



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

## EVALUATION OF IPDC PROJECTS

### OUTLINE

**Background:** this document is submitted for the consideration by the IPDC Bureau in response to the recommendation proposed by the external evaluation team from “Education for Change Ltd.” in the report (July 2010) regarding UNESCO’s contribution to Strategic Programme Objectives 12 and 13.

According to the established procedures, the responsible management unit is required to submit a Management Response to each recommendation of an evaluation report. The responsible unit should indicate whether it accepts, partially accepts, or rejects the recommendations in the evaluation report.

**Purpose:** In this context, the Bureau is requested to discuss the given recommendation together with the managerial response provided by the CI sector and to decide, if necessary, on eventual actions in order to contribute to improvement in IPDC delivery and monitoring.

**Decision proposed: page 3**

I. In its report on UNESCO's contribution to Strategic Programme Objectives 12 and 13, the external evaluation team ("Education for Change Ltd.") proposed the following recommendation with regard to the IPDC (see Annex II for extracts from the report):

"CI should improve and increase the systematic evaluations of IPDC projects through:

- a) improved quality control over the specification, commissioning and management of evaluations to ensure relevant and useful results from project evaluations;
- b) undertake more regional and country-level evaluations to provide robust and cumulative evidence of IPDC projects' long-term cost-effectiveness, impact and sustainability;
- c) disseminate the lessons learned from evaluations more effectively within CI to influence future choices about developing and selecting project proposals."

II. According to the established procedures (see [Guidelines for Follow-up to Evaluation Report Recommendations](#)), the CI sector indicated that the given recommendation is partially accepted while providing the following **Management Response**:

"The recommendation fails to adequately take into account media development as a process of empowerment. The outcomes or impact of media development are not necessarily evident in the immediate aftermath of media development project interventions. While such interventions are important in maintaining the empowerment process, media development is largely determined by a number of other factors which are beyond the direct control of a particular IPDC project.

It must be pointed out that the impact evaluations proposed by this recommendation are linked to the long-term development objectives to which a project would contribute, while the current IPDC project evaluation assesses only the achievements of immediate objectives which can be guaranteed within the project. The Sector wishes to underline the fact that IPDC projects are not isolated interventions; they are part and parcel of MLA V.2 'Promoting the Development of free, independent and pluralistic media'. Therefore, any evaluation of the impact of IPDC support must take into account the complementarity of IPDC projects and the CI Sector's overall programme on media development.

The IPDC project evaluations are carried out on the basis of decisions taken by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council, who determines which projects are to be evaluated, and the amount to be allocated from the IPDC Special Account for this purpose. Currently, an average of ten IPDC projects are selected by the Bureau every two years, and \$20,000-25,000 is allocated to cover their total cost. These evaluations are conducted by external evaluators, who visit project sites and verify the achievements. The selection of the evaluators and the preparation of the terms of reference for the evaluations (which include elements on cost-effectiveness and the sustainability of project outputs) are carried out in consultation with the Internal Oversight Services (IOS), in accordance with the instructions contained in memo IOS/2007/009 (sent to the directors and heads of Field Offices) on the management of evaluation at UNESCO.

Evaluations of the cumulative impact of IPDC projects have been carried out occasionally in the past, as directed by the IPDC Bureau. A case in point is the evaluation completed in Nepal, which confirmed the impressive results achieved through IPDC support in catalysing the development of the community media sector in the country. But such evaluations require additional resources to collect reliable data on the media sector as a whole. In most of the countries that the IPDC works in, national statistical institutes do not collect data on relevant media development issues on a regular basis. To address this issue, the CI Sector has already collaborated with UIS to produce country-specific media development data sets to be collected and published annually as of 2011. The Sector is of the view that the availability of such data would enhance IPDC project evaluations.

Evaluation findings are discussed with the CI staff responsible for project implementation, particularly if and when findings do not correspond to the project objectives. These are presented to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC for examination. The IPDC Bureau is responsible for the selection of projects to be supported and the evaluation findings are taken into account when new projects are submitted from the same country. The lessons drawn from the project evaluations are summarized and published along with the evaluation reports. They are distributed to the field staff and made available on the IPDC website for reference.

Following the decision taken by the IPDC Bureau in 2009 to align project support with the IPDC-endorsed Media Development Indicators, and given the initiative launched with UIS to collect standardized data on media development on a regular basis, the Sector believes that there is a possibility to increase the scope and quality of project evaluation. However, this will depend on the ability of the IPDC Bureau to allocate additional financial resources to evaluations from the IPDC Special Account.

Therefore, the Sector will draw the attention of the IPDC Bureau to this recommendation.”

### **III. DECISION PROPOSED**

In light of the above, the Bureau may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The IPDC Bureau,

*Having discussed* the recommendation concerning the evaluation of IPDC projects proposed by the external evaluation team from “Education for Change Ltd.”, together with the managerial response provided by the CI sector,

*Taking into consideration* IPDC’s extensive experience and established procedures with regard to the evaluation of projects,

*Reiterates* that due to the limited funds available for evaluation activities and the high cost of evaluation missions, special attention should be given to the selection of the projects to be evaluated, in order to identify those which can potentially provide the most useful information for the designing, selection and implementation of future projects;

*Requests* the IPDC Secretariat to revise, in collaboration with IOS, the model format and set of guidelines for evaluators to ensure that the evaluations reports on IPDC projects fully meet UNESCO’s requirements in terms of quality;

*Decides* to increase the funds allocated from the IPDC Special Account for evaluation activities in order to enable the IPDC Secretariat to reinforce the evaluation of IPDC projects and ensure adequate follow-up. The biennial allocation will thus increase from US\$25 000 (53<sup>rd</sup> IPDC Bureau meeting, March 2009) to US\$40 000 in view of financing the missions of independent evaluators to complete at least 12 evaluation reports on terminated projects per biennium.

ANNEX I

**WORKLOAD OF DOCUMENTS  
FOR 3 IPDC STATUTORY MEETINGS PER BIENNIUM**

<b>DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PAGES PREPARED AND TRANSLATED</b>
At least 210 <b>project proposals</b> for two Bureau meetings	At least 2400 pages in total in two working languages (600 pages x 2 languages x 2 Bureau meetings)
At least 300 <b>implementation reports</b> on on-going projects for Council session and Bureau meeting (150 reports x per year)	At least 600 pages in two working languages (150 pages x 2 languages x 2 meetings)
At least 10 <b>evaluation reports</b> on terminated projects for IPDC Council session	At least 200 pages in two working languages (100 pages x 2 languages x 1 meeting)
<b>Final report</b> of IPDC Council session	At least 100 pages in two languages (50 pages x 2 languages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity (Report)</li> <li>• UNESCO IPDC Prize for Rural Communication (Candidates)</li> </ul>	At least 100 pages in two languages (50 pages x 2 languages)
Other documents	At least 100 pages in two languages
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3 500 pages in two languages</b>

## ANNEX II

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IPDC EVALUATION PROCEDURES

<p>IPDC COUNCIL 2ND SESSION (JANUARY 1982)</p>	<p>A model format for evaluation of existing projects (which should be used when examining the new phases of a project) was prepared after the second session of the Council.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 5TH SESSION (MAY 1984)</p>	<p>The Council decided that projects already under implementation would be evaluated at the end of each phase, according to standardized procedures.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 11TH SESSION (MARCH 1990)</p>	<p>The Council recommended that: The IPDC should develop a systematic framework for monitoring and evaluation, to cover the separate but interrelated needs for formative, process and summative evaluation at both the project level and the overall programme level. Monitoring and evaluation should take place twice yearly, with executing agencies reporting according to an agreed proforma; final reports of projects should similarly conform to an approved model, and a selected number of representative projects should be the subject of in-depth evaluation. Records should be kept, and regularly updated, of the implementation of all earlier projects of the IPDC, including basic evaluation data on implementation rates, problems encountered, and success and failure rates.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 12TH SESSION (FEBRUARY 1991)</p>	<p>Recommendation of the working group: The group recognizes that financial constraints upon evaluation have to be acknowledged, particularly in the case of smaller projects. Impact evaluations should be given priority in selected cases, and importance attached to obtaining feedback which can lead to concrete and practical results.</p>

<p>IPDC COUNCIL 14TH SESSION (OCTOBER 1993)</p>	<p>The Council decided to approve the allocations for projects funded from the Special Account which include 5 per cent to 8 per cent for post-evaluation.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 15TH SESSION (NOVEMBER 1994)</p>	<p>The Council decided to approve the allocations for projects funded from the Special Account which include 10 per cent for post-evaluation.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 21ST SESSION (MARCH 2001)</p>	<p>A monitoring mechanism for projects should be put in place, from the planning stage through to implementation. IPDC has to continue with its evaluation missions by independent consultants and their results should be communicated to potential donors.</p>
<p>IPDC COUNCIL 22ND SESSION (APRIL 2002)</p>	<p>Taking into account that the evaluation process should be enlarged to include more projects and -especially- that the evaluations are better utilized in the future, the working group proposed the following new procedure regarding the evaluation of terminated projects has been approved: The Bureau will be responsible for establishing of a list of projects to be evaluated by independent consultants on the basis of short reports to be prepared by project officers in cooperation with beneficiary bodies. The number of projects to be evaluated will be determined by taking into consideration the specific modality of each project and amount of funds to be allocated by the Bureau from the IPDC Special Account for the evaluation activities. More transparency will be provided on the selection of independent consultants for project evaluation.</p>
<p>IPDC BUREAU EXTRAORDINARY MEETING JUNE 2003</p>	<p>Due to limited funds available for evaluation activities and the high cost of evaluation missions, special attention should be given to the selection of the projects to be evaluated in order to identify those which can potentially provide the most useful information (lessons) for designing, selection and implementation of future projects.</p>

## ANNEX III

### EVALUATION OF UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES 12 AND 13: ENHANCING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE AND FOSTERING PLURALISTIC FREE AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND INFOSTRUCTURES

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001894/189401e.pdf>

#### INTRODUCTION

UNESCO's 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategy is framed around fourteen Strategic Programme Objectives (SPOs) that capture the entire programme of UNESCO through articulating overarching objectives and expected outcomes.

This evaluation assesses progress towards achieving the expected outcomes of Strategic Programme Objectives 12 and 13, and how progress might be enhanced through improving programme policy, design and delivery.

The outcomes of SPO 12 - Enhancing universal access to information and knowledge – and SPO 13 – Fostering pluralistic, free and independent media and infostructures - contribute to the Overarching Objective 5: Building inclusive knowledge societies, and are implemented by the Communication and Information (CI) sector with the two SPOs covering the breadth of the sector's work.

The evaluation period is 2008-09, though work encompassed programme activities planned and carried out in the previous biennium in order to capture the key events in the evolution of the programmes in focus.

The evaluation covered RP and EXB activities, the work of Intersectoral Platform 5 Fostering ICTenhanced learning, and the role and work of the two inter-governmental programmes - Information for All Programme (IFAP) and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

#### EXTRACTS WITH REGARD TO THE IPDC

##### 1.4.2 Documentation

There is much valuable background documentation related to the CI programmes generated by HQ and some field offices, available at the website and locally produced documentation, including all the material associated with the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) follow-up, and the two inter-governmental programmes, IFAP and IPDC. However, actual projects and activities in the field are not well-documented and those reports (including **IPDC** proposals, implementation and evaluation reports) are of variable quality. No significant body of monitoring data, information or evaluative reporting exists for the biennium in question.

## 2.2 Intergovernmental programmes in CI

The two intergovernmental programmes in the CI sector – IPDC and IFAP - had very different origins within UNESCO’s CI work and are very different in purpose and effectiveness.

They were established by UNESCO with the same funding and governance structures. Special accounts have been established to receive voluntary contributions from Member States to fund these programmes rather than earmarking funds for specific activities. UNESCO has established intergovernmental councils for IPDC and IFAP drawn from among 39 and 26 Member States respectively. Each full council meets every two years to determine programme policy, provide planning guidance and assist in fundraising for contributions to the programme ‘pot’. Each full council has a Bureau representing a small number of Member States, responsible for project selection, approval and allocation of funds from the Special Account.

For each programme UNESCO CI provides the Secretariat from RP allocations and subsidizes the Council and Bureau meetings.

### 2.2.1 IPDC

The IPDC was created by UNESCO in 1980. The pivotal aim was to increase co-operation and assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and to reduce the gap between countries in the communication field. The programme emerged from debates within UNESCO about a ‘new world’ communications and information order, and reflections on the importance of communications media as tools for development.

In providing support to projects, IPDC has four priorities established by its Council:

- Promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism
- Development of community media
- Human resource development
- Promotion of international partnerships

In 2008 and 2009 the IPDC attracted contributions from Member States totalling \$1,729,548 and \$1,937,588 respectively. It had \$2,111,332 available for new projects at 31 December 2009. IPDC projects are small scale stakeholder-driven interventions, with expenditure of on average \$21,400 per project.

A total of 194 IPDC projects with expenditure in the 34 C/5 biennium were recorded in FABS. These IPDC projects represent 68% of the total number of EXB projects, though they account for only 34% of EXB expenditure assigned to the biennium.

The proportion of IPDC as part of all EXB expenditure varies between regions:

in particular IPDC funding accounts for 36% of total EXB in Africa, 52% in Asia and the Pacific and 61% in Latin America and the Caribbean.

IPDC provides an opportunity for professional media organisations, media outlets and NGOs to obtain funding for small-scale projects through a relatively straightforward process (in contrast to other submission-selection-implementation procedures).

Evidence from cumulated IPDC implementation reports (Table 9, Annex 5) suggests IPDC projects are implemented in quite a wide spread of CI areas, in keeping with its four priorities, but that the majority of projects fall into the core areas of community radio and capacity-building for journalists and media personnel.

### 3.4 CI delivery mechanisms and modalities



### 3.4.1 IPDC

Project evaluation reports from the biennium 2006/2007 and earlier suggest that IPDC is a very effective mechanism for channelling support to grass roots media organisations and addressing capacity building needs among media professionals at all levels, with a potentially powerful cumulative impact on, particularly, community media and professionalisation in the media.

Excerpt from the 2008 evaluation of the impact of IPDC projects in community radio in Nepal between 1985 – 2007

*IPDC engaged local groups at a critical time in the country's development and was the first international agency to put its weight behind community radio. The establishment of specific stations, supported by IPDC, was interwoven with the growth and development of Nepal's overall media system. The initial project implementers continue to be at the forefront of the movement's growth in Nepal. Radio stations supported by the Programme - Sagarmatha, Madanpokhara and Lumbini – are internationally recognized and the models they offered – for better and for worse – have been widely replicated. Although the sector in Nepal faces many challenges, the IPDC approach of relatively small projects, each building on the outcomes of previous projects and addressing current sectorial needs has contributed to the gradual build up of national capacity – both of individual stations as well as national organizations and associations - which offers Nepal the best possible chance in facing current and future challenges.*

Field offices submit an average of 4-5 project proposals each year per office. Proposals are submitted by the UNESCO partners dealing with media development in their own countries. CI staff assist partners in the preparation of proposals and have the opportunity through this work to reinforce the network of collaborators they have established to help develop media.

#### *IPDC as the main source of EXB*

IPDC is the only programme available to media NGOs in the UN system, and a “parallel support structure to implement MLA 3”. This parallel funding structure is particularly important in Latin America and the Caribbean where IPDC represents 61% of this region's EXB expenditure in the 34 C/5 biennium (see Table 8, Annex 5). Field offices are very dependent on the programme to complement RP allocations. In three field offices in this region (Havana, Montevideo, Port-au-Prince) IPDC was the only source of EXB funding during the last biennium.

From discussions with CI staff in the field the factors that favour the use of IPDC as the principal source of EXB appear to be pressures of time, difficulties of identifying willing donors for CI areas, the complications of the UNESCO procedures for attracting/securing EXB funding for a project proposal, and lack of experience among both CI staff and NGO partners in developing and writing project proposals for diverse donor agencies. In these circumstances IPDC provides an effective, indeed, indispensable mechanism for many countries.

#### *Upstream and downstream work*

The development of the Media Development Indicators, managed by CI HQ staff and launched in 2008, was the biggest ‘upstream’, normative initiative undertaken using IPDC funds with worldwide and growing impact.

More typically, though not exclusively, IPDC funds ‘downstream’ projects, addressing the needs of geographical communities and communities of practice. A review of 123 IPDC project implementation reports (see Table 9, Annex 5) indicated that 20% supported the establishment or development of community radio stations; 32% capacity building for the professionalisation of journalists and 28% for other media professions. Few IPDC projects appear to have directly addressed the ‘upstream’ aspects of media development, such as

media regulation, licensing issues and public service broadcasting enhancement. The focus of IPDC on community and civil society actors obviously militates against much 'upstream' work.

Nonetheless, CI has undoubtedly made significant progress at national and regional levels towards the achievement of several of the expected results of MLA 3, through the aggregated effect of these small individual projects, and its continued support from RP to IPDC partners after project completion.

### *Some lessons learned*

The evaluation of the IPDC reforms by the University of Oslo<sup>13</sup> recommended that "while there have been improvements in the use of evaluation processes, more could be done in order to make use of the evaluations as a learning tool for IPDC and the CI sector as a whole." While most projects are evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness and immediate results the cumulative, long-term impact of the Programme in a country or region has only, to our knowledge, been assessed in Nepal (2008).

The Nepal evaluation appears to suggest, supported by anecdotal evidence from the field missions in this evaluation, that IPDC projects are most effective and have the greatest impact if:

- they are not one-off or stand-alone projects but part of a more sectoral or strategic approach;
- projects are focused over a period of time on one or two big issues (supporting specific community radio developments, or developing effective training of media professionals, for instance); or
- projects are deliberate catalysts for leveraging and supporting other larger donor support, such as pilots for particular approaches to media development or developing and testing particular models of media delivery,

Close involvement of UNESCO CI staff in identification, preparation and monitoring, as well as in partnership capacity development to manage projects, emerges as a recommendation from the Nepal evaluation. Such close and continuous involvement is seen as a positive benefit and advantage also by the IPDC Secretariat: "the field professionals who assist in the preparation of proposals have the opportunity through this work to reinforce the network of collaborators they have established to help develop media. Without IPDC, most of the field offices would have no credible mechanism for building a network of partners."

### *Sustainability*

The evaluation of the IPDC reforms by the University of Oslo highlighted how IPDC projects can be and often are integrated with RP and other EXB projects, providing the mechanism for piloting and start-up projects that can be scaled up. Clear evidence of this planned integration is quite hard to find, though exploitation of synergies between RP and IPDC clearly happens de facto in many field offices.

The impression from reviewing biennial programmes at country level and talking to CI staff is that IPDC projects tend to be stand-alone projects, though the project partners may be part of CI's established network of local media collaborators, regularly supported by either RP or IPDC funds. The sustainability of one-off development projects is always an issue and sustainability options are addressed in project proposals and are evaluated.

Where IPDC activity is effectively integrated with RP and other EXB programmes, there are obvious sustainability gains. RP can be used to forge and sustain relationships with key community partners after the IPDC project is implemented (e.g. in the Palestinian Territories) or to prepare partners for IPDC projects through feasibility and preparation work.

Sustainability is also further evident where community media and radio projects in particular can be scaled up using other UN funding (e.g. Cameroon). IPDC projects often have significant multiplier effects, with many UN and other international agencies and NGOs making use of community media established by IPDC to communicate their messages and reach out to target communities (e.g. Cameroon), though this is not usually the result of deliberate planning and depends on the right conditions being in place.

## *Developing country contexts*

In the least developed countries, which are a key target group for UNESCO, CI work necessarily takes on a different character than in other more developed regions and countries. CI in this context acts more as an ‘implementing agency’ than a ‘facilitating agency’; focusing more on ‘downstream’ rather than ‘upstream’ work. For example, in African countries CI EXB in the last biennium was characterised by the heavy use of the IPDC to fund projects in media development in Africa (see Table 9, Annex 5) and the emphasis in the RP on support to community media. ‘Cutting-edge’ issues in particular around e.g. ICT or internet governance, are rarely addressed as they are not current priorities in developing country contexts. In contrast, CI’s RP and EXB in Bangkok focused on empowering information professionals to support information policy development, information literacy training for school and university students, and access to scientific knowledge.

### 4.7 IPDC cost effectiveness

IPDC is an effective intergovernmental programme and the main instrument through which CI progresses towards the SPOs in the fields of media development, community participation and professionalisation in media.

CI staff are encouraged and expected to maintain considerable control over the IPDC project cycle and each project can involve a lot of work for CI staff in the field. Evidence from discussions with staff suggests that they routinely assist (and often negotiate with, to ensure that the project would fit in CI priorities and MLAs) NGO and other partners to develop project ideas, write and revise the project proposals. In this sense, IPDC is a labour-intensive programme, taking up a large proportion of CI field staff time, when they also need to initiate and progress activities in the very wide range of other CI areas under MLAs 1 and 2.

Though there is considerable anecdotal evidence indicating the value and long-term, cumulative impact of IPDC projects, not enough systematic documented evidence about project outcomes and impact is available to make a proper judgement about

- the cost effectiveness of all the effort put in to small-scale projects of two years duration;
- the right balance of staff effort between IPDC and other areas of CI interest; and
- whether actions could be taken to further improve the programme’s efficiency and effectiveness.

Moreover, the findings of project evaluations that are done are not disseminated in useful and digested forms for staff to benefit from lessons learned.

## **5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions outlined in the preceding sections the evaluation makes the following recommendations.

### 5.4 More effective evaluation of IPDC

- CI should improve and increase the systematic evaluations of IPDC projects through
  - a) improved quality control over the specification, commissioning and management of evaluations to ensure relevant and useful results from project evaluations;
  - b) undertake more regional and country level evaluations to provide robust and cumulative evidence of IPDC projects’ long-term cost-effectiveness, impact and sustainability;
  - c) disseminate the lessons learned from evaluations more effectively within CI to influence future choices about developing and selecting project proposals.