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

EVALUATION REPORT

**UDF-16-703 ALG
Citizen Empowerment for the Promotion of Good Governance
and Participatory Democracy in Algeria**

25-01-2022

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Disclaimer

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

All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the author.

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This report was written by Amal Khlif.

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

(i) Project data

This report is the evaluation of the project "Citizen Empowerment for the Promotion of Good Governance and Participatory Democracy in Algeria", implemented by the Association for Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty and Exclusion (El Ghaith), based in Bordj Bou Arreridj in Algeria, between 1 April 2018 and 30 September 2021. Although the project lasted 42 months, it was initially planned to be implemented in 24 months and obtained three extensions of six, three, and nine months, respectively.

The project was implemented in collaboration with four civil society organisations: INSAF, El Ikram, El Amel, El Allig, and the National Organisation for Combating Desertification and Protecting the Environment. It aimed to promote citizen participation in decision-making at the local level in five governorates of Algeria, including Bordj Bou Arreridj, Annaba, Setif in the east, and M'Sila and El Bayad to the south.

Throughout the implementation phase, the project faced multiple challenges, starting with the resistance of public officials to grant the required permission to hold the launch seminar, which was postponed twice. In addition to this, the mistrust and unavailability of local officials was a real barrier to implementing interactive and participatory activities. Another challenge was the Covid-19 pandemic, which disrupted the flow of the project implementation strategy, affected the beneficiaries' engagement, and had a considerable impact on the effectiveness of CSO initiatives.

The objective of this evaluation is to undertake in-depth analysis to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project, which will help UNDEF to plan for future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented as per the Project Document and whether or not anticipated project outputs have been achieved.

ii) Summary of findings:

The success of the project manifested in the following ways:

- It overcame multiple challenges, including **resistance of authorities** in granting permissions, mistrust and unavailability of local officials on interactive and participatory activities, and pandemic disruptions overall.
- It proved deeply relevant given the need to promote citizen **participation in local development**; had a significant impact in the capacity-building of both civil society

organizations and State officials; and strengthened networking among all participants.

- It had enabled **youth** beneficiaries to overcome the barriers of fear and mistrust when contacting officials from local authorities; equipped them with concepts and knowledge on citizen participation and local governance; enhancing youth engagement and participation in elections and volunteering.
- It clearly demonstrated **improved collaboration** between CSOs and State officials; followed a coherent, well-detailed, and documented approach; and **can be duplicated** in several communities in Algeria.
- The **added value of UNDEF** proved indisputable, as UN entity support provided legitimacy trust that made it possible to engage local authority participants who are often suspicious of foreign funds.

Overall, the project was clearly coherent. It fell within the scope of the organisation's areas of intervention, and its activities were complementary to those of other projects. The project was fully consistent with Algeria's political priorities. Its implementation approach was pragmatic, ensuring excellent consistency with what was being done in parallel by other stakeholders.

The project's relevance is also indisputable considering the increasing need to promote citizen participation in local development in Algeria. The project intended to establish trust and collaboration between CSOs and State officials, however, its objectives and the number of targeted communities were over ambitious, especially given the challenging political situation and the resources used for the project.

The project's effectiveness was partial. Despite its overambitious objectives, the project was implemented in accordance with the logical framework. The project was remarkably effective in Annaba, and partially effective in El Borj and Setif. It was difficult to prove the effectiveness of the project in M'Sila and El Bayadh.

The excellent linkages between partner organisations that coordinated it at the local level, specifically in Annaba, El Borj, and Setif were undoubtedly a positive factor that maximised the effectiveness of the project. However, the geographical distance between project communities had negatively affected the effectiveness.

The project's efficiency is debatable. El Ghaith demonstrated reliability in financial management: all partnerships were formalised and complied with internal financial procedures, budget lines were respected, and two requests for a budget revision were placed to UNDEF, approved, and documented. Funds from non-completed initiatives were duly retrieved. On the one hand, the project was efficient, thereby making it possible to carry out many activities and reach several target groups. On the other hand, the project's utilisation of resources as a means to achieve specified results was only partially effective. Resources were fragmented across a large number of distant communities and a large number of CSO beneficiaries.

The project's impacts in Annaba, El Borj and Setif were substantial, less impact was captured in M'Sila and El Bayadh. Most of the stories gathered through the outcome harvesting process demonstrate that the project was successful in promoting participation

and collaboration on local governance among the target groups- in three out of the five target communities.

The project had a significant impact on the capacity-building of both CSOs and State officials, and on strengthening networking among all participants.

The project had a tangible impact on the attitudes of youth beneficiaries, enabling them to overcome the barriers of fear and mistrust when contacting officials from local authorities. By equipping them with concepts and knowledge on citizen participation and local governance, the project enhanced youth engagement and participation in elections and volunteering.

The funded local initiatives clearly demonstrated the improved collaboration between CSOs and State officials in Annaba, and, to an extent, in El Borj and Setif.

The project had significant elements of sustainability: The project followed a coherent, well-detailed, and documented approach. It can be duplicated in several communities in Algeria by CSOs with good management capacities and good relations with local authorities.

The added value of UNDEF is indisputable. The fact that support to communities comes from a UN entity gave legitimacy to the activities and generated trust that made it possible to engage local authority participants who are often suspicious of foreign funds.

The evaluation yielded recommendations and lessons learned. It suggests that there is a greater need to involve citizens and CSOs in local development in Algeria. Moreover, it revealed the considerable need for capacity building projects and for the promotion of values on democracy and participation. Additionally, local authorities need capacity building on the concepts, mechanisms, and tools of good local governance to modernise and improve public services and better engage citizens in local development.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

(i) Development context

Since the beginning of this century, the problem of democratic transition has been continuously evolving in Algeria as well as in several countries around the world; particularly in Africa. This transition includes issues of good governance, decentralisation, and active citizen participation in local governance for more inclusive and sustainable development.

(ii) Project objective and intervention rationale

The project strategy aimed to launch campaigns in five governorates to strengthen citizen participation and to encourage actions that respond to the needs of Algerian civil society in the selected communities.

The project focused on communication, awareness-raising, training, and animation-consultation, aligned with decision-making support tools. These tools included territorial diagnosis to develop and implement citizen initiatives in consultation with and participation of stakeholders, 10 of which were funded with sub-grants by UNDEF.

The project was implemented in two parallel phases; a pilot experiment was carried out in Bordj Bou Arreridj and was then supposed to be duplicated in the other four project governorates upon the completion of pilot activities.

The eight representatives of the eight associations representing the four project governorates were present during the implementation of all the activities in Bordj Bou Arreridj. The goal was to ensure that they all equally understand the project stages and appropriate tools that will enable them to prepare and duplicate the activities in their governorates.

- **Geographic scope**

The governorate of Bordj Bou Arreridj was established in February 1984. The other selected four governorates are Annaba and Setif in the east and M'Sila and El Bayad to the south. These two areas are well-known for their weak and poorly developed organised associative movement. They are underprivileged and require more attention and development initiatives from the part of the National Land Use Planning Agency.

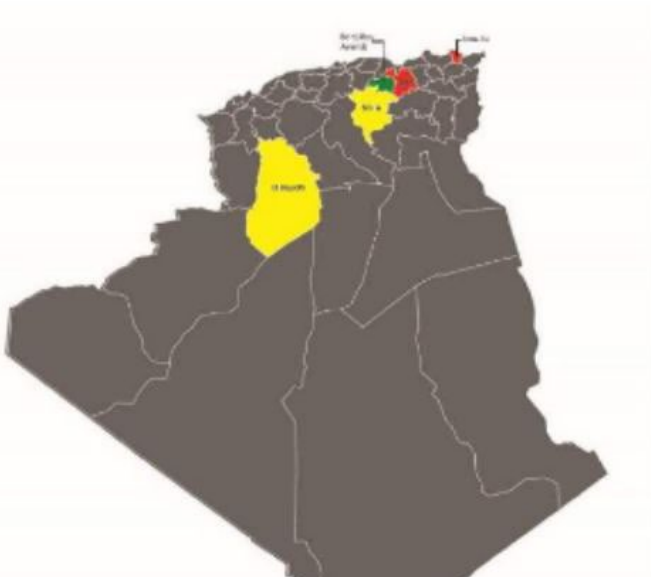


Figure 1 Geographic scope

- **Project beneficiaries:**
 - Elected officials from the four governorates.
 - Social Development Agents (SDA): agents of social activities from the Ministry of Solidarity's local units.
 - Local authorities.
 - Partners from the four governorates, and the National Organisation for Combatting Desertification and Protecting the Environment.
 - CSOs.

- **Project activities:**
 - Capacity building: Training /Seminars.
 - Awareness raising activities.
 - Strengthening of CSOs capacities.
 - Sub-grants for the projects in target communities
 - Joint activities: (i) participatory community diagnoses, (b) participatory citizen initiatives.

The project's intervention rationale intentionally follows the below **theory of change**:

- **If** local stakeholders, CSOs, representatives of local authorities, and elected officials are more informed and engaged in the local governance;
- **And if** local public authorities embed the participatory approach in their projects;
- **And if** local authorities and other local development stakeholders cooperate more to design and implement community development projects;
- **Then** local stakeholders and citizens will have more space to participate in decision-making and sustainable development in their communities.

The project's expected outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Increased mobilisation of local stakeholders for governance and participatory democracy.
- Outcome 2: Increased integration of participatory democracy in the management of development programmes within local public authorities.
- Outcome 3: Strengthened cooperation between associations and public authorities.

(iii) Logical Framework Matrix

Project activities	Project outputs	Project outcome	Long term objective
1.1.1. Preparation of communication tools 1.1.2. Information campaign on the programme on the poster 1.1.3 Three radio broadcasts to inform the population about the programme 1.1.4. Ten awareness-raising trips on good governance and local development 1.1.5. Seminar on good governance and sustainable development	Output 1.1: An information and awareness campaign set up in the wilaya of Bordj	Outcome1: The mobilization of local actors in governance and participatory democracy has increased	Promote citizen participation in decision making at the local level in 5 governates in Algeria
1.2.1. Gender-sensitive inclusive governance training (a 2-day cycle for two groups of 24 persons) 1.2.2. Gender-sensitive inclusive local government responsibility training (a 2-day cycle for two groups of 24 persons) 1.2.3. Training on social and territorial responsibility (a 2-day cycle for two groups of 24 persons) 1.2.4. Practical workshop on diagnostic tools (1 workshop per group, i.e. 3 workshops).	Output 1.2: 48 local development actors trained on the theme of good governance and its relation with sustainable development in the wilaya of Bordj		
1.3.1. Information campaign on the programme (posters, local radio broadcasts) at the level of the 4 wilayas 1.3.2 Four sensitization trips on good governance and local development at the level of the 4 wilayas 1.3.3 Seminar on good governance and sustainable development at the level of the 4 wilayas	Output 1.3: 400 people were informed and sensitized on participatory management of local development in the 4 wilayas associated with the project		
1.4.1 Training on inclusive gender-sensitive governance (a 2-day cycle in Sétif) 1.4.2 Training on gender-sensitive inclusive local government responsibility (a 2-day cycle in Annaba) 1.4.3 Training of 24 associations on social and territorial responsibility (a 2-day cycle in M'Sila) 1.4.4 Practical workshop in the wilaya of El Bayadh	Output 1.4: 96 local development actors trained on the themes of good governance and its relation with sustainable development in the 4 wilayas associated with the project		
1.5.1 Consultation and training sessions on the themes of citizenship and good governance between Algerian associations in the Center, East, and South	Output 1.5: An intervention strategy developed in consultation with local development actors		
2.1.1. Ten sensitization trips for the 34 municipalities in the Wilaya of Bordj Bou Arreridj for the public authorities on participatory management 2.1.2. Five working sessions between public authorities and associations in the Wilaya of Bordj Bou Arreridj 2.1.3 Four sensitization trips for the public authorities on participatory management at the level of the 4 Wilayas	Output 2.1: 34 presidents of Communal Popular Assemblies (APC) and 8 presidents of the 4 associated wilayas are informed on participatory management and good governance	Outcome2: Integration of participatory democracy in the management of development programmes within local public authorities is Increased	
2.2.1 Ten young boys and girls involved in consultation meetings on the development programme of the municipality 2.2.2. Participation of public authorities in 5 association consultation sessions	Output 2.2: A participatory local development platform programmed in consultation with local development actors	Outcome3: Cooperation between associations and public authorities is strengthened	
3.1.1 Territorial diagnosis of Bordj 3.1.2 Territorial diagnosis of the 4 Wilayas	Output 3.1: 5 territorial diagnoses established		
3.2.1. A 3-day training cycle on setting up projects in Bordj 3.2.2. A 3-day training cycle on setting up projects at the level of the 4 Wilayas	Output 3.2: 100 local development actors trained in project development		
3.3.1. Selection of 10 micro-projects out of 28 for funding 3.3.2. Signature and implementation of 10 micro-projects in the 5 Wilayas 3.3.3. Support for the implementation of 10 micro-projects 3.3.4 Monitoring by the coordinators of micro-projects at the level of the 4 Wilayas	Output 3.2: 10 micro-projects financed in cascade		

III. METHODOLOGY

(i) Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The objective of this evaluation is to conduct an in-depth analysis to better learn about the process of change in the different project communities and understand what makes a UNDEF-funded project successful in the particular context of Algeria.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

Given the political instability of the Algerian context during the project's lifetime and the delays caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluation focused on learning, impact, progress milestones demonstrating stages of the change process in the different communities, as well as the achieved results.

The methodology was based on multiple, non-linear sequences that bring change. This promotes learning from challenges as well as successes and building on achievements to improve the quality of initiatives.

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards and the OECD Evaluation Criteria. This approach makes it possible to distinguish the different levels of impact experienced by different groups of participants through a practical and simplified language.

▪ The outcome harvesting methodology

Outcome harvesting is designed for situations where programme planners and implementers are interested in learning about achievements rather than activities, and about effects rather than implementation. It is especially useful to understand the process of change and how the outcomes contribute to this change, rather than simply accumulating a list of results.

- In addition to this, there are more benefits to this approach because it:
 - Offers a participatory, formative evaluation process that engages staff, partners, and community members in reflections about how the change takes place, and the project's contribution to the change process.
 - Allows the evaluator to benefit from the outcomes already identified and recorded.
 - Enables the project's team and partners to participate in the evaluation process and introduce evaluative thinking.

The evaluation included the following steps:

▪ Desk review

First, a desk review of the project progress reports and other relevant documents were conducted to identify the different actors that the programme has influenced as well as outcomes that could be derived from the progress reports and other documents produced by the project team. The understanding perceived from this exercise was used to plan the evaluation.

- **Staff meeting**

To further expand the overview of outcomes achieved, the evaluator held two meetings with the project team of El Ghaith. The purpose was to provide a space to:

- Brainstorm additional outcomes that were not reported in progress reports, positive as well as negative outcomes, and to show how the programme contributed to these outcomes.
- Elaborate on the contribution of El Ghaith, the outcomes, as well as the working relationship between El Ghaith, CSOs members, local authorities, elected officials, and community members.
- Derive lessons learned from the adaptive management strategy due to the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Validation of outcomes**

Findings from the above were used to manage data collection in the field. Data collection was conducted among:

- (3) Implementing partner CSOs.
- (4) CSOs.
- (10) Social Development Agents (SDA): agents of social activities from the Ministry of Solidarity's local units.
- (5) Local authorities.

(ii) Limitations of the evaluation

Because of the great geographical distance, the evaluation was not able to cover all communities and CSOs participants but three communities only with the maximum of available CSOs and local authorities.

The fieldwork took place between the 15th and 21st of November during the municipal election campaign, which made it complicated to meet the elected officials.

Administrative procedures to meet local authorities were also challenging within the short duration of the fieldwork. Those challenges need to be taken into consideration when planning for the fieldwork in Algeria in the future.

The evaluator particularly appreciated the efforts of the El Ghaith team and partners who made this evaluation possible and smooth despite all challenges.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) *Coherence*

• **Internal Coherence**

The project objective is "to promote citizen participation in decision-making at the local level in five wilayas of Algeria", which is fully aligned with the objectives¹ of El Ghaith, especially the first two objectives namely:

- The contribution to fight against exclusion of all types.
- The promotion and enhancement of the associative movement in Bordj Bou Arreridj.

Being active in the Bordj Bou Arreridj for 23 years, the association has made important social investment in the region, a deep knowledge of the problems, and obstacles of local development. El Ghaith has a large network among CSOs in the region and has a strong and trusted reputation among local authorities and CSOs. El Ghaith has an internal learning system to promote learning from implemented projects and has developed strong managerial and financial capacities. Therefore, this project falls within the scope of the organisation's areas of intervention, and its activities are complementary to those of other projects, and so ensuring close continuity and synergy among all of them.

By choosing to widen the geographical scope of the project, the association's ambition was to expand its area of intervention and accumulate learning for future projects, a choice that is understandable but questionable.

▪ **External Coherence**

Given the constitutional revision of February 2016 and the related literature from the participation of citizens in the management of Municipality Affairs, the project is considered to be consistent with Algeria's political priorities. At the end of November 2016, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a financing agreement for the 'Participatory Democracy and Local Development' Programme

¹ <https://elghaith.org/#projets>

El Ghaith is an association of solidarity and the fight against poverty and exclusion. Its objectives are:

- Contribution to the fight against exclusion of all types.
- The promotion and enhancement of the associative movement in Bordj Bou Arreridj.
- Participation in human and socio-economic development in rural areas of the wilaya.
- Improving the living conditions of vulnerable populations, especially rural women.
- The establishment of participatory democracy for sustainable local development.

(CAPDEL)², aimed at strengthening the capacities of local authorities and civil society as actors in local development. There were no synergies between this project's activities and the CAPDEL, because of the difference in the areas of intervention, however, there was a synergy of knowledge and skills. There are trainers and project managers who have been recruited by the CAPDEL, and informal exchanges have been made.

(ii) Relevance

The El Ghaith association relied on a “user” need as an association of Algerian civil society in its analysis of the problem, given its long experience in the field and the nature of the problems that it faced in the implementation of these projects and findings through collaboration with CSOs and local authorities.

The issue as formulated is simple, relevant, and coherent. “CSOs want to take part in the definition and implementation of public policies, both at the national and local levels”.

However, the application of “participatory democracy” in response to this problem can sound very ambitious given the political situation, the expertise and tools of the association related to this subject as well as the capacities of the stakeholders in this project.

Participatory democracy is a form of sharing and exercise of power based on strengthening the participation of citizens in political decision-making. The project was designed and implemented without affecting the “political decisions”. It contributed to citizen participation through consultation and partnership with public authorities and elected representatives. Therefore, it is early to label the project as an application of “participatory democracy”. It is rather to be put under the category of dialogue strengthening and collaboration between CSOs, local authorities, and elected officials.

The project intervention logic is relevant and the activities (including training, community diagnoses, joint activities between CSOs and local authorities) are well linked and ensure excellent synergy to achieve the project objectives.

Involving partner associations in the pilot phase at Bordj Bou Arreridj in order to train them on-the-job was a very relevant choice which remarkably contributed to building the capacity of partner associations; enabled networking and strengthening of collaboration between the members of these partner associations; facilitated the process of project implementation in other communities thereafter; and gave a chance to learn and improve the project implementation in each community.

² CapDeL implements and tests an approach in the field based on active citizenship, a joint multi-actor, multi-sector, and multi-level governance work, with an increased role of the municipalities, in coordination with the Daira, the Wilaya, and the central level towards inclusive, integrated, and sustainable local development.

<https://www.dz.undp.org/content/algeria/fr/home/projects/programme-de-renforcement-des-capacites-des-acteurs-de-developpe.html>

<https://www.local2030.org/story/view/90>

The choice of project communities was partially relevant. This selection is justified with the aim to learn and compare between communities with different profiles rather than dictated by pragmatic criteria such as the participation rate of the CSOs, development indicators etc. The allocation of sub-grants is also considered partially relevant. More specifically, several selected projects do not integrate in any way with the collaboration between CSOs and public authorities, even if it would be beneficial to the communities. The assessment of the capacities of partner and/ or beneficiary organisations was not always relevant, hence the failure of half of the funded projects due mainly to capacity shortages.

(iii) Effectiveness

Assessing the overall effectiveness of the project was challenging given its different components, the complex dynamics in target communities, and the impact of successive unforeseeable factors such as the Hirak³ and the Covid-19 crisis.

Although the project document proposes the integration of "participatory democracy for the sustainable development of the selected municipalities", it is necessary to rectify the terminology to assess the actual contribution of the project. The project's intended aim was to strengthen citizen participation in local development and to strengthen collaboration between civil society and state officials. In general, the project's strategic approach and the compliance with its steps as described in the logical framework contributed to its effectiveness.



Figure 2: Awareness campaign, El Ikram association, Setif.

³ The 2019–2021 Algerian protests called Hirak Movement, began on 16 February 2019, six days after Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced his candidacy for a fifth presidential term in a signed statement. These protests, without precedent since the Algerian Civil War, were peaceful and led the military to insist on Bouteflika's immediate resignation, which took place on 2 April 2019.

The project’s established partnerships were very effective. The excellent linkages between partner organisations that coordinated it at the local level were undoubtedly a positive factor that maximised the effectiveness of the project. Organisations collaborated and shared knowledge, lessons learnt on what works and what doesn’t, and even resources.

On the other hand, the geographical distance between project communities has negatively affected the effectiveness and made it difficult to monitor implementation. Due to this distance, there was little room for intervention and/or adaptation from El Ghaith, so the quality of the project outputs depended mainly on the capacities and commitment of local partner associations.

- **Training activities and development projects**

All the capacity building activities through training, coaching and/or monitoring of state officials and of associations were notably effective. Based on stakeholder interviews and the project documentation’s review, the content of trainings is indeed in line with the project objective and expected outcomes. According to participants, the activity implementation method was not only participatory, but also didactic in that it imparted knowledge on the entirely new and critical theme of participatory democracy. The quality of training materials produced for the project is noteworthy. They were clear, complete, and well compiled and distributed to target groups.

Outcome 1: Increased mobilisation of local stakeholders for governance and participatory democracy

Significant delays and complications were caused by public authorities which refused to issue the required authorisation to carry out launch seminars and other project activities. Nonetheless, and despite all the aforementioned, outputs under the first outcome were considerably effective, as local stakeholders (associations and State officials) were greatly mobilised and continued to participate throughout the lifespan of the project, especially in Bordj Bou Arreridj, Annaba and Setif.



**Figure 3: Local Governance workshop- Annaba
March 27,2021**

Other factors that contributed to the effectiveness of this outcome in these communities were the capacities of partner organisations - such as the mobilisation of public stakeholders, engaging youth, and obtaining authorisations - and the trusted relationships they maintained with State officials (elected officials, public authorities, and SDA agents), thus bridging the gap between them and the CSO beneficiaries, and ultimately making the voices of citizens heard.

Outcome 2: Increased integration of participatory democracy in the management of development programmes within local public authorities

The extent to which outputs contributed effectively to this outcome is difficult to determine. It was challenging, for the purpose of this evaluation, to reach elected officials who participated in this project, as they were busy with the municipal electoral campaign in Algeria. However, and based on the interviews carried out with other State officials, it turned out that local public authorities became less reluctant to collaborate with CSOs. Yet, they are not clear on the role they attribute to them and on the nature and scope of their partnership.

Citizen participation ranges from demanding to co-deciding. These various levels make it possible to measure the power of citizens. Interviewed public authorities affirmed that there is political will to listen to civil society so as to ensure that citizen voices are heard. They assume participation is to call on the human, financial, and technical resources of civil society to strengthen State officials’ capacities, but that there is no readiness to give away part of their decision-making power to CSOs.

Authorities in the communities of El Bayadh and M’Sila, per contra, refused this openness to CSOs’ contribution, and even the mere use of the term “participatory democracy” was rejected.

The Hirak (protest movement) which arose during the lifespan of the project, revealed the flaws in the Algerian power system and prompted the central and local authorities to rethink the effectiveness of the governance model and the role of citizens and civil society. The project activities took place at a very critical and opportune time to instigate conversation and reflection on governance and to offer a space for CSOs to participate in the local governance.

Community: El Bayadh
Sub-grant for the project: Digging two wells in the community of Al-Masid, Sidi Amor

The project didn’t take into account the need for collaboration between CSOs and local authorities. Its aims was to provide more water supplies to the population of Al-Masid in the community of Sidi Amor, which would have also benefitted migrants. The project got off to a good start: the ideal locations for the wells were identified and the digging process started, but after the completion of the first activities, the authorities decided to suspend all activities and meetings. Members of the association lacked experience to build trusted relationships with local authorities and to convince them that the project is beneficial for the community. Consequently, they were unable to resume project activities, which forced El Gaith not to pay the second instalment.

When examined from this angle, Outcome two outputs were very effective.

Outcome 3: Strengthened cooperation between associations and public authorities.

The effectiveness of outputs under Outcome three can sum up the effectiveness of project activities in the different communities. This is perceived in the successful design and implementation of community initiatives that have embedded State-CSOs cooperation requirements.

El Ghaith's selection of initiatives to fund was only partly effective. This is because some associations lacked the necessary capacities to design and implement projects, and some projects did not integrate in their strategies the State-CSOs collaboration. There was no notable mitigation for the inability of some organisations to implement activities, and the sum of the sub-grant, albeit recovered, was not spent.

Among 12 funded projects, only six were completed. The most notable success was in Annaba, where all the selected projects integrated the collaboration between CSOs and local authorities, were completed on time, and achieved their objectives.

In Borj Bou Arreridj, only three out of the six funded projects were completed by the selected associations. Reasons for the non-completion were not clearly detailed by El Ghaith, but the evaluation interviews suggest that they mainly include:

- The low capacity of CSOs, which remain inactive for a long time due to the absence of funds and of a space for collaboration;
- El Ghaith's inability to closely mentor all the associations given that there are many CSOs intervening in several and various fields of expertise; and
- The suspension of several activities as a result of the health crisis, which affected their continued engagement.

The three projects funded in M'Sila and El Bayadh were not completed. There was no success in overcoming the reluctance of local authorities to grant authorisations, and partner associations eventually became discouraged and abandoned the project. This failure is mainly due to:

- An inaccurate context analysis and an inadequate choice of target communities (very geographically distant);
- The lack of previous experience for El Ghaith in this communities; and
- Rigid societal and cultural norms that are resistant to change.

(iv) Efficiency

The project was efficient enough to make it possible to implement many activities and reach several target groups. However, the project's utilisation of resources as a means to achieve specified results was only partially efficient. Resources were fragmented across many distant communities and numerous CSO beneficiaries.

The overall costs of project management were relatively high (27%), so the extent to which the project generated value for money remains limited when compared to the low sub-grant project completion rate (50%).

Activity implementation costs were very reasonable given the number of activities. However, the 18% of the allocated budget for travel (budget line 4. *Travel*) is considerably high. Although this is due to the long distance between the target communities, the poor planning for community selection did not contribute to the efficiency of project implementation, which could have been optimised had the communities been geographically closer or less in number.

The project's grant management component has only been partially effective and efficient⁴. Half of the sub-grants for the projects in target communities were retrieved because of implementation suspensions to which the project team did not react to in a timely manner. The retrieved sum of \$22.965 was not spent.

(v) Impact

Most of the gathered stories demonstrate that the project was successful in promoting democratic values among the target groups in three out of five target communities. The project had a great impact on the capacity-building of target groups and strengthened networking among all participants. However, the geographic scope of the project and many partner associations and/or sub-grant recipients affected the quality of monitoring and support offered by El Ghaith association and so limited the impact of the project.

▪ Capacity-building of CSOs

One of the project findings is the urgent need to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations, especially in the Wilayas of El Borj and those in the south of M'Sila and El Bayad. One of the consistent contributions of the project is the capacity-building of partner and local associations. Most of them are small with limited resources, with no ability to mobilize and/ or fund, and working in isolation and inconsistently.

Despite the disengagement of several funded associations, especially in M'Sila and El Bayad in the south, the activities of the project were opportunities for small local associations "of the district" to establish new contacts, to share resources, learn new techniques such as writing a project proposal, managing a budget, working with local authorities, and investigating new possibilities for participation and partnership.

The coaching in the development of concept notes and budgets for local projects was very impactful. Beneficiaries of the training were able to formalize the creation of an association they named "Ô Jeunes association" and were supported to prepare a proposal and to implement a local initiative that was very successful in Annaba as a direct result of that support.

⁴ Two requests for a budget revision were placed to and approved by UNDEF. The first was on Nov 1st, 2019, which was intended for the reallocation of \$10.000 to fund eight community initiatives instead of six in the original budget. The second request was placed on August 8th, 2021. Its purpose was to reallocate the saved money after the suspension of activities due to the pandemic (\$19.302) to carry out an awareness-raising campaign.

- **Capacity-building for local authorities**

The interviewed local authorities showed the positive impact of the project in terms of their knowledge and perceptions about local governance, the roles of CSOs, and citizens in development. Some State officials in Annaba adopted the principles in their work, because they consider them "effective tools and consistent with the political will of the state".

- **Empowering youth for leadership roles**

The young members of beneficiary associations confirmed the appropriation of the concepts and new knowledge relating to the promotion of participatory democracy. The project made it possible to train young trainers on the theme of "good governance" and "participatory democracy". A young member of the INSAF association has duplicated the received training as part of the project with fellow members of the association and intends to expand the training to other associations.

Community: Annaba

Sub-grant for the project: Training on networking techniques, delivered by Ô Jeunes association.

The project aimed to strengthen the skills of CSOs and public authorities and reinforce their mutual collaboration.

The association was able to effectively engage 12 local CSOs and 05 public institutions and deliver to them a series of trainings on networking and communication. In addition, a virtual workshop was organized to identify and plan joints activities.

The project was highly effective, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19, as CSOs and local authorities worked together to quickly respond to the crisis by mobilizing volunteers, supporting medical teams, and organizing awareness-raising campaigns for citizens, etc.

Positive testimonials from local authorities that were engaged in this project showcase the impact that it had on current and potential future networking and collaboration between them and CSOs.

The young beneficiaries interviewed as part of this evaluation explained that the project was an opportunity to overcome the barriers of fear and mistrust when contacting the members of local authorities and it offered them a space to activate as a citizen and gain skills and knowledge. Several young beneficiaries presented themselves as candidates in independent lists for legislative and municipal elections, created associations, or became more engaged in civil society.

- **Networking and collaboration between CSO and local authority**

In Annaba, Setif, and El Borj, the impact of the project, on strengthening "social bonds" between the different beneficiaries regardless of their functions and political positions, is proven. The effective and official collaboration between CSOs and local authorities is more demonstrated in Annaba, where local authorities asked CSOs to design and plan joint activities. In M'Sila and El Bayad it seems that the project had very little impact on the relationship between CSOs and local authorities.

(vi) Sustainability

The project had significant elements of sustainability: The project proposed a coherent, well-detailed, and documented approach. It can be duplicated in several municipalities in Algeria by civil society organisations with good management capacities and good relations with local authorities.

Strengthening the knowledge and capacities of organisations, their members, and States officials are very important elements for sustaining the project results. The translation of this knowledge and capacity into change and collaborative practice will depend mainly on the determination of organisations and individuals.

"The project approach is excellent, I have understood the project well, and I have the complete information. I was able to engage and train the young members of the association because I master the content and I was able to train. "

Project Manager of the implementing partner INSAF, in Setif.

Given the context it is unrealistic to expect that the project has created mechanisms for a lasting collaboration between CSOs and State officials. However, the strengthening of relations is a step that may be secured later.

The sustainability of initiatives funded with sub-grants is less clear and will depend mainly on the engagement of local organisation, funds, and ongoing follow-up and support from El Ghaith.

(vii) UNDEF Added Value

The added value of UNDEF is considerable, as the UN label which came with UNDEF's support provided the legitimacy and trust needed to engage local authority participants who are suspicious to foreign funds.

Promoting democratic value is highly needed in the Algerian context, especially after the Hirak. The Algerian state in the transition period is looking for reforms and new ways of governance. Civil society needs strengthened capacity and up-to-date knowledge and tools.

The project and its products were transparently branded as supported by UNDEF. However, participants and CSOs did not recognize UNDEF's mission; they just linked the project activities to the UN in general.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>The relevance of the project is obvious; it met the participation needs of CSOs and States officials, and motivated collaboration between them in the target communities.</p>	<p>El Ghaith should continue working on this theme and develop its expertise, tools, and networks to scale this project to other target communities in the future, especially with the will of the state to strengthen citizen participation in local development.</p>
<p>Although the project's idea was pioneer, it was prematurely delivered in Algeria, as its objectives were overambitious considering the political context. The choice of the terminology "participatory democracy" was not very relevant to the reality of the project and did not help the engagement of the target groups either.</p>	
<p>The project strategy was relevant and coherent; the project activities were linked and ensured synergy to keep the participants engaged throughout the different activities and to build the relations between CSO and States officials gradually over time.</p>	
<p>The choice of target communities and the large geographic distance between them affected the effectiveness and the efficiency of the project.</p> <p>The project was more effective in communities like Annaba and El Borj and much less effective in El Bayadh, and M'Sila; it relied mainly on the organisational capacities of the CSOs and the openness of the local authorities.</p>	<p>In future projects, El Ghaith should be pragmatic in the choice of location of partner communities.</p> <p>El Ghaith can reinforce its strategy by a previous context analysis to judge the effectiveness and the efficiency of such a choice.</p>
<p>The depth of collaboration between El Ghaith and its implementing partners, the quality of organisation of events and training, as well as the quality and consistency of follow-up given to the beneficiary organisations are factors that have increased the effectiveness of the project.</p>	<p>El Ghaith should continue to invest in maintaining its network and improving its know-how for future projects.</p>

<p>In Annaba, based on the mobilisation, management capacity of the implementing partner, and the openness, and availability of local authorities, the project was able to achieve its objectives and had considerable impact on the collaboration of CSOs and local authorities.</p>	<p>It is strongly recommended to seek funding to continue and extend the project in Annaba, to promote the dynamic created by this project.</p>
<p>Algerian CSOs in general, and especially those in the centre and the south, have modest capacities. Most of them are small with limited resources and lack mobilisation capacities and/or financing ideas. They work in isolation from other organisations, often with inconsistent procedures and without any organisational strategic vision.</p> <p>The project had a considerable impact in building the capacity of CSOs and promoting democratic values.</p> <p>It has also strengthened the knowledge of local authorities about local governance, and the roles of CSOs and citizens in development.</p>	<p>El Ghaith should continue to improve the training and capacity building component in its strategy to make it a competitive advantage.</p> <p>There is a pressing need for projects that strengthen the capacities of CSOs and local authorities in Algeria, and their potential for success is quite high. As such, UNDEF could leverage its already established presence and its acquired knowledge of the dynamics to prioritise similar projects and consequently achieve wider impact.</p>
<p>The project had a significant impact on the attitudes of the young beneficiaries, by equipping them with concepts and knowledge to strengthen their participation, ranging from identifying issues and needs to proposals and negotiation of solutions.</p> <p>As a result of the project, many young beneficiaries presented themselves as candidates on independent lists for legislative and municipal elections, created associations, or became more engaged in civil society.</p>	<p>El Ghaith and implementing partners should continue to follow and support young participants beyond the end of the project. Engaging young people is a long process and requires continuity and consistency.</p>
<p>The consistency of the project implementation, the quality of the resources produced as a result of the project (training, manuals, etc.), the network resources and continued application of the lessons learned in the different communities, constitute elements for the sustainability of the project.</p>	<p>It is strongly recommended that El Ghaith seeks funding to scale the project to other communities, and to make the resources produced within the project available to other organisations for adoption and maintenance.</p>

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

- There is a particular need to involve citizens and CSOs in local development in Algeria. The framework, mechanisms, and tools for this participation are significantly dependent on experimentation, hence the relevance of funded initiatives which prioritise capacity building, experimentation, and learning.
- States officials, especially local authorities, need capacity building on the concepts, mechanisms, and tools of good local governance to modernise and improve public services and better engage citizens in local development.
- To strengthen collaboration between CSOs and States officials, it is necessary to consider the following:
 - The commitment of the authorities to grant authorisations for the financing and implementation of similar projects.
 - Planning awareness and targeted communication activities to overcome the mistrust and lack of motivation on the part of CSOs and youth.
 - Interventions must create spaces for dialogue and collaboration, managed by unbiased and trusted keys actors and facilitators.

Annex 1: Example evaluation questions

DAC Criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Coherence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the El Ghaith ? To what extent is there consistency with other actors' interventions in the same context? To what extent is there complementarity, harmonization and coordination between the organization/the project and other organizations/projects working in the same context and on the same issue. To what extent is the intervention adding value while avoiding the duplication of efforts?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?

Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)? ▪
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Review of the following project documentation:

- Proposal and project document
- Mid-term progress and final narrative and financial reports;
- Milestone verification reports;
- Annexes: training support and communication support
- Awareness campaign videos
- Partnership contract
- Budget and Final FUR
- Audit report
- CSOs beneficiaries report
- Press coverage

CAPDEL

<https://www.dz.undp.org/content/algeria/fr/home/projects/programme-de-renforcement-des-capacites-des-acteurs-de-developpe/>

Maha Messaoudene and Karima Messaoudi *La Pensée*, 2016/1 (N° 385),

QUELLE « DÉMOCRATIE » PARTICIPATIVE EN ALGÉRIE ?

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-la-pensee-2016-1-page-61.htm>

Annex 3: Schedule of interviews

Date	Title, Organization	Community
16 November 2021		
Coordination meeting	Project team "El Ghaith"	Bordj Bou Arreridj
Focus group	Beneficiaries CSO El "Bahdja"	Bordj Bou Arreridj
Focus group	Beneficiaries CSO "Mimissis"	Bordj Bou Arreridj
Focus group	Beneficiaries CSO "Numidia"	Bordj Bou Arreridj
17 November 2021		
Focus group	Social Development Agents (SDA) (Djaâfra, El Anasser, Tassameurt, El M'Hir, Ghailassa, Ouled Braham, Bir Kasd Ali et Medjana)	Bordj Bou Arreridj
Interviews	Implementor partner "INSAF" Trainee beneficiaries	Setif
18 November 2021		
Interview	Project team El Ghaith	Bordj Bou Arreridj
Interview	Head of the municipality	Djaâfra
20 November 2021		
Focus group	Implementor partner 'El Ikram'	Annaba
Interview	CSO Beneficiaries "O jeunes"	Annaba
21 November 2021		
Interview	Head of communication department in the ministry of environment	Annaba
Interview	CAP platform Manager http://www.paje.dz/index.php/espace-jeunes-et-associations.html	Annaba

Annex 4: Acronyms

NGO	Non-governmental organization
CSOs	Civil Society organizations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UN	United Nations
El Ghaith	Association for Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty and Exclusion
CAPDEL	Capacity building program for local development actors / Pilot Communities
El Borj	Bordj Bou Arreridj
State officials	Elected officials, public authorities, and SDA agents