

UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

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

EVALUATION REPORT

**Project: UDF-16-733-COL
“Youth 2 Youth. Building Peace and Democracy in Colombia”**

11 December 2020

Acknowledgements

The evaluator would like to thank the staff of Fundación Mi Sangre (FMS) for their invaluable assistance and disposition to actively participate in the evaluation exercise. Special mention goes to Laura Rico Pérez for her essential guidance and support during the whole evaluation process; and to Claudia González for her assistance with the on-line survey.

The evaluator is extremely grateful to all project stakeholders, especially young peace leaders, who took the time to share their thoughts and experiences. The evaluator would also like to thank Jaime Palacios, Solomon Wise and Elizabeth Baja at UNDEF. Finally, the evaluator's sincere gratitude goes to Eva Otero Candelera, colleague evaluator, for her crucial support.

All errors and omissions in this report remain the responsibility of the author.

Disclaimer

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

Authors

This report was written by Cristina Santillán Idoate, with the support of Eva Otero Candelera.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT 4
- II. THE PROJECT 6
 - Development context*..... 6
 - Project objectives and approach* 6
- III. THE EVALUATION 7
- IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS 8
 - Relevance – why was the project needed?* 8
 - Effectiveness – what was done?* 11
 - Impact – what was achieved?* 17
 - Efficiency – how were financial and human resources used?* 21
 - Sustainability – will processes and effects last?* 24
 - UNDEF added value and visibility* 25
- V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 25
- VI. LESSONS LEARNED 28
- VII. ANNEXES 29
 - ANNEX 1: RESOURCES REVIEWED 29
 - ANNEX 2: PERSONS CONSULTED 30
 - ANNEX 3: MAIN ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS 31
 - ANNEX 4: EVALUATION QUESTIONS..... 32

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The project “Youth 2 Youth. Building Peace and Democracy in Colombia” sought to empower young people to democratically engage in Colombia’s peace and reconciliation processes through: (a) capacity building of young leaders and their organizations; (2) connection of young leaders and their organizations; and (3) support to their coordinated mobilization and advocacy actions.

The project design was clear and suitable strategies, activities, outputs, and outcomes were developed. The major shortcoming at this level was that the results framework’s indicators were not able to capture the qualitative and multi-layered nature of project intended results.

The project was timely and relevant to youth needs and the political context in Colombia. It was also perfectly aligned with the mandate and history of FMS, UNDEF and with the spirit and objectives of the Colombian 2016 peace agreement.

The project managed to remain faithful to its internal logic and to complete most of the activities it had planned, sometimes greatly exceeding expectations. Project activities, methodologies and products were of excellent quality. Gender was taken into consideration in project design and implemented accordingly.

The project made important contributions to change. It contributed to strengthening the capacity (knowledge and skills) of young leaders including youth participants. It also boosted youth alliances and collective action, and strengthened the advocacy capacity and action of youth organisations and networks. The project unexpectedly contributed to other changes: FMS’s strengthened institutional capacity; strengthened gender awareness among youth participants; and, empowered female participants.

The level of project efficiency can be considered very high. An important factor for this was the commitment and professional caliber of FMS staff and partners. Besides, funding was spent as planned, with certain flexibility (agreed with UNDEF).

The sustainability of the process and results are guaranteed by FMS and youth’s commitment and capacity to continue working for peace and reconciliation in Colombia. Finally, UNDEF brand and flexible approach had an important value added in the Colombian context.

Recommendations

For FMS:

- Continue to review the institutional Theory of Change to incorporate the learnings from the project and other ongoing initiatives, ensuring that the gender focus crosses over, and establishing an adapted M&E system with strategic indicators.
- Continue to invest in research on youth organizations, their work and impact.
- Continue to review and rethink current and future institutional frameworks and processes to ensure a gender focus that cuts across the thinking and doing of the organization, its entire team, and collaborators.
- Continue to promote diversity among young people in the different initiatives and in particular within RedAcción.
- Continue to deepen and facilitate the debate on the sustainability of RedAcción.
- Involve young people in the design of future project proposals and follow-up.
- Ensure that the relevance, use and appropriation of the materials and publications developed within the framework of future projects are maximized.

For UNDEF:

- Strengthen the monitoring of projects with visits to the territories, whenever circumstances allow it. In the case of projects with young people, this follow-up, proximity, presence would provide an element of recognition that they long for.
- Strengthen technical guidance to grantees on how to measure tangible and intangible change/impact.
- Consider on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context and the nature of the project, how much it is possible to allocate to project human resources and travel costs.

Lessons learned

- People and “soft skills” are crucial ingredients when boosting youth leadership, networking, and advocacy.
- It is necessary to break down the barriers of who knows and who has to learn.
- Approaches that heal and address issues of the inner being have the potential to strengthen the sustainability of youth leadership initiatives.
- Youth initiatives require flexible resources.

II. THE PROJECT

Development context

Citizen participation in democratic processes in Colombia has been **historically weak** due to different factors, including political corruption, violence as a form of governance, assassination of political and community leaders, and exclusion and marginalization of specific groups. **Youth**, specifically, remain **one of the most excluded groups**. Youth organizations and networks are often limited to the local level and their social change efforts are kept at the margins. Besides, decision-makers often do not take young people's perspectives into account, while young people do not always know the channels for making their voices heard.

At the time of the formulation of the project, the peace agreement between the Colombian national government and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) had been signed. Fundación Mi Sangre (FMS), the project implementing agency, saw the **peace agreement as an opportunity to increase and deepen democracy**, and, specifically, as an opportunity for young people to democratically engage in peace and reconciliation processes. Besides, presidential elections were planned for 2018 and regional ones for 2019. FMS considered that youth participation in these electoral processes would be critical because elected decision-makers would lead the development of local and national development plans that would help translate the peace agreement from paper into action.

This conducive context soon turned around. The referendum held on October 2016 to ratify the final peace agreement failed with 50.2% voting against and 49.8% voting in favour, which implied a rejection of the peace process by a large part of the population. In addition, the government elected in 2018 objected to several of the peace related decisions that had been taken. Furthermore, the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla, which had begun a process of negotiation with the previous president, was still active. As the United Nations (UN) Special Representative for Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, informed the Security Council in October 2020, social leaders, human rights defenders, former combatants, and entire communities, including young people, continue to be victims of violence by different groups.

Project objectives and approach

The project "Youth 2 Youth. Building Peace and Democracy in Colombia" sought to empower young people to democratically engage in Colombia's peace and reconciliation processes (**general objective**). The project clearly conceptualized three outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Increased capacity of youth leaders and youth organizations to play a role in the implementation of the peace agreement.
- **Outcome 2:** Strengthened alliances between youth initiatives regionally and nationally.
- **Outcome 3:** Increased engagement of youth organizations and youth leaders in online and offline advocacy spaces.

At the time of project design, **direct beneficiaries** (490) of the project included:

- 20 youths with leadership backgrounds from community-based organizations based in Medellín and its metropolitan area - known as Youth to Youth (Y2Y) leaders;
- 200 youth of Y2Y leaders' organizations' membership base; and,
- 270 members of RedAcción de Paz (RedAcción).

The project was conceived and **implemented by Fundación Mi Sangre (FMS)**, a Colombian civil society organization founded in 2006 to position children and young people as leaders in peace and reconciliation processes in the country. FMS managed to mobilize not only UNDEF's financial support but also the knowledge and technical skills of a range of stakeholders that supported different project efforts.

The implementation took place from **January 2018 to January 2020** with a focus in the **metropolitan area of Valle de Arrubá (Antioquia)**, including the municipalities of Medellín, Bello, Itagüí, Envigado, Caldas, Copacabana, La Estrella, Girardota, Sabaneta and Barbosa. The project, indirectly, reached other areas and departments (Bolívar, Córdoba, and Nariño) where RedAcción is present.

In 2015, FMS created the National Network of Young Peacebuilders with the participation of 100 graduates from its youth leadership program. In 2016, the Network was renamed **RedAcción de Paz** and included 900 young people in 6 departments. RedAcción is a network that supports and connects young leaders to enhance the transformative power of their initiatives and to influence the public agenda.



Figure 1. Geographical outreach: Valle de Arrubá.

III. THE EVALUATION

The evaluation exercise aimed to generate **findings**, extract **lessons learned** and provide evidence-based **recommendations** that can **enhance FMS and UNDEF's future strategies** to strengthen the voice and action of young people, and encourage their participation in peacebuilding and democratic processes.

The evaluation was undertaken from July to November 2020. It was conceived and implemented as a **flexible, gender-responsive and people-centred reflective and learning process**. It was designed to build the capacity of FMS and youth beneficiaries by: (1) providing them with the opportunity to reflect on the progresses and obstacles of the project; and, (2) generating knowledge to inform immediate practice.

The evaluation was carried out **remotely** due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. After conversations with FMS staff, the evaluator concluded that the project could be evaluated remotely, without reducing the quality of the process and the deliverables.

The evaluation followed a **six-step process**: (1) engaging the FMS project team and conducting a preliminary desk review; (2) describing the project, refining the evaluation framework and designing data collection tools; (3) gathering credible evidence; (4)

consolidating data and sharing preliminary findings; (5) writing and sharing the draft report with the main users for feedback; and, (6) finalizing the report.

In answering the evaluation questions, the evaluator drew from the **best available evidence across a range of sources**, such as interviews, group discussions, sense-making meetings, an on-line survey (adapted for mobile devices), and an ample body of documents (see Annex 1 for more details on the documentation reviewed).

During the evaluation process, **61 people, of which 22 men and 39 women were consulted** (see Annex 2 for more details). Emphasis was placed on the **voices of young people** (69% of people consulted), specifically **of young women** (61% of young people consulted).

The information collected throughout the evaluation process was compiled, codified, and analysed using **triangulation** techniques to validate findings. The evaluator used **Dedoose**, a Quality Data Analysis (QDA) software, to support this process. Furthermore, the evaluator discussed and analysed available information and insights during a formal **preliminary findings' session** held with the FMS team on the 24th September 2020.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance – why was the project needed?

The relevance section analyses how appropriately the problems identified by the project and the activities that followed responded to the needs and interests of the targeted youth beneficiaries; and how the project design met these needs and interests. It also analyses whether the project was clearly within the mandates of the main project stakeholders, particularly FMS (implementing agency) and UNDEF (donor).

Design

The analysis of the design of the project allowed the evaluator to identify **positive aspects as well as some deficiencies that affected project implementation and monitoring**. On the positive side, the **intense process of interaction and exchange between UNDEF and FMS** allowed for adjusting project formulation to **UNDEF's standards and requirements**. It resulted in a project with **clear activities, outputs, outcomes, and indicators** that permitted exhaustive progress reports with references to a variety of verification sources.

According to people consulted and documentation reviewed during the evaluation, **all project activities and outputs were suitable** for achieving the intended outcomes. The evaluation also found that the outcomes contributed to empowering youth participants to democratically engage in democratic and peace and reconciliation processes (general objective).

A second positive aspect to note was that although the project document did not include an explicit theory of change (ToC), the evaluation showed that **the project was embedded in a broader institutional ToC**. FMS conceived and designed the project as a contribution to the overarching goal of "contributing to build a country (Colombia) that respects life in all its forms and promotes love, equity, freedom, diversity, citizenship and shared responsibility."

The general objective and main strategic activities of the project - Capacity building of young leaders and their organizations; (2) Connection of young leaders and their organizations; and (3) Support to their coordinated mobilization and advocacy actions – were also aligned with FMS's broader institutional ToC and contributed to its ultimate goal.

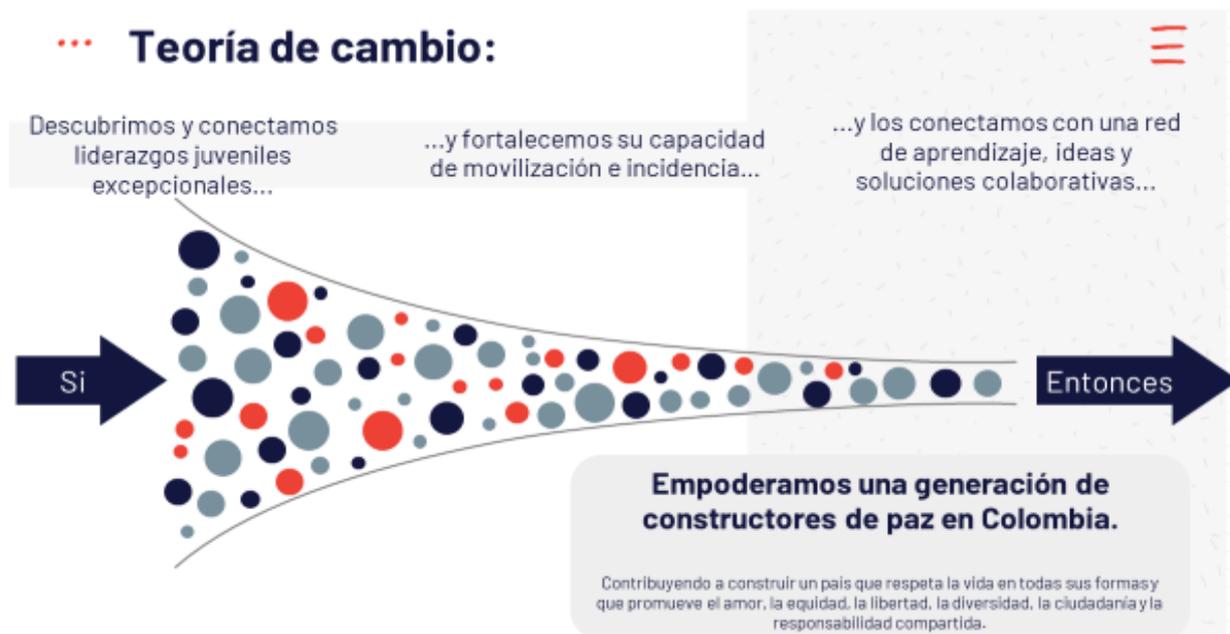


Figure 2. FMS's Theory of Change 2020.

Risks were well identified during project design and **most were mitigated as foreseen** and hence had no major negative effect on project implementation. As anticipated, violence affected some of the youth participants who received threats. FMS activated specific resources and provided emotional support. Besides, the participation and engagement of Y2Y leaders were also affected, also as anticipated, by personal and organisational reasons that made some leave the project. FMS decided to involve and financially and technically support two additional youth organisations/initiatives to ensure that the expected 10 organisations completed the process, as was the case. A third risk did not materialise (i.e. the elections and political climate make it difficult for youth to organize meetings with decision-makers).

Despite these strengths, the evaluation found that the design suffered from a major shortcoming. The **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system designed** was detailed and gender-sensitive **but unable to capture the qualitative and multi-layered nature of the project's intended outcomes**. For example, **outcome indicators were mostly quantitative**. Besides, **indicators for capturing capacity changes at key levels were missing**, such as personal changes in youth (in terms of confidence, motivation, self-awareness) and social skills (group work abilities, relationships building), and in youth organizations' capacity. In addition, some of the project's **most important contributions**, such as opening spaces for interaction and dialogue between youth and decision-makers and allies **were not captured in the targets at the outcome level**.

Adequacy to context and young people's needs and priorities

The evaluation found that the **adequacy level of the project was very high**. All voices consulted and documents reviewed considered that youth participation in peace building and democratic processes in Colombia was and continues to be paramount. There was shared understanding among people interviewed and documents reviewed that the effective

participation of young people would enrich democracy bringing new and diverse visions and interests to the country's democratic processes and peace and reconciliation efforts. The human and financial resources that the project mobilized were considered of **great value** in a country like Colombia where initiatives of this kind are scarce or under-resourced.

Regarding young people's needs and priorities, more than 87% of the youth who responded to the on-line survey fully agreed (64,71%) or somewhat agreed (23,53%) with the statement "*The activities developed by FMS under the project responded to the real*

needs of Colombian youth in terms of political participation and peacebuilding". The youth that participated in group discussions during the evaluation unanimously recognized the **need to reinforce their knowledge on peacebuilding and their conceptual, technical, and emotional skills** to ensure effective and meaningful leadership and impact in their communities. They also expressed the difficulty of youth organizations to access funding and resources and the need for capacity building to reinforce the sustainability of their work. They highly valued the new and reinforced interactions and partnerships with other young people to strengthen their collective impact. In this regard, the project's three-pronged strategy (capacity building + coordination + support to youth initiatives) perfectly responded to their critical needs.

On the adequacy of the youths targeted, the evaluation found two positive aspects. Firstly, the project committed and created the conditions to ensure **diversity among youth participants**. Different socio-economic strata, ideological positions, sexual and gender identities, and ethnicities, mainly Afro, were represented reflecting the diversity of Colombian society. According to youths, this diversity nurtured their empathy and respect for difference and enriched their views and interaction contributing to more integral leaderships and actions.

Secondly, and specifically, the commitment to **equal and meaningful participation of young women** responded to the need to overcome internal (self-confidence) and external (masculine and racist political culture) barriers that affect young women's leadership in Colombia. This focus on young female participants also responds to the Colombian and international context, where feminist conscience is rising among young women and society at large.

The **geographical outreach** of the project was **adequate** given the resources. Medellín and its metropolitan area were prioritised because of the levels of violence that affected the region. It is a region where challenges to peacebuilding and reconciliation are important; specifically, a high proportion of its population remains against, or suspicious of, the peace agreement and its implications as 2016 referendum results demonstrated. On a positive note, it is a region with a dynamic civil society and numerous youth initiatives that, as the evaluation found, require resources and support to strengthen their impact. Besides, FMS's long sustained presence in the region ensures an extensive network of partners and allies and facilitates

"(Transformative) democratic initiatives have to come from civil society because political actors keep fighting and doing nothing. Within civil society, youth have renewed discourses and a different kind of activism, mostly based on action, and responding to very practical needs (...). They create very engaging mobilization campaigns; they deal with new issues seeking well-being on a daily basis. They understand and respond to the needs of their territory and fellows."

Project stakeholder

"Women's socialization is very different; we find it very difficult to talk and express our own ideas. Also, society does not listen to us and it is very difficult for our voices to be heard."

"Finding my own voice as an Afro woman in such a racist and sexist country has been of great value."

Y2Y women leaders

access to valuable resources and support to youth efforts. Finally, the project expected to expand its geographic influence to other regions deeply impacted by the armed conflict through the participation of members of RedAcción in project activities. In this regard, RedAcción members consulted warned of the need to expand this kind of initiative to territories that are more affected by violence than the department of Antioquia.

Alignment

The evaluation found that the project was **perfectly aligned** with the mandate, history, **and geographic priorities of FMS**. Learning from previous projects informed the design, while responding to FMS’s institutional long-term vision, objectives, and approach.

FMS identified and mobilised **key stakeholders with shared vision and approaches**, and the relevant experience, expertise, and skills. That was the case of the different organisations (NGOs, academic institutions, and consultancy firms) in charge of different skills training and learning activities and products.

“We had already implemented two projects with a similar approach: capacity building and mobilisation. They generated important learnings: the importance of targeting youth with significant leadership background to enhance impact; the role of the network as a key scenario for youth organisations’ sustainability; and, the need to strengthen youth’s capacity to build relations and partnerships with a range of actors to enhance the impact and sustainability of their initiatives.”

FMS staff

The project was also strongly **aligned with UNDEF’s global mandate and strategic areas** of work. At the time of project design, UNDEF’s support aimed to “strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups **in democratic processes**”. **The project also responded to UNDEF’s geographical** priorities where countries emerging from conflict, such as Colombia, were prioritised.

The project’s objective and results were also **in line with the United Nations’ (UN)** objectives and strategies in Colombia, in particular with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2019, which included a strategic objective on peacebuilding aiming, among others, to strengthen civic participation.

Finally, the project was entirely **aligned with the spirit and objectives of the peace agreement** signed in 2016, specifically regarding the promotion of greater participation and deeper local, regional, and national democracy.

Effectiveness – what was done?

The effectiveness section analyses to what extent the project was able to carry out the activities that had been planned, unravelling the factors that hindered and facilitated progress. This section also analyses how far the gender approach was integrated.

Progress

Despite the challenging socio-political context, the project managed to remain **faithful to its internal logic** and to **complete all the activities planned**. What follows is a summary of progress in the implementation of activities at output level, as well as findings referred to their quality. The summary is the result of the analysis of project progress reports whose information has been triangulated with the verification sources and the testimonies of the different project stakeholders, mainly Y2Y leaders and RedAcción members consulted during the evaluation.

Outcome 1: Increased capacity of youth leaders and youth organizations to play a role in the implementation of the peace agreement.

As planned, a baseline survey was designed and conducted at the beginning of the project by the FMS M&E team involving 90 youths (30 more than initially planned) from the municipalities of Medellín and its metropolitan area. The baseline survey was suggested by UNDEF during project design based on a lesson learned from another project in Pakistan. Although it was very useful for understanding young people’s needs and realities, and for confirming the relevance of the project’s objective and strategies, some of its potential was lost. It was conducted before the selection of the 20 Y2Y leaders that would participate in capacity building activities, and was not able to inform the design of the process to ensure the contents and methodologies responded to their specific needs and interests. On a positive note, FMS managed to maximise the survey instrument using it as training pre-test and post-test during *hackathons* (intensive training activities) to understand progress and change in Y2Y leaders’ knowledge and skills.

20 Y2Y leaders from 10 organizations/initiatives were selected (65% were women, exceeding the 60% original target). As previously mentioned, the inclusiveness with which the Y2Y leaders were chosen was remarkable. They were selected taking into account most of the socio-demographic criteria established by the project: age (18-28 years); area of residence (metropolitan area of Valle de Arrubá); and, socioeconomic strata (SISBEN 1, 2, and 3)¹.

However, the evaluation found inconsistencies with the criterion of “being a leader of an organization or initiative”. While the 20 youths selected were members or participants of organisations/initiatives, not all had a strong leadership background. The evaluation found that the latter found more difficulties or frustration when trying to respond to project expectations. The interesting thing is that FMS learned from this experience and, since this component of strong leadership is considered fundamental to ensure high and sustained impact, its revised ToC (see figure 1) includes a much clearer definition of “what being a leader entails”.



Figure 3. Project call for applications poster.

FMS designed and organised **4 social innovation hackathons (4 days/3 nights) for the 20 Y2Y leaders**: (1) youth on peacebuilding; (2) online and offline advocacy tools for youth initiatives; (3) strengthening sustainability of youth initiatives for peacebuilding; and, (4) conscious leadership. Y2Y leaders consulted appreciated the hackathons as spaces of learning and individual and group growth. The participatory methodologies were highly valued, and the training materials were seen as accessible, of high quality and very useful. The city tour (*hackathon* 1) and all the dynamics of *hackathon* 4 were specifically valued for its experimental component of “putting the body” and of “learning by doing”; since they allowed the participants to move from concepts to practice and to connect with personal and internal dimensions. The professional calibre and the commitment of the facilitators was also highlighted; those who could more easily “customize” their language and methods to youth’s reality were highly appreciated.

¹ The government in Colombia assigns citizens a number called SISBEN (System of Beneficiaries for Social Programs) based on the zones where they live. SISBEN is used to identify citizens’ socio-economic conditions on a scale 1-6 (6 the highest, and 1 the lowest) and to support their access to government benefits and subsidies.

A communication service provider produced **six short video clips** highlighting the key topics of the 4 hackathons. These videos were shared through FMS YouTube channel and RedAcción Facebook platform. According to project reports, as planned the video clips reached 1133 views and at least 600 young people accessed the content as planned. Regarding the quality of these resources, 85% of the youths that responded to the on-line survey considered them of high quality and 89% of high usefulness. On the access, only 55% considered that they reached the relevant youths.

The 20 Y2Y leaders organised replication activities at community level to share their new knowledge with their membership base reaching 517 young people (50,5% women), exceeding the originally estimated 200 young people (40% women). The organisation of these replication activities demanded a lot of energy from Y2Y leaders who were “under a lot of pressure” to get the “right” number of participants and the necessary participants lists as verification sources of the project. The evaluation found that there was more focus on the number of participants to respond to planned targets than on the process, conditions, methodologies, and results. In this regard, no monitoring tool was designed to understand the value and results of these activities apart from participants’ lists.

With the technical support of FMS and capacity building partners, the **Y2Y leaders developed 10 project proposals** with clear **peacebuilding dimensions to implement at community level**. The youth projects addressed different themes (veganism, feminism, cultural identity, tourism) and realities (urban, rural), and used a variety of methodologies and languages (on-line, off-line, art, training).



Figure 1. Y2Y leaders and FMS staff in Museo Casa de la Memoria – Medellín.

The 10 project proposals were presented in a **social entrepreneurship fair at the Museo Casa de la Memoria** bringing youth initiatives to the attention of a large public and facilitating youth’s interaction and dialogue with different social, political, and economic local actors. It was a powerful communication event, according to Y2Y leaders consulted.

Outcome 2: Strengthened alliances between youth initiatives regionally and nationally.

FMS organized two (2) annual National Youth Summits, bringing together Y2Y leaders and RedAcción members. The youths consulted praised the adequacy of the methodologies and the quality and usefulness of the contents addressed. Youth participants **designed peacebuilding activities and campaigns**: Month of Peace (2018), *Que la Paz Te Toque* (2019), and *Tú Decides* (2019). Media plans were also formulated, and photography, graphic, radio, and video contents were created to promote the actions.



Figures 5 and 6. *Que la Paz te toque* campaign posters.

The project **documented and disseminated youth peacebuilding best practices**. The Institute of Political Studies (*Instituto des Estudios Políticos-Universidad de Antioquia*) was in charge of the research process and the resulting knowledge products: a publication (*Documento de mejores prácticas de la red de jóvenes constructores de paz, RedAcción de Paz*) and an internet site with a variety of multimedia (figure 7). The evaluation found that the publication and the multimedia were of high quality and very valuable for enhancing the understanding and visibility of youth peacebuilding initiatives.



Figure 7. *Buenas prácticas de paz* internet site.

Outcome 3: Increased engagement of youth organizations and youth leaders in online and offline advocacy spaces.

The Y2Y leaders managed to successfully implement their 10 project proposals and documented and shared the results at a closing workshop. They received financial and material support (USD 2.523,8 sub-grant and one laptop per organisation) alongside technical support provided by FMS staff and other stakeholders. Y2Y leaders consulted highly valued the support sharing great satisfaction with the results. Nonetheless, they recognised that it was not an easy task. The implementation of the projects required a lot of effort, time and dedication from youths who struggled to respond to "standardized" project cycle logics, procedures, and technical and

"Making time for the project was very hard. We had a lot of things; we were in a hurry. The project was too long and demanding"

Y2Y leaders in group discussion

financial reporting requirements. While FMS organised 3 support sessions, this support did not solve the challenges faced by the Y2Y leaders during the implementation of the projects.

As project documents reported and evaluation informants confirmed, **RedAcción members and Y2Y leaders managed to effectively implement the peacebuilding activities and campaigns** designed during the National Youth Summits: 10 actions related to arts, culture, and political participation were implemented during the Month of Peace (September) 2018; and, 18 mobilization plans in September 2019. For that purpose, they **engaged strategic stakeholders, including decision-makers**, at local and regional level to mobilise financial, operational, and strategic support: 69 meetings with potential allies were held, reaching a total of 1.874 people. More specifically, they managed to establish collaborations with 44 decision-makers, of whom 20 were women (46% against an initial 40% target). These meetings represented an opportunity to communicate young people's demands and to make their peacebuilding efforts visible to a large number of actors.

FMS supported all these mobilisation and advocacy youth-led efforts. The communicational support provided that included communication skills training was particularly valued. Capacity building partners, decision-makers and allies consulted during the evaluation found their campaigns very engaging and “refreshing” and valued the participatory approach that FMS encouraged and facilitated during the design and implementation of the campaigns.

“They developed the campaign logos, created social networks, set up microsites or blogs to stimulate conversation with their communities and to facilitate networking with partners, they disseminated their initiatives on media.”

FMS staff



Figures 8 and 9. Participants planning mobilization campaigns. National Youth Summit 2018.

Influencing factors

The evaluation found that project implementation was enabled by “positive” factors, mainly: the professional calibre and commitment of FMS staff, stakeholders involved in capacity building activities and service providers; the institutionalised culture and practice of reviewing, questioning and learning within FMS; the flexibility and adaptability showed by FMS, youth participants and UNDEF; the strong and sustained engagement of Y2Y leaders involved; the adequate identification of risks and mitigation strategies in project design; the convening power of FMS; and the international backing of the UN.

The “negative” factors that affected implementation were the strict sub-grant justification requirements imposed on youth (more details provided in the section on efficiency); the

individual economic reasons or organisational problems that prompted the drop-out of some youth participants or youth initiatives; and, Y2Y's overload of responsibilities (academic, work, personal, community activism), which caused them stress.

Gender approach

Gender was taken into consideration in project design and gender equality was an explicit commitment that was effectively integrated during implementation and monitoring. All voices consulted welcomed a number of efforts and specific measures in this regard:



Figure 10. Photo on FMS internet site.

- Gender capacity was an explicit criterion for the selection of the facilitators of capacity building processes. While most of them felt confident with this approach, some would have expected more guidance or consistent instructions from FMS in this respect.
- Gender-related issues and women's realities were mainstreamed in capacity building discussions and materials. While youth participants appreciated this effort, those with a strong feminist background would have expected more depth and time devoted to addressing gender-related contents.
- A childcare resource was hired during the *hackathons* to facilitate the participation of a female Y2Y leader.
- Project knowledge products and communication materials used gender-sensitive language and images.
- Young women were positioned as spokespersons and role models in public events and communication materials.
- Participation quotas were established in all spaces and activities: *hackathons*, meetings, replication activities.
- Feminist youth organisations/initiatives were purposely selected to participate in the project. They were essential to animate the debate and analysis.
- Gender equality was included among the intended levels of impact of Y2Y projects supported by the project.

Most youths consulted in group discussions and through the on-line survey agreed that project activities involved both genders and made an explicit commitment to promoting or achieving gender equality. They also considered that project materials communicated an explicit commitment to promoting or achieving gender equality and ensured the use of non-sexist and inclusive language and images.

The evaluation found that different factors facilitated the integration of a gender approach in the project, mainly: (i) sensitive and committed leadership and staff within FMS; (ii) rising demand from women and young women and a national and global scenario where feminism gains strength; and, (iii) explicit demand from UNDEF.

Meanwhile, some limitations were identified: (i) at the time of project design and implementation, FMS had not yet developed gender and sexual violence specific guidelines and procedures - FMS is currently working in this direction, developing a gender policy and

reviewing internal processes; and, (ii) data analysis would have been more useful if it had been disaggregated by gender. For example, a gender analysis of *hackathons* pre post-tests could have indicated if there was a difference between the understanding/learning of male and female participants, and therefore introduce changes in the training.

Impact – what was achieved?

This section analyses how change happened as a contribution of the project under its three outcomes. It also presents contributions identified beyond the original outcome targets.

The biggest difficulty in determining the impact was that outcome level indicators, targets and data were not always appropriately formulated to sufficiently measure the kind of expected changes, tangible and intangible, in youth’s (and organisations’) attitudes and behaviours. As mentioned in the relevance section, project design, monitoring and reporting mainly focused on activity and output levels rather than on contributions to change.

Expected project contributions

OUTCOME 1 – Increased capacity of youth leaders and youth organizations to play a role in the implementation of the peace agreement.

- Target 1.1. By the end of the project, 20 Y2Y leaders have a deeper understanding of the 6 points of the peace agreement, 60% are women.
- Target 1.2. By the end of the project, at least 20 Y2Y leaders have strengthened leadership skills and have new online and offline advocacy tools, 60% are women.
- Target 1.3. By the end of the project, at least 10 youth initiative project proposals—in line with the peace agreement—will successfully be designed and implemented.
- Target 1.4. By the end of the project, the Y2Y leaders will have shared what they have learned with 200 young members, of whom 40% are women.

Concerning targets 1.1. and 1.2, the evaluation revealed that they were surpassed by far, including the female representation targets. The evaluation found that the project achieved an increased level of leadership and self-confidence among Y2Y leaders. They expressed that they gained knowledge on the peace agreement and new and adequate skills and tools for their networking efforts and for the sustainability of their community-based initiatives. This included the improvement of their leadership skills and project management capabilities, such as stakeholder and power analysis, proposal writing, and fundraising. This ultimately strengthened their organisational capacities.

They also expressed stronger commitment to peace and community work, and an increased awareness of their rights as youth. They gained confidence in the key role youth can play in peacebuilding and democratic process. Interestingly, they developed empathy with other perspectives and realities and increased tolerance.

It is important to mention that much of the new learning, according to the voices consulted, came from their peers. Y2Y participants were exposed to “expert” adult knowledge and experience but also to peers’ different ideas, positions and realities.

Target 1.3. was more a progress indicator than an outcome (impact indicator). As already explained, Y2Y leaders used their new knowledge and skills to design and implement community-based projects that sought to promote and build peace at the community level. So, what was the effect of this achievement? The voices consulted and the documentation reviewed showed that the implementation of these initiatives further strengthened their organisational capacity: learning firsthand and in practice how to manage resources, coordinate partnerships, mobilize key actors and targeted publics, use communication and social research tools, and report on progress and results, among others.

Target 1.4. was another process indicator that could not show the effect that participating in replication activities had on the young participants. While the evaluation did not have the opportunity to consult them, it found that in some specific cases, these replication activities were the seeds of new youth activism. *“It should be noted that the youth seedbed (semillero juvenil) was born out of the commitment of the replication activities, which has become an activist group in San Cristóbal”* (Trekking San Cristobal activity implementation report).

Some testimonies from Y2Y leaders...

“I was able to clarify doubts on the peace agreement.”

“It has increased my level of self-confidence; I feel more secure.”

“I came out a different person. I have strengthened my leadership”

“We lost our fear and learned to think big.”

“We learned to take care of ourselves.”

“It helped us to imagine a different country, to understand that we all have to do something about peace.”

“I learned a lot about advocacy and how to talk about conflict from a different perspective (...). This process gave us important tools.”

“We were very diverse; I learned how to treat other people. It also helped me to deal with stressful situations because there were many moments of stress.”

OUTCOME 2 – Strengthened alliances between youth initiatives regionally and nationally.

Target 2.1. By the end of the project, the members of the network and/or Y2Y leaders will have made a least 50 new contacts and/or partnerships with potential allies.

Target 2.2. By the end of the project, two agendas or strategies will have been codesigned.

Target 2.3. By the end of the project, the document of *Best Practices of Young Peacebuilders* has been viewed or shared 500 times, and 50 network members have reported that the best practices guideline helped them learn from other youth organizations.

As previously mentioned, the two (2) National Youth Summits facilitated exchange, inspiration, and learning. They also motivated and strengthened alliances between youth participants and facilitated coordination of youth-led peacebuilding activities and campaigns. Youths consulted during the evaluation, especially RedAcción members, highly valued the new alliances and articulations generated. As they expressed, they allowed them to strengthen their local work and connect it to regional and national processes that ensure greater outreach and impact.

Some testimonies from RedAcción members on the value of collective spaces and alliances...

"They give me a bigger picture. We feel part of something bigger."

"We strengthen each other. I am still working with a young fellow from Medellín."

"They have facilitated articulations with other organizations."



Figure 11. National Youth Summit 2019.

However, the evaluation found that the 20 Y2Y leaders did not find so much value in these collective spaces and articulated efforts. The evaluation gathered some explanations that could not be confirmed. On the one hand, the Y2Y leaders were part of a very intense process of personal and collective empowerment that kept them connected while demanding a lot from them; they found that their participation in the National Youth Summits was an additional effort on top of what they were already giving. In contrast, RedAcción members

"RedAcción becomes a space for leadership training. It sometimes provides financial support to members' initiatives. The network has increased the visibility of their local initiatives and has allowed them to come into contact with decision-makers. It also encourages them; they feel they are not alone."

Project stakeholder

worked in isolation most of the year and considered these meetings and summits unique opportunities to interact with other leaders and inspire their community work.

On target 2.3., the evaluation confirmed that the document of best practices of young peacebuilders was viewed or shared 500 times. RedAcción members consulted found that the document was of great value because it allowed them to reflect on their experience, to learn about other initiatives, to replicate them in their territories, and to showcase their efforts and impacts. However, although it was also disseminated among Y2Y leaders, other youth organizations, media, and civil society allies; its use and uptake emerged as an area for future improvement. None of the external stakeholders consulted during the evaluation knew the document and most Y2Y leaders consulted did not know it or had not used it. On a positive note, the evaluation found that the document had become a reference framework for FMS when thinking and planning new initiatives. It also became an inspiring basis for future research work by a group of teachers from the University of Antioquia.

OUTCOME 3 – Increased engagement of youth organizations and youth leaders in online and offline advocacy spaces.

- Target 3.1. By the end of the project, 12 positive changes, at the social or policy level, result from youth initiatives, and at least 60% include strategies to promote gender equality.
- Target 3.2. By the end of the project, 90% of the 20 Y2Y leaders, of whom 60% are women, will feel they can influence or have influenced decision-making in the design of public policies at all levels.

Target 3.1. referred to impact beyond youth participants, focusing on the impact of the implementation of their projects at social or policy level. Due to the above-mentioned limitations of the M&E system, this level of impact was more difficult to ascertain. However, the evaluation could find anecdotal evidence to suggest that the youth-led projects resulted in increased awareness at community level on specific issues of interest for the project and the youth: human rights; peace and non-violence; afro cultural identity, history and values; feminism; environmentalism; citizen activism; and, animal rights, among others. Some of the projects specifically addressed gender-related issues and promoted gender equality and women's empowerment and equal representation.

On target 3.2., according to project final narrative report, 95% of the 20 Y2Y leaders responded that they felt that their voices were heard in the advocacy spaces where they participated. The youth that participated in the evaluation confirmed this assessment providing anecdotal evidence. Firstly, they shared that their capacity to identify and engage decision-makers was enhanced; they also felt that the outreach, visibility and convening power of their organisations had increased. On their effective influence on decision-making processes, FMS staff and the youth and external stakeholders consulted felt that communities, allies, and decision-makers were more aware of issues of interest to youth. However, the evaluation did not find enough evidence to make a statement on the impact of youth's advocacy on public policy decision-making and planning.

“While they do not have the vocation to become politicians, they do have the vocation to affect politics. They are really committed to what is happening. They are aware of their rights. They have the capacity to generate the conversations they need. They are concerned for other young people in other regions, especially in rural areas. Listening to youth allows us to reformulate our questions and bring in new questions, from the reality of young people. It helps us get out of adulthood.”

Project stakeholder

 **Alza tu voz, Medellín** was an advocacy action led by *Jóvenes Forjando Cambios* (Y2Y organisation)² and *Cafecito Político* (RedAcción member) in the framework of the Month of Peace 2018 mobilisations.

21 young leaders took on the role of councillors during a plenary session of the Medellín Council (*Concejo de Medellín*). They discussed and shared a legislative bill to enhance peace and reconciliation in Medellín, including education, sports, environment, art, entrepreneurship, human rights, and political participation-related measures.

This advocacy action was replicated by other RedAcción members to bring their agendas to the attention of local authorities.



Figure 12. Y2Y leaders in “Alza tu voz Medellín.”

Other valuable contributions

The evaluation found that the project contributed to additional changes that were not clearly envisaged in the original framework:

- **FMS’s strengthened institutional capacity:** the project was an opportunity to put into practice methodological hypotheses, which led to very important learnings. These learnings informed new strategic developments and refined FMS’s approach to working with young leaders and RedAcción. The project also reinforced the institutional gender equality commitment and approach. Finally, the project connected FMS to new expertise and alliances.
- **Strengthened gender awareness among youth participants:** all youth participants consulted, male and female, recognised becoming more aware and knowledgeable on gender equality issues.
- **Empowered female participants:** female youth participants communicated important personal changes: greater awareness on their rights and stronger self-confidence as female leaders.

Efficiency – how were financial and human resources used?

The efficiency section analyses the extent to which the project made good use of its human and financial resources. This includes a) how activities transformed the available resources into the intended or unexpected contributions (value for money); and, (b) how the management and coordination arrangements ensured a cost-efficient and accountable implementation of the project.

Value for money

The level of efficiency of the project was very high considering: a) the investment; b) the execution of all activities as planned; c) the quality of the processes and products; and, d) the contributions of the project to significant changes under the three outcomes and beyond, in a hostile political context.

² *Jóvenes Forjando Cambios* was one of the Y2Y organizations that did not complete the process because of internal disagreements.

The total grant awarded by UNDEF, the only donor, was USD 198.000. **Project costs were estimated at USD 180.000.** UNDEF retained additional USD 18.000 (9,1% of total amount awarded) for M&E purposes.

The project had a **budget execution level of 97.72%.** Final project expenditure amounted to USD 175.892,05. without significant budgetary deviations. The financial reallocations that took place were always justified and approved by UNDEF.

The budget allocation for the different items was balanced and in line with the objective and expected results with some exceptions:

- **Human resources (HR).**

The project provided for a full-time coordination position that amounted to 17% of the total amount awarded, which is slightly over the 15% limit that UNDEF establishes for personnel in projects (see figure 13). The project did not foresee specific resources for other FMS management and technical staff. However, as explained in the effectiveness section, the project would not have gone so far without the

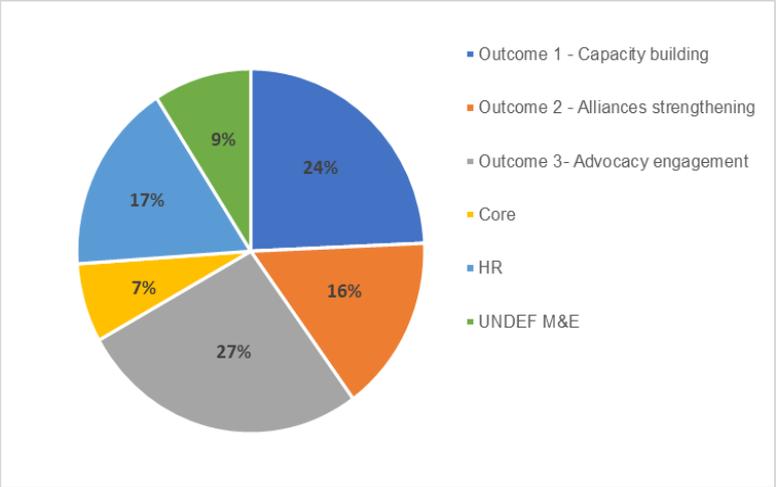


Figure 13. Budget allocation, including UNDEF M&E costs.

commitment and professional calibre of all FMS staff mobilised to support the project. It was FMS that invested in all the human resources that accompanied the project. It was an investment that FMS decided to make in order to achieve the expected impact. It is very important to highlight this aspect because the evaluation shows that this type of project requires the sustained, intermittent, or one-off support of a diversity of profiles and functions that need to be funded in one way or another.

- **Travel costs for youth participants’ mobilisation, networking, and advocacy purposes.** The initial financial provision for travel costs was not sufficient to respond to all transportation needs that the project involved. FMS staff and the young people consulted confirmed that travel expenses were essential for the kind of activities and processes that the project promoted, since they required numerous encounters and interactions for advocacy purposes. The flexibility showed by the UNDEF programme officer supporting the implementation of the project allowed for co-financing and diverting resources to transport.

There was another important issue that affected the use and management of financial resources. Youth participants complained that the **strict requirements for the justification and legalization of all expenditure** during the implementation of their initiatives were strenuous and unrealistic in a context like Colombia. This was also very stressful for FMS and generated tensions with youth. Interestingly, the evaluation did not manage to identify who set these requirements. While FMS understood that these were UNDEF’s requirements, UNDEF explained that this was not the case. This might suggest that it was either a recommendation from the auditing company or the result of poor communication between UNDEF and FMS at some stage.

Finally, it is important to highlight two additional issues that show the level of commitment and professionalism of FMS staff. On the one hand, as explained in the relevance section, in order to mitigate the risk of drop-out of youth organizations, **FMS mobilised its own resources** (around USD 5.500) to ensure the participation of two additional youth organizations. On the other hand, the interaction between UNDEF and FMS was very smooth thanks to **FMS's compliance with all UNDEF financial requirements** and, important to mention as well, thanks to **UNDEF's flexibility** when changes had to be made. For example, the project was budgeted at a USD rate at which there was no risk. When the resources came, at some points the rate was higher which meant that the budget had remaining balances in certain lines. When resources needed to be transferred to other line items, UNDEF provided effective support.

Human resources management and coordination mechanisms

A first point to note is that the evaluation found that the financial investment would not have gone so far without **the commitment and professionalism of all FMS staff**, funded, and not funded, by the project budget. The project mobilized the support of virtually all, if not all, of the departments/areas of FMS and a large number of its professionals.

FMS's **reputation and track record** were also invaluable -albeit intangible resources, as were the **figures of the director of FMS and the singer Juanes**, one of its founders, who brought value to all FMS processes and who facilitated some of the project's strategies by initiating contacts, opening up spaces, etc.

All these human resources were **perfectly organized** to ensure adequate backing and follow-up of the project. The most relevant **spaces for coordination and management** of the project were the Technical Committee, the Project Committee, and the regular meetings between the project coordinator and the project manager. According to the FMS staff consulted, this coordination, management and decision-making scheme worked very well. This scheme also facilitated **institutional learning** in the face of a project that was recognized as challenging because several components were being "piloted": *hackathons* and seed capital (sub-grants) for youth initiatives.

One issue that created some difficulties was the **high turnover of staff** within the FMS team that was most closely involved with the young people. FMS downplayed the impact of this given the difficulties inherent in understanding and finding the profile that best suited the nature and approach of the project. The experience of the Y2Y leaders was, however, different. For them, the most traumatic aspect was not so much the rotation but the way in which it was managed. In any case, the evaluation identified that it was an issue that demanded a lot of energy from all parties and at times affected the Y2Ys' relationship with FMS.

At the external level of FMS, although the project design did not include a clear partnership strategy, which always enhances the sustainability of project objectives, the evaluation showed that **FMS mobilized different professionals and organizations** whose experience and knowledge were confirmed by the people consulted and by the quality of their products. The evaluation also showed that the **relationships** built between FMS and allies, partners and service providers were **excellent, with high levels of transparency, professionalism, flexibility, dialogue and mutual trust**. As a member of FMS staff noted, alliances and partnerships are essential for FMS, they are part of the organization's DNA. As to the partners involved, they saw FMS as an ally that knew what it wanted, and at the same time questioned, reviewed, adapted, and learned from its own work.

Finally, a leading and indispensable human resource of the project were the **young people** themselves, who were enthusiastic and committed, and dedicated considerable time and effort to the project despite sometimes being exhausted or stressed as a result. The relationship

FMS built with these young people reflected high professionalism, flexibility, openness, and respect. The members of RedAcción were the ones who expressed the greatest connection and strongest relationship with FMS. The relationship with the Y2Y leaders was more tense because of the changes of personnel explained above and of the high demands of the project.

Sustainability – will processes and effects last?

The sustainability section identifies those aspects of the project that are likely to be sustained after its completion. These aspects can be approached from two points of view: (1) the extent to which key stakeholders will remain committed to the project's objectives; and, (2) the extent to which the products of the project (for example, materials and publications) are used after the end of UNDEF funding.

According to the project document, project sustainability relied on three pillars:

1. **Focus on young leaders associated with organizations/initiatives, to impact youth organizations as a whole, not just the individual.** At this level, the evaluation showed that the 20 Y2Y leaders constitute a melting pot of experiences and situations. Many remain highly involved, active, and gaining recognition. Others, for various reasons, have left their organizations, or have disassociated themselves from activism. Their youth initiatives have also evolved differently, and not all of them have been able to ensure the sustainability of the processes and results they promoted with the sub-grant.

It is important to mention that this ingredient of sustainability has been revised by FMS as a result of the project, and that its current ToC is based on the hypothesis that a young person trained as a leader will continue to be a leader and ensure social impact, even if he/she moves, his/her circumstances change, or he/she leaves his organization.

2. **Involvement of RedAcción to foster youth partnerships in order to amplify youth voices.** The evaluation had the opportunity to consult with young people who were very active in RedAcción and who expressed their commitment to the objective of the project, pointing out that the sustainability of the network today depends on FMS in the absence of other clear supporters. The evaluation found that this aspect was a matter of debate within FMS and also RedAcción, a debate that was beyond the scope of this evaluation. What the evaluation has been able to show is the strong commitment of FMS to continue supporting the network and the and the efforts it is already deploying to commit funds from other donors for this purpose. In addition, another positive aspect identified that could translate into greater relevance and sustainability of RedAcción is that FMS is making efforts to involve young people with other diversities, mainly indigenous and youth with functional diversity.
3. **FMS's long track record in the country and, particularly, in Antioquia region.** The evaluation showed that the mainstay of the project's sustainability was FMS's commitment to continue supporting RedAcción in particular, as well as new young leaders through its new Fellows program. FMS has new funding for this purpose, and strengthened capacity, as well as significant social and youth recognition.

The evaluation identified other positive elements that would contribute to the sustainability of the processes driven by the project. The **external stakeholders** consulted, trainers, decision-makers and allies, expressed their commitment to continue linking with the issue of youth and peacebuilding explicitly. They felt that they were learning from these young people, that they were broadening their horizons and offering them new methodologies. Some of them were already getting involved in the initiative promoted by FMS "*Laboratorio Social*".

Finally, with regard to the project's **products**, the young people consulted noted that they continued to use many of the educational materials in their studies, activism, and work.

UNDEF added value and visibility

UN brand: The fact that the project was funded by the UN gave it more weight and recognition since it was associated with a strong sense of commitment, as well as with transparency, academic quality, theoretical support, and solid institutional backing.

Having UNDEF as funder facilitated access for young people and allowed them to mobilize resources and secure support for the activities. It generated trust among key actors both at the town hall and community levels, as well as among members of youth organizations. Young people also noted that their participation in the UNDEF supported project also gave them a certain status at the personal level, since they "*found it very useful to add it to their CV*".

International support: Funding this project conveyed the message that youth were important and that processes led by them deserved support. International cooperation funds enable organizations to operate with higher levels of independence while causing fewer alterations to the existing local dynamics. Even if there are interests and requirements attached, the feeling at the territorial level is different. In particular, international support offers the possibility to do things that are not being done internally. Furthermore, in the context of Colombia, human rights issues continue to emerge, and the UN's understanding of peace as an individual and collective right remains very relevant to the current context.

UNDEF as a donor/partner: Although there was rigidity in the design and formulation of the project, there was a lot of openness and flexibility during implementation. Despite being in charge of several countries, the UNDEF Programme Officer always responded in a timely manner and the communication established between FMS and UNDEF was open and frequent. Furthermore, UNDEF showed a lot of interest in the project, closely reading the periodic reports and requesting the FMS team to share stories.

For the young people involved in the project, the relationship with UNDEF was very different. They had no contact with the funder, given the absence of any direct communication channels, and UNDEF's role was reduced to "*those who established the demands*". Consulted youth considered that it would be good for the funder to know who they had given the sub-grant to and what results they were obtaining.

UNDEF visibility: All stakeholders consulted during the evaluation were aware of UNDEF's funding. FMS complied with UNDEF's visibility requirements. UNDEF featured as donor in project outreach materials and monitoring templates, including participants' lists, publications and multimedia, internet sites and social networks platforms, communication pieces, etc. Only youth-led mobilisation activities and campaigns were free of any logo as according to FMS's experience "*when articulation and mobilisation efforts are free of logos, they are more easily appropriated by citizens*".

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Relevance: The project developed clear and suitable strategies, activities, outputs, and outcomes embedded in a broader institutional ToC. However, the results framework's indicators were not able to capture the qualitative and multi-layered nature of project intended results.

The adequacy level of the project was very high. The need to maximise youth's participation in Colombia was important and justified, recognising that youth's involvement in peacebuilding and democratic processes had been marginal to non-existent. Building youth's knowledge and capacity, facilitating their interaction and coordination, and advancing their participation and influence on peacebuilding and democratic processes were -and remain- relevant objectives in Colombia. There has been a clear shortage of projects to empower young people as peacebuilding actors and trigger new leaderships.

The project was perfectly aligned with the mandate and history of FMS, with the spirit and objectives of the 2016 peace agreement and with the strategic objectives of UNDEF and UNDAF 2015-2019 for Colombia.

Effectiveness: Despite the challenging socio-political context, the project managed to remain faithful to its internal logic and to complete most of the activities it had planned, sometimes greatly exceeding expectations. Project activities, methodologies and products were of excellent quality. Gender was taken into consideration in project design and implemented accordingly.

The main factors that facilitated project implementation were the professional calibre and commitment of FMS staff and project stakeholders; the flexibility and adaptability showed by main project stakeholders; young leaders' strong engagement; the adequate identification of risks and mitigation strategies; and, the convening power of FMS and the international backing of the UN. The main factors that negatively affected the implementation were youth's overload of responsibilities alongside the strict sub-grant justification requirements imposed on them.

Impact: The project made important contributions to change at the level of its three outcomes and beyond. Firstly, the project contributed to strengthening the capacity (knowledge and skills) of young leaders including Y2Y leaders and RedAcción members to participate in peacebuilding and democratic processes. In fact, 75% of those who responded to the on-line survey stated that they were already applying what they learned in the project. Secondly, it contributed to boosting youth alliances and collective action, and, thirdly, to strengthening the advocacy capacity and action of youth organisations and networks. This reinforced capacity at different levels probably led to fruitful secondary results, but the project monitoring system made it difficult to identify them. As mentioned, the design of the project failed to capture the complexity of the context or how it was being influenced through the implementation of the different strategies and activities.

The project unexpectedly contributed to other changes: FMS's strengthened institutional capacity; strengthened gender awareness among youth participants; and, empowered female participants.

Efficiency: The level of efficiency of the project was very high considering: a) the balanced investment; b) the execution of all activities as planned; c) the good quality of the processes and products; and, d) the contributions of the project to significant changes under the three outcomes and beyond, in a hostile political context. In terms of human resources, FMS staff were committed and apart from the full-time coordination position funded by the project, almost the entire team supported the initiative at different moments in time. Funding was spent as planned, with certain flexibility (agreed with UNDEF) in light of the required funds for transportation to events and activities. The justification requirements for expenditure imposed on youth participants' sub-grants caused certain tensions and exhaustion.

Coordination mechanisms ensured adequate backing and follow up despite the high turnover of staff. Excellent relationships were built with services providers, allies and partners through

this project and the young enthusiastic people who participated deserve praise as the leading and indispensable human resource of the project.

Sustainability: The project had identified three pillars for sustainability. The first was the idea that young leaders associated with organizations/initiatives would impact youth organisations as a whole and not just the individual. This was revised as a result of the project to incorporate the hypothesis that a young person trained as a leader would continue to be a leader and ensure social impact regardless of any changes to his/her life. The second pillar was the involvement of RedAcción, and the evaluation concluded that despite the absence of other clear partners, FMS remained strongly committed to supporting RedAcción, as well as new young leaders through its “*Programa de fellows*”, beyond the life of the project. Thirdly, FMS’s long track record in the country (particularly in Antioquia) will remain an asset. Other positive elements for the sustainability of results included the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders to continue working on youth and peacebuilding and the future use of project products by youth participants in their studies, activism, and work.

UNDEF added value and visibility: Having UNDEF’s backing gave the project more weight and recognition, since it was associated with positive values that facilitated access for young people and allowed them to mobilize resources and secure support for their activities. These international funds allowed the project to operate with higher levels of independence and to support youth’s critical empowerment, an area of work that few national institutions had committed to. The communication between UNDEF and FMS was frequent and open, which allowed for a certain flexibility in addressing challenges. FMS complied with all the visibility requirements, since UNDEF featured as a donor in outreach materials, multimedia, internet sites and social networks platforms, etc., with the exception of materials that supported youth-led mobilization activities and campaigns, in order to facilitate appropriation by the community.

Recommendations

For Fundación Mi Sangre: The evaluator acknowledges that the project generated many learnings that FMS is already incorporating into its work. Some of the recommendations acknowledge these new developments by proposing some nuances, others suggest new developments:

- Continue to review the institutional Theory of Change to incorporate the learnings from the project and other ongoing initiatives, ensuring that the gender focus crosses over into the ToC; and establishing an adapted M&E system, with strategic qualitative and quantitative indicators, that is capable of measuring the contribution to tangible and intangible change/impact and of understanding how it occurs. To this end, it is recommended that the necessary external support is mobilized, but also to involve staff, partners, and young people themselves at all times in the definition of these frameworks and tools.
- Continue to invest in research on youth organizations, their work and impact. It is necessary to better understand their capacities, their life cycles, their exposure to external factors in order to strengthen their sustainability. It is also essential to understand the impact of their initiatives on their communities and territories, moving beyond success.
- Continue to review and rethink current and future institutional frameworks and processes to ensure a gender focus that cuts across the thinking and doing of the organization, its entire team, and collaborators. This will require, among other things, promoting spaces for reflection and internal training, accompanied at times by external facilitators and with sufficient and adapted resources. Alliances with feminist organizations would be another source of inspiration and learning.

- Continue to promote diversity among young people in the different initiatives and in particular within RedAcción in order to reach more young people from indigenous and rural communities and young people with different (dis)abilities, by reviewing work approaches and methodologies.
- Continue to deepen and facilitate the debate on the sustainability of RedAcción.
- Involve young people in the design of proposals and follow-up. A good idea might be to create a youth advisory group to make assessments and contributions, and even provide young people with opportunities to lead project components. It would also be useful to establish a system of submission and management of complaints and responses so that young people have channels to do so.
- Ensure that the relevance, use and appropriation of the materials and publications developed within the framework of future projects are maximized. To this end, it is essential to understand their place in the pathway of expected change, and to design communication and dissemination strategies aimed at different audiences.

For UNDEF:

- Strengthen the monitoring of projects with visits to the territories, whenever circumstances allow it. In the case of projects with young people, this follow-up, proximity, presence would provide an element of recognition that they long for.
- Strengthen technical guidance to grantees on how to measure tangible and intangible change/impact.
- Consider on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context and the nature of the project, how much it is possible to allocate to project human resources and travel costs.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

People and “soft skills” are crucial ingredients when boosting youth leadership, networking and advocacy. This kind of efforts depend to a large extent on the youth and their personal abilities. They also rely on the professional caliber of those accompanying the processes, which need both technical and “soft” skills to generate respect and trust among young people.

It is necessary to break down the barriers of who knows and who has to learn. Intergenerational learning has shown extremely valuable for both youth and adult people accompanying them.

Approaches that heal and address issues of the inner being have the potential to strengthen the sustainability of youth leadership initiatives. It is understood that in order to become a leader, one has to reconcile oneself internally and with one's own violence.

Youth initiatives require resources that are more flexible. It is important to simplify procedures and give youth freedom in their expenditure. This communicates trust and allows them to make decisions that are consistent with their ideological positions, contexts, and eventualities, while also allowing them to adapt processes and expenditure to the needs and demands of their membership base.

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Resources reviewed

UNDEF documents

- *Evaluation Launch Note Template*. August 2018
- *Evaluation Manual 2019*
- *Information Note for Post-Project Evaluation (UDF-16-733-COL)*
- *Project Monitoring, Reporting, Revision and Extension Guidelines*. October 2017
- *Project Proposal Guidelines*. Eleventh Funding Round
- *Reporting requirements R12 and backwards*
- *Reporting Template*. May 2018
- *Special considerations for online evaluations during the COVID 19 crisis*.

Project Documentation

- *Project Document, including 4 annexes*
- *Milestone 2 Verification Report, including 5 annexes*
- *Mid-Term Report, including 22 annexes*
- *Milestone 3 Verification Report, including 1 annex*
- *Financial Utilization Reports 2 and 3*
- *Narrative Final Report, including 24 annexes*
- *Financial Final utilization Report*

Other documents

- ALTEC (sin fecha). *Ruta de actividades para el segundo semestre*
- ALTEC (sin fecha). *Género en ALTEC - PROYECTO PAZ EN CONSTRUCCIÓN: insumos para EVALUACIÓN*
- Ashoka (November 2019). *Seven steps for funding system change. A comprehensive guide for Funders, by Social Entrepreneurs*
- Fundación Mi Sangre (no date). *Glosario de género*
- Fundación Mi Sangre (no date). *Documento de difusión del Documento de Buenas Prácticas*
- Fundación Mi Sangre (no date). *Acta de selección de proveedores para el proyecto “De jóvenes para jóvenes”*
- Fundación Mi Sangre (no date). *Comunidades de aprendizaje (Word and ppt)*.
- Instituto de Estudios Políticos-Universidad de Antioquía (2019). *Documento de mejores prácticas de la Red de Jóvenes Constructores de Paz RedAcción de paz*.
- Marta Restrepo López (November 2019). *Informe del Taller sobre interseccionalidad e incidencia: Pensando la democracia y la institucionalidad desde la perspectiva de las mujeres, las personas diversas sexualmente y las personas racializadas*.
- Mary B. Anderson Dayna Brown Isabella Jean (2012). *TIME TO LISTEN. Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
- Woodrow, Peter (2019) *“Framework for Collective Impact in Peacebuilding.” Revised version following field testing and case studies*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

Internet sites

<https://www.un.org/democracyfund/>
<https://nacionesunidas.org.co/>
<http://fundacionmisangre.org/>
<http://fundacionmisangre.org/red/>
<https://www.youtube.com/c/Fundaci%C3%B3nMiSangreOficial/videos>
<http://aquelarrecolectiva.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/redacciondepaz/>
<https://www.facebook.com/fundacionelhormi/>
<https://trekkingsancristobal.com/>
<https://www.revistaviveafro.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/LaRevolucionDeLaCucharaMedellin>

<https://lluviadeorion.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/CasaTumac/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ciudad.frecuencia>
<https://www.picachoconfuturo.org/>
<http://laboratoriosocialmed.co/>
<https://luminategroup.com/>
<https://www.extituto.org/>
<https://www.region.org.co/>
<http://www.indeleblesocial.com/>
<http://portal.udea.edu.co/wps/portal/udea/web/inicio/institucional/unidades-academicas/institutos/estudios-politicos>

Additional on-line resources

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/10/1075402>
<https://www.elsaltodiario.com/colombia/colombia-o-la-normalizacion-de-las-masacres>
<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20201015/onu-acuerdo-paz-colombia-masacres-8156598>

Annex 2: Persons consulted

FMS staff

1. Catalina Cock Duque, Directora Ejecutiva, FMS
2. Nataly Erazo, Líder de comunicaciones, FMS
3. Claudia González, Coordinadora M&E, FMS
4. Laura Rico Pérez, Coordinadora de Proyecto, FMS
5. Carlota Salazar, directora administrativa, FMS
6. David Vidal, Líder de proyectos, FMS
7. Andrés Chaves, Gestor de proyectos, FMS

RedAcción members

8. Cristina Botero, Red9
9. David Alejandro González Urrea, Casa de la Juventud CaJu
10. Andrea Robledo Yepes, Cafecito Político
11. Mateo Alzate Zabala, DMR
12. Juliana María Nieves Riaño, Ancestral
13. Cristián David Amado Reyes, Juventud Unida
14. Paula Andrea, Mesa diversa comuna 9, Alianza LGTBI de Antioquia y voluntaria en la Secretaría de las mujeres con emprendimiento, mujer talento tecnología y ciencia
15. Miguel Ángel Salazar López
16. Alfredo Castellar Castellar, Colectivo Kalamary
17. Valeria López Giraldo, Matices Grupo Comunitario
18. Yeison Pacheco Pacheco, generación Cambio por la Paz
19. Libaniel Guzmán, JACCU
20. Aldair Romero López, memorias diversas
21. Ana Marcela Ramos García, Transformando Vidas
22. Jasmel David Contreras Hernández, Fundación dame esos 5
23. Carol Boyacá Montañez, Red Nacional Jóvenes de Ambiente
24. Genesis Vélez Muñoz, Mesa de Articulación Juvenil Parche en la 80
25. Paola Rojas
26. Annie Carolina Téllez Arroyave, Cruz Roja Colombiana
27. Yoider Isaac Quejada Martínez
28. Sara Jaramillo Gomez, Jóvenes Forjando Cambios
29. Alejandra Aguirre González, Corporación Retazos
30. Lina Marcela Restrepo Valencia, Matices Grupo Comunitario
31. Juan Esteban Velasquez Echevarria, Evolucion y Arte, Filantropia Crew, FILM_antropia
32. Jessica Natalia Naspiran Plazas, Red Jóvenes de Ambiente Nodo Sogamoso

33. Javier Martínez, Matices Grupo Comunitario
34. Julián Jiménez Restrepo
35. Yovany Vargas Arroyave, Sonidos de reconciliación

Y2Y leaders

36. Paula Ocampo Rendón, Revolución de la Cuchara
37. María Stefanía Orrego Querubín, antigua integrante de Corporación Lluvia de Orión
38. Yenny Paola Córdoba Armijo, Fundación Afrocolombiana Casatumac
39. Vanessa Sirley Márquez Mena, Revista Vive Afro
40. Carolina Echeverri Orozco, Colectiva Feminista Aquelarre
41. Davier David Montes Mármol, Trekking San Cristobal
42. Ana María Montoya Zuluaga, Ciudad Frecuencia
43. Daniela Londoño González, antigua integrante de Corporación Lluvia de Orión
44. Yésica Ruíz Guzmán, La Revolución de la Cuchara
45. Dumar Franco Pérez, antigu integrante de Picacho con Futuro
46. Sebastián García García, Zulu Norte
47. Maira Alejandra Mosquera Mosquera, Zulu Norte
48. Xiomara Correa Correa, antigua integrante de Corporación El Hormiguero
49. Ana María Cano Arroyave, antigua integrante de Corporación El Hormiguero

Other stakeholders (Capacity building partners, allies, and decision-makers)

50. Catalina María Cruz Betancur, Profesional Diálogo Social, Territorial Antioquia-Comisión de la Verdad (durante el proyecto: Coordinadora del programa de derechos Humanos y Paz, Corporación Región)
51. Valeria Correa, estudiante (durante el proyecto: Integrante equipo de derechos humanos y paz, Corporación Región)
52. Nicolás Díaz, director, Extituto de Política Abierta (durante el proyecto: director, SeamOS)
53. Lina Villa, Socia-consultora, Reflejarse
54. Marta Restrepo López, feminista e integrante de la Red Feminista Antimilitarista
55. Lina Suescún, Socia fundadora, Indeleble
56. Nataly Hernández, Coordinadora de proyectos, Indeleble
57. María Ochoa Sierra, Profesora investigadora, Instituto de Estudios Políticos-Universidad de Antioquia
58. Verónica Tabares, Coordinadora Regional de Antioquia-Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía
59. Víctor Daniel Vélez, Comunicador de la Regional de Antioquia-Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía
60. Clara Tamayo, periodista y coordinadora Prensa Escuela-El Colombiano

UNDEF

61. Jaime Palacios, Programme Officer/project focal point, UNDEF

Annex 3: Main acronyms and abbreviations

FMS	Fundación Mi Sangre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RedAcción	RedAcción de Paz
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USD	United Stated Dollars
Y2Y	Youth to Youth

Annex 4: Evaluation questions

Criteria	Focus	Question	Data collection method	Sources
RELEVANCE	Adequacy	Did the project address the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries, both women and men?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project, third-party and official documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders (partners, allies, service providers, and decision-makers)
	Alignment	Was the project clearly aligned within key stakeholders' mandate and congruent with their strategic framework, including gender specific policies and priorities? <i>(focus on FMS, UNDEF, youth initiatives at local level and NNYL)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project and third-party documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
	Design	Were project strategies, activities, and outputs adequately linked up with outcomes to provide the best approach for achieving project objective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
		Were risks and mitigation strategies appropriately identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
EFFICIENCY	Value for money	How well did the project activities transform available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness (in comparison to what was planned)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
	Governance and management (internal coordination)	To what extent did the management and administrative arrangements sufficiently ensure a cost-efficient and accountable implementation of the project? <i>(Focus on clarity and adequacy of roles; responsibilities; decision making procedures; and, information flows)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Other stakeholders
		Did the rotation of project management staff have an impact on the effectiveness of the project's implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Other stakeholders

	Partnership and alliances (external coordination)	To what extent did the project have an inclusive and gender sensitive partnership strategy?	- Workshops - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops	- Beneficiaries - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
		To what extent did the project promote participation, ownership, alignment, and mutual accountability among all relevant stakeholders?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
EFFECTIVENESS	Progress	What was done? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
	Gender equality	To what extent did the project integrate a gender perspective, and how effective was it in ensuring youth men and women equal and fruitful participation and engagement?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
	Monitoring, evaluating, learning and accountability (MEAL)	How appropriately was progress towards results (outputs and outcomes) measured and monitored? (<i>Focus on sex disaggregated information; monitoring information to promote learning</i>)	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops	- Project documents - Project team - UNDEF
IMPACT	(Outcome 1) Increased capacity	To what extent was the capacity of youth leaders, both men and women, and youth organizations to play a role in the implementation of the peace agreement strengthened?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
	(Outcome 2) Strengthened alliances	To what extent were alliances between youth initiatives strengthened regionally and nationally?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
	(Outcome 3) Increased engagement	To what extent did the engagement in online and offline advocacy spaces of youth organizations and youth leaders, women and men, increase?	- Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey	- Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Service providers
	Unintended changes	To what extent did the project contribute to an increase in youth's participation in elections?	- Document analysis	- Project documents - Project team

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
		To what extent did the project contribute to advancing gender equality among youth organizations and in their communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
	Context and complexity	Due to changes in the development context during project implementation, the focus shifted from the peace agreement to democratic participation, how did this affect youth's involvement and leadership capacities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
SUSTAINABILITY	Process	To what extent did key stakeholders, mainly youth, remain involved, in promoting peace and democracy once the project finished? (<i>Focus on stakeholder's knowledge, ideological alignment & technical/financial capacity</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
	Results	To what extent are the products of the project (for example, best practices documents, videos, etc.) likely to be used after the funding ends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops - Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders
UNDEF VALUE VISIBILITY	Added value	Could the results of the project had been achieved through alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders - UNDEF
	Visibility	Did UNDEF's support to the project appear in all events organized and in all printed and online materials distributed during the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document analysis - Interviews - Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project team - Beneficiaries - Other stakeholders