF has provided grants that can be described as demand-driven and as a consequence, coherent and aligned to the new democratic impetus. Through the crucial years of the democratic transition, the projects addressed tangible needs and proposed roadmaps that responded to the needs related to democracy building in the country.

4.2. Relevance

4.2.1. Relevance of focus areas

UNDEF projects have generally been relevant and have met real democratic needs and priorities. UNDEF focus areas of the projects under review (as described in the above section) indicated a willingness to prioritize the strengthening of civil society interaction with government and gender equality.

However, it is important to note the relevance of intersecting focus areas in all the projects. For example, multiple projects positively touched on electoral processes even if their primary focus area was different.¹⁵

Project #	Primary Focus Area	Intersection with other focus areas
443	Electoral processes	n/a
606	Strengthening CS Interaction	Participants worked through the first municipal elections with both appointed councilmembers and newly elected ones in the last phase of the project.
607	Electoral processes	n/a
661	Youth Engagement	Participants were highly engaged in the municipal elections in their towns and voted in higher proportion than the national average.
662	Strengthening CS Interaction	Participatory budgeting mechanisms closely following the municipal elections, therefore working in the midst of electoral processes.
710	Gender Equality	The project targeted mainly municipal administrators and newly elected municipal councilors to increase their knowledge and capacities to apply gender equality in local development projects.
711	Rule of Law	No noticeable intersection with specific electoral processes.
759	Gender Equality	No noticeable intersection with specific electoral processes. However, the project trained and raised awareness of municipal civil servants on gender equality.
760	Gender Equality	No noticeable intersection with specific electoral processes.

Figure 8: Intersection of electoral processes in reviewed projects.

¹⁵ Examples range from encouraging project participants to get out the vote (project 661) to transfer knowledge around electoral processes and work with outgoing and incoming municipal councilmembers (projects 606, 607, 661, 662, 710, 759).

Despite delays related to setting legal frameworks and organizing elections, the electoral processes projects (projects 443, 607) remained relevant to the context and local dynamics, especially as all projects touched on the importance of strengthening political decentralization processes.

Projects focusing primarily on strengthening civil society interaction with government and gender equality were also seen as relevant. Building trust in the political class has been an uneasy and challenging journey in the transition process, and providing opportunities for direct collaboration mechanisms between citizens, CSOs, and the government, was key to establish sustainable and trust-based participatory mechanisms at the municipal level. Similarly, navigating the post-revolutionary Tunisian context characterized by the growing polarization of thought currents, especially on women's and minorities' rights was of considerable relevance. Youth inclusion was also seen as a cross-cutting component of all projects contributing to strengthening youth capacities and increasing opportunities for their participation, be it through trainings, joint activities, or workshops. Relevance to the country's needs could have been strengthened through baseline analyses, such as a gender one (project 710) or with stronger components focusing on women's political participation.¹⁶

4.2.2. Relevance of project approaches and risk mitigation

The participatory approach adopted by the majority of projects was seen as relevant, despite challenges in creating synergies between the different actors through the joint activities. Good practices were noted in the approach of project 607: over the course of its implementation, it promoted a comprehensive, participatory, and focused approach. Also, beneficiaries of project 662 became integral to its implementation and to the promotion of participatory budget processes. The relationship between grantee and beneficiaries allowed the former to tailor its project and regularly integrate feasible action informed by lessons learned in its activities.

The main factor that affected the relevance of project strategies and approaches was the precision of problem identification. There have been instances where an identified problem was effectively addressed with a targeted and appropriate response (project 607). The project's relevance was most clearly observable in its expansive strategy to include a wide range of civil society and citizen voices in the development of

L'Action Associative (AA) designed a focused, geographically diversified, and collaborative approach to introduce sustainable participatory budget mechanisms at the municipal level. Initially, MOUs were signed with partner municipalities, constructive feedback encouraged, and followed by comprehensive advocacy campaigns, citizen town halls, and meetings with newly elected municipal council members. Through an inclusive CSO approach, AA facilitated meaningful citizen engagement in local affairs. Project partners had clearly defined roles in delegate elections and in encouraging discussions around local community budget priorities. The agility of design and implementation rendered this a sustainable and highly impactful UNDEF-funded project.

¹⁶ 443 and 607 both had some elements of women's political participation.

materials and activities to build local participatory democracy through transparency and good governance. But there were others where the identified problem was resolved using an ineffective response that ultimately failed to target the problem (projects 443, 606, 661).

In general, the more the identified problem and project objectives are precise, the more the developed approach is targeted, concise and relevant to their initial design, which was the case for projects 662 and 607. Projects with a more complex design, targeting either several target groups (project 711) or several communities (project 710), or having an overly ambitious and unrealistic logical framework (project 443) generally weakened the project's relevance.

Analyzing and addressing the contextual factors was not always very relevant across the reviewed projects. While the risks identified in project documents were relevant and appropriate, the risk mitigation plan were not entirely adequate. As a result, many projects faced delays and had incomplete products because of uncalculated challenges. For example, project 661 had no contingency plan related to challenges in the microfinance component, leading to time-consuming efforts in finding solutions to this component instead of pursuing other project activities as planned.

4.2.3. Relevance of project participants

Participants and stakeholders were relevant across the projects, despite shortcomings related to the selection processes. The relevance of a multi-stakeholder approach for projects was clearly undeniable, in that the latter strengthens and fosters engagement between and among the different beneficiary groups and creates spaces for discussion in addition to opportunities for mutual collaboration despite the obstacles of mistrust and political tension.

Despite missed opportunities related to project design and some implementation issues, all participants, especially women, from nearly all projects felt strongly about their newly acquired skills and knowledge and their inputs were considered as relevant in the evaluations.



Citizen Forum in Monastir, October 2017 (Action Associative, project 662)

4.2.4. Relevance of Partnership Plans

Projects that had partnership plans were more relevant than others are those that featured the following factors:

- Clearly identified their partners in the design phase:
 - on the basis of the nature of their activities (project 711)
 - on the basis of their expertise and capacities (project 710)

- or on the basis of their geographical presence which served as a source of information for the implementing agency
- further consulted with them in the design phase on activities and logframe development
- Followed clear coordination mechanisms: The implementation of projects 711 and 710 was based on a consultative approach with partners thanks to the establishment of a common value charter and the setting out of roles and responsibilities from the design phase of project 711, and to the partnership based on the exchange of expertise and on very specific roles for project 710.

Projects whose partnerships negatively affected relevance had the following issues:

- Limited or no experience working with partners:
 - Partners were not part of design process and not consulted for planning, monitoring, and adjusting course during the implementation (projects 443, 606, 607)
 - Inability to coordinate properly across different regions and link lessons learned across the activities (project 443)
 - Absence of preliminary work leading to an ambiguity on the role of partners (project 607)
- Changed partners without clear justification (project 607)
- Chose partners with limited:
 - Experience with democratic engagement (project 661)
 - Organizational capacity and core resources (project 443)

4.3. Effectiveness

The evaluations indicated mixed results in terms of effectiveness, in the strict sense of delivering expected outputs and achieving the projects' outcomes. As developed initially, set outcomes were not entirely achieved in most projects due to contextual reasons (institutional delays at the national level, projects 607, 661, 662), limited organizational capacity and expertise (project 606), and issues related to project design (projects 443, 661, 711).

Projects that were more effective than others had the following favorable factors:

- Implemented by knowledgeable local grassroots grantees¹⁷ with technical expertise relevant to the scope of activities
- Demonstrated an ability to problem-solving skills enhanced by project elasticity
- Focused on transferring ownership of processes to project participants and stakeholders

¹⁷ References to knowledgeable grantees with technical expertise in this meta-analysis refer to capital (Tunis)-based NGOs with small staffing structures, that have developed expertise in a specific field (for instance expertise participatory budget mechanisms, expertise in working with specific laws, etc.). Expertise can exist at the capital level or with smaller grassroots organization at the sub-regional level (i.e., expertise in working with local authorities on natural resource issues). By expertise we mean subject- and/or geographic-specific expertise as it relates to the successful implementation of the project.

However, just as some projects were more effective than others, the achievement of activities, outputs, and even outcomes were not systematically correlated to achieving specific and even general objectives. Even grantees who were subject matter experts, such as 607, were unable to effectively achieve their set outcomes due to challenges in adapting to the contextual delays and limited project elasticity for the matter.

While the project performed strongly in the first phase, contextual and institutional delays rendered the second part, which focused on surveys and subsequent trainings for municipalities less effective. Nonetheless, the project resulted in two successes – high-level of citizen involvement the municipalities of Rades and Ain Draham through sustained awareness-raising via new CSO networks – in which participation and inclusiveness resulted in effectiveness as well as potential sustainability, at least in the first phase of the activities (see below).

The municipality of Rades, with three communes and one of the oldest industrial and port zones, worked with Observatoire CHAHED (project 607) via an MOU to establish a clear plan for the inclusion of CSOs in its work. CHAHED helped create the *Dar Jamayat* network of 22 local CSOs to strengthen citizen-municipality relations, and coordinate awareness raising campaigns before the 2018 local elections. The sustainability of the network has boosted overall project effectiveness, especially around citizen trust and involvement in local democracy.

4.3.1. Capacity Development

The outcomes of capacity development were most successful at being effective. Training was seen as satisfactory by participants but depending on specific cases, there was indication that they were not effectively nor systematically interlinked with other components in every project. There was a wide range in the availability of outlets to apply the knowledge acquired during those activities. Outlets were absent such as in project 661. About 1,000 participants out of the total 1,200 participants in the project attended a three-day training but the design of the project provided limited follow-up activities that, in any case, were ultimately not implemented. In other cases, follow-up activities were limited both in design and implementation (projects 443, 606, 661).¹⁸ Lastly, some projects were able to positively harness the newly acquired knowledge by participants for action-oriented activities (projects 662, 710, 711).

Strategies for capacity development were mostly comprised of trainings and workshops, but some projects opted for additional coaching of local authorities (project 710) and mentorship of activists (projects 606, 760). These methods yielded better results as the support was more continuous over time and able to weather external challenges in the project implementation (such as institutional delays).

4.3.2. Multi-pronged components

A successful hybrid method was the organization of workshops combining local authorities and CSOs or citizens that were aimed at specific goals (projects 606, 607, 661, 662, 710, 759 and

¹⁸ Information related to the last phases of projects 759 and 760 were insufficient to include in this analysis.

760¹⁹). Clearly pre-identified topics to discuss and agree on, in addition to appropriately preparing for those sessions (through preparatory sessions on each side of the dialogue), directly led to achievement of the activity's objectives. Halfway between capacity development and awareness raising/advocacy, dialogue sessions were useful to address the core problems identified in the project design phase. When done comprehensively, responsibilities to follow-up as well as accountability over results were almost naturally transferred to the stakeholders themselves. Feeling ownership over the process often built motivation and commitment. However, not all dialogue sessions were able to embrace that potential, mostly due to the grantees' limited organizational capacity in facilitating, keeping track of, and supporting the process.

4.3.3. Project-wide awareness raising and advocacy

Awareness raising and advocacy components were only partially effective. Even though six projects benefited from no-cost extensions (ranging from 2 months to a full year), those components generally all fell at the end of the implementation as per the project designs and therefore were implemented under time pressure, or not implemented.

In addition to accrued delays in the early phases of the projects, there were limited opportunities of internal midterm reviews to better adjust the final project phases. In addition, there was an absence of clear communication and outreach plans indicating limited expertise of grantees in communications.

Several products and material outputs remained uncompleted, and when they were, there were no or limited plans to use the resources developed. The lack of dissemination plans or strategic vision around those resources was visible in the project designs and through evaluations that indicated limited added value of those outputs.

The communication and advocacy activities in project 710 were designed based on the hiring of a communication consultant (with reasonable budget allocation), but the organization ended up refraining from hiring an external expert and relied on in-house staff members that lacked expertise and resources to conduct a comprehensive communications strategy.

In project 711, the grantee effectively addressed minority issues and produced communication materials but lacked a coherent dissemination strategy which limited its public effect.

4.3.4. Sub-grants in the form of collaborative advocacy activities

Joint activities and small projects implemented in collaboration with local authorities were also partially effective, in that some were unable to be developed or implemented and/or not directly linked to democratic engagement and with long gaps in implementation (project 606), and others being successful and leading to concrete changes (project 710). Their presence in project designs, usually at the end of the project, was detrimental to their effectiveness: The two-year timeframe, whereby trainings usually occupy at least six months and up to the entire

¹⁹ The meta-evaluation was unable to verify the effectiveness of the activities in projects 759 and 760 due to the absence of reporting around the last phases of the projects.

first year, left insufficient time to ensure that sub-grants were appropriately designed, planned, implemented, monitored and adjusted accordingly. Using the capacity development component to initiate the sub-grants (for example accompanying through coaching the implementation of local needs assessments to appropriately identify the objective of the sub-grant) would have provided foundational structure and a smoother transition to the second year of the project.

As such, any issue arising (which can be predictable in activities implemented collaboratively) was difficult to resolve in a timely and effective manner. Some issues were external (such as the dissolution of a municipal council, project 710). Most internal issues that occurred went unresolved in a bid to complete the activity even if it only partially addresses the project’s objectives (selected projects by stakeholders unrealistic or not linked to democratic engagement processes).



A participant voting for a citizen committee to collaborate with the municipality of the Gafsa, 25 February 2017 (Lab’ESS, project 606)

When they occurred, these internal challenges could be traced back to the lack of experience and capacity of the NGO in supporting local activities. This translated in issues such as over-reliance on local partners (even when they were not sufficiently supported), identifying expert consultants in the process of the project, and contractors for the achievement of the related activities and outcomes as well as providing limited resources (time, energy and financial resources) to finding solutions as they arose.

Despite these short-comings, evaluations clearly indicated the potential for catalyzing change and impact through sub-grants and joint activities bringing together local activities and CSOs/citizens. Where they were effectively implemented, their impact was visible.

Project	Collaborative advocacy activities (in the form of sub-grants)	Comments
606	3 joint activities: Jendouba, Tozeur, Gafsa	*Insufficient funds *One successful activity (Gafsa, public works resumption), one partially successful (Tozeur, solid waste management), one failure (water supply in Jendouba)
607	7 pilot projects: Ain Draham, Ben Arous, Bizerte, Gabes, Kairouan, Kasserine, and Sfax	*2 success stories: Ain Draham and Rades in first phase of the project *Delays related to legislation and elections
662	7 joint activities: Tabarka, Ariana, Kairouan, Monastir, Mahdia, Gremda, Sidi Bou Zid	*Successful and effective activities *Added 3 municipalities in the course of the project – Tabarka, Kairouan and Mahdia.

710	3 joint activities: Mdhila, Kebili, and Bargou	*Successful in Mdhila and Kebili in opening (or reopening) women spaces, one failure in Bargou because of the dissolution of the municipality
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Figure 9: List of collaborative advocacy activities per project

The relatively small number of direct advocacy activities in the nine projects, such as influencing policymaking or policy change further indicated a preference towards collaborative processes rather than an activist approach of direct or confrontational advocacy. Despite the plans of UNDEF grantees to develop two draft bills (project 711, whose draft bill was neither finalized nor introduced to parliament, and project 760²⁰), there was limited advocacy planning around the topic, indicating limited effectiveness in engaging in policy-oriented activities through the evaluated projects.

4.3.5. Effectiveness of partnerships and other functional relationships

All the projects benefited from partnerships with other CSOs (except project 661 whose main partner was a microfinance institution), usually based in the regions targeted by the implementation of activities.

Despite a wide range of approaches that were used to work with partners, evaluators identified a trend of reducing their role to the implementation of activities, with limited avenues for collaboration on design, risk mitigation, or budget allocations. Partners were seen mostly as sub-contractors and less as co-creators or genuine contributors to the projects as a whole. Some were unaware of the full scope of the project they were participating in (project 443). Others were better informed but still were unable to make changes they believed would improve the project's effectiveness (project 606). Follow-up represented a challenge to the main grantees, especially in projects that included a large number of activities over different regions.

Some UNDEF grantees relied on expert consultants in-lieu of NGOs as partners (projects 661, 759), especially as it came to develop thematic products or specialized activities. Those working relationships were mostly effective as they were able to contribute to the achievement of the projects' objectives and targets.

Project	Partners	Comments
443	4 partners	Issues with some newly established CSOs with limited capacity and limited support from implementing NGO.
606	1 partner – dropped out during course of the project	Issues with the partnership and the UNDEF grantee Solution: recruitment of consultants to facilitate remaining activities.
607	1 partner – changed during the course of the project	The reasons for the change remained unclear despite attempts of the evaluator to clarify.

²⁰ A draft bill related to equal opportunities between men and women for ministerial and high-level decision-making positions was produced by project 760 and was introduced to the parliamentary commission on women and family affairs. According to the grantee, 10 commission members voiced their initial support for the bill.

661	1 contractor	To develop and implement the democracy-related training. The relationship was effective because of the lack of in-house expertise of the grantee.
662	2 partners	Partnerships were effective as no issues were raised in the evaluation.
710	3 partners	Limited coordination. Issues with one local partner who left the project (evaluators could not clarify whether the decision was made by the local partner or UNDEF's grantee). Unclear in terms of added value or effectiveness.
711	6 partners	The evaluators could not verify the quality and effectiveness of regional activities (the evaluation took place during lockdown and local partners were unresponsive), but no issues were raised that affected the effectiveness of the partnerships.
759	4 partners – 1 changed during the course of the project	Midterm report indicated sound planning though approach and format similar to sub-contracting in silos rather than collaborative with all partners, implying preference over regional specificity rather than general project streamlining. This project was not evaluated, and the sole interview conducted for this meta-evaluation was inconclusive as to the effectiveness of its partnerships.
760	None in the project document	The grantee clarified in the project document that they would work alone as they thought they would be unable to find relevant local partners, but mid-term reporting indicates that there were three partners involved in the organization of events, one in each region, in an attempt to be more effective ²¹ .

Figure 9: List of partnerships per project

4.4. Efficiency

Two main external factors negatively affected efficiency. The first relates to the institutional delays in this meta-evaluation (see section 4.3). The second is related to the (continuing) depreciation of the currency that lost 40% of its value in the years between 2016 and 2018. Internal factors to efficiency were project management skills as well as project elasticity. What was lacking across the board was the provision of mechanisms of oversight aimed at adjusting the course of action during project implementation.

Concretely, all projects under review benefitted from a more or less substantive increase in their budgets as a result of the devaluation of the Tunisian dinar from the time they were signed to the time they were being implemented. Communicating around and adapting financial and project planning to reflect these changes were left to the discretion of the grantees, demonstrating the trust that UNDEF places in their grantees. Budgets were not systematically adjusted, and grantees rarely accounted for the spending of this extra amount of local currency at their disposal. Additionally, and despite this boost, half of the projects were seen as partially

²¹ Separate post-project evaluations would provide more insights as to the effectiveness in project 759 and 760.

efficient or inefficient (projects 443, 606, 661, 710). Two projects were evaluated as efficient (projects 662 and 711). There was an inability in providing a clear assessment of the remaining three projects due to the absence of final financial reports and other relevant types of information (projects 607, 759, 760).

Utilization rates or extensions were not directly correlated to efficiency. Out of the nine projects, only two were concluded with no extension and with 100% utilization rate of their budgets (projects 710, 711). The extensions that were granted were not all similar and were dependent on the recipient's requests, ranging from two months (project 662) to a full year (projects 443, 607). All, except one (project 606) were causally related to national timelines (legislation passing around municipal elections, holding of six elections in ten years). Despite receiving long extensions of seven and nine months, three projects were still unable to fully spend the funds (projects 606, 607, 661) with utilization rates as low as 83% (project 606, with \$33,493 remaining funds²²). The only project without any indication of utilization remains project 760 which has yet to provide UNDEF with draft or final financial utilization report.

Inefficiencies related to those grants were also linked to the following factors:

- Recipient NGO's capacity
 - Limited project cycle management and financial management experience (for example lacking a financial procedures' manual or proper accounting)
 - Project indicators were unused for a variety of reasons (as explained in 3.2)
 - Absence of coordination mechanisms among project partners and stakeholders relying on ad hoc communications with the grantee (in addition to a general lack of communication between all project partners)
 - Lack of vision towards the achievement of project objectives in efficient and impactful ways
- Local partners' capacity and resources
 - Allocating too little funds and resources for local partners, sub-grants, or activities led by project participants.²³
 - Lack of learning opportunities from each other through the course of the project.
- Budgeting issues
 - Lower than expected costs around meetings and other activities. This factor may be linked to the depreciation of the dinar; however, those projects were also evaluated as ranging from ineffective to partially effective, indicating that not all activities had taken place.

²² Project 606 was analyzed as inefficient as the implementing NGO imploded when all their staff resigned at the same time, leading to a break in implementation of about one year. The low utilization rate is therefore a product of both effectiveness issues and devaluation of the currency.

²³ While financial reports from projects 443 and 607 did not provide a breakdown (but provided between 7.5% and 10.5% of their grants to both participants and partners), projects 606, 661, 662, and 711 provided at best 4.5% of the totality of the grant amount to their local partners. The exception was with project 710, which was based on a collaborative model, shared 17.5% of the grant amount with its partners.

- Higher than expected costs of consultants and subject-matter experts. This was justified as being a pragmatic choice to ensure effectiveness but strained the budgets from crucial resources in goal-oriented activities.

Problem-solving by grantees may have included reaching out to either local partners or UNDEF to share their issues and discuss potential solutions with relevant stakeholders. In one case (project 759), the solution to pandemic-related implementing challenges aimed at transferring more activities and related funds to the local partners. The budget was revised twice, and local partners' share increased three-fold from a total of \$12,352 to \$34,149, a jump from 6.8% to 18.9% of the total budget of \$180,000. While the results of the change have not been evaluated, these transfers indicate the ability and willingness of finding solutions to achieve the project's goals within the already-existing framework. In another project (606), there was a focus on efficiency through "checking boxes" rather than reshaping the design or adapt the vision and activities to ensure lasting impact.

Nevertheless, efficiency was globally enhanced through partnerships, especially in projects implemented by an NGO with pre-existing network and history of working together, as well as in projects led by an NGO with specialized subject matter expertise.

4.5. Impact

Impact was assessed through a triangulation of data from evaluation reports and project documents, interview research, five post-project grantee impact surveys, and anecdotes, to determine positive, negative and unexpected effects as a result of the projects. Findings were analyzed against contextual development trends, as well as synergies and trends across projects. In the absence of systematic base-line studies²⁴ and comprehensive impact surveys of participants and beneficiaries (in addition to available post-project grantee impact evaluations) throughout and following the implementation (short-and long term), causality cannot be established.²⁵

From the available set of data, important positive trends can be discerned, and limitations to impact identified. The general outcome of the nine projects aimed at the institutionalization of democratic processes (mostly) at the local level was found to be partially achieved. We found positive and negative effects in all projects (projects 443, 606, 607, 661, 662, 710, 711).²⁶ In this evaluation section, we will assess the potentiality for impact by identifying positive and negative effects as a result of UNDEF-funded projects, and analyze which trends contributed to these changes.

²⁴ It is important to note that systematic base-line studies are not pre-requisites of UNDEF, however, baseline information is available in some logical frameworks, especially in the most recent UNDEF-funded projects 710 and 759, while self-assessed impact is reported by grantees in selected post-project surveys. Both sources of data were included in this analysis.

²⁵ To note are two exceptions - projects 622 and 710 - in which baseline figures are 0 in the logframe. the UNDEF-funded projects therefore clearly correlated with expected results.

²⁶ Information on projects 759 and 760 were insufficient to be included in this analysis.

4.5.1. Themes and Synergies

4.5.1.1. Overall Positive Effects on Civil Society

Highest potential for impact was found at the CSO-level, where civil society was strengthened through their engagement with local authorities (projects 606, 607, 662) garner citizen trust through diverse activities, or broaden their impact by building CSO networks (projects 711, 443, 710, 606, 607) or expanding geographic reach (project 662). A number of projects stressed the positive effects of building such networks (both CSOs and citizens involved), as these helped overcome political isolation (project 711, or via public initiatives as reported in project 443) and establish relationships with local authorities that contributed to impactful future project designs and their implementation (projects 606, 622, 661). In project 661, farmers noted a positive effect of feeling included through the project (microcredit recipients) and thereby engaging more in democratic processes, than before the project. The same project notes high impact potential for

its youth beneficiaries, as soft skill trainings in participatory democracy yielded higher levels of participation in public life, including civil society engagement and participation in meetings with local authorities. Project 661 created a network of associations, including agricultural interest organizations, while project 607 established the formal *Dar Jamayat* which sustained the CSO-municipality relations. We also noted a positive effect as a result of unintended consequences of informal network formation among elected municipal members (project 710), and the intended CSO transformation of work in 'micro-spaces,' to a formalized and impactful network for the protection of minority rights (project 711). Finally, CSO skills training has had positive impact on beneficiaries. Skills impacted range from designing budgets, project designs, concept notes to engaging marginalized populations in democratic processes (projects 661, 662).

مع بلديتنا تزهى عيشتنا

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Outreach material around participative democracy and municipalities resulting from a joint activity, 2018 (CHAHED, project 607)

Positive effects were noticed around activities that included participatory and dialogue-based elements across the project. In cases where dialogues led to regular communication channels between implementing CSOs and municipalities, and between local authorities and citizens as well as CSO and citizens, positive effects, even in the short-term were significant. In these cases, beneficiaries were actively involved throughout project phases, but also in cases of local elite

rotation, when sustained dialogued ensured both project continuity and sustainability (see below). Overall, UNDEF-funded activities were well-positioned to contribute to larger donor and national processes (education, volunteering, seeking public office) because of the emphasis on participatory models, local relations, and subject specific initiatives (participatory municipal budgets, microfinancing of rural and agricultural projects, minority rights).

4.5.1.2. Local-Level Demand Driven vs. National Approaches in Project Design and Implementation

As the map of projects' geographical locations illustrates (figure 4), we found strong potential for impact at the local level. The principal reason is that UNDEF-funding shows comparative advantage at the local-level because of overall funding levels and the type of proposals received. Relatedly, UNDEF projects are demand-driven, and both the Tunisian government and main donors have identified areas either outside of the capital, or marginal areas (rural, impoverished, peri-urban) as geographic priorities with highest need (see sections 2.1 and 4.1).

At the local-level, positive effects of UNDEF projects are a result of:

- (1) more frequency in direct encounters between citizens-CSOs-authorities (globally, democracy is experienced most profoundly at the local-level; projects 662, 607, 607, 710),
- (2) less overlap (and perhaps competition) and more cooperation with other donor projects of similar funding-levels (projects 443, 662, 711, 661)
- (3) ability to navigate political polarization because of broad consensus around direct community concerns/needs (sidewalks, garbage removal, electricity, water; projects 443, 606, 607, 662, 710, 711).

Overall and when impactful, UNDEF local-level projects through CSO expertise complement larger and longer-lasting projects by tackling community-level issues, with the ability to adjust programmatic design based on variation in community needs.

4.5.1.3. Multi-Scalar Project Design

We also find positive effects in projects that work at multi-scalar levels. UNDEF-supported projects around specific laws – electoral laws, decentralization, gender equity and equality, minority protection – included participatory project design between implementers, partners, and beneficiaries. They were also able to tie multiple scales into their projects. Because laws are passed at the national-level, sensitization campaigns happened first at the national- and then local-levels. While this appears to be a natural project flow, the effects of legal and legislative changes at the national-level are applied unevenly at the local-level. Positive effects were noted in projects that were able to address this asymmetry (projects 710, 662, 606). On the other hand, projects that focused at the national-level (project 711), placing less focus on forging asymmetric national-local designs, were able to achieve potential for impact (also sustainable, see below).

4.5.2. Positive Effects of Activities on Project Participants

As with other evaluation criteria, we find highest impact potential among organizations that have demonstrated expertise in the self-designed projects, in relevant contextual details

(institutions and legal framework), and which are seeking UNDEF funding to expand their activities either geographically or specific to the subject expertise (e.g., participatory budget mechanisms at the municipal level, project 662; youth-focused micro-financing in rural areas, project 661; gender equity and quality activism across CSOs, project 711).

4.5.2.1. *Trainings and Quality of Content*

The positive impact of trainings was most evident at the local level when conducted by expert implementers who have previous engagement with same or similar communities (662, 661, 711),²⁷ with a smaller group of participants, and a variety of beneficiaries and stakeholders present (projects 607, 662, 711, 710, 661).²⁸ According to the evaluations and interview research, participants and beneficiaries noted an overwhelming sense of satisfaction in the quality of training sessions.²⁹

While sense of satisfaction does not directly translate into impact, we can infer that trainings had positive effects on participants. For instance, multiple participants registered significant satisfaction for trainings on participatory democracy early in the democratic transition (project 443), important knowledge acquired from gender training linked to local politics (project 710) and understanding elements of local-level democracy (projects 606, 607, 662). Women beneficiaries of project 710 specifically stated positive feelings towards participation in local democratic processes and the inclusion of gender-based demands in local movements and CSO work, a strong indicator for the potential impact of the project.

A variety of participants acknowledged that expertise around content is more impactful than high numbers of participation with less-established experts. Relatedly, we identified positive effects in projects that involved partners and relevant participants *throughout* the implementation period and are thereby most likely to exhibit highest levels of impact (e.g., projects 711 and 622). In summary, the combination of regular partner involvement coupled with CSO expertise has high impact potential.

4.5.2.2. *Positive Effects of Gender-Focused Activities*

Gender-focused projects specifically require conceptual, political, and historical expertise. For example, as noted in project 710, different participants and beneficiaries had competing notions of parity and equality (see section 4.2). Nonetheless, several projects reported positive effects of better understanding democratic processes for women, especially rural women (project 443),

The mayor of Mahdia and a newly elected council member in Ariana specifically emphasized the assistance of UNDEF-funded Project 662 in better understanding legally mandated participatory processes, especially involving civil society and citizens in local governance decisions.

Both local authorities in Mahdia and Ariana developed relationships of trust with the grantee and built communication and advice channels that remain in place today.

²⁷ I.e., participatory budgets, gender equity/equality activists, project managers and micro-finance specialists.

²⁸ I.e., different political parties, variety of CSOs, women and men, youth, authorities, civil society activists, media.

²⁹ Despite usual feedback related to the duration of the sessions (too short) and ease of access (location and transportation issues).

women municipal council members (project 710 – intended/unintended effect, 662- unintended effect). In project 710, women municipal council members felt positively about their potential participation in local politics and created an informal network for knowledge sharing and effective communication.

4.5.3. Positive Effects on Institutions

4.5.3.1. *Effect of Activities Related to Specific Events (Intended)*

Impact on institutions was observed in projects that were able to effectively implement activities around specific events, such as elections. Impact potential on institutional strength/democratic processes depended on a number of factors: (1) the timing and proximity of project activities around events. In cases of contextual delays, projects that were able to swiftly and effectively amend to delays (project 662) and avoid long breaks between activities (projects 606, 607, 443) were able to achieve modest (and temporal) positive effects on institutions; (2) institutional strengthening³⁰ yielded positive results through meaningful expansion of CSO's role in political processes.

4.5.3.2. *Effect on Capacity of Municipalities (Intended)*

Potential impact was registered among newly elected municipal council members (e.g., Rades/Ben Arous, Ariana, Mahdia and Gremda/Sfax) who relied on the expert CSOs to conduct trainings on complex legal issues related to municipal governance, and stipulations around citizen and CSO involvement, as well as transparency. This is especially the case for projects that had signed MOUs.

Beneficiaries noted that project 662 improved the capacity of municipal council members, whereas in project 606 activities were qualified as interesting. In project 710, beneficiaries noted confidence in participating in future local politics. Project 606 provided beneficiaries with the tools to monitor municipal affairs in Gafsa.

4.5.4. Factors that Contributed to Negative Effects

Not all trainings have had impact on macro-level objectives, especially such as increasing citizen trust in democratic governance (local- and national-level). This is the case for capacity-building, awareness-raising, and advocacy campaigns. This trend is mirrored in local survey findings (see section 2.1), which have reported an overall decline in support for and trust in democracy.

The following are explanatory factors for reduced impact potential:

1. At issue is not the *content* of UNDEF-funded project designs, but rather the relationship of project (training, sensitization, advocacy) to the stated *scope* of the outcome. This applies especially to the relationship between a training on citizen rights and the

³⁰ I.e., knowledge of laws, knowledge and practice of gender inclusiveness and parity, awareness of minority issues, understanding participation in elections, understanding participation in municipal affairs, frequent and regular voluntary CSO participation

intended effect of ‘changing mindsets,’ ‘changing a culture of citizenship,’ ‘promoting a culture of democracy (projects 443, 710).’ The content of activities can have a positive effect when its stated relationship is feasible, such as ‘learning about democratic and participatory practices at the local-level’ (projects 662, 622, 607, 606).

2. The longevity of UNDEF-funded activities is not necessarily sufficient to overcome psycho-structural barriers to democracy (for example, long-term civic education programs), but the timeframe *can be* impactful in achieving pilot examples at the local-level, around niche issues (for instance, minority rights), with positive direct implications (projects 711, 710).
3. The linkage of awareness-raising activities to subsequent project activities is not always clear and can also lose impact potential when implementation is delayed due to contextual factors or limited design elasticity (project 607).
4. Awareness-raising throughout implementation can be more impactful if conducted through meaningful partnerships with CSOs (see section 4.3.5), and with the early backing of local authorities or decision-makers (project 711). This is especially the case when MOUs are signed at the onset or *before* project launch (project 622). As an overall project strategy, this can also reduce the potential for rushed project completion, or final project phases (project 607, 606).
5. Variation of impact on youth – we find that positive effects exist around specific moments (mobilization for elections), but that these do not last beyond the event. However, we do find positive effects on youth through microcredit programs and organization of activities in public youth centers *Dar Al-Chabab*³¹ (project 661), as well as awareness-raising by youth councils (project 443) and interest-group formation (projects 606, 661).

4.6. Sustainability

A principal difficulty in measuring sustainability is the different typology of projects. As some projects are designed specifically around events (Constitution sensitization, municipal electoral cycle, debates around a specific law), implementation was dependent on the actual timing of the specific event, which renders its replicability, ripple effect, and sustainability beyond the event difficult (projects 607, 661, etc.).

We find synergies around strong projects that support long-term processes and long-term mechanisms, in that they address structural conditions (such as, gender equity, inclusive participatory mechanisms, youth inclusion in political decision-making) which tend to create processes and materials that are adaptable over time, cross-geographically, as well as for a variety of actors (i.e., pre- and post-elections with rotations of elected authorities). When implemented by expert NGOs with organizational strength around adaptability and elasticity, these projects have the highest potential for achieving sustainability.

³¹ The utilization of public youth centers (and potentially the *Dar Ashaab – Maison du Peuple*), historically tied to ancient regime activities, signify an important effort to reclaim public space as part of democracy-building.

4.6.1. Sustainability of the Project Design

Participatory project designs with synergies around a citizen-CSO-local authority triptych, such as microfinance and inclusion of economically marginalized populations (project 661), municipal participatory budget mechanisms (project 662), training of citizens' political rights (projects 607, 711), including gender inclusiveness and equality (project 759, 760, 710), yield the strongest potential for sustainability. This is measurable around four areas:

1. where local CSOs or project partners are involved *throughout* the duration of the project and collaborative mechanisms are put into place early on (projects 622, 711, to some extent 607, to be measured 759);
2. where civil society has meaningful input in the content of the proposed activities (projects 710, 711, 662, 606, 759 and 760 to be measured);
3. where implementing organizations address long-term yet realizable objectives (projects 662, 711: change of law, inclusion of gender, introduction of processes to further democracy around specific legal stipulations or events);
4. where dissemination strategies underpin overall project activities and are linked to the transfer of ownership.

4.6.2. Sustainability for Institutions at the Municipal Level

We found sustainability of participatory mechanisms at the municipal level. Following the completion of project 662 in Ariana, for instance, the municipal council continued to implement and expand participatory budget mechanisms. In one instance, the council trained neighborhood delegations on the skills acquired from the previous UNDEF project. Sustainability was achieved by targeting trainings towards municipal council core staff *in addition* to newly elected authorities. Municipal councils and cadres refer to existing project documents (fliers, training manuals) and also regularly contact the implementing organization for advice and additional trainings. Within municipalities, institutional memory is taking shape, and participatory processes (among elected members and cadres) are increasingly sustained.

4.6.3. Possible Project Continuity/Sustainability post-UNDEF funding

Following the completion of the UNDEF-supported implementation period, project 662 expanded its geographic scope, and methodology to include gender, and also to develop new participatory mechanisms with the assistance of other bi-lateral donors.

A similar trend is observed in project 607 (Rades), where CHAHED helped establish a network of 22 CSOs – *Dar Jamayat* – that specifically address the participatory elements legally stipulated in municipal governance. Project 711 was able to expand its network of CSOs with new funding and is working to consolidate its advocacy and public interest materials into an open-access platform.

Project 711 has reported sustainability of its intersectional and cross-issue platform through its partnership strategy, as a basis to continue its mission of advocating on behalf of and improving the status of minorities in Tunisia. Its network has increased with new funding streams while

its open-access platform will be developed to consolidate advocacy and public interest materials for other CSOs working on similar issues. Project 759 has proposed a similar gender-equity platform, however, the project has not been evaluated for sustainability. These three projects specifically, directly contributed to sustainability of citizen trust in local authorities through participatory mechanisms. They also empowered civil society to advocate on behalf of citizens and serve, on some issues, as mediators between community needs and local authorities.

Sustainability has also been reported at the project partner-level. A partner of project 606 in Gafsa (IRADA Ksar Gafsa) was able to secure new funding streams to expand its project on monitoring the municipality's commitment to public works, while receiving continued guidance from the grantee. Projects 662 and 606 report continued use of project materials, mainly manuals, and project 710 reports specifically on sustainability of its materials related to gender-inclusiveness in marginalized municipalities.

4.7. UNDEF added value

4.7.1. Funding Innovative and Unique Proposals

UNDEF was able to further root its competitive leverage and unique position to fund innovative initiatives that perhaps would not have stood a chance with traditional big donors. By funding projects 711 and 661, UNDEF exemplified its commitment to supporting forward-looking and innovative concepts like *the right to be different* and promoting innovative responses that link economic empowerment, reduction of inequalities, and democratization. Focussing on projects for the promotion of gender equality (projects 710, 759, and 760) to strengthen democratic practices is also evidence of openness and well-thought risk-taking on the part of UNDEF.

Across these themes, initiatives at the community level that emphasized collaborative processes, within a larger commitment to political decentralization, provided UNDEF with a 'niche' area that can often be overlooked by larger development programs.

4.7.2. Strengthening the Networking of Emergent Democratic Activists

UNDEF supported the launch of new organizations by offering them funding for the first time (projects 711, 661) and by supporting actions that amounted to supporting the establishment of a network of different partners, in a context characterized by the fall of classic political elite and the emergence of a new civil society landscape (projects 711, 710, and 607). By funding the various networking, capacity building, and joint activities, UNDEF supported new emerging democratic circles in Tunisia especially at the local level. As one of the few organizations able or willing to fund such activities, UNDEF brought significant added value.

4.7.3. Flexible and Empowering Approach

UNDEF has shown remarkable flexibility for the different projects that faced major challenges either because of electoral delays (project 607), political changes (project 711), or internal problems (projects 606, 443). It has also shown great flexibility and openness in accepting the different proposed project approaches and in providing the space for the organizations to test

their methodologies. Under project 662, Action Associative was able to hone its design of participatory budgeting modules, and to build a strategy that directly focuses on citizen engagement in municipal decision-making.

UNDEF supported these grantees with an empowering approach, namely project 606, which fully suspended the implementation until an honest discussion on the situation took place, after which the organization sincerely felt supported. As a result, a nine-month extension was granted in two phases of six and three months.

4.7.4. Benefits of Co-branding for Trust/Visibility

In a divided and contentious political context where foreign funding is the subject of public scrutiny as well as suspicion, the impartial brand of UNDEF and its reputation for promoting democracy world-wide made it possible to gain the confidence of both the grantee organizations wishing to maintain their independence, and of the projects' participants, i.e., CSOs, public authorities, and citizens. Project 662 stressed that UNDEF-funded activities carry important neutrality around their initiatives.

The presence of the UNDEF logo on event announcements, in workshops, and on training and produced materials enhanced the credibility of emerging civil society organizations. This aspect is especially important when working on sensitive political topics like minority rights (project 711), decentralization (project 607), or gender equality (projects 710, 759, and 760) in a highly polarized political context.



Ms. Annika Savill, Executive Director of UNDEF, taking part in a panel and presentation of Ms. Boudour Lahzami of Tamkeen For Development (Project 661), June 2019.

The UNDEF brand also allowed for better visibility of the projects, a positive perception of seriousness, and more weight with political decision-makers, parliamentarians, and senior officers, which in turn facilitated the engagement of these stakeholders for the achievement of project objectives.

5. Conclusions

1. UNDEF's support to projects in Tunisia was *coherent*, as it responded to the democratic needs of the country, aligned with government-donor strategic plans. UNDEF-funded projects complemented these broad strategies with geographically diverse activities,

which focused on local communities and new municipalities, and were implemented by partners based in those regions (as opposed to those based in the capital).

2. Particularly *relevant* was the emphasis on participatory models for project designs that prioritized collaborative processes between local authorities, CSOs and citizens through subject specific initiatives (participatory municipal budgets, microfinancing of rural and agricultural projects, gender equality and minority rights). In the context of engaging with local authorities, collaborative advocacy through joint activities turned out to be more effective rather than confrontational advocacy approaches.
3. Logical frameworks were challenging to use during the implementation and as a tool for monitoring and evaluation, limiting their role in the projects' *effectiveness, efficiency, and impact*. Similarly, risk mitigation plans were not entirely adequate when all projects faced institutional or other delays.
4. As a result of the analysis in this evaluation, three categories of partnerships between grantees and local actors were identified as trends in UNDEF-funded projects in Tunisia: (i) subject-matter experts or consultants, mainly solicited for capacity developments, materials, and facilitation of activities; (ii) CSOs as sub-contractors or sub-grantees, focused solely on specific activities without full knowledge of the project; and (iii) CSOs as co-contributors, that supported the implementation of the project as a whole. Throughout the evaluated projects, partnerships were mostly *relevant* but only in a few cases were they fully *effective, efficient, and impactful*. *Sustainability* was observed in projects that built partnerships under category iii.
5. Projects that were *effective with positive trends towards impact* combined (i) clearly articulated problems and identified risks, (ii) project-long capacity development and regular input by partners throughout the process (iii) collaborative mechanisms with targeted stakeholders.
6. Nearly all projects benefitted from an increase of their budgets due to the depreciation of the Tunisian Dinar, but not all were able to positively capitalize on this increase, further hindering their *efficiency*. While few were able to increase their workload to optimize outcome achievement, others were left with large amounts to be returned to UNDEF.
7. Communication strategies were weak across projects, lacking targeted and effective dissemination and advocacy plans that could have enhanced *impact and sustainability*. With a few exceptions, products and outputs, even when completed, had limited added value. This was mainly due to the lack of partners expertise and appropriate allocation of resources on communication and campaigning.
8. Possibilities for *sustainability post-UNDEF funding* were reported (i) at the municipal level when participatory mechanisms were key project elements, and (ii) among newly

created CSO-networks. This depended on consistent partnership involvement as well as issue-specific familiarity of the grantee and their partners.

6. Recommendations

1. UNDEF should continue funding both local expert CSOs (e.g., capital-based) and smaller out-of-capital grassroots organizations, taking into account the potential for a lower degree of effectiveness by the latter. The pay-off is the high potential for catalytic impact.
2. In addition to legal stipulations for producing transparent annual activity and financial reports, UNDEF should require grantees to produce internal operational and financial procedures manuals, especially in the case of funding recently established grassroots. This would both help in reducing risks related to financial management of the grant as well as strengthening their capacity in the long term.
3. UNDEF should encourage grantees to design efficient partnerships with sufficient resource allocation to enhance transfer of ownership in order to maximize the potential for impact and sustainability.
4. UNDEF should encourage grantees to develop stronger and more regular mechanisms to communicate and follow-up with project partners, stakeholders, and participants. UNDEF should invite grantees to consider mentorship/coaching as a capacity development tool throughout the duration of their projects.
5. Exit strategies should be considered, especially in projects involving a multi-partner and cross-regional implementation structure, in order to clarify expectations among partners and stakeholders, and to ensure sustainability.
6. UNDEF should consider expanding their monitoring mechanisms as appropriate, and when possible, increase resources (human or financial) to that effect throughout the duration of the projects.
7. UNDEF should consider establishing a database of outputs (manuals, guides, reports) produced by all grantees in Tunisia. This resource would be available to new grantees, would avoid duplication of materials produced, create synergies among grantees, and lead to greater and long-term sustainability of UNDEF-funded materials.

7. Lessons learned

1. Reviewing the timing of activities before final approval of projects, especially for activities around electoral periods, is critical to the success of the project: (i) to ensure impact and sustainability of engaging with stakeholders such as new councilmembers, (ii) to constructively contribute to already-existing technical initiatives around electoral participation, and (iii) to avoid perceptions of political bias³².
2. In addition to UNDEF's already existing procedures and practices, grantees should be encouraged to build deeper synergies between project components for coherence, and trust among participants and stakeholders through the application of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) criteria for their and partners' activities. This is especially critical for projects in which grantees provide capacity development opportunities and sub-grants to local partners around project cycle management. This can alleviate risks related to potential delays in proposed timeframes, without compromising the overall timeline of the project and its objective.
3. In extreme and exceptional cases such as radical currency fluctuations or organizational interruption, early communication by the grantee is critical for UNDEF to provide technical and institutional support in a timely and effective manner. This will allow to overcome challenges that could provide difficulties in the implementation of the project.

³² After initial review of this document, UNDEF also informed that it has refrained from funding projects with elections occurring within 2 years following the call for proposals.

8. Annexes

Annex 1: UNDEF-funded projects in Tunisia 2011-presentⁱ

Project #	Project Title	Organization Name	Start Date	End Date	Grant Amount
377	L'observatoire pour l'égalité des chances et la citoyenneté des femmes en Tunisie	Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates	1/7/2012	31/06/2014	\$150,000
442	Education électorale des femmes et des jeunes en Tunisie	Ligue des Electricies Tunisiennes	1/2/2013	31/01/2014	\$80,000x
UDF-11-443-TUN	Projet d'accompagnement de la transition démocratique et de Promotion de la citoyenneté en Tunisie	Association Nationale de Développement Durable	1/4/2013	31/03/2015	\$225,000
UDF-12-506-TUN	Strengthening Tunisian Democracy through Public Opinion Polling and Media and Party Training	Centre d'Études Maghrébines à Tunis	01/05/2014	30/04/2015	\$180,000
UDF-13-558-TUN	Transparency and commitment for better development of Tunisia	Association Touensa	01/06/2015	31/05/2018	\$175,000
UDF-14-606-TUN	Support for Civil Society and Constitutional Processes in Decentralization and Governance	Développement Sans Frontières – Lab'ESS	1/8/2016	30/04/2019	\$220,000
UDF-14-607-TUN	Promoting Local and Participatory Democracy	Observatoire CHAHED	1/2/2016	31/08/2018	\$220,000
UDF-15-661-TUN	Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia	Tamkeen For Development	1/4/2017	31/10/2019	\$209,000
UDF-15-662-TUN	Eyes on the budget: Building Public Participation, Trust and Transparency in Local Government in Tunisia	Action Associative	1/4/2017	30/09/2018	\$242,000

UDF-16-710-TUN	Women and Men as Equal in Partners in Local Government in Tunisia	Lam Echaml	1/3/2018	29/02/2020	\$198,000
UDF-16-711-TUN	Observatory for Minority Rights in Tunisia	Association Pour la Promotion du Droit à la Différence	1/4/2018	31/03/2020	\$176,000
UDF-17-759-TUN	Feyza: Promoting Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Six Regions of Tunisia	Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability	1/5/2019	31/05/2021	\$198,000
UDF-17-760-TUN	Kif-Kif: Women and Men	Free Sight Association	1/4/2019	31/03/2021	\$198,000
UDF-18-809-TUN	Empowering Youth to Build Local Democracy in Tunisia	Tamkeen For Development	01/07/2020	30/06/2022	\$220,000
UDF-18-810-TUN	Promoting Youth Participation in Regional Development in Tunisia	Observatoire Tunisien de l'Economie	01/06/2020	31/05/2022	\$220,000
UDF-18-811-TUN	Promoting Democratic Consolidation through Inclusive Natural Resource Governance Reform in Tunisia	Natural Resource Governance Institute	01/01/2020	31/12/2021	\$242,000
UDF-19-851-TUN	Strengthening Citizen Journalism to Counter Hate Speech and Violent Extremism in Tunisia	Arab Institute For Human Rights	-	-	\$198,000

Annex 2: Projects' target participants

Project #	Project Title	Direct participants	Indirect beneficiaries
UDF-11-443-TUN	Projet d'accompagnement de la transition démocratique et de Promotion de la citoyenneté en Tunisie	<i>in Tatouine, Gabes Sfax:</i> 30 local CSOs 240 high school students 90 teachers 960 youth and elementary school students 3000 citizens (for election training) 3200 citizens (for democratic caravans) 60 local authorities	<i>in Tatouine, Gabes Sfax:</i> Families of participants in 'democratic caravans' events Youth signed-up for 'democratic charter competition' 3000 citizens
UDF-14-606-TUN	Support for Civil Society and Constitutional Processes in Decentralization and Governance	Members of 18 participating CSOs, 30 citizens and 6 representatives, and 1-2 representative per each of the 6 municipalities.	Unspecified - "all the residents of the regions of Jendouba, Gafsa, Tozeur"
UDF-14-607-TUN	Promoting Local and Participatory Democracy	Civil servants from 7 municipalities, 50 CSO activists	Unspecified - "all CSOs and residents of the seven targeted municipalities"
UDF-15-661-TUN	Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia	200 microcredit recipients, 1,200 empowered youth and 48 municipal civil servants and council members.	4,800 indirect beneficiaries and 4 political parties (Nida, Afek, PNL, Nahdha)
UDF-15-662-TUN	Eyes on the budget: Building Public Participation, Trust and Transparency in Local Government in Tunisia	20 civil servants (30% women), 40 CSOs, 60 local facilitators, and 1600 citizens/participants (30% women)	40 civil servants (30% women), 3,200 citizens (30% women), spill-over effect towards 2 neighboring municipalities,
UDF-16-710-TUN	Women and Men as Equal in Partners in Local Government in Tunisia	54 members of local CSOs, 54 municipal civil servants, 54 municipal council members, 45 journalists.	4,500 general public
UDF-16-711-TUN	Observatory for Minority Rights in Tunisia	30 CSO representatives, 15 media representatives, 50 victims of HR violations, 30	35,000 general public

		government officials, 10 MPs, 35 members of 7 political parties, 50 journalists, 500 citizens from minorities	
UDF-17-759-TUN	Feyza: Promoting Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Six Regions of Tunisia	50 CSO representatives (70% women), 60 civil servants (40% women)	2000 girls and women, 800 general public (60% women)
UDF-17-760-TUN	Kif-Kif: Women and Men	60 mentors, 15 CSOs, 390 citizens, 25 NGOs	Around 30,000 recipients of IEC materials, campaigns, theater, and online outreach.

Annex 3: Projects' main products/outputs

Project	Trainings	Publications	Awareness-raising and advocacy	Other
443	Trainings of CSOs, local authorities, and other participants on participative democracy and other related topics	*Survey on citizen participation *Charter for democracy and prizes *Manual on good practices in citizen education	*Itinerant exposition *5 cyber-citizen centers *Democracy caravan + IEC materials	
606		*Guide on citizen mobilization	*3 joint activities with municipalities	
607		*Procedural manual on participative budgeting (legal basis) *Practical manual or report on governance at the local level	*Projects with 7 municipalities on participative budgeting/open-gov programs open in the 7 municipalities *IEC materials	
661			* 5 awareness raising campaigns *5 initiatives applying acquired knowledge on participative democracy *Advocacy campaign for socio-economic development programs at the local level	*200 microcredit recipients
662		*Guide on monitoring and evaluation *Best practices manual	*Projects with 4 municipalities on participative budgeting *Campaign to increase municipal budgets for participatory mechanisms	
710		*Manual of good practice on gender equality at the local level	*Partnerships with 9 municipalities *3 pilot projects *Awareness raising campaign	
711		*2 reports of documented cases	*Awareness raising campaign	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide of best practices *Report on legal analysis and draft law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Advocacy campaign for legislative change 	
759		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dissemination of recommendations to municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *5 community engagement campaigns *Website and app to document discrimination cases 	
760		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Training manual on “masculinity and gender equality” *Survey on masculinity and gender equality *Draft law on quota for women in decision-making roles within the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Small initiatives by mentors in their communities *3 theater-forums, 30 performances *36 videos *Awareness-raising campaign with IEC materials, media coverage and public dialogue 	

Annex 4: Typology of capacity development topics

Project	Training method	CSOs	Local Authorities	Citizens/Others
443	Training on participative democracy	X		
	Training on civic education			X educators
606	Training on project cycle management	X		
	ToT on community organizing	X		
607	Workshops on participative democracy	X		
	Training on participative democracy		X	
	Training on youth leadership			X
661	Training on soft skills and participative democracy			X
662	Workshops on participatory budget mechanisms	X	X	
	Training on participatory budgeting	X	X (+ additional trainings for candidates/newly elected officials)	X (+ additional trainings for youth and women)
	Training on citizen mobilizing and organizing	X		
710	Training on leadership, gender equality and good governance	X		
	Training on gender equality, good governance and sustainable development		X	
	Training on gender equality and citizen journalism			X
	Coaching on internal procedures and regulations on gender equality	X	X	
711	Training on results-based management project development	X		
	Training on minority rights	X		
	Training on communication and advocacy	X		
759	Training on gender equality, project development, workshop facilitation, advocacy	X		
	Workshops on gender equality		X	
	Trainings (separate) on platform usage	X	X	
760	Training of mentors	X		
	Mentoring	X		

Annex 5: List of products and outputs

Project	Products	Comments
443	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Survey on citizen participation *Charter for democracy and prizes *Manual on good practices in citizen education *IEC materials *3 short movies on democratic practices in each region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Survey left unpublished but helped in networking *Manual not produced *Movies were of low quality
606	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide on citizen mobilization *IEC materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide is in the form of a PowerPoint Presentation that was useful to participants but lacked a dissemination plan beyond the project
607	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Procedural manual on participative budgeting (legal basis) *Practical manual or report on governance at the local level *IEC materials *Effectiveness survey (citizen satisfaction in municipal performance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Manuals seemed to be disseminated only to pilot municipalities.
661	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *8 radio broadcasts, 21 articles, a website, 5 video capsules, a Facebook page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *While T4D made a great effort communicating around the project through radio, TV and magazine publications, activities meant to be implemented by the participants were left uncompleted.
662	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide on monitoring and evaluation *Best practices manual *IEC materials *5 Radio broadcasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide was seen as useful but lacked a dissemination plan beyond the project
710	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Manual of good practice on gender equality at the local level *IEC materials *9 radio broadcasts and 15 articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guide was seen as useful but lacked a dissemination plan beyond the project (not even available electronically)
711	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *2 reports of documented cases *Guide of best practices in defending minority rights *Report on legal analysis *4 videos *Draft law on minority rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Exceeded: 6 videos were produced *Draft law was not finalized nor introduced to members of parliament.

759	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dissemination of recommendations to municipalities *Website with app 	<i>Unable to verify</i>
760	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Training manual on “masculinity and gender equality” *Survey on masculinity and gender equality *IEC materials *36 videos, production of 3 theater-forums and 30 performances *Draft law on quota for women in decision-making roles within the government 	<p>According to our interview with the grantee: all products and materials were produced.</p> <p>*Draft law was produced and submitted to the parliamentary committee on women and family affairs for consideration.</p>

Annex 6: Compilation of lessons learned

Project	Lessons learned
443	n/a
606	<p>Projects that suffered from a complete stop in implementation should be thoroughly revised before restarting activities. Any break of more than six months should automatically lead to a deeper exercise of reflection among all project stakeholders. An honest discussion with the donor, and consultation workshops with the participants to revise the timeline of the components or even propose new ones, should be organized. A budget revision should also be inclusive of new contextual changes and address any weakness that had already been identified earlier.</p>
	<p>Projects implemented in remote regions by a capital-based NGO should have stronger mechanisms of communication and follow-up. The organization had implemented some light activities in the region but needed to develop clearer communication channels with all project participants, especially in the final stages. Whether it be by having a local focal person or additional in-person visits, there was a need to ensure that project activities were ongoing and to contribute to solving problems as they arose.</p>
	<p>Similarly, instilling a feeling of ownership over the process to local partners is insufficient if not coupled by regular support. There was no real transfer of ownership of the process until the final stage of the project and the implementation of local initiatives. Instead, ownership should be instilled at the earliest stages of the project to enhance the commitment of all partners.</p>
607	<p>A key lesson learned is that building a project based on election-related expertise will have the downside of coming up with contingency plans if elections are significantly delayed, as in this case. Delays were related to parliamentary debates and votes around electoral legislation as well as the actual holding of elections. While CHAHED's project design was pyramidal and on target from launch to the midterm report, the contextual delays forced the grantee to tightly group sensitization, communication, advocacy and capacity-building activities related to newly elected municipal councils, not leaving much space for replicability and sustainability. Impact would have been much greater in the absence of contextual delays however early impact is observable at the scale of pilot municipalities.</p>
	<p>Project sustainability is dependent on continued CSO involvement and not solely on products, including manuals and trainings. As stated throughout the report, the involvement of CSOs was essential on multiple levels: (1) citizen mobilization and trust at the local level; (2) building trust and knowledge about municipal processes prior to elections; (3) serving as a critical valve for municipal-citizen relations; (4) ensuring a continuity of transparency and good governance. A key lesson learned is that for a project design that depends on CSO involvement for its launch and legitimacy, expansion, broadening of</p>

	<p>scope of work, sustainability and replicability, grantees should possess an existing and robust network of nation-wide and local organizations, as that by CHAHED.</p>
	<p>Projects working on participatory political and democratic processes must develop co- constitutive relationships between different authorities and citizens. While civil society involvement and strengthening is key to this relationship, especially the two-directional work of CSOs as a balancing weight between citizen demands and local political authorities, both citizens and authorities need to be involved at equal weight. Building citizen trust in context of transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule is as complex as it is lengthy, and the movement of decision-makers from roles of citizens to agents of state is contentious, can create ruptures and either increase or decrease mistrust (especially in polarized political contexts). Relationships of trust must be built on participatory processes in which both weights – citizen and authorities – depend on each other equally, and also built channels of effective communication and participation. A key lesson learned is that grantees and projects that exhibit previous experience in building citizen trust are best positioned to implement at these socio-politically complex and quickly evolving situations.</p>
661	<p>The model used in this project to connect economic empowerment with democratization through micro-financing and engagement of beneficiaries in democratic processes is worth further reflection to improve its local implementation first, especially on the democratic engagement component, before scaling it up to other regions or countries.</p> <p>Actions plans should be realistic in reflecting the time for procedures to review and approve microcredit recipients, as well as include additional monitoring tools. In projects that include microfinancing, an assessment of the risks of the microfinance component should be further elaborated with more precise analysis of the economic situation and contingency planning should be developed and designed within the project document.</p> <p>The proximity of the trainings was extremely useful to attract famers and people with limited transportation options. The advantage in the flexibility around the locations of the trainings was palpable and should continue to be considered in projects whose audience is rural, of modest and poor means and generally more conservative than in urban settings.</p>
662	<p>Project designs and strategies based on in-depth knowledge of the development issues and context (in this case decentralization) are economical, replicable, and easily adaptable.</p> <p>The strength of Action Associative as grantee and implementer derives from a unique set of expertise by both its leadership and staff.</p> <p>The project design funded with this grant was based on previous exercises in participatory mechanisms focused on overcoming issues of citizen mistrust during the post-dictatorship era.</p>

662	<p>A key lesson learned is that projects rooted in issue-specific knowledge (legal, political, historical, procedural, technical), are economical, replicable, and easily adaptable to contentious and swiftly changing contexts of political transformations. This not only ensures sound project delivery and completion but also allows for much-needed legitimacy among different stakeholders.</p>
	<p>Projects that work on issues of building citizen-trust as broader democratization initiatives need to allocate large programmatic and budgetary portions to effective communication, advocacy, outreach and sensitization campaigns. Action Associative stresses this element as do both the direct beneficiaries of the projects and those who have not encountered such initiatives. In politically polarized and rapidly transforming conditions, misinformation (or oversaturation of information) does not allow for clear understandings of reform projects (local collectivities code, constitutional chapter on decentralization, additional regulation), adding to citizen mistrust in local governance. Effective and clear communication and sensitization about contentious political issues is critical to any project launch, the project life cycle, as well as prospects for sustainability.</p>
	<p>Projects based on a symbiotic relationship with beneficiaries (rather than purely instructive or instructional) increase potential for ownership, adaptation, as well as sustainability. The adaptability of the Action Associative participatory budget module to different political contexts and across geography is a result of an underlying symbiotic strategy in which the grantee communicated regularly with all tiers of beneficiaries to adapt the content of project activities to local needs and demands. This allowed the project to stand out from others in that it did not operate as a “technical course,” but was rather demanded by beneficiaries as it helped the targeted population make sense of both possibilities and barriers to participation in local governance.</p>
710	<p>As the selection of beneficiaries is key to the success of a project, the selection strategy should take into account the contacts and network of the implementing agency and have a well-defined and guided intervention rationale. This strategy must meet the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>
	<p>To better measure the impact of the intervention and inform other projects, capacity building projects require robust consideration of initial and final baselines of participants’ knowledge and skills.</p>
	<p>To ensure greater sustainability in capacity building projects, developing a dissemination plan for learning resources, presentations, videos, manuals, etcetera maximizes the number of beneficiaries.</p>
	<p>The promotion of women participation in local governance requires a deep understanding of the motivations and obstacles to participation in each target community. It is also important to involve women of these communities in the design of projects with a bottom-up approach to ensure more inclusion and effectiveness.</p>

	It is crucial for the project management approach to be consistent with the principles and objectives of the project. Thus, a project to promote the participation of women designed and managed by men would have less credibility than a project that gives women more chances.
711	Unity makes strength, and sustainable coalitions are more impactful than isolated CSO efforts
	Networking to create coalition should be conducted after a clear mapping of a wide range of civil society groups , despite personal affinities and organizations' notorieties
	Organizational capacity assessment identifications of potential resources are key for any long-term partnership project
	Evidence-based campaigns are very effective. However, without any advocacy strategy it's impossible to prove that the work was not research for the sake of research , but because it would lead to actions improving the identified development issue
	The advocacy plan should take into consideration the heterogenous members of a coalition, an internal advocacy effort must be carried out prior to an external campaign
	Empowering partners and forging strong cohesion through capacity building and smart participatory decision-making processes is key to overcome leadership challenges and sustain partner's engagement

Annex 7: Links to post-project evaluations

Project	Project Title	Organization Name	Link
UDF-11-443-TUN	Projet d'accompagnement de la transition démocratique et de Promotion de la citoyenneté en Tunisie	Association Nationale de Développement Durable	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/tunisia_udf-11-443-tun_evaluation_report.pdf
UDF-14-606-TUN	Support for Civil Society and Constitutional Processes in Decentralization and Governance	Développement Sans Frontières	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/Evaluations/tunisia_udf-14-606-tun_final.pdf
UDF-14-607-TUN	Promoting Local and Participatory Democracy	Observatoire CHAHED	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/Evaluations/tunisia_udf-15-607-tun_final.pdf
UDF-15-661-TUN	Entrepreneurship for Participation and Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth in Tunisia	Tamkeen For Development	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/tunisia_tamkeen_for_development_undef_evaluation.pdf
UDF-15-662-TUN	Eyes on the budget: Building Public Participation, Trust and Transparency in Local Government in Tunisia	Action Associative	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/Evaluations/tunisia_udf-15-662-tun_final.pdf
UDF-16-710-TUN	Women and Men as Equal in Partners in Local Government in Tunisia	Lam Echaml	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/tunisia_udf-16-710-tun_final_report_0.pdf
UDF-16-711-TUN	Observatory for Minority Rights in Tunisia	Association Pour la Promotion du Droit à la Différence	https://www.un.org/democracyfund/sites/www.un.org.democracyfund/files/tunisia_udf-16-711-tun_evaluation_report.pdf

ⁱ Projects highlighted in bold are those reviewed in this meta-evaluation.