

# EVALUATION REPORT

Minority Rights Group, London, UK

2009-2012

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AR: Awareness Raising  
AU: African Union  
ACHPR: African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights AU African Union  
APRM: African Peer Review Mechanism  
ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations  
BiH: Bosnia and Herzegovina  
CB: Capacity Building  
CBO: Community Based Organisations  
CSO: Civil Society Organization  
CoE: Council of Europe  
EC: European Commission  
EaP: Eastern Partnership  
EU: European Union  
ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms  
EWC: Endorois Welfare Council GoK Government of Kenya  
HCNM: High Commission on Nacional Minorities OSCE  
ILO: International Labour Organisation  
IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons  
ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
IOs: International Organisations  
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals  
MRG: Minority Rights Group International  
NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development  
NGO: Non Governmental Organisation  
OIDHR: the Office for Democratic Institutions for Human Rights of the OSCE  
OAS: Organisation of American States  
OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers  
PUT: Peoples Under Threat  
SEE: South East Europe  
SIDA: Swedish International Development Agency  
SWM: State of the World's Minorities  
ToR: Terms of Reference  
UN CERD: United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
UN DRIPS: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
UN FMI: United Nations Forum on Minority Issues  
UN HRC: Human Rights Council  
UN OHCHR: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
UNPFII: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
UNHRMs: United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms  
UPR: Universal Periodic Review  
WB: World Bank

### 1. Executive Summary

Today, no place is beneath the radar or beyond the reach of globalization. Our world is changing rapidly and history shows that if minority issues remain unresolved, such is often a cause or excuse for escalation of violent conflict. Shortly before and after 1992, there was increased international attention given to the rights of indigenous peoples. Resolutions were written, policy reports drafted and budget lines created. Today, the issue has been buried under many other issues again. Indigenous peoples have been “mainstreamed and forgotten.” Where minority rights go consistently ignored, a descent into conflict is always a risk. MRG's assessment of 53 ongoing conflicts in 2002 found that over 71 per cent of the world's conflicts have an ethnic dimension. Despite this, the factors that create conflict (historical marginalisation of one group by another, denial of a group's identity and land rights, increasing poverty, discrimination and hate speech) often go unaddressed (Darfur, Chechnya, Kashmir, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Mali). As conflicts occur, the marginalised position of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities makes them even more vulnerable (Pygmies or Batwa in Rwanda and DRC, Baha'is in Iran).

MRG's mission is strategic and includes two complementary objectives: securing the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples and improving cooperation between minority and majority communities. To assess progress towards achieving these objectives, the organisational indicators for MRG's programmes and project success would be: how minority and indigenous peoples' organisations are strengthened, how cooperation and understanding between communities has improved (claims of rights-holders), and how the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples are enhanced (securing positive changes in national laws, policies or practices, changing discriminatory attitudes and strengthening international systems for minority protection of duty-bearers). This rights-based approach ensures that strategies facilitate the claims of rights-holders and the corresponding obligations of duty-bearers<sup>1</sup>.

MRG occupies a strategic position at both the international and grassroots level. It seeks to enhance implementation of the international human rights system, improve access of minorities and indigenous peoples to legal mechanisms, engages with the media, and publish a broad range of materials on minority rights: reports, micro studies, macro studies, guides, training manuals, briefing papers and the annual *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples* (SWM). MRG is mainly active in Horn of Africa and Great Lakes and South East Europe (SEE), but also implements some projects in Asia, Middle East and Latin America. Shifts of focus in geographical areas are the result of changing realities and funding opportunities.

For a relatively small organisation, MRG generates an impressive amount of interventions (see Chapter 4.3), administers projects at global, regional and national level and makes a difference at local level. Evaluation procedures are well established and transparent, MRG publications enjoy a good, even excellent, reputation with stakeholders. There is no doubt that MRG's mission will increase in importance over the next couple of years. Development agencies will come to realise that minorities and indigenous peoples effectively did not benefit from the MDGs and there will be an increased call for its specialised experience. This evaluation has identified countless examples where MRG actions make impacts on peoples lives, increase self-respect of communities, intensifies dialogue with national authorities and access to international organisations and Human

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<sup>1</sup> See definition of the Concepts of HRBA, minorities, minority Rights and indigenous peoples in the Inception Report.

Rights Mechanisms (HRMs). MRG is supporting minorities and indigenous peoples to submit legal claims, exert political influence, bring local issues to international fora and make moral claims where legal claims are being dismissed. It makes long-term engagements with partners in the field, a majority of which express the opinion that they would benefit from more frequent contact with MRG. More influence can be generated if the wealth of field experiences is translated into operational theory, partners are put back in focus and coalition building is increased.

What are the immediate priorities for the future?

- Visualise and strengthen internal networks
  - highlight better the role of partners in proposals, reports and evaluations
  - involve partners more in strategic planning
  - continue decentralisation of regional offices
- Strengthen external networks
  - consistently map advocacy targets
  - build better synergies with other INGO's and NGOs
  - identify focal points and intensify communication with IOs
- Policy development and theory building
  - develop an MRG Brand Approach,
  - professionalise methodologies, toolbox, programme documents and reports

The first chapter of this report reflects on the aims of the present evaluation, its scope and methods. It provides a brief summary of MRG's objectives and discusses the objectives and input of its programmatic documents and annual reports covering the past strategic period. It suggests that the objectives for the new strategic period could be defined more closely to MRG's core mission and offers an alternative for the existing strategy organisational diagram so as to do justice to the inter-relations and cross-fertilisation between MRG, minority and indigenous communities, their organisations and stakeholders. The section concludes that there is a decline in unrestricted or flexible funding and offers some suggestions to ensure a long-term financially secure future for the organisation.

Chapter three includes some brief comments on how evaluation has been a learning tool for MRG and presents a meta-analysis of 11 independent evaluations of its project and programmes in Africa, Asia and Europe, implemented or finalised between 2009-2012. It identifies general findings and trends (the relevance of MRG's interventions to the needs of minorities and Indigenous peoples, that MRG projects can deeply impact on traditional relations, and the need for long-term engagements, etc.), areas for improvements (collaboration with other (I)NGOs use of intervention logics and participation strategies, the need to develop more clearly defined qualitative indicators, lack of baseline information) and ends by analysing the overall quality of the 11 evaluations.

Chapter four analyses MRG's international advocacy strands. It provides a brief introduction to the concept and MRG's approach to advocacy thus far. This chapter also identifies MRG's advocacy targets and presents a list of achievements obtained during the last strategic period. It concludes that measuring international advocacy on minority rights issues is complex, as is attribution, but that MRG should build on past experience to develop a more focused advocacy strategy. The chapter assesses the ability of the organisation to access and influence international agencies at the global level (UN) and international organisations and HRMs at the regional level (African Commission on Human and People's Rights/ACHPRs and the High Commissioner on National Minorities

/HCNM of the OSCE in Europe). Finally, this chapter also assesses MRG's ability to strengthen the voices of minority and indigenous organisations and make an impact at the grassroots level, based on evidence collected through interviews and questionnaires distributed to 179 partners and stakeholders in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe.

Chapter five presents the evaluators comparative conclusions based on secondary and primary resources, MRG's added value and challenges, future priorities and recommendations.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Aims of the present evaluation

This evaluation was conducted by an independent expert and facilitated by MRG staff, partners and stakeholders, without whose support and input this study would not have been possible. It is part of an open dialogue between stakeholders and was conducted as transparently as possible. The evaluation aims to enhance organisational learning, policy and project development through critical analysis. It was commissioned in association with Sida and presents the outcome of an organisation-wide external evaluation of MRG in two parts.

The purpose of this evaluation exercise was to: assess how SIDA core-funding has been used by MRG; the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and results of actions in the four geographical regions; identify added value; and provide recommendations for the new strategic four-year period. The research has been mainly qualitative. The first part of this report introduces the aims of the present evaluation, assesses MRG's objectives and the latest strategy and annual programmes and presents the findings of a meta analysis of past independent evaluations of MRG projects and programmes. The second part reviews MRG's international advocacy approach, its claims and ability to access and influence international agencies and HRMs, and presents the conclusions and recommendations for ways forward based on field missions, interviews and questionnaires to over 200 partners and stakeholders. The annexes include the ToR, a list of MRG partners and stakeholders, documents and questionnaires. Building on this, a new four-year strategy will be presented to MRG's International Council for approval in October 2012.

Since 2005, Sida has contributed £230.000 a year to MRG's core funding. This evaluation covers the second four year period of Sida's support to MRG ( 2009-2012). The total annual expenditure of MRG is approximately £2.5 million a year. Therefore, Sida's support amounts to about 10per cent of MRG's annual income. This Sida funding is a contribution to the core capacity of MRG and is not earmarked for special activities or programmes. This evaluation, therefore, includes the overall package of projects and advocacy activities between 2009 and 2012.

Most funders support project activities and require strict percentages for management and administration. Core funding supports essential aspects of MRGs organisational quality, including evaluation and staff development, strategy development and planning. Core funding is also essential to bridge gaps between projects that have come ended and new projects that will be launched in the future. It helps link programmes, prevents staff from being fired, allow staff to develop considerable expertise and secures continuity of

programmes. Core funding thus allows MRG to continue to build quality and learn as an organisation. The litigation programme is a good example where, thanks to reserves and core funding, MRG was able to continue to support partners and legal cases even when project money temporarily ended. Sida support has been used for that purpose; it is flexible money that can be used when needed. Core funding gives MRG the ability to react quickly to crises that emerge for example, the “Arab Spring”). The organisation would benefit from more core funding.

## 2.2 Methods and scope

The key instruments of this evaluation were: a study of completed evaluations (meta analysis of projects and programmes implemented between 2009-2012), project documents, field visits to London headquarters (HQ), Bangkok, Budapest (regional projects and offices) and Macedonia (in situ visit), general guiding questions based on the priorities of the ToR (see inception report), participatory observation and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with partners and other stakeholders (see annex). Over 175 partners, donors, inter-governmental and governmental agencies and other stakeholders were approached. Their responses were very encouraging. Over 70 partners and stakeholders returned the questionnaires with valuable observations.

The basic elements that determine the evaluation criteria are: relevance of the proposed action to the people (minorities and indigenous peoples), ownership and involvement of local partners at all stages of the project cycle, quality of the intervention, i.e. capacity building of appropriate techniques that local communities need to improve their rights before majority communities, improvement of policies and their implementation, strategic planning. Through analysing the DAC criteria, this evaluation addresses the question of whether, with Sida support, MRG was successful in achieving its strategic objectives: making significant progress towards securing the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples; and improving cooperation and understanding between communities. This evaluation also looked at MRG’s rights-based approach and gender perspectives (for further details, please see the Inception Report in the Annex).

## 2.3 Summary of MRG’s objectives

Founded in the 1960s, MRG is an independent, international non-governmental organisation (INGO). It is not a membership organisation. It is governed by an International Council, which meets twice a year. MRG’s international headquarters are in London, where it is legally registered both as a charity and as a limited company under English law. It has regional offices in Budapest, Kampala and Chiang Mai.

MRG is a rights-based organisation that seeks to persuade decision-makers of the need for constructive change through involvement of minority communities and in partnership with around 130 organisations in some 60 countries (see annex). MRG’s work concerns empowering minority and indigenous communities to be aware of and demand fulfilment of their rights to equality in all areas of life. MRG trains minority activists, and supports advocacy campaigns and legal cases to bring about policy changes and implementation.



MRG is also a small organisation with around 40 staff globally, a budget of approximately £2.2 million a year and a focused mandate. Its two-fold mission is strategic in that it does not only focus on improving the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples in isolation, but also on promoting cooperation between minority and majority communities, thus paving the way for enhancing peaceful co-existence.

Although primarily a human rights organisation, MRG is to some extent inter-disciplinary in that it also works within the paradigms of development, conflict prevention and anti-racism. There are other NGOs that work in similar fields: indigenous peoples' rights (IWGIA, Survival International, NCIV, Indigenous Resources) or minority rights (mostly regional organisations), but MRG occupies a strategic position at the international level. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). A Dutch government comparative study (02/2004) of nine NGOs quotes UN officials' comments about MRG's positive performance. MRG won a large number of EU calls for tender (although lately several have been rejected). MRG also enjoys a good reputation online; any Google search using the word "minorities" provides immediate hits to MRG. At an overall strategic level, MRG is found to have been a pioneer in enhancing minority rights in development, but creating further strategic linkages between the human rights and development community is an important future challenge for MRG.

#### MRG's partners

Although MRG can show many examples of good practice, there is no formal system in place for identifying partners. MRG's public profile generates initiatives from local organisations. Fundamental to the way MRG works is that partners are closely involved in the communities and that their representation is genuine. Sometimes organisations contact MRG of their own accord, driven by needs on the ground. Sometimes MRG is already in touch with communities and starts work with representative organisations. Generally, organisations should have some track record of implementing projects of a certain scale and type and have some degree of management and financial capacity and staff resources to become an MRG partner. In some cases, MRG supports organisations to build their capacity from the ground up.

Becoming an MRG partner is ultimately a natural and self-selecting process. Procedures could be systematised and more structured. MRG could develop a system of community, carrying out needs assessments and identifying organisations transparently. A number of jointly identified criteria could be developed. Organisations can then be divided into two categories: gold (capacity to work independently) and silver (capacity building for organisational and project development needed).

#### MRG's projects and programmes

MRG generally employs three different ways of determining which programmes are implemented where and why. In theory, MRG facilitates partners in their activities, rather than deciding what should happen. First, partners or communities approach MRG by writing letters, emailing or phoning with a request for technical or other support. Following such a request, MRG shares with the local organisation in question what kind of support it can offer, a planning meeting is set up, possibilities of starting a programme are assessed, proposals are written and funders are found. In this way that the project to enhance Batwa



Pygmies Leadership was developed and started when a person from Rwanda approached MRG. Second, through global programmes trainees learn how to campaign and advocate for minority rights. In some cases this can lead to projects in countries where MRG has not been active before. Trainees can come back to MRG with proposals for future projects. Through the Global Advocacy Programme (GAP), for example, people from Asia, Africa and SEE countries receive online training to learn both theoretical and practical skills. MRG recently obtained funding for a follow-up programme in Russia with partners that were GAP trainees. Third, on occasions a programme can also come into being as a result of the particular experience of staff members (for example MRG projects in Egypt and Bangladesh). Some projects are also donor driven; donors identify priorities and put out a call for proposals and MRG responds with a project on issues that fall within its mandate.

MRG exists to support partners, boost advocacy efforts of partners and work as closely as possible to where activities are delivered, hence regional offices today are being strengthened. Capacity building (financial and staff management, proposal design, monitoring and fundraising, facilitating strategic contacts with the outside world, HRMs, governments, etc.) will contribute to empowering organisations and also increase their ownership of supported activities and processes.

#### 2.4 Strategy, annual programmes and reports (2009-2012)

Every four years, MRG holds an organisation-wide consultation with staff, stakeholders and the Council. This process of defining the strategy presents two major challenges for MRG: i). how ambitious can/should MRG be in terms of setting (new) goals and ii). how can it extend communication on the programme documents and publications to a wider audience to give the work a strategic focus. During the past four years, MRG published 16 reports, five guides, 20 briefings, two training manuals and four *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples* on subjects relevant to minorities and indigenous peoples<sup>2</sup>.

The 2009-2012 strategy and annual programme documents which govern the period that is being reviewed by the evaluator, explain how MRG's mission will be put into practice through projects and programmes (thematic and regional). The four annual programmes (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) of the strategy carry the same slogan: *working together for peaceful development*. All four include basic information about MRG, the organisation's strategy, the strategic framework, the programme of work for each year and appendices (MRG's main current partners, guiding principles, monitoring and evaluation, policies summary, fundraising guiding principles, major donors and budget summary for Personnel. The strategy and programme documents are somewhat repetitious.

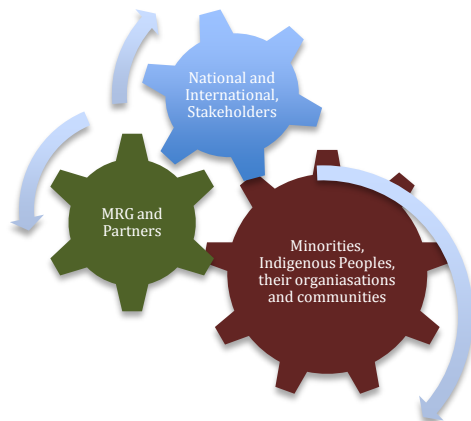
The 2009-2012 strategy underlines that MRG projects respond to the needs of minority communities across the world. It acknowledges that the best advocates are local organisations, but how they are involved in the decision-making processes that precede and accompany projects and address their rights and needs, is not made explicit. MRG's annual programmes underline that programmes are selected on their potential to achieve meaningful and sustainable impact. In deciding where to work "we consider where the

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<sup>2</sup> See the Annex for a complete list of publications.

need is greatest as well as where, in our assessment, change processes are underway or issues of minority rights are topical and high profile, and therefore the potential for an organisation of our size to achieve significant change and impact is highest”. MRG projects and evaluations could make this essential point of departure more explicit in the reporting. Evaluation reports also do not sufficiently highlight the issue of who, within or outside MRG, decides which projects and activities where, how and with whom will be implemented. This chain is the core justification of any MRG project.

MRG’s guiding principles are part of the appendices, but since they stand at the heart of MRG’s work, they could be part of the very first section of the work programme and strategy. The strategy for the new period 2013-2016 could do more to highlight that MRG is an organisation that builds on and owes its existence to its wide network of local communities and partner organisations, champions diversity and equal rights, self-development, the need to strengthen and share traditional knowledge systems as a special contribution to tackling twenty-first century challenges in respect to minorities and indigenous peoples and brings about change in specific situations with the involvement of the people affected. This would demonstrate more clearly that MRG is rooted in minority and indigenous communities all over the world and that the people affected are involved in all stages of programming, from identification, formulation, implementation to evaluation of MRG’s projects and programmes.



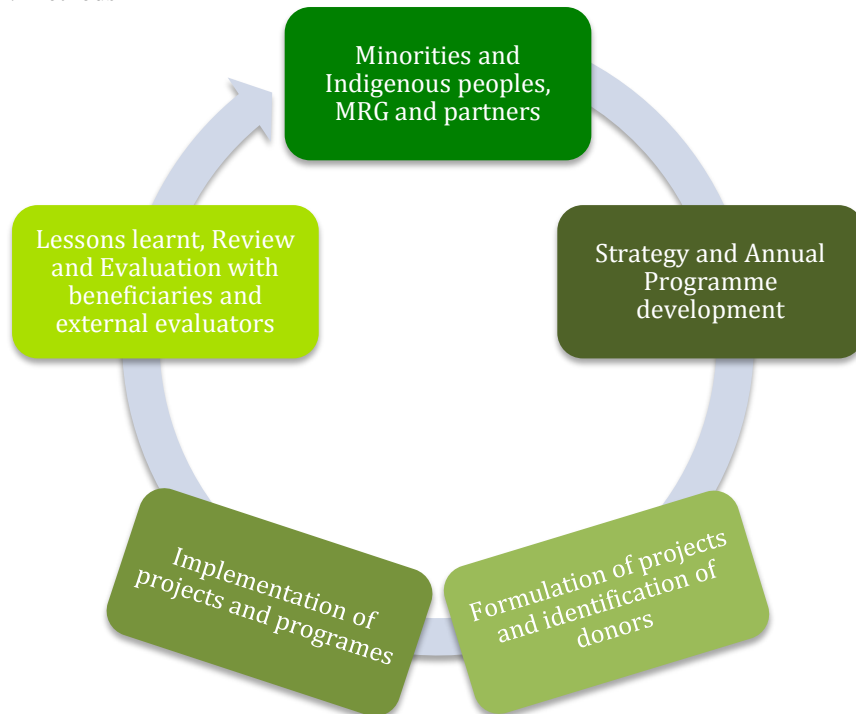
The strategic plan for 2009 – 2012 includes six objectives. MRG’s strategy has moved to an outcomes-focused approach (from an outputs (or activities) focused approach). The five key strategies identified for achieving the six objectives are: bringing about positive changes in national laws, policies and practices; land rights and education; increasing participation of, and protection for women from minority and indigenous communities; managing a greater proportion of work from regional offices (Uganda and Hungary); and assisting partners to build their capacity.

The objectives of the strategic framework are laudable but too general and ambitious (“reducing poverty, preventing conflict”), interrelated and overlapping; “ending discrimination” and “changing discriminatory attitudes”, for example, are two separate objectives under different headings but clearly linked. MRG’s key strategies for achieving its objectives are also worded as objectives: “Bring about positive changes in laws, policies and/or practices either nationally or in areas of significant minority population” or: “Address negative attitudes resulting from ignorance and lack of contact between majorities and minorities”. Could objectives be defined more strictly, closer to MRG’s mission, to the reality of its work, to make it easier to link them to the proposed strategies?

The intentions in the strategy are yet too activity driven and could be more results-focused to make the new four-year tool more powerful. A strategy should be short, specific, easy to read and explain clearly to partners, donors or other stakeholders *how* this will be achieved. The description of activities could highlight existing capacities of minority organisations and the knowledge and know-how of minority communities.

The existing strategy diagram from the 2009-2012 strategy includes all relevant stages, but it is linear. MRG’s work should be presented in a more circular movement, reflecting the continuous flow of needs and rights assessments, responses and lessons learned between minorities/indigenous peoples, their organisations worldwide, MRG HQ, regional offices, partners and other stakeholders. The present diagram links MRG through its beneficiaries and partners to its objectives. A renewed strategic diagram could visualise the more cyclical, cross-fertilising relationships that constitute the MRG universe, for example:

DIAGRAM 1: Methods

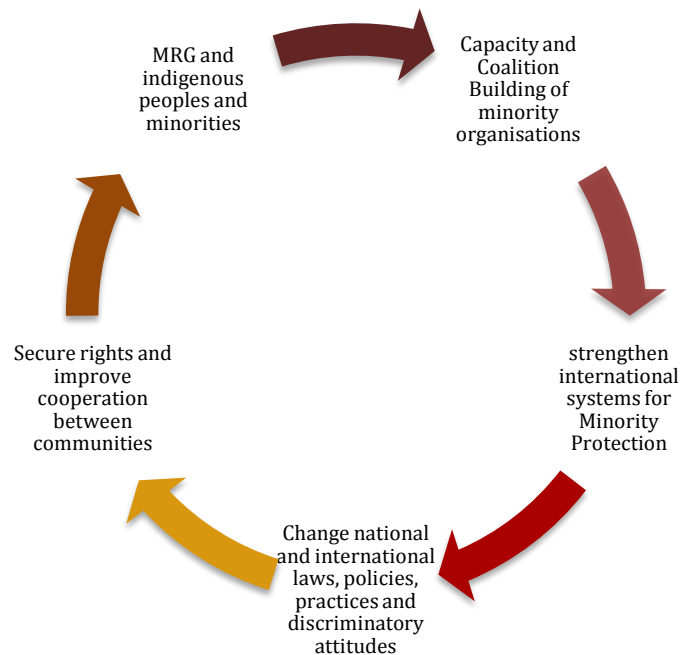


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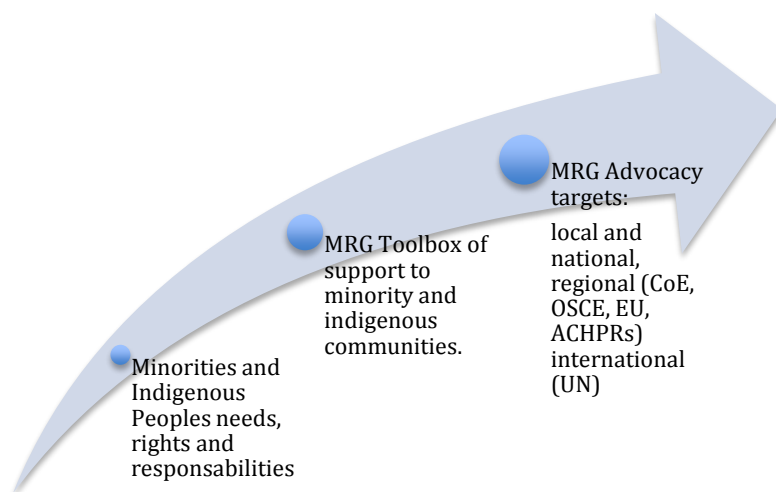
<sup>3</sup> Impact in terms of reaching the organisational objectives: strengthen minority organisations, promote participation, strengthen international systems for minority protection, address poverty, conflict and discrimination

<sup>4</sup> geographical and thematic area (Capacity building, training and workshops with minority organisations, legal case work, national and international advocacy, publications, media work)

DIAGRAM 2: tools and impacts



MRG’s annual reports no longer provide a record of activities. They are therefore shorter and less detailed than in the past. This is a positive development, it makes the reports easier to digest and more interesting to read. Outcomes are grouped around the six objectives, not geographically. They do not consistently link advocacy at the community-level to impacts generated as a result of advocacy with partners at local, national, international level (including HRMs and UN). In the overview of progress, only a few achievements are included and no distinction is made between outcomes, outputs and activities. Local level progress (the first objective: strengthening the voices of minority and indigenous peoples), is described in terms of quantification of outputs and activities (quantified numbers of people participating in events and their opinions and participants ratings: “*my knowledge increased, the group work was interesting*”). To understand impact at local level, the crucial issue is not only how many peoples were trained but HOW minority representatives and their leaders benefited from trainings, CB, AR, visits, and what processes they initiated and what they achieved. To measure this, six months after training, MRG approaches trainees again to monitor the practical use they are making of the trainings, coalition building and campaign initiatives. This information could be captured in a logical sequence of cause and effect and become the starting point of annual reports, tracking consistently the different project concepts rather than recording isolated events and (training) activities. It is also important that the reports make reference to and further elaborates MRG’s brand policies in the field of advocacy, legal case work and gender as the guiding principles, in addition to presenting partner’s priorities, following transparent and participatory processes of needs identification at community and other levels. The reports could also include a description of the MRG Toolbox (advocacy, online and/or face to face trainings, CB, AR, theatre, radio, legal support etc.) and a mapping of relevant advocacy targets in each region. MRG projects and programmes with minority and indigenous communities are thus visualised as part and parcel of a conceptual MRG advocacy continuum, linking communities through tools with targets:



MRG runs two main types of programmes: geographically based (programmes that concentrate on minorities or indigenous peoples in a particular region, sub-region or country), and based on a thematic area or methodology (involving minority partners from all over the world). The geographical focus of MRG in parts of Africa, Asia and Europe has been constant. Between 2009-2012, MRG was active in: the Horn, Eastern and Central Africa (Botswana, Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda (regional office), Somalia and South Sudan and a new project in Mauritania), South-East Europe (BiH, Hungary (regional office), Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, Cyprus, Poland, Turkey) and South and South-East Asia (Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, West Papua, Sri Lanka, Vietnam. New programmes were started in the Middle East and Latin America (with Afro-descendants in Brazil, Peru and Ecuador and with indigenous peoples in Belice), but MRG was not able to secure funding for these projects in Latin America.

The thematic focus has also been constant over the four years, with additional initiatives in the field of Afro-descendants and climate change.

2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Regional Work</b>			
Africa/Middle East Region	Africa/Middle East Region	Africa/Middle East	Africa/Middle East
PRSPs project	PRSP project	Asia & the Pacific	
Asia/Pacific Region	Asia/Pacific Region	Central Asia	Asia & the Pacific
Europe/Central Asia Region	Europe/Central Asia Region	Europe, South Caucasus	Other regional programmes
<b>Thematic Work</b>			
Gender project	Gender project	Gender Project	Gender Project
Roma Programme	Street Theatre Project	Street Theatre Project	Street Theatre Project
MRG Strategic Communications	MRG Strategic Communications	Minority Voices Project	Minority Voices Project
UN Advocacy project	UN Advocacy project	Global Advocacy Project	Global Advocacy Project
Legal Cases project	Legal Cases project	Legal Cases Project	Legal Cases Project
Conflict Resolution projects	Conflict Resolution projects	Conflict Prevention Project	Conflict Prevention Project
Turkey project	Turkey project		
Afro Americans project	Afro- Americans project		
Other programmes	Other programmes (i.e. Climate Change)	Other programmes (i.e. Climate Change)	Other programmes (Climate Change)

Though it is always tempting to expand into new areas in a new strategic period, it is recommended that MRG continues to focus on its core mission, without expanding too much into other areas. MRG's mission is already vast and also unique, and its specialised knowledge and experience are its strengths. The organisation would benefit from further deepening, improving methodologies, strategies and impacts. Should relevant opportunities arise (for example: hypothetically WHO requests MRG to cooperate in a campaign to enhance minority health practice), they should be accepted, but the focus should remain on the priorities of minorities, indigenous peoples and their organisations and this should be at the heart of the new strategic period.

To further involve partners and communities, participatory decision-making practices and consultation procedures with beneficiaries in the process of identification of priorities and ways forward, could be developed. A global meeting is unrealistic and too expensive, but there are other, more efficient and cost-effective ways to hold a consultation process: using survey monkey, decentralised regional face to face or electronic surveys, telephone/video conferences or opening an interactive consultation on the MRG website. The results of the consultations could be included in MRGs strategic documents and enhance credibility of MRG as an organisation that prioritises participation and consultation with minority and indigenous peoples.

## 2.5 Sources of income

The International Council decides on the budget outlines and programme strategies and delegates work to Committees. MRG's annual income during the period evaluated has been steady and grew slightly in 2010/11. MRG is developing a decentralised structure by strengthening regional offices. The role of regional offices in implementing activities has gradually increased. Over the past three years, small grants have tripled.

YEAR	Total Income
2009	£2,341,943
2010	£3,346,618
2011	£3,268,785
2012	£2,508,817

MRG - Grants to Partners	2011	2010	2009
Total spent on projects	£2.741.108	£2.571.347	£2.257.737
Total sent to partners (including salaries and overheads for long term relations)	£699.831	£806.432	£805.746
% sent to partners compared to the overall expenditure	26%	31%	36%
Number of partner organisations MRG has worked with:	58	63	43
Total small grants to partners	£193.646	£53.916	
% small grants to partners compared to the overall expenditure	7%	2%	
Number of small grants to partners	45	26	

MRG is aware that the current decline in unrestricted or flexible funding represents a threat to its long-term future. What more could MRG be doing to ensure a long-term financially secure future for the organisation?



#### Diversification of income streams:

- MRG has recognised the risks of a decline in both core and project funding, partly because fund-raising has not been successful during the recent period and partly a recognition of the fact that the two largest unrestricted grants are up for renewal in 2012-13 (the Sida grant is one of these).
- The risks were reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee this April. MRG is well within its match funding limit, so the risk of failing to secure adequate match funding for programmes is low.
- Thus far, MRG has managed to maintain a stable income, but with the recession, budget cuts and increased competition for grants and donations (more NGOs are seeking more money from traditional funding sources) MRG has to rethink its financial model, explore other options (private sector) and develop a more diversified range of local and international donors who can provide different amounts at different points during programme/project implementation, as it is always easier to get money for *one* event than for a sustained long-term programme.
- MRG has been planning to develop a diversification strategy, but due to urgent issues and cut backs, it has not been able to do so as yet. This has been recognised as a priority. Management has meanwhile been working on the budget for the next strategic period, and foresees a stable performance during the next few years. Some contracts for projects that will be running for the next 2–3 years have already been signed and there are several pending applications. In terms of funding diversification, MRG is trying to reduce dependence on EU funding by applying to trusts and foundations. Furthermore, MRG will seek to increase income from individual donations by optimising its website and make more use of social media. Finally, corporate opportunities should be explored more (recently MRG signed a charity appeal with BBC radio 4).
- In addition to diversifying sources of income and bearing in mind the ever increasing competition for ever more limited funds, it is important that MRG continues to work on improving the quality of its funding applications. Proposals should not fail on admissibility/eligibility and project intervention logics and strategic multi-pronged approaches should be rooted in the communities and define clear, obtainable objectives (such as the legal projects in Kenya and BiH, and the GAP).
- Finally, MRG could develop particular funding streams that allow targeting and engaging consistently in regional advocacy processes.

Funds are channelled from HQ to regional offices quarterly. Regional offices have their own accountants and propose their budgets, but HQ has the financial oversight. Dialogue and monitoring is intense, but with the purpose of support, not of control. It has been a definite goal to make the regional offices more autonomous through much needed improvements of staff capacity and independent fund raising, but keeping the organisational identity. HQ communicates with regional offices through regular visits (a total of two months a year to the Uganda office, less to the Hungary office), one-to-one sessions, Skype conversations and email. For the most part, collaboration between HQ and regional offices has been effective; issues that emerged have been more of a technical nature. A challenge for the future is build up MRG's integrity and reputation in the regional offices, as the central reputation is one of MRG's important assets.

Four years ago, MRG Africa based in Kampala was largely playing the role of a logistics office and was not engaged in much strategic work. Over time, the office started developing projects “from the African point of view”, and although management still sits

in London, Uganda is involved in each and every step of fundraising, budgeting, project design and implementation. The African approach involves carrying out thorough needs assessment and involving partners and communities in the design of projects that respond to the reality of minority communities, systematically asking for opinions and creating a sense of ownership of projects and programmes throughout the design and implementation process. Almost every conflict in the African continent seems to have a minority angle and most are resource conflicts. Minorities in Africa are marginalised in all spheres of life; some are facing extinction, their cultures are eroding. The MRGAfrica office has played a role in empowering minority communities to speak for themselves and participate in socio-economic processes in their countries like other citizens. For instance; one project has worked to ensure minorities participate in the constitutional reforms in Kenya and as a result the new Constitution seems to be taking their views into consideration. The Uganda office is better placed and able to keep stronger links with partners on the ground. Sometimes partners approach the office, sometimes it happens the other way around. The office developed a profiling matrix of all minority communities in the region which serves as a guide for expansion and bringing new partners on board. They also encourage and facilitate coalition building both at national and regional level to enable organisations to speak with one voice, share experiences and learn from each other. Working with communities that are excluded and marginalised by dominant groups is difficult because they are generally and justifiably suspicious of outsiders.

Where possible, MRG Africa offers technical guidance in form of fundraising skills, media skills monitoring and evaluation, logistical support and facilitating their presence at regional and international events such as the African commission and UN sessions etc. The MRG Africa office is keen to further develop bottom-up project design and keep top-down initiatives (which insufficiently includes minority and indigenous peoples viewpoints, are too donor driven and have an issue with ownership) to a minimum. The office requires training for its own staff (in monitoring and evaluation, for example) and needs to hire a senior finance person so finances can be managed in a more decentralised way as well. The office's vision for the future is to gradually make the office more independent and increase autonomy in design and implementation. It is also recognised that there is much to gain from strong links with the London office in terms of integrating experiences from programmes in other regions and obtaining large funds (locally based embassies and donors generally only provide smaller grants). The MRG Africa office benefits from having an experienced and locally active set of trustees, who support advocacy and programme development inside Africa and in the Council. The Africa office has gradually grown and there is need to strengthen its fundraising capacity to enable new programmes in other regions of the continent. Given the nature of land conflicts among most minority communities, there is need to strengthen the strategic litigation programme in the region and link up with like-minded organisations and institutions to share learning and experiences.

MRG Europe was formally established in 2006 in Budapest. Its operations were built around the expected funding of SEE phase three, which gave MRG the scope to develop the regional office (proximity to target countries, lower match funding requirements for new member states). In 2007, the office developed the second core strand of its Europe work, the Development Education programme, initially with MRGI as a lead partner. Two years back, the MRGE office decided to leave the SEE region (2009) and switch the regional focus towards the former Soviet Union. But securing funding has been difficult. MRG lacks experience in the region and developing a strong presence, knowledge and

proposals requires time. Since, through the implementation of the GAP programme, the office is working on strengthening presence in this new region.

Today MRGE finds itself at the crossroads. Funding permitting there has been and will continue to be a gradual move towards greater responsibility and professionalization of the regional office. Recently funding was secured for a 2.5 year programme in Russia. If two more proposals are successful, the Budapest office will expand, hire more local experts, appoint in-country staff in the South Caucasus and move towards an independent Council for MRGE. If not, the majority of current staff will face redundancy in January, management of the new Russia programme will be taken on once more from London and MRGE will remain a regional office. Five years ago, the Budapest was not a formal office, staff were employed as consultants (although treated in practice as full staff members) and included part-time project officers on both SEE and Roma programmes. Unlike in Africa, there was not a large volume of Europe centred projects. The Roma project finished in 2006, the legal case programme ran from 2005 until 2008 and the Turkey programme (which was suspended due to lack of funding in 2009) was operated out of MRG's advocacy programme. Fundraising and media are still led from London and at present it is not envisioned that this should change. Possibilities to locate fundraisers in the regional offices are being discussed, but so far financial and overall oversight remains with MRGI.

Budapest is not yet an independently functioning office from MRGI. It has not yet developed a "Europe policy" because its regional presence is still too ad hoc. It has worked towards increasing its brand identity at an advocacy level, strengthening the credibility of the Budapest Office as a specialist resource on European minority issues. It has developed a certain methodology that fits the European context:

- As in Europe there is an existing civic mass, CB activities move directly into advocacy, networking and collaboration rather than needing to focus on strengthening organisations.
- The MRGE focus is on the link between regional institutions and national advocacy. The EU as a major donor has more leverage than the AU, allowing a regional approach to programming with direct impact on national CSOs work. In SEE, MRGE supports networks of CSOs to strengthen the quality of monitoring the accession process and and minority community participation, built around the leverage of EU funds. Also for the East, MRGE is adopting a similar approach to the Eastern Partnership. The Russia programme, for example, is built around implementation of CoE recommendations. In terms of impact on programmes, the regional approach has had benefits in the development education work, being accessible to decision makers and viewed as a peer and long term partner to CSOs.
- What is distinct about MRG as opposed to other organisations working with minorities (such as the ECMI, European Centre for Minority Issues. or FUEN, the Federation of European Nationalities) is MRG's scope, and in particular its strong emphasise on development, which came as a result from developing common programmes in London across different regions. In Europe, more than in Africa or Asia, CSOs focus is on civil and political rights: fundamental rights. Development is less effectively monitored from a rights perspective and is an MRG added value in the region<sup>5</sup>.
- The MRGE work is likely to be further removed from the final beneficiaries than in for example Africa. SEE evaluations have observed this. Perhaps it affected fundraising and curtailed advocacy impact in that MRG is insufficiently using the

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<sup>5</sup> The EaP is expected to elaborate development orientated programmes (as IPA did)

capacity of communities in advocacy. MRGE is learning from examples of more popular campaigning in Africa (f.e. the Street Theatre project and the use of sports in conflict prevention) and is developing a Cricket based project in Hungary, linking into regional anti-racism work.

MRGE is developing consultancy work to increase core resources, but at the same time is moving back towards being solely an organisation implementing minority rights programmes (with elements of regional advocacy) as opposed to its vision to be a regional advocacy organisation implementing minority rights programmes. Therefore, operations must increase and more organisational support is needed from MRGI.

In Asia, contrary to Africa (ACHPR) and Europe (CoE Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities mechanism and the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the OSCE), there is no regional human rights mechanism. The only networks on minority rights at the UN a run by OHCHR and MRG. The Asean Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights are in the process of drafting the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. MRG coordinates with the Europe and Africa regions for study visits for exposure to the other minority rights mechanisms in these regions and promote the inclusion of minority rights in the ASEAN HR declaration.

All GAP Asia staff work on a part-time basis, which complicates coordination and continuity. As GAP Asia does not have an official presence in Thailand, bank transfers are complicated are made on a piece by piece basis through partner organisations. With regards programmatic implementation, it has been a challenge to distribute more widely the call for applications and identifying those people interested in the course, and also getting people to remain committed to the online course in the midst of busy schedules and often working in remote areas without access to internet. The establishment of a regional civil society network is one of the visions of GAP Asia, but there is lack of time and resources. GAP Asia currently manages a functioning listserv for GAP alumni on which information is distributed. GAP trainees have created a Facebook for participants.

The Asia office, at its own initiative, included an exercise of project proposal writing for small grants in the programme, preparing grounds to allocate direct funding to minority rights grass-roots initiatives. A good achievement of the office has been promoting such follow-up activities of participants, for example, supporting minority participations in Nepal's constitutional roundtable. Continued functioning of the MRG Asia office depends entirely on future funding. Funding proposals for GAP2 are in the pipeline.

### **3. EVALUATION: a tool for learning**

#### **3.1 Evaluation Strategy and Lessons Learnt**

The 2012 MRG Annual Programme highlights that evaluation proves its worthiness to receive funds and provides accountability and is also a crucial tool for critical reflection of our programmes and thus for improving the work. The practice of independent evaluation is advanced at MRG. “*MRG’s evaluation procedures are extremely well established*”<sup>6</sup>. This good protocol contributes to MRG’s recognised reputation for integrity.

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<sup>6</sup> Comparative evaluation of 9 international human rights organisations in 2004, Foreign Office

As a matter of policy, independent evaluations are commissioned of all larger projects. The organisation as a whole underwent a comparative external evaluation<sup>7</sup> and an external 'audit' evaluation<sup>8</sup>. The external evaluation concludes that “MRG has a well-defined mandate complemented by a high degree of internal reflection over strategies, projects, and areas of work. The office is well organised and displays a high level of professionalism. Its efficiency is illustrated by the large number of areas of work and outcomes for its relatively small size. It has policy documents and procedures in place for all areas of its work, and there are explicit criteria and guidelines for relationships with partners. Its evaluation procedures are extremely well established”. The external audit is equally positive about MRG’s books and work.

Following recommendations from project evaluations, over the past years MRG changed its methodology, looking beyond activities towards the overall impact of its work. Where projects achieved less, MRG had not fully analysed the problem in sufficient depth in the early stages<sup>9</sup>. MRG today recognises that assumptions were made about what was needed or how change could be ignited. “It was quite common for MRG to assume that publishing a report about an issue would, in and of itself, somehow bring about a change in policy, as if a lack of knowledge or awareness of a problem was the sole factor preventing change (stand alone reporting)”. In reality, reports can result in changes only if conclusions are adopted by policy makers or embraced by minority groups and other stakeholders who use concrete recommendations as instruments for campaigning and implementation. MRG is conscious that the most important reason for lack of minority rights is often not a lack of knowledge or awareness, but of vested interests and has sought to adapt its projects accordingly.

### 3.2 Meta analysis of 11 independent programme and project evaluations

Evaluation has changed and evolved over the past years. MRG holds internal, external and periodic organisation-wide evaluations and learns from these. All programmes request feedback from partners (on project management, implementation and impact), during coordination meetings and ad-hoc, as well as through mid-term and final implementation reports and feedback from target groups done after activities, trainings, advocacy, conferences have taken place, through interviews and questionnaires. External evaluations are conducted by external experts, selected through open calls for proposal. The MRG evaluation process is transparent, it is unusual for an NGO complete so many evaluations, all of which are published on the website.

This meta-analysis included regional programmes (Pastoralists, Batwa Leadership, SEE, anti-discrimination in B&H, Kosovo, Croatia), in-country projects (Cyprus, Kenya, Sri Lanka) and global projects (Minority Voices, Iraq/Somalia) in Africa, Asia and Europe. The regional and global character of the programmes is meaningful and properly justified in all cases, except for the Somalia/Iraq project, which does not explore the added value of a project that covers more than one country.

MRG distinguishes between 9 thematic areas. The meta-evaluation covers 4 themes and 11 projects/programmes. It reviewed aggregating information and aims to capture evaluation

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<sup>7</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2004

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland in 2010

<sup>9</sup> Policy and Practice note, Evaluation at Minority Rights Group, Claire Thomas.

data into a single tool for learning about past MRG projects and future priorities. The second part of this report will also assess a Roma programme and a UN advocacy project, thus covering all thematic areas except for the Afro-descendant programme which never got off the ground and the Turkey project which was finalised before the revision period started (2009):

- Pastoralist programme (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda: 2006-2009),
- Enhancing Batwa Pygmies Leadership (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda: 2007-2009),
- A solution to the forced displacement of the Endorou in Kenya: working towards the implementation of the African Commission on Human Rights Decision (Kenya:2008-2011),
- From exclusion to inclusion: improving the situation for minorities in Africa (Uganda, Kenya, DRC, Tanzania: 2008-2011),
- Strengthening the capacity of Sri Lankan CSOs to promote minority rights (2009-2011),
- Minority Rights: A contribution to the Cyprus problem (2009-2011),
- Strategic Litigation anti-discrimination and minority rights issues (B&H, Croatia and Kosovo: 2008-2010),
- Advancing inclusion of vulnerable groups in SEE, Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU Accession Process (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo: 2006-2010),
- Gender-Based Discrimination / Violence Against Women (VAW) evaluation in Batwa communities (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda:2007-2010),.
- Securing protection and promoting FF of vulnerable minorities in Iraq and Somalia (2009-2011).
- Minority Voices Project, final evaluation (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK: 2009-2011).

Type of Projects				
Regional Programmes	In-Country Projects	Global projects		
6	3	2		
Geographical Distribution				
Sub-Sahara Africa	Central and South- East Europe	Asia	World	
5	3	1	2	
Thematic Area				
Gender	Strategic communications	Legal cases	Conflict Resolution	
1	4	2	4	

### General findings and trends

All 11 evaluations are generally positive about MRG's work. They show how projects make a difference to minority communities in Africa, Asia and SEE through: strengthening local organisations, increasing their influence through CB, AR, publication (drawing attention to forgotten peoples, ignored situations and calling upon taking action), liaison with international organisations, governments and legal action.

Evaluations agree that MRGs publications are of good, even excellent, quality. Even though we live in an information-overwhelming world, there is scarcity of baseline information on the particular situation of minorities and indigenous peoples, therefore, MRGs support to conduct surveys and produce studies is significant, all the more as these are developed with the input of local partners and experts.

All 11 evaluations adhere to the general relevance of MRG interventions to the needs of minorities and Indigenous peoples, who continue to be disproportionately represented



among the world's poor and are often among the most affected groups when there is economic recession or conflict:

- The project “addressed a critical need as opportunities are created for advocating rights of Batwa communities, all the more so as it is a regional project, considering stark similarities between issues challenging Batwa communities across the great lakes region. In different degrees, the projects are a response to the particular needs of the target groups for capacity building, technical and legal support, alliance building with other donors, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations”<sup>10</sup>.
- “The programme was built on the foundation created by the previous MRG’s projects in the region and it was highly relevant to the needs of target groups”<sup>11</sup>.
- “The project was critical for minority rights activists, especially those who raised the issue of the Tamil and the Muslim community, to give voice to the situation of minorities affected by the war and, the post-war developments”<sup>12</sup>.

Some evaluations found that MRG projects deeply impact on traditional relations, sometimes with sad side-effects. They report on potential unwanted consequences of sensitizing marginalised people to their rights in repressive political environments. Beneficiaries may be given tools they will not be able to use, or even be victimised when they use them. Should projects interfere in local dynamics when timing, political space, and traditions are not ready for change?. In the case of the Pastoralist Programme, training and CB raised awareness about gender issues and democratic rights. As a result, the political class turned to women as enemies and they were not given the chance to represent their people next to the men. In the case of the Iraq-Somalia Project, for the first time ever, minority issues (in Somalia) received national and international attention, but staff members and volunteers of MRG partners have to work under extremely difficult and risky circumstances. In one case, MRG had to advise against a minority group claiming indigenous peoples status as this would risk negative political and other consequences. In the particular country, there has been a tendency for violent groups to crack down with extreme violence on minorities who stand up for their rights. MRG is well aware of these and other ethical difficulties and risks, and aims to keep integrity high on its agenda.

Many of the (ethnic) minorities in Africa, are also economic minorities and in dire need of special humanitarian support. The question was raised by one evaluator how effective human rights advocacy is at a community level when that community struggles with mere survival. The type of projects MRG supports and initiates, often do not translate into economic value on benefits. As in the case of the Endorois project in Kenya. There is however little doubt that the benefits constitute a significant accomplishment for a community that has “previously felt hostage in its own land”. MRG is probably wise not to extend its core mission to providing much needed support, but in those cases where communities ask MRG for help in matters of survival, it is important that it widens its strategic synergies with development and humanitarian NGOs to involve other organisations to address these needs. Several evaluations noted that MRG could work on improving its collaboration with other (I)NGOs and this is indeed considered the right way forward.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Evaluation of MRG project: Enhancing Batwa Pygmies Leadership programme.

<sup>11</sup> Evaluation of the Strategic litigation anti-discrimination and minority rights issues in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo project

<sup>12</sup> Evaluation of the Sri Lanka project.

<sup>13</sup> Irish Block Grant evaluation of MRG Africa Programmes

MRG projects need long-term engagements to generate lasting impacts. Partners and beneficiaries often ask for a continuation of projects, generally the life of the projects is too short, even if the time-span is 3 to 4 years. This is an important issue to bear in mind when measuring the programme achievements. For example:

- The pastoralist programme achieved good institutional impacts (creation and strengthening of Elders Councils), but for these to be sustainable, continued financial support is needed after the project finished in 2009.
- The strategic litigation project in SEE lasted for 3 years, too short a timeframe for a programme whose main focus was to engage in strategic anti-discrimination litigations.
- The Kenya project with the Enderois people, despite the successful ACHPR decision and continued coordination between MRG, the Commission, the partners and other stakeholders, the government has still not articulated an official position regarding the decision and implementation of the ACHPR recommendations.

The issue deserves a paragraph in the new strategic document as donors should (ideally) give greater consideration to the need for long term engagements and especially for the specific features of the strategic litigation projects as litigation cases are frequently tied up in local courts for excessively long periods of time.

Evaluations highlight the importance of continuity and quality of local and international staff. Two evaluations mention how staff turnover in MRG affects effectiveness of the project (the Kenya Enderois projects and the litigation project in central Europe). Several evaluations mention the appreciation of local organisations for MRG staff.

All evaluations mention how the quality of partnerships is crucial to the success of the project. Partnerships in all MRG projects evaluated were established with local groups and NGOs, except for the MRG litigation programme in Kosovo. The project's choice of a Spanish partner was evaluated as "incoherent with the character of the programme and proved particularly troublesome when the NGO withdrew from the project and the country, impacting effectiveness, ownership and sustainability of the project". MRG learned from this experience and in all other projects, partnerships have been local and beneficial for the counterparts. Increasingly, local partners are being actively involved in project design, implementation and evaluation. The Enderois project is a good example of how tripartite partnership can be effective and complementary.

The 11 evaluations also show that MRG has learned to be balanced about reporting on attribution or contribution to project results and impact, except for one project where attribution, according to the evaluation, was an issue. One other evaluation expresses that MRG reporting is "justifiably cautious with claiming results and impacts that cannot entirely be contributed to their direct intervention, but are a result of common action (with other NGOs, IOs)". The evaluation of the pastoralist programme reads: "political recognition of pastoralist groups is generally increasing in the region, and it is clear from testimonies that MRG supported trainings, workshops, and policy briefs "have had their part in this".

The overall effectiveness of projects is satisfactory, in one project, an evaluation even describes it as excellent<sup>14</sup>: "the outputs and results were achieved long before expected, which took the project by pleasant surprise. In addition, one of the greatest achievements of the project has been the improvement made to the capacity of EWC (the partner) as an organization". The evaluation of the Minority Voices project notes that "the vast majority of its planned activities were implemented and produced the planned outputs". Two evaluations describe the significant

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<sup>14</sup> (Kenya, Enderois)

legal impact of MRG projects (Kenya and in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo). One project (Pastoralist Programme) achieved good policy impact (changing government attitudes, increasing recognition of pastoralist groups in the region and generating a measurable influence on policy making in Kenya and Tanzania of the Pastoralist Parliamentary Groups (PPGs) created by the project). Other evaluation reports are insufficiently clear about policy and legal impacts of evaluated projects, and do not place the evaluated projects in a continuum of change, including clear definitions of objectives, activities and subsequent achievements at the level of the community, policy or legal changes.

Without exception, and despite the many challenges and complexities that are inherent to the type of projects MRG implements, all 11 evaluations report that the planned project activities were completed, sometimes subject to important changes and delays. All evaluations also report that projects provide capacity building for partners, some with good impacts: “it is evident that one of the greatest achievements of this project has been the improvement made to the capacity of EWC as an organisation”<sup>15</sup>.

Most evaluations do not provide specific and reliable data on the cost-efficiency of MRG projects, but do make general statements about MRG’s efficiency in achieving its aims and objectives. The gender-Based Discrimination / Violence Against Women evaluation notes that “the programme has been efficient in that every activity has been completed to a reasonable quality, every stated indicator has been met, with some timescale slippages as might be expected, and within budget. This, in itself, is a great achievement, a ‘job well done’ which is testament to huge amounts of effort expended, not least by MRG staff in the UK and Uganda, to hold the programme together through its many twists, turns and partner disputes”. The evaluation of the minority voices project concludes that “it has developed an effective approach to achieve its overall aim. It has built capacity in the South for minority groups to engage with the media. It has produced high quality information materials and an accessible web-hub for use by CSOs and media alike and achieved excellent value for money completing these activities on a very tight budget”. Also the outputs of the Iraq/Somalia project have been delivered, despite extremely harsh circumstances and communication hick-ups between partners and HQ due to the fact that neither country (except in Iraq the Nineveh and Kurdistan Regional Government area) could be visited.

Several evaluations report that using different strategies simultaneously enhances efficiency. Multi-pronged approaches should be standard for MRG projects. The strategic litigation project in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo, “through its advocacy activities, has effectively mainstreamed the use of the last generation anti-discrimination legislation and the concept of strategic litigation for the advancement of minority rights. The choice to pursue strategic litigation combined with the targeted advocacy campaigns as the core programme activities, was based on accurate assessment of what is needed for an improved protection of minority rights”. Also the Endorois project in Kenya’s combined successful legal litigation before the ACHPRs through simultaneous launching of an effective international advocacy campaign, generated tremendous media interest, was mutually strengthening and complementary and contributed to the efficiency of the programme.

Also, the flexible approach applied by MRG with the Minority Voices Project, learning from experience through the project and adapting to maximise new opportunities, contributed significantly to positive results. Also this approach could be standardised in future applications and be part of an “MRG brand approach”.

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<sup>15</sup> Evaluation of MRG Project: a solution to the forced displacement of the Endorou in Kenya

The very nature of MRG projects sometimes makes it difficult to measure specific outcomes and impacts. The evaluation of the project to advance inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in CEE, notes that it has had significant results in working with the EU and local partners, but that it is difficult to measure any specific effects on minority groups, as the project has not had any activities directly with those beneficiaries. The minority voice project evaluation concludes that to identify impact of the project (on-going higher attention to minority issues in the EU broadcast & print media) is difficult. Some useful background material was put together on media coverage of development and minorities issues in the new members states at the beginning of the Minorities Voices project. But there is no baseline data for attention to minority issues in the EU broadcast and print media with which to compare. The same evaluation mentions over-ambitious targets given limited budgets and technical capacities. These examples show that in some cases, objectives are phrased too ambitiously and are not objectively verifiable or measurable. Funders are increasingly strict about the relation between set objectives and achieved impact and viability (achieved impact) over nobility (noble cause). MRG is self-conscious about this issues and already working on setting more realistic targets.

The impact of most MRG projects has to be measured against the unpropitious circumstances in which projects are being implemented and aims pursued. The more MRG works in countries at risk, the more efficiency, effectiveness and also impact will be an issue. The strategic litigation programme in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo, for example, was implemented in a challenging environment characterised by semi-functional anti-discrimination mechanisms, widespread discriminatory practices affecting large segments of population, fear of victimization and lack of trust in the judicial system. The extreme difficulties under which the Iraq Somalia project was being implemented were overwhelming, yet achievements have been considerable and MRG is waiting for follow-up funding for a second phase. The Kenya Project has had meaningful local, national, but also regional impacts as its success served as a blueprint for legal cases with minorities in other countries and with other peoples. The pastoralist programme created lasting understanding and cooperation between pastoralist groups, contributed to a stronger political and civil voice for pastoralist communities. As one of the evaluations concludes: *MRGs success and influence in Africa reaches beyond what might be expected of a relatively small INGO.*

### Areas for improvement

The MRG focus today is less exclusively on whether a piece of work was done well, and more on whether it has had the desired effect. This is a good development. The purpose of any project is to generate impact. The challenge remains in applying effective strategies for implementing and managing change and enhance change leadership strategies.

Since 2003, MRG aims to include a well-developed intervention logic or theory of change for each project or programme. One evaluation describes a situation where in spite of careful planning before a project is started with local partners, once it is launched, they feel that more joint planning should have been accomplished. In case of the Cyprus project, which overall was positively evaluated, “participants were pessimistic about one activity” that still went ahead. The evaluation on vulnerable groups in SEE, notes that “priority needs to be placed on the development of more efficient planning and monitoring in order to support senior managers in identifying and communicating real progress, success and impact against a project’s key objectives”. The Irish block grant assessment of MRG Africa programmes concludes that projects are generally well designed and well matched to needs, but there are opportunities for

MRG to take a more uniformly consultative approach. Strategic planning meetings with partners and beneficiaries to define and later on adjust priorities could therefore be built-in more consistently. MRG already acknowledged it has learned from experiences and is allocating co-ordination funding in addition to project costs to involve partners more in monitoring and evaluation. In an internal paper on lessons learned from evaluations, MRG also concludes that its focus today may have turned too much on change, not on what local minority community request is changed, through the support of MRG. Such is also a conclusion of this meta-evaluation. Even though implicit in each project, too little explicit attention is paid (by the evaluators and/or by the projects?) to giving a microphone to the voice of minorities, how they envisage their situation will improve with a change (through training, AR and CB) and which laws and policies need developing and implementation. Their role should come more to the forefront in proposals, projects and evaluations and follow the following sequence:

- Each proposal is, as a matter of principle, the fruit of consultations with partners and should, and once funded, start with a joint needs, rights and responsibilities assessment with partners and participants/ beneficiaries of the project. Priorities and workplans can thus be defined jointly. Future MRG projects/programmes are to describe at the outset which exactly is the target groups' involvement and participation in the identification of the project priorities and their leadership in the day-to-day management, implementation, monitoring. Simultaneously, guidelines and ToR for future evaluations of MRG projects and programmes could include evaluation questions on prior needs assessments and involvement of partners and communities. As one evaluation highlights: "MRG is helping communities to help themselves and is also supporting them to achieve what they themselves want as communities, MRG thus fine tunes with the new community development consultative and culturally sensitive approach, which should be a major attraction for donors".<sup>16</sup>
- After this first phase, a mapping is to be drawn up of all relevant stakeholders: other local organisations that champion for the rights or development of the target groups, international NGOs that work in the region, national government development, human rights or minority and IPs agencies, international and intergovernmental organisations, HRMs and development banks.
- A brief but precise and easy to track description can then be made of the activities and involvement of each stakeholder. In this manner, through laid-out networking and collaboration, overlap can be avoided and complementarity enhanced between local and international CSOs, international organisations, etc.

Several evaluations highlight the need to develop more clearly defined qualitative indicators to document improved situations and relations. Particularly in the case of projects with indigenous peoples, different indicators that measure their well-being in appropriate terms (the importance and value of cultural and linguistic integrity, the environment, autonomy)<sup>17</sup> should be incorporated, based on local notions of what constitutes poverty, and what is desirable development (diversification of indicators). The Cyprus evaluation notes that indicators set in the proposal with the objective of monitoring and evaluating the project's objectives, were not measurable and specific enough as they focus on meta-cognitive abilities of the participants that are not verifiable.

Several evaluations mention a lack of baseline studies as a starting point for measuring results and impact, and related to this, the provision of evidence that formal needs assessments were conducted before the launch of a programme. Other projects have done

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<sup>16</sup> Irish Aid Evaluation of MRG Africa Programmes

<sup>17</sup> DANIDA's toolkit for Best Practices for Including Indigenous Peoples in Sector Program Support.



very well in this respect. The Litigation project in SEE, for example, parts from a baseline condition that was well established and thoroughly elaborated, already in the programme proposal, the annex of which contained detailed programme country profiles (the project was a follow up project of earlier MRG activities in the region). The information on baseline conditions was also given in the detailed description, specific for each programme country, of the problem areas to be tackled through the strategic litigation. The evaluation of the programme highlights that “particular types of discrimination against certain minority groups were addressed by the programme and well elaborated, which shows a praiseworthy level of insight into the situation on the ground”.

Several evaluations note an insufficiently pro-active media/dissemination/follow up advocacy strategy. A challenge for the Pastoralist programme, for example, is to scale up engagement of partners with the media use of diversified strategies: oral dissemination methods, translation into indigenous languages and the use of radio.

The quality of the evaluations differ, but from the evaluations it can be concluded that the quality of the MRG projects varies as well. Some projects are clearly better designed and tailored to local realities than others. Perhaps MRG could designate staff that has proven experience in writing and winning proposals of successful projects for oversight and quality control. Or, MRG could draft brand guidelines for proposals including the recommendations of this evaluation, that ensure quality and address above issues.

Evaluations note that several MRG projects start with trainings. MRG strives to integrate training, advocacy and media work in one package. Some projects are successful in this respect, but some evaluations provide examples where this was not the case:

- “Participants observed that they could not remember the content of their training or do not act on the acquired knowledge as insufficient thought has gone into follow up after training” (Cyprus).
- “One of the drawbacks of the workshops was that there was very little follow up on activities. Follow up would have been possible with an action plan and a training module, even after the workshop/campaign. A loose network was formed, but it was not consolidated. There was dissatisfaction among the target groups about lack of feedback and follow-up after distribution of voter registration forms (Sri Lanka).
- MRG successfully introduced a concept of human rights to the target group, linking international law, human rights and local instruments, but respondents were not able to link the knowledge with any action taken (Pygme Leadership programme).
- It is not always clear what goal the community wants to reach. The programme goal implies inclusion or integration into existing local, national, regional and international decision making processes, participating effectively in the structures and systems of wider society. Meetings were held to discuss regional issues, but this has not lead to a formally registered functioning network (Batwa leadership Project)
- Publications could be used better as an advocacy tool at the local level. The MRG report on Batwa children’s access to education, was launched internationally and was said to be very useful, but could have been more effectively used as an advocacy tool at local level, in discussions with Ministry of Education officials and education sector donors in target countries.

MRG is well aware that ‘stand-alone’ trainings and publications should be avoided, some evaluations, however, note a lack of vision and action plans on post training follow-up activities. CB, AR or training should always be embedded in needs assessments and application strategies. Knowledge has to be tested, it is a prerequisite, but per se does not help in solving problems of minorities, per se it does not change anything (when



knowledge flops). MRG research today is dovetailed with programmes of capacity building, advocacy, and legal work in support of the research findings<sup>18</sup>.

And finally, some evaluations conclude that enhanced responsibilities and salaried positions for partners would contribute to improving efficiency. In the case of the *SEE* evaluation, “discussions with partners revealed that some were not happy with the way in which the MRG conducted the project revisions, as they felt that they were not included to a sufficient extent in decision-making on revisions of the project and its activities”. A lesson from the pastoralist evaluation is that more space could have been provided for partners to express concern or report back on success and failures, that more funds could be transferred to the partners and that they should be more involved in monitoring and evaluation so that objectives and priorities can be adjusted. This issue is already being addressed in the current strategic period and could be a continued focus of attention in the new strategic period.

Quality of the 11 Evaluations. MRG has well understood that conducting independent evaluations is a necessary part of good management and an important learning tool. The overall quality of the 11 evaluations is mixed. Some are of good, even excellent quality<sup>19</sup>, others lack precision and diligence and do not analyse the DAC criteria<sup>20</sup>. The Pastoralist of Central Africa evaluation reviews an interesting programme and contains good observations, but also lacks clarity as to the impact of MRGs work in two countries. The Iraq/Somalia evaluation is not properly structured, sharp analysis and helpful conclusions are lacking. Other evaluations list accomplishment of activities but do not analyse impacts. The Cyprus evaluation points to the fact that the aims of the project are not easy to accomplish nor measure, but neither offers clear recommendations<sup>21</sup>.

The 11 evaluation methods, formats, reporting techniques and analysis differ. Could external evaluation methodologies and reporting be more harmonized and structured? Since 2011, MRG started including more detailed evaluation questions for the external evaluators and this process is to be continued (the most recent evaluations are not necessarily better). To more easily identify achievements and challenges of MRG projects and programmes, stricter guidelines could be drawn up to help evaluators focus on issues that are relevant to MRG and submit an end-report that display a structure that enhances comparison and quality control.

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<sup>18</sup> Claire Thomas.

<sup>19</sup> The evaluation of the strategic litigation anti-discrimination and MRG issues in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo project, the Irish Block Grant evaluation of MRG Africa programmes, the evaluation of the Kenya project.

<sup>20</sup> The Cyprus, Somalia/Iraq and Sri Lanka evaluations

<sup>21</sup> Quote: “the workshop provided them with the opportunity to become aware and knowledgeable of the existence and problems faced by other communities in Cyprus, and the discussion that took place was constructive and *enlightening*. (What was constructive is not further explained). *Or: 75 per cent of the participants stated that they had extended their knowledge and skills*, but no baseline information or needs assessment is provided, neither is it clarified how the training will contribute to finding a solution for the Cyprus issue (which is the aim of the project). The same evaluation states: *The report contributes new ideas on reconciliation amongst all communities and enhances the trust and dialogue amidst all Cypriot communities*, but does not elaborate on those ideas, thus not doing justice to the quality of the project.

## 4. International Advocacy

International advocacy is central to MRG's mission and strategy and integrated in many projects and programmes. It has not been previously evaluated in its entirety. Through various advocacy strategies, MRG targets international and regional organisations, as well as national governments, urging them to prioritise minority issues. It supports minorities to attend UN, EU, OSCE and AU sessions to have their issues heard first hand, and submits international statements with or on behalf of minorities to influence policy makers and minority communities.

The principle question is how effective has MRG's international advocacy been, considering time, effort and funds that have gone into it. Answers were sought by conducting interviews and sending questionnaires worldwide to partners, research institutes, NGOs, UN agencies, HRMs, governments and other stakeholders who work with MRG. Examples were collected of advocacy impacts on the ground, in policy making and legislation at national and international level (UN, HRMs) and an assessment was made of the MRG advocacy approach.

With advocacy work it is often hard to define outcomes at the outset and measure impact at the end. Projects respond to opportunities and eventualities (for example in the Thomson/Masai case). The annual reports highlight: *“Evaluating human rights advocacy is notoriously difficult given the slow pace of change, the difficulties in identifying and documenting the small steps in the change process and the significant challenges in attributing credit for any change. MRG is aware of these difficulties but nevertheless feels that certain measures can – and should – be taken to assess the value of our work. We recognise that such evaluation will always be at best imprecise but feel that if it is done carefully it can nevertheless provide a body of evidence to demonstrate to a reasonable degree the value of the organization's work”.*

To measure impact of international advocacy on minority rights issues is complex. Intergovernmental bodies and fora are generally reluctant to give minority rights the same attention and status as other fundamental rights. This reluctance explains why minority rights issues are debated mainly in the MR Forum rather than in the mainstream events of the Human Rights Council and why there is an Independent Expert rather than a Special Rapporteur on the subject. Comparison has also been made with the perceived greater effectiveness of the Forum of Indigenous Peoples, largely due to special efforts made by that community both in national settings and internationally to promote their cause, and also greater international public interest in the specific issues of indigenous communities.

The evaluator reviewed thematic and cross-cutting programmes and projects in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Middle East and Europe, implemented between 2009 and 2012. 19 tailored questionnaires were drafted in 3 different languages (English, French and Spanish) and forwarded to 179 partners and stakeholders, following an introductory note from MRG staff about the purpose of the evaluation. This methodology was effective. About 40 per cent of stakeholders approached, replied. Mostly in English, but also in French and Spanish. With the help of their responses, an assessment was made of the extend MRG claims regarding international advocacy impacts at global, regional (stakeholders) and community (partners) level are justified. The results of this evaluation will be shared with stakeholders and disseminated via MRG's website.

## 4.1 Advocacy approach

Advocacy is a tool for influencing policy makers. Advocacy should be result oriented, led and undertaken by the people who are directly affected by issues, their voice is legitimate, and be about promoting and achieving positive change. When successful, advocacy leads to changes in law, adoption of new policies, reform of existing ones, enforcement and implementation, generating impacts for minorities, not just raising awareness of problems. MRG considers itself first and foremost an advocacy organisation. Its primary purpose is to influence policy and practice, public attitudes and behaviour, decision-making processes involving affected communities and strengthen these. The quality of the advocacy strategy, of international networks and contacts on the ground are crucial elements of success. Developing an international advocacy strategy and specialised strategies per key forum, e.g. UN, EU, AU, ACHPR, CoE, OSCE/ HCNM, ASEAN, is important.

MRG advocacy activities do not stand on their own, but are woven into other programmes. The set of activities MRG has employed over many years, were a combination of traditional ingredients (rights and advocacy trainings, research and publications). Increasingly, in the last strategic period, it has broadening its tactical repertoire to other activities on-line training, litigation and street theatre, which is commendable. The MRG Communications Department develops and implements the international advocacy approach of the organisation. From its accounts, however, it is not possible to separate advocacy from projects as each project includes an advocacy component.

The MRG advocacy approach is generally non-confrontational. As MRG seeks to be an insider working with communities, it clearly prioritises building relationships of trust with both partners and decision makers. Outsiders, sometimes affected communities, can engage in confrontational lobbying as a necessary tool for achieving change in urgent situations. MRG's advocacy programmes raise awareness and put constructive pressure rather than naming and shaming on governments and intergovernmental organisations on minority rights issues, based on own research, publications, information and advice of minority communities.

MRG could consider making a more explicit contribution to debates on international minority/diversity rights norms through the theorisation of the organisation's practical experience in norm advocacy in both international and domestic settings.

## 4.2 Advocacy Targets

Key advocacy targets are selected based on whether the government, organisation or other policy-maker has the power to implement change and is open to being persuaded. In each programme or activity, MRG analyses who best meets both these criteria. Decision-makers who can bring about change indirectly, are as important as those who have direct responsibility or power.

The main MRG advocacy targets are national governments and international organisations: UN HRMs: Human Rights council and its mechanisms, including the Minority Forum and Independent Experts, UN Treaty Bodies and the UN Secretariat (including the Special Adviser on Genocide, UN Agencies such as UNDP, UPR, Climate change mechanisms, AU (department for peace and security), ACHPRs (secretariat and commissioners), EU (Commission, DG enlargement, Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna and MEPs), CoE

(Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on National Minorities), Council of Ministers, OSCE (OIDHR), OAS).

In addition to these, also the private sector has increasing influence over minority and indigenous peoples communities and should be included as an advocacy target in the new Strategic Period. The latest State of the World's Minorities (SWM 2012), with its focus on land rights and natural resources is a move in that direction.

It can be said that MRG has worked with all major IOs of interest. In Europe, it has, however, not liaised with the European Parliament Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages. With the dissolution of EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser used Languages), there is definitely a place for MRG in this context.

Develop a more detailed database of advocacy targets, divided by kind (governmental, non-governmental, inter-governmental and private) and region (Asia, Africa, Americas, Middle East and Europe) and identify who are the focal points contacts for indigenous peoples and minorities in inter-governmental and governmental agencies, is a mapping exercise worth engaging in for MRG in the new Strategic Period.

### 4.3 Advocacy achievements

Between 2009 and 2012, working with partners, MRG contributed towards the following instances of progress towards objectives. The advocacy outcomes presented hereunder, are those that either took place during the past 4 years, or were the result from earlier work.<sup>22</sup>:

#### Legal work:

- Decision from the ACHPRs, recognising for the first time indigenous peoples' right to development and their rights over traditionally-owned land and improvements on the ground for Endorois in Kenya as a result of this decision, although still pending national level implementation<sup>23</sup>.
- Continued success of the Ogiek in Kenya in resisting eviction from their forest lands and its referral to the African Court of Human and People's Rights<sup>24</sup>;
- The *Finci* case, A landmark Grand Chamber judgement before the ECHR requiring the Bosnian constitution to be amended to enable Jews, Roma and other minorities to be eligible to stand for high political office<sup>25</sup>.
- A new Anti-Discrimination Law enacted in Bosnia<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The evaluator compiled this list on the basis of a variety of resources, annual reports, interviews with Partners and stakeholders, it is by no means complete, it just gives an idea of concrete achievements.

<sup>23</sup> MRG has been supporting the Endorois in their search for justice after being thrown off their ancestral lands in the 1970s. A legal cases was lodged with the ACHPR in 2003 and MRG has supported the communities to pursue it ever since.

<sup>24</sup> A case was lodged by MRG partner CEMIRIDE (on behalf of the Ogiek community) before the ACHPR in November 2009. As a result, the Ogiek community was told they would not be forcibly evicted from the Mau Forest in late 2009.

<sup>25</sup> A victory for MRG, its partners and other actors, overturning rules effectively barring minorities from high public office. Work continued on implementation with advocacy within Bosnia as well as with the CoE, the OSCE and the EU. Despite much pressure from international actors, implementation of the judgment still needs to be effected

<sup>26</sup> The anti-discrimination legislation was advocated by partners through the MRG programme and EC consultation meetings, including input on the issue within the progress report framework. Partners subsequently were involved in the drafting of the actual legislation. Links improving social inclusion of

- The announcement of a draft Anti-Discrimination Law in Turkey – the draft includes text taken directly from a draft law prepared by MRG and partners<sup>27</sup>
- Decision by State Government of Gujarat to withdraw textbooks with discriminatory content.
- Support to the first successful prosecution under Mauritania's 2007 Anti-Slavery Law. The case, which was concluded in November 2011, led to the imprisonment and fining of the slave master.

Progress in international advocacy:

- Direct liaison with the Minority Forum (Working Group on Minorities)<sup>28</sup>, training minority and indigenous peoples representatives to present their cases before the WG, lobbying and sharing publications;
- MRG was commissioned by the UN Independent Expert on Minorities to carry out research on minority rights and conflict prevention.
- In March 2009, as a result of MRG advocacy, CERD issued a strong and clearly worded letter to the Government of Tanzania, asking them to supply information on the case of the pastoralist community and other cases of expropriation of land, asking for a dialogue to take place about suitable interim measures that can be put in place, and that the Government should investigate allegations of violence against community members by state agents and ensure the physical security of all members of this community.
- MRG held advocacy meetings on the plight of the Batwa in DRC with UNHCR, OCHA, the ICRC, Christian Aid, the North Kivu government, the Deputy Governor of North Kivu and senior military commanders of the Congolese Armed and managed to secure a number of promises from agencies to include Batwa in their work.
- Many of the recommendations of MRG reports since 2007 regarding the situation in Xinjiang and Tibet, were included in the final recommendations of CERD to the State party China (2009).
- On the same token, MRG supported Peruvian Afrodescendant partner CEDET to research and submit a shadow report to CERD on the situation of Afro-descendant communities and many of the key points (inequalities in health, education and housing provision) were taken up by CERD and included in the recommendations that CERD gave to the Government of Peru, for example, calling for the creation of a code of conduct for the media to ensure they respect the culture of Afro-descendants & IPs.
- Also in March 09, several statements made by the EU and other countries on Sri Lanka had clearly taken into consideration MRG recommendations on the specific minority dimension of the crisis.
- MRG supported the submission by Sri Lankan civil society to CESCR in November 2010. As a result, there were several recommendations made by CESCR to the GoSL on human rights violations of plantations Tamils.
- MRG contribution to the CEDAW shadow report on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>h</sup> periodic report by the government of Nepal in 2011.
- In supporting the Masai in their case against Thomsons Safari, MRG's wider advocacy strategy (ie beyond the strict litigation) involved engagement with CERD's urgent action procedure<sup>29</sup> as well as communicating with the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights, the African Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities and cooperation with a UK based NGO.
- Also in March 2009, many of the issues raised in the MRG report on Turkey were taken up by CERD when they issued their report (lack of any definition of racial discrimination in Turkey, no prohibition against discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin and the need to adopt a comprehensive equality law).
- UNDP published a resource kit for all UNDP country offices to mainstream minorities in all UNDP programmes (a major outcome from MRG's long-standing collaboration with UNDP);

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minorities and contribution to anti-discrimination measures can only be made implicitly, in most cases broad coalitions work on similar issues.

<sup>27</sup> The government's draft law included significant material 'copied' from the draft law prepared by MRG in cooperation with its partners and experts in Turkey. The draft law has not yet been submitted to Parliament. The further development of this law is now stalled and not progressing.

<sup>28</sup> The existence of the Forum (plus the Independent Expert) was very much thanks to the advocacy efforts of MRG staff (plus others).

<sup>29</sup> In CERD's second letter to the Tanzanian government requesting an update on the Sukenya Farm situation and for certain measures to be taken, the Committee referred to information that it had received from Thomsons as well as from MRG.

- A joint project with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDP to promote Minority Representation in National Parliaments which concluded in November 2010 with a major conference in Mexico for members of parliaments worldwide on promoting the participation of minorities<sup>30</sup>;
- The 2009 State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples access to appropriate education around the world was developed and published in association with UNICEF.<sup>31</sup> The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the UN OHCHR were also partners on the project.
- Promoting the rights of minority children and women: a review of UNICEF's policies and practices', published by MRG in 2010 and launched by UNICEF and MRG jointly at the UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva in 2010.
- MRG was commissioned by the UN Independent Expert on Minorities to carry out research on minority rights and conflict prevention. 11 interviews were carried out with policy-makers from agencies including the UN Department of Political Affairs, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, European Commission Crisis Response Team, African Union Peace and Security Secretariat.
- MRG supported its local partner organisation to undertake a consultation processes with minority communities nationally, to input into a submission of the UPR for Georgia.
- MRG's partners, with technical and financial support, submitted shadow reports to the Advisory Committee of the FCNM for Croatia (on electoral participation and minority rights in times of transition to EU membership) and FCNM for Macedonia (on Roma and Roma women) and Georgia.
- MRG is about to collaborate with UNICEF on a Global Situation Analysis of Indigenous and Minority Children: State of the World's Indigenous and Minority Children".
- With the OHCHR, MRG cooperated in the 2012, commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the UNDM. OHCHR is also an Associate Partner on the GAP programme
- UNHCR commissioned MRG to write a Guidance Note for field staff on *Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement*, the first global guidance for UN refugee protection staff on minorities.
- UNHCR provided funding and assistance to MRG for the publication of its report on Uncertain Refuge, Dangerous Return: Iraq's Uprooted Minorities (2009);
- With UNDP, MRG issued the publication: Marginalised Minorities in Development Programming (May 2010), a resource guide and toolkit for all UNDP staff worldwide.
- UNHCR, Need to Know Guidance Series, Volume 4, Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement (December 2011) – MRG authorship.
- UNDP/MRG cooperation in advocacy training in Eastern Europe (2011)<sup>32</sup>.
- MRG also produced the background document for the IEMI on effective political participation for the Minorities Forum of 2009.
- MRG's partner, a Roma led CBO, persuaded the EC delegation to revise the IPA 2009 programme in favour of minorities.
- MRG submitted materials to the UPR and the HRC on Hungary with particular attention to the Roma. MRG submitted a shadow report to the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the HRC, October 2010.
- The publications resulting from the MRG Iraq/Somalia action<sup>33</sup> had an impact on understanding of both EC and UN officials about the challenges of minority groups in Iraq and Somalia. A platform for CSOs and activists working for the protection of minority rights was created in Somalia, MRG with SOMRAF submitted a UPR report on the rights of minorities in Somalia that was noted in the Somalia National report and included in the final draft report adopted in Geneva on May 5, 2011 and the UN Independent Expert on March 2011 expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis in Somalia by including for the first time ever in a press statement on Somali minorities (following MRG advocacy).

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<sup>30</sup> MRG provided technical papers on electoral systems and on international standards; was a member of the project's expert advisory group, and participating in the final international conference of parliamentarians that led to the Chiapas Declaration (2010) on promoting minority representation in national parliaments

<sup>31</sup> UNICEF funded part of the project and contributed to several chapters. The report documented ways that minority children are excluded from education and the long-term effects in terms of trapping groups of people in poverty. It included information about most countries round the world but also chapters on key topics (e.g. on minority girls, on disaggregated data and on mother tongue education).

<sup>32</sup> The evaluator consulted a variety of different resources to complete this list (annual reports, project reports, evaluations, input from questionnaires). It is therefore recommended MRG advocacy achievements are tracked more consistently at different levels (local, national, international), referred to with precision (who, how, what) and included in the annual reports and website to show the variety of advocacy impacts.

<sup>33</sup> Elaborated with local minority experts,



- MRG submitted a report to CEDAW on Pastoralist women. As a result, the Committee called for: ‘Strengthen[ed] support services, including scholarships, transport and tutorial support, for disadvantaged girls such as poor girls, girls in pastoralist areas and girls with disabilities, as well as incentives and subsidies for their families’ and recommended that ‘the State party collect disaggregated data on the situation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination, such as older women, women with disabilities, pastoralist women, and refugee and internally displaced women, and include such information in its next periodic report.’
- MRG made an NGO submission to the Human Rights Council’s UPR review of Sudan. The submission was cited five times in the compilation of NGO submissions.
- MRG made a submission relating to the UPR of Tanzania focusing primarily on pastoralism and land rights issues. In the final report of the UPR, both Mexico and the Netherlands made recommendations in relation to pastoralists which Tanzania said it would examine.
- MRG made a submission for the consideration of Uganda under the UPR which focused on pastoralists’ access to land and water resources and marginalisation
- A shadow report focusing on the treatment of visible and new minorities was produced in partnership with the Social Action Centre (Ukraine). A number of areas of the final report of the committee made recommendations based on the submission.
- MRG made a submission to CERD regarding the Chagos Islands, as a result, issues were included in the Committee’s Concluding Observations.
- MRG signed an agreement with IDEA, the international electoral assistance agency, to advise them on how to integrate minority and indigenous issues into their work.
- MRG is working with Tourism Concern on its production of a code of conduct for tourist operators in respect of indigenous peoples and their rights. Partners such as the Endorois and the Pastoralist Women’s Council are feeding into the contents of this code.
- At European level, the pre-accession process was influenced by increasing the volume and quality of information received by key decision makers (the EC and accession country governments) on minority issues and technical capacity (knowledge and understanding of how rights effects development programming for minorities) of the EC to address minority issues. As a result, there is an increased number of measures (programmes, policy, legislation) developed to benefit minorities, with a greater degree of consultation with both minorities and CSOs.
- MRG obtained accreditation with the Organization of American States in November 2011.

#### Publication and Media (some examples)

- Publication of MRG’s *State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*. The last 3 reports focused on: Education (2009), Religious minorities (2010), Gender (2011, the first global survey on the rights of women from minority communities), Land Rights and Natural Resources (2012).
- MRG is generating roughly 800-1,000 media mentions per year. 2009 – 1,240; 2010 – 1,000; 2011 – 717. There has been an increase in 2012.
- The first ever Batwa Cultural Day held in Bujumbura, attended by over 100 Batwa from across the region and attracting attention from media and decision makers.

The amount of MRG work with UN agencies is impressive. MRG has been largely successful in forging relationships with key inter-governmental stakeholders, and although some voiced some criticism, most are complimentary and propose a more intensive communication, as do government agencies. One observation was made worth mentioning. MRG works with IOs more as an ‘insider’, a partner, rather than a critical outsider. This role can be problematic as it can cast MRG as a conservative organisation fitting more or less neatly into IO agendas.

MRG advocacy work is developed differently in different regions and projects. It is loosely based on its Campaign Guide<sup>34</sup> that includes some excellent guidelines and considerations. Albeit not captured in a single advocacy strategy, MRG already applies and could more consistently employ the following advocacy principles and approaches:

Key Principles:

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<sup>34</sup> Clive Baldwin, former MRG Head of International Advocacy

- Do No Harm. A benefit-harms analysis should ideally be made for every project, to assess the context, external environment and possible impact of projects for the communities, minimising unintended harms by defining possible sources of division in communities (access to funding, resources, international travel), and those that build community coherence.
- Rights Based Approach: based on the recognition that human rights and development are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing, engaging in advocacy through an inclusive and participatory approach focused on rights rather than needs.
- Root the advocacy strategy in minority communities and their representative organisations through participatory advocacy strategy and project design. Advocacy campaigns need to be driven by the communities and not the donors or external interests. There were some complaints that MRG did not use local capacities at international level and did not reflect local needs sufficiently. It was also found that the degree of satisfaction of partners with MRG projects was directly related to the degree to which they were involved in project design. For international advocacy to reflect the needs of minorities, MRG needs a model of norm evolution reflected in programming so that more systematic interaction can be established between international advocacy and local partners engaged in review and implementation processes.
- Keep a balance between servicing the needs of minority communities and relate these to lobbying at different levels, but always involve local experts in presenting cases, making interventions, lobbying

Planning:

- Map the stakeholders at all levels (local, national, regional, international). Who are the key policy makers for minority issues, who are the staff in charge?
- Map the policies that need changing or implementation at national and international level, and how, reflecting clarity of vision and definition of realistic outcomes and targets. Are there relevant policy reviews underway? What are the national and international laws relevant to the minorities MRG seeks to support?
- Define the advocacy strategy in concert with the partners and beneficiaries, and guarantee an evidence-based approach highlighting pro-active participation of partners and their networks in decision-making processes. In contrast to traditional approaches to advocacy that seek to effect policy change on behalf of marginalised groups, the MRG *people-centred advocacy* aims to effect social transformation involving the minorities and indigenous peoples to negotiate for their rights<sup>35</sup>.

Preparatory action:

- Build coalitions. Advocacy is more effective when carried out by coalitions. How well has MRG worked with others to achieve its aims (horizontally, with other NGOs, and vertically with the grassroots and advocacy targets)? MRG claims that there is no other organisation working on minority rights issues at the ACHPR or Asian fora, but there are many local, regional and international organisations specialised in minority and indigenous peoples rights in both regions. At a horizontal level, the MRG afrodescendant projects in Colombia and Peru, for example, could have benefitted from collaboration with AECID (an important funder with a multi-million budget for afrodescendant projects), IFAD (that runs the ACUA programme with afrodescendant communities in Latin America) and

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<sup>35</sup> This approach is also referred to as citizen-centred advocacy, participatory advocacy, transformative advocacy and social justice advocacy; Jennifer Rietbergen-McCracken, People Centred Advocacy

CAN (Andean Community that developed relevant policy initiatives with afrodescendant peoples), which would have added to the strategic value of the project and opportunities for fundraising. In Africa, coordination with IWGIA in submitting cases before the ACHPRs with indigenous peoples could be closer and more visible, in other countries (Sri Lanka or Russia), coordination could be established with the Swiss Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), or in other countries with the German Society, Dutch NCIV or Belgian KWIA. In addressing slavery in Africa, one NGO points to the need to increase strategic coordination through more frequent communications by telephone and regular email updates on respective/shared projects; meetings to schedule respective activities in a strategic and complementary way, and more active involvement from MRG in the legal work and relevant cases. Also Cordaid (funder of the Gender Dalit programme), is interested in stepping up coordination with MRG and explore possibilities for joint advocacy work. It acknowledges that collaboration with MRG could have been more efficient and effective. Oxfam has been working with MRG on pastoralist advocacy for a long time<sup>36</sup>. FPP (Forest Peoples Programme) and MRG work with similar communities but have different strengths. In Uganda both work with the Batwa and have tried to combine work, based on the direction of the Batwa, to avoid duplication and combine strengths, but communication could definitely improve, as much as it is considered that MRG could spend more time in the communities to make sure all its work is as close to their goals and needs as possible. FPP staff wrote several of the first MRG reports in the area, but personnel changes and pressures by own deadlines, got the cooperation sidelined. Coordination is, according to FPP, hugely important, both for work and making the most of the funds. They suggest bi-annual meetings between sectional heads at MRG and FPP. Back in the UK, liaison with other organisations who work with the Batwa people from the DRC, was ad hoc only and could be more systematic with a view to harmonising approaches. More structured horizontal coordination with organisations that work in similar fields, could add to the efficiency and effectiveness of MRG programmes. MRG could benefit from working more closely with many other INGOs that exist globally and regionally. This is definitely a weakness of the MRG approach. To identify and strengthen strategic alliances with organisations and groups who share policy viewpoints and are concerned with minorities and/or indigenous peoples, the environment, etc. is a priority for a coherent advocacy strategy and the next strategic period.

- Support and encourage minority representatives and their organisations to forge stronger connections with non-minority-focused civil society organisations and movements, in addition to facilitating their direct contact with focal points and experts with international organisations and donor governments.
- Identify and build relationships with government and inter-governmental officials who include minority rights in their portfolio for long term planning and networking and through the course of every-day work:
  - o Provide specialised information and offer expert services to government and international agency officials about the situation of minorities and indigenous peoples,
  - o invite officials to project meetings
  - o facilitate meetings with minority representatives to enhance officials

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<sup>36</sup> e.g. during the review process of the National Development Plan for Uganda; organising Uganda Pastoralists Week; advocating for Pastoralism Policy for Uganda among others

understanding of issues.

- approach policy makers through local organisations, as it may not be appropriate for MRG to take a direct role in national advocacy, and moreover, this will strengthen partners' ability to advocate for relevant issues. The African Pastoralist Programme is a case in point. MPs and district chiefs were approached through pastoralists who had received advocacy training from MRG. Also the impetus to push for pro-pastoralism policies in Uganda has come from the efforts of others including MRG through education of the policymakers.
- Select a combination of appropriate tools from the MRG toolbox: litigation, publication, training, CB, AR, media, research, dissemination of information on standards to communities, inviting community representatives to address IOs, etc., engaging in both direct and indirect advocacy.
- Elaborate a media strategy, including drafting and delivering messages through the local, national, international and social media.
- Consistently factor gender into advocacy: gender issues are taken up: a) to improve equality at community level (support women to develop their skills and abilities to ensure that their issues are taken up within their communities and by MRG), b) to bring equality standards and their application to community level from top to bottom through CEDAW committee recommendations and shadow reporting and c) to facilitate networking of women from minority communities with specialised organisations at national and international level. Other MRG ways to enhance gender balance is through targeting 50per cent women participants in trainings<sup>37</sup>, identifying objectives and involve women, where necessary, separate from men, include women as speakers at meetings and conferences, organise women-only sessions or establish women-only institutions (the women pastoralist group). MRG's programmes on minority and indigenous women's rights have predominately focused on Batwa women and girls in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Dalit women and girls in South Asia and Pastoralist women and girls in the Horn of Africa. The 2011 annual report includes gender disaggregation. MRG contracted a Gender coordinator, who's post could not be maintained after financial cut-backs in 2011. MRG designed a policy paper on mainstreaming women issues: *Gender Matters*. Consultation with minority and indigenous women stands at the forefront of MRG's gender approach, at the start of any project, it should always be clarified what the gender issues are, expressed by male and female representatives of partner organisations. On the same token, when issues arise, the crossroads between minority and gender issues should be explored in culturally sensitive terms, if necessary with the support of gender expert organisations in the field. The pastoralist programme paid careful attention to gender issues in all aspects of the programme and was fairly successful<sup>38</sup>. MRG programmes in Rwanda and Burundi failed to be effective in mainstreaming gender, as partners were resistant. MRG found that seeking to work on gender where senior local management is not committed, is wasting time and effort.

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<sup>37</sup> Attendance in trainings and events is generally disaggregated by gender, however, when sub-granting to s or cooperating with other organisations, MRG is not always in charge and might not have access to gender disaggregate data.

<sup>38</sup> It established the League of Pastoralist Women in Kenya (with other NGOs), publication of a thematic report on pastoralist women, promoting women participation at the 4 national and regional elders trainings

MRG is planning to engage in a gender review of its work some time next year with the purpose of assessing the gender programme and gender mainstreaming in all projects. This review could result in an update of the MRG gender policy.

#### 4.4 Ability to access and influence international agencies and HRMs

MRG's international advocacy has been influential in establishing existing global minority rights mechanisms, occupies a strategic position and acquired authority, visibility and credibility on minority rights: observer status at the HRs Council, ACHPRs and OAS, recognised contribution to the norm creation process along the Inter-American Convention Against Racism, shadow reporting for CERD, UPR, etc. It has contributed significantly to the conceptualisation and establishment of the UN Forum on Minority Issues and the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, to the formulation of the mandate of the Council of Europe's monitoring mechanism in the context of the Framework Convention. Further, MRG has done a lot for the incorporation of minority rights into the work of UN agencies like the UNDP and, more recently, the UNICEF. It is safe to say, that MRG is one of the principal INGOs to facilitate minority participation in global and regional minority rights mechanisms through the provision of both material and ideational resources, such as trainings.

MRG has been much less influential in norm creation in the field of international minority rights either through contributing to the establishment of new norms or in the establishment of novel interpretations of existing norms. Drawing on its rich operational work across continents, MRG could do more for the improvement of the relevance of the existing international minority rights standards. MRG's limited interest in the area of norm creation is evidenced by the fact that MRG has never published a guide on minority rights presenting its own view on some controversial issues in minority protection. Based on its work with partner organisations, MRG could also summarise systematically and regularly the new issues that have been identified and framed by minorities awaiting regional or global regulation.

MRG claims advocacy impacts at different levels: local (minority communities and their organisations/partners), national (legal and political) and international (UN, EU, HRMs, CoE, ACHPRs). What has happened since the reporting, what do partners and stakeholders perceive as major impacts, strengths and weaknesses of MRG international advocacy? What are stakeholders perceptions about the MRG advocacy approach? How successful has MRG been in forging relationships with key inter-governmental stakeholders?

##### 4.4.i Global Advocacy

The MRG experience has shown that where governments are reluctant to make improvements in terms of minority rights, international attention and criticism can give them an added push. In 2002, the MRG Advocacy Team identified relevant future priorities for its work around international and regional fora and assessed feasibility of developing advocacy in other areas. It is recommended this document is reviewed and updated to serve as a guidance document for international advocacy. Since 2005, unfortunately, MRG does not have a dedicated international advocacy officer overseeing all its advocacy programmes. For the implementation of the Global Advocacy Programme

(GAP, which finalises end of 2012), 3 staff are deployed in the 3 regions, one in Geneva and one in London.

MRG's international advocacy work focuses around the Office of the HCHR and bodies, which monitor the implementation of international human rights conventions. MRG regularly attends and makes interventions at meetings of the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, the Working Group on Minorities, the UN CERD and other bodies. As human rights concerns are increasingly mainstreamed at the UN, the MRG Minority Rights and Development programme works to promote awareness of minority rights within development policy and practice at the level of the UNDP and WB, and also links with the ILO, in conjunction with whom MRG, a decade ago, produced a training manual for minority group representatives on how to access the ILO. An important part of the MRG approach is to facilitate participation of representatives from minority communities from all over the world, organising training seminars prior to the Minority Forum enabling them to make effective use existing human rights protection mechanisms themselves. *"I attended a training in Geneva on International Advocacy and UN mechanism. It was really great and I have been applying my experience in my work in my country. Here I write columns in the newspapers and I published 7 books. I am the editor of an indigenous magazine and newsletter. Often I go for LIVE television talk show, I use my MRG training knowledge on human rights and indigenous issues» (Bangladesh)*

#### UN stakeholders observations and recommendations

- The contributions of MRG has been influential for the work of OHCHR.
- MRG visibility and participation in various OHCHR minority rights initiatives should increase.
- However, on a European level, MRG could participate explicitly and more visibly with a clear standpoint in some major on-going minority rights debates. These debates include the inclusion of immigrant minorities among the beneficiaries of the FCNM and the integration of antidiscrimination/ equality advocacy with minority rights advocacy – two strands of minority protection which, historically, have evolved distinctly (in parallel) in Europe and elsewhere.
- MRG should focus more on the rights of minorities in parts of the world where their existence is not recognised. (this is an interesting observation and a related question would be: what type of minorities does MRG work with, for whom the present international minority protection regime is relevant and who do not criticise the international community?)
- There is considerable scope for an organisation such as MRG to engage more with Geneva based UN human rights bodies, including treaty bodies and Special Procedures, in the area of minority rights, and to increase attention to minority issues by the Human Rights Council. MRG has for many years offered excellent training for national NGOs and minority representatives and this should continue.
- MRG is very much at the forefront of international advocacy initiatives in the area of minority rights. One could argue that a greater dedication to minority issues would be valuable, MRG should not compromise its niche position and the significant recognition that it has in the field of minority issues by trying to do too much. There remains a relative neglect of minority issues by international NGOs. MRG's support to the Forum on Minority Issues and the mandate of the Independent Expert should remain key focus areas for its advocacy. MRG could



provide minority rights cases that the IE and other mandates could take up with governments via communications and other means and it could bring cases to CERD's early warning and urgent action mechanism, which is currently dominated by indigenous land rights issues. (Mandate of the Independent Expert on minority issues)

- MRG should develop stronger and more regular channels of communication with the Mandate in order to benefit from a greater understanding of respective on-going and future priorities. An MRG representative should be based in or regularly visit Geneva<sup>39</sup>.
- MRG's strength is that they are quite specialised and enjoy the credibility that they have built over long years of devoted and independent work. MRG research could be strengthened by stronger ties with specialised actors on the ground in the case of the MENA region. MRG advocacy could be more far-reaching at country level (UNWRA).

GAP is MRG's Global Advocacy programme in Asia, Africa and non-EU-Europe. MRG's training programmes are increasingly relying on a high-quality distance learning packages on minority rights, which trainees can follow in their own time and with lower security risks. As the minority specific UN mechanisms (Independent Expert on Minority Issues and the Forum on Minority Issues) are fewer and not as strong as mechanisms for indigenous peoples, the GAP focus is on strengthening minority mechanisms by encouraging minority engagement with them and with regional mechanisms<sup>40</sup>.

GAP Asia thus far supported organisations to submit UPR reports in India, Indonesia<sup>41</sup>, and the Philippines<sup>42</sup>, launched a national campaign in India with the Centre for the Sustainable Use of Natural and Social Resources (CSNR) to implement UN recommendations relating to freedom of religion for India's minority communities, it helped organise a constitutional roundtable on protecting minority rights in Nepal with Support Nepal, launched a campaign on untouchability in Bangladesh, drafted a shadow CERD report with the People's Empowerment Foundation Burma and the AICHR (ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights) report by CORE. In addition, the Asia team granted funds to 3 participating organisations to produce UPR reports.

At regional level, GAP Asia supported the attendance of GAP participants to the ASEAN Civil Society Conference / ASEAN Peoples Forum in Jakarta, Indonesia (3-5 May 2011), the biggest gathering of CS in ASEAN countries and a venue for inter-sectoral networking and dialogue on a range of advocacy activities and issues, it organised a workshop on minority issues and also supported national-level advocacy activities (in Vietnam) and international level advocacy (participation of a Dalit organisation at CEDAW).

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<sup>39</sup> For the GAP, MRG has a person in Geneva.

<sup>40</sup> The evaluator attended the second regional training of the GAP Asia programme in Bangkok, together with 22 participants from 12 different Asian countries: Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia Philippines, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Vietnam (international advocacy in practice). All participants completed the MRG online advocacy course. The evaluator assessed the degree to which participants were properly prepared by the training and whether the tools they were given can or are applied in their local advocacy activities.

<sup>41</sup> With the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Studies (CHRD), GAP Asia organised and prepared a UPR report on Freedom of Religion and Belief in Indonesia.

<sup>42</sup> MRG partner Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) in the Philippines organised and prepared a UPR report on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.

### Stakeholders and Participants observations and recommendations<sup>43</sup>.

The GAP strength, according to an OHCHR official, is its wide network and reputation. An important weakness, according to the same official, “is its fragmented approach, lack of regional presence and a coherent approach in tackling issues in the same way and advocate an agreed line. In addition, their combined work on minorities and indigenous peoples is creating confusion, indigenous persons were accepted in the GAP which in reality is a training on minority protection. MRG should find a way to elaborate programmes for both groups separately and work on them through separate and distinguishable projects. MRG did not send the OHCHR information about when calls for applications were launched”.

The response and feedback of the participants is felt to be the most rewarding part of the programme by MRG staff, trainers and participants. Participants found the programme materials, methodology, the on-line and face to face training tools of good quality. One observed that information about national laws, regulations and policies was missing and should be included in the course. It is indeed suggested that participants, at the start of the face to face training, are engaged in a bottom-up identification process to contextualise their situations; from local (communities and organisations), to national (laws, constitutions, ratified conventions), regional and international. Most GAP participants are either minorities or indigenous peoples or directly work with their organisations and communities. They were also keen to define ways to apply what they had learned during the trainings and determine ways to develop common projects and continue exchange with each other. Several participants noted that the training contributed to making them feel proud of belonging to an indigenous groups or minority.

*“My knowledge of minority rights is far way better and I can now go to community and talk to them with details (individual cases, legal protection, identifying the types of discriminations)”*

*“After completing my course, I wrote an article on UN treaties and situation in Pakistan. Now I will share the relevant information in workshops organised by my organization for activists”.*

*“I have learnt a lot and it helps me in my work. The topics were great and I would like to learn more about how to write proposals to get funding for helping my community.*

### Challenges and future priorities for MRG Global Advocacy<sup>44</sup>.

- Distribute more widely the call for applications and identify those people interested in the course, getting people to remain committed to the online course in the midst of busy schedules and often working in remote areas without access to internet.
- Promote establishment of a regional civil society network. GAP Asia currently manages a functioning list-serve for GAP alumni on which information is distributed. GAP trainees have created a Facebook for participants.
- Strengthening Asian countries and regional organisation’s appreciation of minority rights is a priority that GAP Asia should work towards by establishing strategic alliances with other organisations and advocate for the creation of regional human rights mechanism. A declaration on the rights of minorities came out in draft form in

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<sup>43</sup> During the GAP training, participants and staff was interviewed. All 22 participants were also given a questionnaire. 14 responded.

<sup>44</sup> Beyond January 2013, when the programme comes to a close, implementation of these recommendations will depend on continued funding.

January 2012. Minority rights are controversial in the region, but at the same time, a way of staving off conflict.

- The on-line course is available in English, French, Russian and translations in Arabic are on-going. More languages should follow. If minority organisations do not read and write in their own languages, radio could be used to access distant communities. GAP started to translate the online material into Hindi and aims to also develop Thai, Urdu and Spanish versions (depending on funding).
- Develop a parallel training on indigenous peoples rights and/or include chapter on indigenous peoples HRMs in the on-line training for minorities. One of the respondents noted that: “if the training had included UN instruments/mechanisms for indigenous peoples, it would have been more relevant for my work. There should be a separate module for indigenous rights“.
- Make the on-line training accessible to more HRDs and develop a TOT for future (minority) tutors, drawn from umbrella organisations, so that the on-line course can further be distributed and trickled down to minority groups at all levels.
- As the internet in most parts of Asia is often failing, there is also a recognised need to distribute hard copies of the training (MRG has started to do this). The issue with this is that the package does not stand alone and cannot be followed without a tutor. Could a booklet be published with basic material and decentralised meetings and exams in-situ be planned at different stages?
- Include experiences from Latin America in the GAP.
- GAP could include more practical advocacy tips on how to make SAARC and ASEAN work for minorities and indigenous groups.
- Help create a Minority Caucus at the UN, like the indigenous peoples caucus, including GAP participants<sup>45</sup>.
- And finally it is recommended that face to face trainings in capital cities are accompanied by an exposure visit to a minority groups' habitat so that they are not kept too removed from the reality of minorities.

#### 4.4.ii Regional Advocacy

- ACHPR and AFRICA

MRG's legal advocacy work with minorities in Africa, has had powerful impacts (see 3 cases described here below). Legal cases have been an important, relatively new piece of work, embarked on since 8 years, its results have become apparent during this last strategic period. MRG Litigation is combined with capacity building, media work, lobbying around the case and urgent actions, embedding litigation in a wider advocacy approach. Legal cases involve huge amounts of work and long years of effort, impact for communities is not always immediate. As a basis for its legal work, MRG staff are aware of the Guide to Strategic Litigation: developed for CRIN<sup>46</sup> and would like to develop something similar for its own work but has not been able to do so yet. In view of the importance of the legal

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<sup>45</sup> One obstacle is that since there is no voluntary fund for minority representative participation, MRG has not been able to build up the kind of network that each year attends the Indigenous Forum.

<sup>46</sup> Child Rights Information Network, an introduction by Patrick Geary, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP., This guide has been produced to help those working for children's rights to understand what strategic litigation is and consider this as an option for effecting change for children by using the law. The guide is aimed at legal and non-legal NGO staff and can be adapted to local settings and procedures.

work with the ACHPRs in Africa and OSCE/NMC in Europe (and possibly future work with the OAS), MRG should develop an MRG-own strategic Guide to Litigation Advocacy, including guidelines, based on past experiences and lessons learnt with minorities and indigenous peoples.

MRG's observer status with the ACHPR is important for its Africa work. In addition to supporting minorities and indigenous peoples preparing and submitting legal cases before the ACHPR, through the GAP, MRG also trains local representatives on how to engage in advocacy activities and brings selected groups to sessions, for example, Batwa people from the DRC were brought to the ACHPR.

Through its project to find a solution to the forced displacement of the Endorois people in Kenya, with local partner EWC, MRG provided legal support to argue a case before the ACHPR which took a decision in favour of the Endorois community that served to vindicate their long struggle. The project has had a deep overall positive impact on the community and the partner organizations in terms of improving organizational skills, achieving objectives, improving self-realisation. Winning this case has had a positive impact on other cases MRG is involved in, such as the Ogiek and Thomson cases.

Mid 2008, MRG was contacted by the Ogiek community from Kenya when they were threatened with mass eviction by their government. With the Ogiek people, MRG ran an advocacy campaign to challenge the government's plans to evict them and others, who lived in the forest, key policy makers (including the president, prime minister, UN special rapporteurs and the EU Delegation) were lobbied, a case was lodged before the ACHPR<sup>47</sup>. These combined strategies were successful in that the Ogiek people, till today, have not been evicted from their land.

In neighbouring Tanzania, the Thomson Safaris land rights case (of Masai against the Thomson Safari Company who bought their land and began measures to restrict movement of local people) has been an opportunity for MRG to do more legal work. MRG's assisted the community in identifying what they would want to secure from negotiations (i.e. top, middle and bottom line), provided CB to the community and engaged in advocacy through the media (the case received weighty media coverage). MRG rightly put media advocacy on hold when negotiating with Thomson Safaris trying to reach a settlement. When this failed, advocacy was reinstated. A partner says that "*MRG's support has been pivotal in enabling the Masai communities concerned to pursue the case against Thomson*". Future priorities are to continue to advocate on land issues, legal education for communities and local organisations in Tanzania. Currently, this case is making its way to the Court of Appeal. There are good opportunities for a mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute and further advocacy strategies that involve all stakeholders.

#### Stakeholders observations and recommendations

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<sup>47</sup> In 2012, the African Court on Human and People's Rights decided to refer the case lodged regarding threats to evict the Ogiek community from their ancestral land to the ACHPRs. This was the first case of indigenous people's property to be considered by that body. The Commission granted provisional measures which essentially prohibited the Kenyan government from taking any action in relation to the Mau Forest which would prejudice the outcome of the case before the Commission such as evictions or dispositions of land to third parties.

The Chairperson of the ACHPR working group on Indigenous Peoples, in her response to the questionnaire, observed that MRG has “fairly influenced policy making and managed to raise awareness through legal cases research and publications”. She also noted that MRG “needs to work more closely with minorities and involve them in designing programmes and that MRG should focus on awareness creation at the national level by organising trainings and seminars to parliamentarians, judges, lawyers, policy makers and capacity building of local NGOs in collaboration with the relevant international and regional organisations”. As a priority for the future MRG activities, the chairperson identifies Awareness creation of stakeholders; capacity building of civil societies and minority groups and close liaison with policy and law makers.

- [OSCE, EU and Council of Europe](#)

The OSCE is a useful forum for MRG to be involved in, it developed standards on minority rights, although not legally binding, and it has a High Commissioner for National Minorities. MRG has long worked closely with the OSCE. MRG reports are made available to OSCE bodies and participates in relevant meetings of the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, notably Review Conferences and Human Dimension Implementation Meetings. MRG projects in Central, East and Southern Europe use regional instruments in place (OSCE and HCNM) and European neighbourhood programmes and accession negotiations, tied to financial incentives with the EU, to enhance impact and strengthen positions of minorities in the region. At the Council of Europe (CoE), MRG promotes awareness of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and provides an independent input into its monitoring mechanism, for example through alternative reports to complement official reports.

Two positive court decisions against discriminatory practices were obtained, at least one of which has characteristics of a powerful legal precedent. The judgement issued by the European Court of Human Rights in December 2009, finding provisions of the Constitution and Election law which effectively bar minorities from high public office in breach of Convention rights regarding non-discrimination. In the absence of a Government in Bosnia between the October 2010 elections and early 2012, progress with implementation has proved difficult. MRG sent a submission to the European Council of Ministers in November 2011 in advance of their meeting to review implementation of ECtHR judgments. This resulted in the adoption of an interim resolution on 2 December 2011 on the Sedjic and Finci case. *Finci v. BiH* is by any definition a landmark case not only for BiH, but also for the international level protection against discrimination.

The MRG project in Macedonia aimed to leverage the opportunities provided by the EU accession process to combat poverty and exclusion by mainstreaming effective minority participation in political and development processes. The project relied on international instruments and mechanisms for minority protection as well as the tools created by the Copenhagen Criteria for EU accession and the EU non-discrimination framework. International advocacy led to the creation of a specific fiche for Roma. Despite the obligations of the Copenhagen criteria, the government had initially avoided and the EC had missed the need for this targeted funding. The fiche has now established resources for the development of a number of Roma specific programming, established under participatory monitoring. MRG influenced articles of the drafting process of anti-discrimination legislation, for example in Croatia, where the partner specifically worked with authorities on amending certain clauses. In Serbia, MRG partners contributed to

achieving reserved places were established for Roma women, on consultative councils for women at local authority level.

As most legislation and programming is relatively new, data is not yet available that can measure substantive change. What MRG can demonstrate, is that there was a lack of information being received by and consultation with the EC by CSOs on minorities in the accession process. Increased advocacy by SEE partners coincides with increased detail and attention in policies and programmes, particularly as a result of increased reference by the EC to minority issues. The reference and detail of information on minorities in the EC country progress reports has increased. The number of minority specific recommendations in reports by international human rights monitoring bodies, on minority rights in accession countries has increased too. Regular consultation by Brussels desk officers on the content of Progress Report was instigated by the SEE programme, which had not previously taken place.

#### Stakeholders observations and recommendations

- HCNM: To improve impact, it is recommended that more specific country input could be provided by MRG for international organisations, as even though MRG does specific work on Kosovo and Turkey the Commission hardly ever receives targeted questions, input or recommendations on these countries from MRG. More direct calls, emails, visits etc. to influence opinion, raise awareness are needed.
- It was also recommended that more campaigning on cultural and linguistic rights is a priority, in addition to more specific country work on e.g. Russia, Romania is needed.
- The question was raised whether MRG is sufficiently active at the EU level. It was observed by the Swedish Equality Ombudsman (DO) that MRG staff never visited their office. The DO was formed on 1 January 2009 in part as the result of a merger of the four previous anti-discrimination ombudsmen. The previous Ombudsman for combating Ethnic Discrimination during the period up to 1 January 2009 together with MRG and European Roma Rights Center participated in a project focusing on advocacy training. MRG also had some contacts prior to 2007 with the now defunct Integration Authority. The cooperation involved the translation into Swedish of an NGO handbook on producing shadow reports for CERD. MRG could quite likely help to educate/train Swedish NGOs concerning advocacy.
- In the case of Poland, MRG achieved an important impact. The Polish Department for Development Cooperation included the HRBA into its strategic documents and the government is presently preparing guidelines for project implementers. To further strengthen the HRBA campaign and enhance impact on policy making, it was recommended that MRG steps up its direct contacts with experts in executive bodies.
- On the same token, a representative from the US State Department recommended that MRG could work on greater visibility and contact with senior policy makers.
- The same point was made by 2 UN officials: In some respects MRG could be more proactive in pushing its thematic and country specific agendas; and: «It might be useful for MRG to initiate contact with the UNICEF team more frequently, in between on-going collaboration. Thus far it has been our team that has initiated any contact».

## 4.5 Ability to strengthen the voices of minority and indigenous organisations.

### 4.5.1 Publications and the Website



MRG provides easy to access information on a variety of relevant issues through different on-line and printed tools. Minorities can upload their audio and visual materials to the website, which is also accessible to journalists. MRG's Facebook is a significant driver of traffic to the Minority Voices website, with the MRG website coming in as second most significant. MRG could go on LinkedIn as well, the most widely used professional networking and information gathering tool with over 100 million users. The MRG organisational profile would integrate keywords such as minorities and indigenous peoples, advocacy, human rights, collective rights, etc. and include all employee personal LinkedIn profiles, also of regional offices and partner organisations. Through LinkedIn MRG could connect easily with its stakeholders, target groups, advocacy targets, fellow NGOs, donors and potential funders, national development agencies and intergovernmental organisations. MRG can connect its Twitter account to LinkedIn to share to both places at once.

It has been confirmed by all respondents and experts interviewed, that MRGs policy documents are well-researched and well-written. Forgotten issues are publicised on a large level than otherwise would be possible for local organisations. In the Uganda context, for example, issues published on the Batwa have been influential at ground level and at a general media/public interest level. Also the State of the World's minorities stands for quality and generally makes good and interesting reading. One suggestion made is to more consistently include a summary of policy recommendations for the relevant actors in each publication and also, for the sake of coherency, add an annex with references to relevant international regulations. The focal subjects of the last 4 SWM (women, education, religious minorities, natural resource development) are relevant, but not evaluated consistently throughout the geographic sections. The overall focus is on highlighting abuse and disaster. The 2012 SWM, for example, records the many negative consequences of natural resource development for minorities and indigenous peoples. The AIPP<sup>48</sup> also launched an issue on the same subject called: *Development aggression as economic growth*, and included a chapter on practices and innovations of sustainable development and green economies.<sup>49</sup> Future SWMs could follow this good example, including at least one chapter on good practice and provide constructive examples of indigenous peoples and minorities success stories. How they win a legal case, how they manage to maintain their cultural and linguistic heritage. MRG could invite minority organisations to make such contributions, so that the SWM becomes more of a joint collaborative effort between experts from minority communities and experts about minorities.

## 4.5.2 Training and international Advocacy

In general terms, the past 4 years, except for the target of reaching new anti-discrimination laws, MRG claims it mostly managed to achieve its goals. Do partners feel the same way? In order to hear the voices of the minorities, indigenous peoples and their organisations about the approach and impact of MRG advocacy programmes and attempt to measure

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<sup>48</sup> Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

<sup>49</sup> (Wild honey gathering in the forest of Cambodia, the Tagal system of Sabah, Malaysia; a sustainable community based fisheries resource management which originated as a traditional system for protection, restoration, conservation and management of the freshwater fishery resources).

cause and effect, assessing the benefits to minority and indigenous peoples communities and partners, over a hundred local partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe were sent questionnaires, 41 of which responded (16-Africa, 12-Asia, 3-Middle East, 2-Latin America, 8-Europe). In addition, 7 international NGOs also submitted answers to the questionnaires and responded to additional queries.

A first, general evaluative observation is that the percentage of partners responding to the questionnaires was high, as was the degree to which they expressed themselves positively about the projects implemented and the cooperation achieved. A large majority of partners state in different ways that their experience of working with MRG has been positive. Several suggest that what can improve is that MRG only *«supports projects proposed by local organisations because they know more about their needs»*. Answers to questions and partners observations confirm the evaluator's impression that their role and participation merits a more prominent place in MRG reporting, project proposal writing, planning and evaluation.

In international advocacy, partners see a clear role for MRG supporting local organisations to reach international platforms they would otherwise not be able to access. Cooperation with MRG, many maintain, has made organisations more effective in their advocacy and help them to link with decision makers at the EU and UN and other implementing partners in their region. A majority of partners acknowledges the importance of MRG's international advocacy activities in opening channels with international mechanisms and organisations or drawing attention to situations through publications and reports. The MRG Dalit Gender Programme is a case in point, combining in-situ CB and training of Dalit organisations, supporting 3 partner organisations in India carrying out a research on barriers to justice faced by Dalit women victims of caste and gender based violence who attempt to access the justice system, publication, training, bringing Dalit women to UN meetings in Geneva<sup>50</sup> and submitting a paper on Harmful Practices for CEDAW (2011). The effectiveness of the first 4 strategies is good, was this MRG submission, a general cry in outrage on issues that are generally accepted as unacceptable in the West but do not only affect minorities)<sup>51</sup>, appropriate? A more strategic approach for MRG, with privileged relations to Dalit organisations, is to record stories of victims and let minority women/girls speak in their own language, in their own words<sup>52</sup> and express what it is like to be part of societies that engage in harmful practices against women and girls and how this situation could be improved.

Dalit partner organisations in India are keen to extend the campaign and advocacy work on the rights of minorities and socially excluded peoples across India. *“We need long-term partnership with MRG: lobby the national/provincial government, build capacities of minority rights activists, strengthen the national level campaign for freedom of religion, track implementation of UPR recommendations (with the Indian officials and representatives of other countries), fact-finding and documentation of cases (collect evidences of violation of rights to freedom of religion); file complaints before appropriate authorities/decision makers at national*

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<sup>50</sup> MRG supported three activists for dalit women's rights to participate and deliver a statement at the UN Forum on Minority issues - *Guaranteeing the Rights of Minority Women*- held in Geneva in November 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; premature marriage; not allowing women to control their own fertility; nutritional taboos and traditional birth practices (which could be harmful as much as they could be beneficial); son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price?.

<sup>52</sup> (as for example the address of Mandula Pradeep of the Navsarjan Trust and other statements from Dalit women at the UN, including clear recommendations),

*and international level, lobby with legislators and bureaucrats and finally, further strengthen the issues and concerns of Dalit women, legal aid and support to girls and women to address the issues of sexual abuse and trafficking, fighting discrimination in government schools against Dalit children. We would like MRG to appoint a full-time person in the Indian sub-continent to help the groups more closely and effectively».*

The ‘Strengthening the Capacity of Sri Lankan CSOs to promote minority rights’ project used a range of national advocacy strategies (preparation of briefing papers, art exhibitions in schools, posters, newspaper advertisements) and international actions (taking the issue of Sri Lanka minority rights to the international arena through organised visits of Sri Lankan delegations to Europe, UN mechanisms in Geneva and South Asian states). According to stakeholders, the MRG report on minority communities in Sri Lanka helped promote understanding of the contrast between official propaganda and the realities that minority communities face on the ground. MRG’s experience of doing advocacy in multilateral forums, its tools and understanding of regional geopolitics, its knowledge of UN and international HRs mechanisms, coalitions and partnership with grassroots NGOs, the impact on the media, were identified as strengths. Limited impact on policy-making, remote management and monitoring, and failure to target indigenous rights, although issues do exist (e.g. the Veddas returnee communities) were seen as weaknesses.

Organisation and confidence building. Particularly partners from Asia and Africa have expressed that they feel more confident to come forward and defend their human and minority rights: “*our organisation gained prestige from working with MRG*”. Several also explain that as a result of training, they are now engaging in advocacy, or after being invited to the EU or UN, to the ACHPR, CoE or OSCE, they strengthened links with government officials and other international NGOs.

Of all partners, only one mentions that trainings had not been useful: “we lost the knowledge gained at trainings as there was no way to apply what we had learned or did not learn how to apply the theory”. Another partner observed one way to avoid that would be: “to participate in a training program and then to ask them to apply these ideas in a real programs, because with training only everything will be forget». Others explain in greater or lesser detail that they benefitted from trainings and also how they apply what they learned. Some very generally: “MRG has brought us many advantages and strengthened our organisational capacities in the field of lobbying, monitoring, evaluations”. Others are more specific: «as a result (of partnership with MRG), relations between pygmies and local authorities have improved, new local partners were established and land was recuperated through lobbying at Kalonge and Kabare».

Several partners identify a need for financial support and further technical advice from MRG. «What is lacking is core funding and quick respond to disbursement» said one partner.” If only MRG could assist in fundraising to get core funding to pay for overhead, rent, electricity, communication, ICT», said another. It was also suggested that MRG opens a fund for small grants. It could actually be an idea for the new strategic period. There are already good examples of successful MRG initiatives with small grants for local CBOs:

- The use of football to bring tribes in Africa together with mixed teams, after-match human rights and peace-forum activities, discussing relations between communities. A local government liked this project so much, that it raised funds to continue it afterwards.
- Small grants to participants of the GAP Asia programme.

- In Iraq, with small grants, sustainable networks of activists were established advocating and monitoring minority rights and minority researchers were paid to elaborate a report on the situation of minorities in the country.

Quality of communication. A large majority of partners answered positively to questions about communication with MRG. Some noted misunderstandings due to lack of possibilities for MRG to visit projects on the ground (Somalia and parts of Iraq) or issues about payments as a result of lack of active MRG involvement in the legal assistance Mauritania project, which created some resentment. One partner complains about payment «The Finance Department is slow and takes too much time to respond to Finance reports». 12 said there was room for improvement, but a majority of these identified the need to intensify communication as a way to improve it: “it would be more helpful and result oriented if we remain in constant touch and in partnership“, or: «more dialogue and interaction required». In 2 cases, more communication was said to be a prerequisite to improve project implementation, but in the other cases, it was expressed as a need of partners who feel they have a lot to say and consult with MRG. Many highlighted the fact that they need long-term engagements, beyond the period of a single project cycle (2 to 3 years). Most partners mention how useful MRG staff visits to the project have been («MRG people are so patient and helpful»), and how they should happen more frequently as well. Three expressed concern about change of staff which negatively affected communication. What partners ask for is long term planning through long-partnerships through frequent consultation and communication.

A number of organisations offered suggestions as to how to improve communication. One African partner observed that MRG should not only work through umbrella organisations but also involve local member organisations in all stages of the project cycle. Also a Bangladeshi partner commented that MRG could improve communication with local indigenous and minority groups, and not work only through national organisations that do not include their representatives. A Cambodian organisation suggested that MRG should keep regular contact with minority organisations through a security protocol (24h hot line) which could be contacted when problems occur. For work in high-risk countries, this is indeed a valuable suggestion that MRG can follow up on.

Participation: Have partners been actively involved in programme and project identification and design, implementation of activities, M&E? Over 2 thirds of partners worldwide confirmed that participation in decision-making, over the past 4 years has increased, was good to even excellent. The issues and strategies were determined by them or jointly, and also implementation was their responsibility, with support from MRG where necessary. They said they choose the advocacy strategies, they selected the issues addressed, they developed the project concepts, sometimes in collaboration with MRG, and they were also responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects. 11 partners identified issues and suggested ideas for improvements. 8 proposed better involvement in concept development and project identification as they became involved in projects at implementation stage, 4 partners (2 European) suggested more diversified and direct involvement of local interest groups: *«at times, MRG seemed unable or unwilling to take into account our needs and local conditions, especially time-wise, but also in terms of local specificities and difficulties. MRG would need to be more attentive and understanding of its partners' strengths, weaknesses and needs. We would be happy to work with MRG again, any future cooperation, however, would have to be based on more solid foundations of equality and mutual respect»*. And one partner said: *I think – partners could be asked to submit what they think would be important projects»*. *MRG should more rely on its partner suggestions*

*and practical findings to improve the project design and its implementation*". It was suggested that participation could improve if MRG also involves partners in strategic long-term planning. This recommendation is to be taken up by MRG, finding a way to more consistently and continuously consult with partners through existing forums (minority voices, but also exploring new ways (twitter, facebook, linkedin) and creating new channels, for example, regional virtual forums for partners to identify priorities, suggest collaboration with MRG and also enhance regional networking between partners. For that purpose, MRG could create a registration system on its website for its partners, which provides them with the opportunity to submit proposals and share ideas any time.

How were organisations strengthened? Some examples shared by partners:

- MRG support has been instrumental in learning about financial and narrative reporting and apply for other funds.
- The profile of our organisation and its visibility raised significantly as a result of partnership with MRG.
- The programme has given us greater visibility in the community as well as interaction with national issues touching on minority rights.
- Our networking capacity was improved, and so was conflict mitigation among local communities.
- MRG brought us a wealth of experience, support and different outlook. They restored confidence.
- Working with MRG was very positive in the area of international advocacy and shadow reporting on international conventions. We also learned about development of case studies and conducting research and MRG connected us with relevant persons and institutions on national level.
- Funding, publicity and capacity building linked us to decision makers at the EU in Brussels, and other implementing partners in the region i.e Sudan and Kenya.
- International advocacy work was significant for us. In-country micro studies (policy papers, shadow reports) developed with MRG support (both, financially and expertise) were very useful advocacy tools.
- Working with MRG enabled me to manage new programmes, I can now contribute to any new topic to help minorities improve and expose their rights and needs.

Advocacy impacts; some examples:

- Our government (Cameroon) has accepted that the issues we raised with MRG are relevant, which was not the case before. It has taken some positive action. Our organisation is invited to submit a human rights report to the Ministry of Justice each year and participated in their human rights workshop to validate the country report.
- Since we started working with MRG, one law was revised – the Bogosi act -and steps have been taken by the government to recognise tribes (Botswana).
- There is significant increase in visibility of the Abasuba voice and discussions of their participation/representation in governance (Kenya).
- There is a real and present danger of violence erupting at the coast and our peace play developed in Nairobi was successfully implemented in the coastal region. The MRG grant enabled us to do that and now we can attract further funding for this project as a result of its success at the coast. The finance training that we will receive should be extremely beneficial (Kenya).

- MRG was instrumental in supporting our organisation in developing a shadow report for CERD which provides a completely different view from the State report (Fiji).
- With MRG support, we have been able to ground the campaign (advocacy for Freedom of Religion of minorities), initiate a national level platform, and launch a successful advocacy using UPR mechanism. Cooperation with MRG has brought visibility to the issues of Dalit women. (India).
- With MRG support we did radio programming, community based forest management and creation of a platform for indigenous peoples leaders to address encroachment of oil companies in indigenous territories and promote implementation of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights Decision recognising Mayan land rights in Toledo (Belize).

#### Partner Priorities for future collaboration with MRG:

Several partners suggested general priorities for future collaboration with MRG (Advocacy, Education, Good Governance), others had clear-cut ideas about what they would strive for if collaboration with MRG were to continue (a confirmed wish of a majority of partners). Partners in Africa have major concerns about lack of implementation of national (Kenya) and international laws and regulations relevant to minorities and peace-building between communities and need CB to strengthen their organisations. Some Asian partners recommend mapping of minorities as a priority (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal) and request more support for international advocacy at UN level, an innovative proposal came from Pakistan to enhance minority music for peace, and a Cambodian partner urgently needs legal support to take action against land grabbing. Participation in political life was identified as a major priority for Iraq and in Europe, partners highlight a need to improve their international advocacy skills. It is indeed recommended that MRG reviews all these recommendations with their partners and follows up on programme development. (See the annex for a complete compilation of partner recommendations.)

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Added value and Challenges

Multiple comments from partners on relevance, communication, participation and impact, illustrate that MRG's strategic process managed to identify and prioritise issues that are relevant to members of their minority communities. MRG acts as an intermediary catalyst, facilitating contacts and networking with the purpose of strengthening communities, cultures and local organisations, not patronising, globalising or criticising. MRG's niche is its mandate, yet the issues faced are vastly different and complex, difficult to compare or address in a single strategy. Some minorities seek improved integration into the economy of their states (Afrodescendants in Peru and Colombia), some MRG projects enhance social inclusion (for Dalits and Roma), other groups want respect for cultural and territorial integrity and aspire participation only with the purpose of increasing self-governance, not assimilation (Masai in Kenya). On the other hand, minorities in different countries, even regions, also face similar issues: discrimination, poverty, marginalisation. Minorities need



to feel safe, several partners stressed the fact that through MRG support, they gained security, confidence and prestige.

MRG has shown willingness to adjust and learn from past successes and failures. Through 4 years of SIDA support (2009-2012), MRG has contributed to strengthening local minority organisations in Europe, Asia and Africa, its regional offices in Kampala and Hungary and presence in Asia, secure rights of ethnic minorities, win legal cases with indigenous peoples in DRC, Kenya, Tanzania, support religious minorities, conduct innovative research and draw national and international attention to forgotten peoples and issues in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and improve cooperation and understanding between communities.

MRG relates to an impressive amount of actors worldwide and produces large numbers of outputs. Much of its achievements is the result of the quality and dedication of staff, minority and indigenous organisations. Efficiency has been affected by limited and discontinued funding (MRG spent time and effort seeking funding for a number of programmes without achieving to secure meaningful contributions, for example, for the South America programme), the nature of MRG's mission (working with the most difficult to reach communities of this planet) and few staff. It is important therefore, that in presenting its objectives, MRG is not too ambitious and defines objectives and results in realistic and operational terms. One partner said: *I think they are understaffed hence overwhelmed.* One donor observed that: *“perhaps one criticism is that MRG tries to do too much and in this sense the reconfiguring of their strategic objectives should be a good thing and give them more focus”.*

## 5.2 Recommendations

It is not the evaluators purpose to present endless wish-lists of recommendations what could be improved or done better, the purpose of this exercise was to review accomplishments and identify challenges of the past 4 years by conducting a meta-evaluation and allowing partners and stakeholders to come forward with their views. On the basis of the outcome of this process, some recommendations are presented hereunder, bearing in mind that we are not living in an ideal world and much depends on funding availabilities. A word therefore to the donors, is in place. With highly limited means (a mere 2.5 million pounds annually), MRG managed to support indigenous and minority communities in parts of East Africa, Asia, Europe and to a limited extend in the Americas, where funding was less successful. As much as it is recommended here that MRG further develops its policy, continues to improve programming in definite areas and intensifies its consultation with partners and stakeholders, it is also recommended that it more consistently establishes coordination with donor agencies, mapping key staff with responsibilities in the area of minority and indigenous peoples issues, provide information about progress and publications. It is equally hoped and expected, that governments, international agencies and donors alike, recognise that mainstreaming and prioritising support to minorities is needed to guarantee balanced cooperation and prevention of conflict. The situation in Mali today demonstrates that a government may have been a donor darling, but when resources are not equally shared with minority communities and distant geographic regions, there are no guarantees for long-term stable growth, respect for human rights and democracy.

### Internal Networks

- MRGs network of partners (indigenous peoples and minorities) is its true backbone. They are the reason why MRG exists and engages in advocacy. Their role could take up a more prominent place in the annual reports and strategy documents. Highlighting how decision making processes are accomplished in close coordination with minority and indigenous peoples communities and how MRG programmes, identifies, formulates and implements its projects in consultation with them;
- Selecting MRG partners. Both the process and registration of existing partners and networks could be professionalised, systematised and updated at organisational level. Many partners mentioned that they aspire more regular coordination and communication with MRG, not only project related, but also with regards issues in the field, policy development, programme design;
- Procedures for selection of participants to MRG trainings and capacity building activities at local, national and international level could be structured, harmonised and professionalised, following standard procedures. Some procedures are already in place (publicising a call for trainees, for example), MRG offices in Budapest, Chiang Mai and Kampala develop their own methods, but the organisation would benefit from general MRG-brand guidelines with criteria and selection methods to also include in future grant applications.
- Continue to strengthen regional offices. The Council supports efforts to pursue further development of the regional offices and MRGI agrees that were the organisation grows in terms of staff, it should grow in the South and in Eastern Europe. Overall, the objective of professionalising regional offices has moved forward over the past four years, although clearly, decentralisation to regional offices is work in progress.
- Enhance regional balance in the Council. The SEE region is under-represented and more council members from this region could help impact better on the functioning of the regional office.

### External Networks

At the last MRG Council meeting (May 2012) it was noted that efforts should be made to reach target audiences (advocacy targets, minority constituencies and donors) more effectively, extending it, in addition to the mainstream press and broadcast media, internet, social networking, to potential individual donors, diaspora communities, advocacy and media targets through better outreach dissemination of MRG information and links with social networks.

- MRGs network of advocacy targets are its focus of concerted action with and on behalf of the partners and peoples. A review could be made to consistently map all the advocacy targets<sup>53</sup>: donors HRMs, governmental, non-governmental and

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<sup>53</sup> Many partners recommended more intense communication with MRG, one partner from Pakistan wrote: *MRGs should bring us into their network, give us media coverage on website and blogs,*

intergovernmental organisations, accessible for staff at any time and place, divided by region and global. It is also recommended that MRG widens its scope of advocacy targets to the private sector and while civil servants and political leaders are an obvious choice, also neutral but respected figures such as teachers, journalists and the wider CSO community should be included.

- Several stakeholders at UN agencies and HRMs also mentioned that intensification of communication by MRG would be most welcomed, they would value a more regular exchange of views with MRG, receiving targeted reports relevant to their particular areas of responsibilities.
- Create diversified strategic linkages with the human rights and development community and build more synergies with other INGO's and NGOs that work in similar fields (indigenous peoples, environment, human rights, conflict resolution), and where coordination would contribute to avoid overlap and enhance effectiveness. MRG could even lead in the creation of an *organisational platform of INGO coalitions for advocacy purposes* along minority rights issues or objectives.

#### Policy development and theory building.

- Continue to develop, refine, define and include in the strategic documents an own MRG brand approach that is minority and indigenous peoples' centred, flexible, and applies different strategies simultaneously adapting projects to local realities to a maximum. MRG's vast experience in the field of implementation of norms merits being systematised and theorised. This systematised knowledge could guide a more integrated organisational strategy that regards international advocacy and programmatic work as an integrated whole feeding each other.
  - Elaborate a more sophisticated MRG conceptual Framework/ Practitioner's Guides for legal casework and advocacy strategies (possibly with regional chapters shedding light on particular mechanisms of relevance to minorities), the latter including the elements exposed in chapter 4. This could be useful as some MRG projects get it right and are complimented for their multi-pronged approach to advocacy<sup>54</sup> where others are not successful. Target outcomes are not always defined specifically enough in MRG projects, yet they should be, and embedded in a map of partners and stakeholders.
  - Present a circular organisation diagram that reflects learning dynamics between MRG, partners and stakeholders.
  - Bring to the forefront and develop the MRG's Guiding Principles less in terms of beliefs and be more in terms of strategic programming.
  - Structure reporting around MRGs own dual objective to further the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples and promote cooperation between communities: HOW will/has MRG further(ed) the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples and HOW will/has it promote(d) cooperation between communities (distinguishing and defining these: local minority

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*provide us links of existing partners for local and international collaboration and help us to develop our connections with donors and supports for our sustainability.*

<sup>54</sup> (Sri Lanka and the litigation project in B&H, Croatia and Kosovo),

communities, networking with local, national, international NGOs, IGOs and GAs). In this way, clearer links are established between local realities and involvements, and advocacy outcomes. This could be a more realistic approach than seeking to sustain optimistic and generalised claims in the field of “reducing poverty and ending discrimination, changing discriminatory attitudes in key sectors of society (difficult to measure), promoting the participation of minorities and indigenous people or preventing conflict and mass atrocities”. In addition to reporting abuse, discrimination, poverty and marginalisation of minority communities, it is recommended that also minority and indigenous peoples strengths and (traditional) knowledge systems are highlighted, disseminating examples of success of local organisations managing their communities, strengthening traditions or change strategies.

#### Programmes and project development

- Nominate specialised staff for oversight of project proposal design and/or develop guidelines that include an MRG brand approach to projects with the purpose of guaranteeing quality control. And/or: develop a clear-cut strategy or checklist that presents some kind of quality blueprint for future MRG proposals as a number of strengths and weaknesses in MRG design seem recurrent. It can include guidelines on the following elements that emerge as weaknesses of MRG projects in the meta evaluation: logframes, reference to baseline studies, post training follow up activities, qualitative indicators, concrete changes in policies, practice or legal impacts, gender mainstreaming.
- Develop, in concert with minority and indigenous peoples’ experts or organisations, a set of tailored to minorities and indigenous peoples indicators for the objectives to which MRG projects are contributing;
- Minority rights education. Like for example Amnesty International in human rights education, MRG could be a leader in initiating and creating manuals and programmes on minority rights education. Minority rights advocacy trainings are not sufficient for the creation of a minority/diversity rights culture domestically and globally. The education of minority rights in elementary, secondary schools and at the tertiary level are essential for changing prevailing cultures of exclusion. Joining up with other human and minority rights INGOs, MRG could start elaborating manuals and teacher training programmes in this particular field.

#### Planning

- Build in more consistently strategic planning meetings and consultations with partners and beneficiaries to identify and adjust priorities, through existing forums or by creating new channels : a registration system on the MRG website for partners, providing them with the opportunity to register, network regionally and globally, submit proposals and share ideas at any time.

#### Funding

- MRG should move ahead soon with developing a funding diversification strategy. As part of that, and in view of the scarce *funds* for international minority rights advocacy, MRG could commission research and publish a guide on this crucial issue. How and who funds minority rights advocacy and norm making, historically

and today? Why? And why not? When, under what circumstances funds flow for minority protection issues? And when funds are blocked? This is an issue of great interest for minorities but we know very little about it. More clarity is needed for improving international advocacy.

#### Publication

- The MRG website is a valuable tool, the available data is of good quality and is transparent (including all evaluation reports). The site provides easy to access and free of charge information but would benefit from re-structuring and making a clearer distinction between MRG policies, global programmes, regional and national projects, their rationale, process and impacts.
- SWMs are considered of excellent quality, but could in the future a) integrate an overview of international laws, conventions and declarations, relevant to the focal subject, b) mainstream the analysis of the focal subject to the geographic sections and c) include a section on good practice .
- It was also observed that MRG press events should seek to have better news value, the launch of the annual SWM should seek to tune into news hot spots to attract better attention from the media. Launches should also connect to local realities to enhance presence of local press.

#### Evaluation

- Draw up stricter and more focused guidelines for external evaluators and enhance quality control when evaluation drafts are submitted to ensure all relevant issues are covered and transparent methodologies are applied. It is important that evaluation reports on different MRG projects and programmes can be compared in terms of the DAC criteria. It is recommended that an evaluation methodology format or grid is developed and a structure for reporting is included.

### 5.3 Future Priorities

In addition to the national and regional priorities identified by partners in the former section of this report, with MRG staff, partners and stakeholders, the following new work priorities for the next strategic period have been identified:

- Focusing on lack of achievement for minorities in reaching the MDGs. The May 2012 Strategic Review of the MRG Council noted that the approach of the 2015 deadline for attainment of the MDGs makes evident that minorities and indigenous peoples have not benefitted from development initiatives to the same degree as majority communities. MRG could therefore, as a priority, advocate for the economic and social rights of such communities, in particular demonstrating through authoritative research that minorities make up a large proportion of those communities left behind in the race to meet the MDGs, and push for the systematic collection of disaggregated data including minorities. Just as new indicators are being developed for post conflict and fragile states instead of MDGs<sup>55</sup> (which take insufficient account of minorities and indigenous peoples as they are too difficult to reach), MRG could work towards developing indicators for minorities. Indigenous organisations and supportive structures have already developed advanced and interesting initiatives in this field<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> INTERPEACE: A NEW DEAL for engagement in fragile states

<sup>56</sup> UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues UNPFII

- Post 2015. Over the next couple of years, MRG can contribute to larger development agencies coming to realise that minorities and indigenous peoples effectively did not benefit from the MDGs and that they are, more clearly than ever, the most marginalised groups of society. Some indigenous communities seek this isolation in dignity as long as their land rights and self-determination are respected, but like most minority groups, they also suffer from continued discrimination. MRG expects that development agencies will turn their attention towards supporting minority communities, also as many existing, latent and potential conflicts are the result of a lack of respect for and discrimination of minority rights. It can then further extend its action as an advisory service for national governments and UN Agencies.
- Tuning in on these expected developments, MRG could focus more on direct, high-level advocacy within a wider range of national governments, particularly those states engaged in large-scale foreign agricultural and natural resource development in the global south.
- Another attractive work area is to continue focus on issues related to participation and representation of indigenous peoples and minorities in elections (this issues as yet does not received the attention it deserves by many national governments but also by the UN, EU, NGOs and is definitely a growth area). MRG already developed valuable experience which could be documented: its project to enhance inclusion and support for minority communities in the 2002 elections in Kosovo; promoting participation in elections of pastoralists women in Kenya, and of women of African origin, Sheiks and tribes in the Iraqi elections, and partnership with IDEA whereby MRG acts as an advisory resource.
- The last strategic review pointed to the need to increase activities in the Middle East, up to a point MRG succeeded in developing programmes in Iraq and Egypt, in addition to regional wide activities. It is challenging to work more in (pre)conflict areas involving minorities and indigenous peoples seeking solutions to conflicts in those countries that are headline news, based on MRG's own Peoples Under Threat (PUT) report, identifying those groups or peoples around the world most at risk of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression<sup>57</sup>. The challenge for the new strategic period is to further expand activities to potential and actual centres of conflict and abuse of minority rights, particularly religious minority rights, to the Middle East and Northern Africa. MRG is in a good position to engage in early support for a movement for tolerance and human rights protection which is much needed and an ever more volatile and polarising political situation. The UN system should support peace-building actions in this region, quite a few European governments are also keen.
- And finally, can it be recommended that the recommendations of partners for future MRG activities are discussed with the partners, analysed and taken up?.

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<sup>57</sup> Over time, MRG has done quite some work on conflict resolution and constitutional work, (Afghanistan, early warning, training for DPA on minority rights conflict prevention, OSCE, 10 years in the DRC, constitution development and human rights and advocacy work in Iraq, the input into constitution development work in Nepal (through Gap), advocacy for post conflict justice in Sri Lanka, support for innovative and successful conflict mitigation projects by local CSOs in Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan through the East Africa inter-community land and water conflicts programme.



# ANNEX

## A. PARTNER'S PRIORITIES

Several partners, as a response to the questionnaires, shared general priorities for future collaboration with MRG (Advocacy, Education, Good Governance), others had clear-cut ideas about what they would strive for if collaboration with MRG were to continue (a confirmed wish of a majority of partners).

### Africa

- To get the government to recognise the Wayeyi. To implement the new Act and go back to court if this is not done, for delayed implementation. Litigation, advocacy and community education to help communities support RETENG (Botswana).
- CB and support in international advocacy to improve equitable sharing of natural resources (land, water, pasture etc) between the Mbororo community and their non-Mbororo crop farming neighbours and in addressing the very rampant Human Rights abuses perpetrated on the Mbororo pastoralists of Cameroon.
- Education for Pygmee women and girls rights, their access to land, sustainable and decentralised management of natural resources, advocacy for indigenous peoples on communal forests, monitoring indigenous rights violations caused by war in the northern and southern province of Kivu and eastern provinces, support humanitarian assistance to Pygmee victims, to continue the advocacy plan of 2011 with local and national partners. MRG support at international level is a priority (DRC),<sup>58</sup>.
- The Kenya Constitution of 2010 is yet to be disseminated among minority groups. We want to push for its greater awareness to support the demand for good governance and fair representation and participation, and also focus on women's issues that limit their participation.
- MRG could look at building on the gains from its Mauritania projects and possibly replicating the projects in other countries affected by descent-based slavery (such as Mali and Niger), where the needs are similar.
- Priorities for the Batwa (Historically Marginalized People) are to escape poverty, jobs for youths, education for children, training for Batwa minorities on human rights, income generating activities. MRG should help COPORWA to do research on the situation of the Batwa people and develop a long term plan (Rwanda).
- Peace building among communities, agriculture and education for pastoralists and income generation activities for the women in the rural areas are priorities. Also, identification of constituents of the population and draft ways forward for peaceful co-existence including all minorities with their participation and rights respected. (Sudan)
- Specifically in the Ugandan context there is a need to promote the rights of minorities within the existing frameworks of Uganda law.

### Asia

- Bangladesh. I urge MRG to address indigenous issues and minority rights with a focus on youth and women. We do not receive MRG publications now, we need the SWM and MRG reports. Bangladesh needs this information. We also need support to attend UN meetings and participate in international events for indigenous peoples. Priorities in Bangladesh are: identity, culture, land and forest issues of indigenous peoples, capacity building of indigenous women and youth, Dialogue with our government, UN agencies, CS and the media, follow-up the UN

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<sup>58</sup> Plan de plaidoyer sur la situation d'Education des filles Pygmées batwa dans la province du Sud-Kivu en RDC'

- recommendation to Bangladesh under UPR and others mechanisms.
- Bangladesh: A mapping of minority communities in Bangladesh is urgent, Dalit rights should become a focus of minority rights issues in the country and the socio-political status of extremely poor minority women deserves special attention.
  - Burma: To empower and strengthen minority youths by giving them financial support to study in India and monitoring their progress in the process. MRG could also support more activities with minority/indigenous peoples rights defenders and provide support to minorities in peace process issues with the government.
  - Cambodia: Supporting organisations to find funding is a priority. The Bunong people of Cambodia need MRG's support in securing their land-rights and natural resources. Other suggestions included: a request to MRG to accept proposals for small advocacy projects for the ethnic minorities and programme to support education for ethnic minority children with disabilities.
  - Indonesia: improve awareness of the general public (a multimedia campaign on religious minority groups in Indonesia, including documentaries and public service advertisements) and of the authorities on the rights of minority groups as a basis for further advocacy.
  - Nepal: Capacity building of minority organisations, awareness raising on minority issues, policy advocacy to protect and promote the rights of minorities and not just of the hill Dalits and hill indigenous nationalities, research on minority issues, voter education, advocacy work on setting a minority friendly election manifesto/agenda and support to contribute to a minority friendly constitution.
  - Nepal: to engage in lobby to promote the rights of minorities under the new constitution as today the situation for minorities is even uncertain as the Constitution Assembly is dissolved. Also assisting minority organisations in writing proposals is a priority.
  - Pakistan: MRG can help introducing a training programme on UN mechanisms for minority rights in Pakistan, provide support for CEDAW and follow-up of UPR and protection of human rights defenders of minority rights. Inclusion of minority rights in the manifestos of the political parties in a bid to address minority rights issues at the district, provincial as well as national level.
  - Pakistan: Develop a project on music for peace with religious minorities.
  - Philippines: MRG is a valuable resource for training opportunities and support for local projects is necessary. Project priorities include exposure programmes for students to indigenous cultural communities, research on extractive industries (mining, in particular) and legal literacy on laws affecting indigenous peoples and the environment.
  - Sri Lanka: Include mitigation strategies for HRDs at risk to help organisations avoid or reduce risks, conflict sensitive planning and a do no harm approach and promote networking with minority communities from the region. Work with the Indigenous Veddah communities.

#### Central and South America

- Promote human and economic rights of Afrodescendant people in Peru.
- Community development, environmental stewardship, protecting and promoting indigenous peoples rights (Belice)

#### Middle East

- Participation in political life, advocacy on electoral law concerning minorities (Iraq).
- Support religious minorities to stay in their territories and not take refuge elsewhere. We hope to help minority women and children to face difficulties in their regions, till now they have been abandoned and largely neglected and have little access to services.
- Implementation of article 125, and legislation of the law regards to this article. Article 125 indicates that, "This Constitution shall guarantee the administrative, political, cultural, and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and all other constituents, and this shall be regulated by law." Discussing and suggestions for the problems between minorities in Nineveh plain, especially regards to demographic changes.

Building or creating a kind of (City Councils) in minorities areas.

### Europe

- More work is needed in the area of minority rights and MRBA (Cyprus)
- International advocacy, development of diversity management in the government, capacity building for ethnic minority communities to make them equal partners in policy dialogue (Georgia).
- Work on CEDAW shadow report and implementation of CEDAW Committee recommendations, inclusion of Roma issues at the EU agenda, monitoring implementation of National Action Plan for Roma Strategy on national and local level, strengthen the Roma women's networking organisation in the Balkans and address gender mainstreaming in MRG programme (Serbia)

## B. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THIS EVALUATION

### Introduction

The overall objectives of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) are to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples and to improve cooperation and understanding between communities.

Under the agreement between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and MRG (No 54040057), SIDA contributes towards financing the core activities of MRG in furtherance of the above objectives and according to MRG's Strategy 2009-2012, 'Working Together for Peaceful Development'.

MRG and SIDA now wish to commission an independent evaluation of MRG's work, to inform the strategic review that MRG will undertake during 2012 and the partnership with SIDA. The results of this evaluation would be shared and discussed in detail with SIDA staff, MRG staff, partners, members of MRG's International Council, as well as disseminated more widely via MRG's evaluations webpage on its website.

The practice of independent evaluation is already relatively advanced at MRG. As a matter of policy, the organization commissions independent evaluations of all its major projects. Some six project evaluations have been completed over the last 12 months, and six more are currently underway. In addition, the organization as a whole underwent a comparative external evaluation undertaken by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2003 and an external 'audit' evaluation undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland in 2010. The evaluator will need to review this work in order to acquire as comprehensive a picture of MRG's work as possible (and avoiding duplication of effort), supplemented by other sources of first-hand information.

### Scope and methods

The evaluation will comprise:

A short introduction summarising MRG's objectives and strategy and the aims of the present evaluation  
A meta-analysis of 10 to 12 independent programme evaluations recently completed covering a broad range of MRG's work, including on-the-ground programmes at national and regional level, and global programmes to advance minority rights; the evaluation will consider in particular results achieved against programme and organisational objectives;  
A specific evaluation of MRG's international advocacy (central to MRG's mission and strategy and contributed to by a number of programmes, but never previously evaluated as a whole), including MRG's ability to access and influence international agencies and human rights mechanisms;  
A brief questionnaire to a sample of MRG's NGO partners and other stakeholders (advocacy targets and donors) assessing both past performance and consulting on future priorities for the organization;  
A summary of conclusions with recommendations for increasing further the impact of MRG's work. Recommendations will include (but not be limited to) consideration of: coordination with other actors; roles and responsibilities of MRG HQ and regional offices; donor relations and possibilities for donor harmonization and alignment.

"Starting point" evaluation questions should include:

How effectively and efficiently has MRG been able to implement programmes to seek to achieve strategic objectives? What has worked well and less well? Has MRG shown the ability to analyse and learn from its successes and mistakes? What examples of impact are already evident? Did MRG's strategic process identify and prioritise issues that were relevant to members of minority communities? Were there other issues that could and should have been prioritized above those that MRG sought to work on? How well were gender issues factored into the work and how successful was this? What constraints affected the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of MRG 's work? Was MRG able to foresee any constraints? How successfully did MRG work around any constraints? How effective has MRG's international advocacy work been? How successful has MRG been in forging relationships with key inter-governmental stake-holders? What could MRG do better in this area of focus? How well as MRG worked with others to achieve its aims? Could MRG organize work better between the London HQ and the regional offices? What more could MRG be doing to ensure a long-term financially secure future for the organization? Methods used in the evaluation will include desk research and analysis; interviews (telephone/internet or face-to-face) with key stakeholders including donors (See A5) and advocacy targets; e-mail questionnaire to a sample of NGO partner organizations (See A4); and field visits. It is envisaged that the evaluator will travel to at most three destinations to assess MRG's international advocacy and its work with communities on the ground.

The evaluator should be willing to meet with MRG staff in London as well as MRG's International Council (either 4/5 May or 5/6 or 12/13 Oct or to discuss the initial findings and implications for future directions for the organization.

Evaluator

MRG will tender for an external evaluator with advanced evaluation expertise in the fields of international development and human rights (including experience of carrying out an evaluation similar to this one). The evaluator will be expected to have widespread experience of working with civil society, including on advocacy-related programmes, and additionally experience of working on minority issues.

Timescale

A tender for recruitment of the evaluator will be undertaken in late March/April, with the main work of the evaluation itself taking place April to July 2012.

The final evaluation report, following comments from key stakeholders, will be prepared for 1 September. The evaluation report will inform the strategic discussions of MRG's International Council which meets in October 2012 to set the organisation's strategy for the next four-year period.

Budget

## C. DOCUMENTS

### Programme Documents:

MRG Programme for 2009: Working Together for Peaceful Development

MRG Programme for 2010: Working Together for Peaceful Development

MRG Programme Document 2011: Working Together for Peaceful Development

MRG Programme of work 2012: Working Together for Peaceful Development

### Annual Reports:

Annual Report on Activities and Outcome (2009)

Annual Report on Activities and Outcome (2010)

Annual Report on Activities and Outcome (2011)

### Strategic Review Documents:

- MRG in a changing world: Discussion paper on MRG's regional structure, (Samia Khan and Claire Thomas, April 2008)
- Results of Stakeholder Consultation (Claire Thomas, April 2008)
- Draft Strategy and Goals 2009 – 2012, (Claire Thomas, April 2008)
- Introduction and Results of Stakeholder Consultation (April 2008)
- Strategic Review Introduction (April 2008)
- Introduction to Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 (October 2008, Mark Lattimer and Claire Thomas)
- MRG Strategy 2009-2012
- Strategy Diagrams
- Strategic Framework Table 2009-2012

### Results and Definitions

- MRG's working definition of a minority, Ishbel Matheson, October 2008
- First look at results compared to planned outcomes 2005 – 2008 (Claire Thomas, April 2008)

### Past Evaluations of MRG programmes and projects (see Chapter 3)

## D. PUBLICATIONS 2009-2012

### Reports

- Kenya at 50: unrealized rights of minorities and indigenous peoples March 2012
- Land, livelihoods and identities: Inter-community conflicts in East Africa December 2011
- Iraq's Minorities: Participation in Public Life November 2011
- Minority rights: Solutions to the Cyprus conflict March 2011
- Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities (Arabic edition) February 2011
- No war, no peace: the denial of minority rights and justice in Sri Lanka January 2011
- EU Financial Assistance to the Western Balkans: a minority-focused review of CARDS and IPA November 2010
- Daawo La'aanta: Beelaha laga tirada Badan yahay Soomaaliya ee La Illaawey November 2010
- No redress: Somalia's forgotten minorities November 2010
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: failing minorities and indigenous peoples July 2010
- Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities June 2010
- Uncertain Refuge, Dangerous Return: Iraq's Uprooted Minorities September 2009
- Filling the Vacuum: Ensuring Protection and Legal Remedies for Minorities in Kosovo May 2009
- Forgotten or Assimilated? Minorities in the Education System of Turkey March 2009
- Unutmak mı Asimilasyon mu? Türkiye'nin Eğitim Sisteminde Azınlıklar March 2009
- Minority Tribes in Botswana: the Politics of Recognition January 2009

### Guides

- Integration of the human-rights-based approach into development policies: A guide for the new EU Member States September 2011
- Minority groups and litigation: A review of developments in international and regional jurisprudence March 2011
- Edukacja rozwojowa z perspektywy praw człowieka: Podręcznik dla działaczy nowych krajów członkowskich UE March 2011
- Emberi jogi megközelítések a fejlesztési nevelésben: Kézikönyv az új európai uniós tagállamok aktivistái számára November 2009
- Human rights-based approaches to development education: A toolkit for activists in new EU member states November 2009

### Briefings

- Improving security for minorities in Iraq July 2012
- Country strategy papers: A policy tool to increase effectiveness of Polish development cooperation April 2012
- Israel's denial of the Bedouin November 2011
- Southern Sudan: The Role of Minority Rights in Building a New Nation June 2011
- The Human Rights-based Approach: A More Effective Framework for International Development Policies in New EU Member States May 2011
- Seeking justice and an end to neglect: Iran's minorities today February 2011
- Facts and figures: minorities and the MDGs February 2011



Maamuzi makuu yanatoa ushindi mkuu kwa jamii asilia ya wa Endorois (Swahili) January 2011

Promoting the rights of minority children and women: a review of UNICEF's policies and practices December 2010

Landmark ruling provides major victory to Kenya's indigenous Endorois August 2010

Indénombrables : les vies cachées des femmes batwa May 2010

Uncounted: the hidden lives of Batwa women May 2010

Discrimination and political participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina March 2010

Six months on: end of the war brings no respite and little hope for Sri Lanka's minorities January 2010

Breaking the cycle of Exclusion: Minority rights in Georgia today December 2009

Resolving conflicts using traditional mechanisms in the Karamoja and Teso regions of Uganda August 2009

Pakistan: Minorities at Risk in the North-West August 2009

Minority Tribes in Botswana: the Politics of Recognition January 2009

### **Training manuals**

A toolkit on HRBA to campaigning and development education in the new member states July 2010

Minority Voices Web Training Manual May 2010

### **State of the World's Minorities reports**

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2012 June 2012

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 July 2011

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 July 2010

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009 July 2009

## E. QUESTIONNAIRES (some examples)

Partners	
a. What kind of cooperation do you have as a partner organisations with MRG?	
b. How and how often does MRG communicate with you? Is communication sufficiently frequent? Have MRG staff visited your project? Is this necessary? Or Useful? Is there room for improvement?	
c. Has the experience of working with MRG been positive or negative? What can be improved?	
d. Have you received training or other capacity building? Were these useful? Are you applying what you have learned?	
e. Has cooperation with MRG brought you benefits?	
f. Have you been actively involved in: Project design? Project Implementation? Monitoring and evaluation? How could your involvement be improved?	
g. Over the years, has there been a shift towards you as an MRG partner taking on more responsibilities? Has this been successful for reaching results?	
h. Have you worked with MRG on advocacy? Has the advocacy been effective? What was achieved? Who selected the issues and strategies? Did MRG support you and if so, was this support helpful?	
I. In future years, what could MRG do to value and support your work as a partner? What would you like MRG to improve?	
j. What are your project priorities for the future?	

DONORS	
a. Does your organisation have a policy on minorities and indigenous peoples? Do you have a focal point/expert for minorities/indigenous peoples?	
b. Do you consult on a regular basis with MRG?	
c. Do you think that MRG advocacy programmes in Africa, Asia, Latin America or Europe address the real issues of minorities and indigenous peoples? Is there anything missing?	
d. Do you receive MRG publications?	
e. Has collaboration with MRG been efficient and effective?	
f. What do you consider are the strengths (added value) and weaknesses of MRG and its approach?	
g. What feedback would you have for MRG about how it operates and how it communicates with you: frequency, format, responsiveness, usefulness of information?	

CSO NGO	
a. How do you cooperate with MRG?	
b. Have you worked with MRG on advocacy?	
c. Has the experience of working with MRG been positive or negative? What can be improved?	
d. Do you think that MRG advocacy work and campaigns address real needs of minorities and indigenous peoples.?	
e. What do you think been the impact of MRG's advocacy activities: on direct beneficiaries, on policy making, on law-making, on the media?	
f. What could MRG do better to improve impact?	
g. What do you believe are the priorities that MRG should consider for the future?	

OHCHR	
POLICY COORDINATION	
a. Do you consult on a regular basis with MRG relating to the issues and rights of minorities and indigenous peoples?	
b. Do you receive MRG publications on a regular basis?	
c. What do you consider are the strengths (added value) and weaknesses of MRG and its advocacy approach?	
PROJECT COORDINATION	
d. Has collaboration with MRG been efficient and effective?	
e. Do you think that the MRG advocacy programmes address the real issues of minorities and indigenous peoples? Is there anything missing?	
f. What feedback would you have for MRG about how it operates and how it communicates with you: frequency, format, responsiveness, usefulness of information?	

## F. INCEPTION REPORT

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### 1. STRUCTURE AND SCOPE

Under the agreement between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and MRG (No 54040057), SIDA contributes towards financing the core activities of MRG in furtherance of the above objectives and according to MRG's Strategy 2009-2012, 'Working Together for Peaceful Development'.

SIDA has been a long-time supporter of Minority Rights Group International, reflecting the high priority that SIDA gives to minority issues. The Perspectives on Poverty document is one of the strongest examples of systematic consideration of the situation of minorities in any poverty policy document of international development agencies. In December 2003, SIDA convened a two-day workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand on Minorities, Livelihoods and Development, for regional human rights and democracy staff of SIDA and partner organisations. The workshop demonstrated good practice in convening the event in a minority region and directly involving local NGOs working on

minority rights issues. SIDA is currently reviewing its next steps on working with minorities.

The overall objectives of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) are to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples and to improve cooperation and understanding between communities. MRG campaigns worldwide with around 130 partners in over 60 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard.

MRG and SIDA commissioned an independent evaluation of MRG's work, to inform the strategic review that MRG will undertake during 2012 and the partnership with SIDA. The evaluation will comprise an analysis of MRG's objectives and strategy, a meta assessment of past evaluations and a specific evaluation of MRG's international advocacy which is central to its mission and strategy and has not been previously evaluated. The results of this evaluation will be shared with stakeholders and disseminated via MRG's evaluations webpage on its website.

## **2. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

The central general question of this evaluation is: "With the support of SIDA, was MRG successful in making significant progress towards securing the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples to improve cooperation and understanding between communities?": Were the MRG strategy and projects relevant to MRG overall objective?; and: "How effectively and efficiently has MRG been able to implement programmes to seek to achieve strategic objectives?". This evaluation will not look first hand at everything MRG has accomplished since 1992, its focus is on completing a meta-evaluation and an assessment of MRG's International advocacy.

This evaluation, like most others, will seek to answer the question: "do beneficiaries achieve greater outcomes than similar individuals not receiving services?". This study is designed to also answer the critical follow-on question: "why or why not?", so that some guidance is given about what to replicate (positive elements) or what to improve (lessons learned). Data will be gathered on inputs and outputs of the programmes, exploring qualitative methods to help interpret the quantitative data collected.

The following methods will be used:

- Meetings with MRG staff on-line and in London (discussing methodology, findings and implications for future directions for the organisation at regular intervals);
- Desk research and analysis of former evaluations, programme, project and audit reports (provided by MRG);
- Meetings and telephone conversations with SIDA staff
- Development of targeted questionnaires for relevant stakeholders and issues
- Forwarding E-mail questionnaire to a sample of NGO partner organisations and other stakeholders (regional offices, donors and advocacy targets)
- Holding Interviews (telephone/internet or face-to-face) with key stakeholders (including donors, IGOs, advocacy targets);
- Conducting 3 Field visits to assess MRG's international advocacy and its work with communities on the ground.

- De-briefing with MRG and meeting with MRG's International Council (12/13 Oct)

The evaluation exercise will mostly be an “*outcome evaluation*” focusing on two strands: a meta-evaluation (integrating the outcome estimates from 12 evaluations to arrive at an overall summary judgement on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact) and an evaluation of MRG's international advocacy (compiling data on outcomes of advocacy programmes causing demonstrable effects on specifically defined target outcomes for indigenous peoples and minorities or contributing to processes that enhance their rights). This evaluation embraces the DAC Criteria as laid out in the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance:

- *Relevance*: The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. To what extent are the programmes and projects coherent with MRGs, minority and indigenous peoples objectives?
- *Effectiveness*: Measuring the extent to which MRG projects have attained their objectives. Interventions are effective, when outputs produce the desired outcomes. The question is: to what extent has MRG contributed to supporting minorities and indigenous peoples?
- *Efficiency* is a more economic term and measures qualitative and quantitative outputs in relation to the inputs. An intervention is considered efficient when it uses the required resources appropriately and economically to produce the desired outputs. The central question here is: To what extent has MRG contributed to supporting minorities and indigenous peoples with acceptable cost comparable to that of good practice observed by other donors?
- *Impact*: the positive and negative changes produced by MRG interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- *Sustainability*: To what extent has MRG contributed to supporting the rights and peaceful co-existence of indigenous peoples and minorities in such a way that it will continue after the conclusion of the projects and programmes, without further input?

Below a list of questions based on the ToR and subdivided into 5 themes (MRG policies, MRG's work, MRG's International Advocacy, organisation and networking). All first questions for each theme are informative and necessary as a state of the art before moving on to analysing and evaluating relevant issues.

*The MRG Strategy (2009-2012) and annual Programmes (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012)*

- What are the main priorities of the Strategy and the 4 annual programmes?
- Did MRG's strategic process identify and prioritise issues that were relevant to members of minority communities?
- How well were gender issues included in the Strategy and Programmes?
- To what extent did MRG remain focused on the main strategic priorities? Were all implemented to the same extent? Where not, why not? Where changes were within MRG control, did MRG make good decisions as implementation progressed?
- To what extent are the objectives of the Strategy and Programme still valid?
- Were there other issues that could and should have been prioritized above those that MRG sought to work on?



*MRG's work: on-the-ground projects at national and regional level and global programmes to advance minority rights (review of past evaluations)*

- Overview of evaluations and of all projects and programmes between 2009-2012
- How relevant are these projects in terms of location (geographical region) and thematic focus? Are projects geographically balanced and do they target those groups or peoples around the world most at risk of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression?.
- How effectively and efficiently has MRG been able to implement projects to achieve strategic objectives?
- What examples of impact of projects and programmes are evident?
  - which changes have been achieved?
  - Which results achieved can be highlighted against programme and organisational objectives?.
- How well were gender issues factored into the work and how successful was this?
- Has MRG shown ability to analyse and learn from its successes and mistakes?
- What constraints affected the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of MRG 's work?
- Was MRG able to foresee any constraints? How successfully did MRG work around any constraints?
- Lessons learned and best practices.
- Future priorities?

*MRG's International Advocacy (review of past evaluations supplemented by other sources):*

- How developed is MRG's thinking about international advocacy strategies? How well is this thinking implemented?
- How well is this thinking implemented?
- What are the results of the international advocacy?
- What real difference have activities made to the advocacy targets?
- What examples of impact are already evident?
- What has worked well and less well?
- How effective has MRG's international advocacy work been?
- How can it be improved?
- What are the future priorities?

*MRG (past performance and future priorities of the organisation)*

- How does MRG divide roles and responsibilities between HQ and regional offices?
- Could MRG organise work better between the London HQ and the regional offices?
- Which decision-making procedures does MRG have in place for identifying projects?
- What are the future priorities?

*MRG and its stakeholders: Networking and strategic collaboration*

- Who are MRG's most strategic partners? (NGOs, governments, IGOs, IDBs, UN bodies and agencies, regional organisations, IHRMs)
- Has there been a shift towards sharing responsibilities between HQ and partners?
- How well are partners involved in:

- Programme identification
- Implementation of activities
- Review of programmes?
- How successful has MRG been in forging relationships with key inter-governmental stake-holders?
- What could MRG do better in this area of focus?
- How well has MRG worked with others to achieve its aims?
- What are the future priorities?

### **3. EXPECTED OUTPUTS:**

- An introduction summarising MRG's objectives and strategy and the aims and methodology of the present evaluation.
- A meta-analysis of independent programme evaluations recently completed covering a broad range of MRG's work, including on-the-ground programmes at national and regional level and global programmes to advance minority rights, highlighting results achieved against programme and organisational objectives.
- A brief questionnaire to a sample of MRG's NGO partners and other stakeholders (advocacy targets and donors) assessing both past performance and consulting on future priorities for the organisation
- An evaluation of MRG's international advocacy, central to MRG's mission and contributed to by a number of programmes, assessing MRG's ability to access and influence international agencies and human rights mechanisms. MRG targets international and regional organisation (UN agencies, EU and African Union), as well as national governments, urging them to prioritise minority issues. MRG also supports minorities to attend UN, EU and AU sessions and have their issues heard and submits international statements with or on behalf of minorities to influence policy makers and minority communities.
- A summary of conclusions for increasing further the impact of MRG's work, added value and challenges. Which are the priorities to go forward?
- Recommendations:
  - roles and responsibilities of MRG HQ and regional offices
  - coordination with other actors
  - donor relations and possibilities for donor harmonization and alignment
  - results achieved against programme and organisational objectives
  - International advocacy

### **4. ASUMPTIONS AND RISKS**

The main assumption for this assignment is related to the availability of all relevant information in a timely manner. The expert will build on the support of MRG to ensure that the field visits phase is well coordinated with the regional officers, Partners and stakeholders.

With regards possible risks, the expert will ensure a maximum degree of flexibility to address possible obstacles that can compromise the mission. She will rely on the advice of HQ and regional office to minimise risk of not being able to collect the necessary information efficiently and effectively. The risk of lack of response from stakeholders can be minimised by ensuring implementation of sensible methods and good coordination. The expert will make all necessary advance preparations for possible country visits.

## 5. WORKPLAN / Calendar

ACTIVITIES	Performance MEASURES	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Inception Phase	Reception of documents, study of MRG website							
Agreement on methodology and targeted questionnaires	Inception Report							
Desk research of MRG strategies, annual programmes.	Summary of MRG objectives and policies 2009-2012							
Meta-analysis of 10/12 programme evaluations	Advance results of study.							
On-going consultations with MRG staff on methodology, findings and future directions.	Regular skype meetings on progress.							
Consultations with SIDA staff and regional offices	Advance report on outcomes. June 7.							
Co-develop, forward and analyse e-mail questionnaires to partner organisations and other stakeholders								
Hold Interviews with relevant stakeholders.	Advance summary report on outcome: (June 17)							
Gather information regarding MRG's international advocacy strategy and projects	Advance report on MRG's ability to influence IAs and HRMs (july 17)							
Field visit to Thailand (24 – 30 June)	Report on mission							
Other (2) field visits (to be determined)	Report on missions							
17 September	Draft Report							

Revisions	Final Report							
De-briefing with MRG and meeting with MRG's International Council (12/13 Oct)								

## 7. BASIC DEFINITIONS

Who are minorities and indigenous peoples, what are their rights and what is the Human Rights Based approach that links development with the international human rights framework?

Minorities: There is no internationally agreed definition of minorities. The United Nations Declaration on Minorities provides the title ‘national or ethnic, religious and linguistic’ minorities. It is clear that MRG should adopt its own definition of a minority. MRG’s current explanation of a minority in the 2008 Programme Document runs three paragraphs and is approximately 300 words long. As well as laying out that minorities are often “among the poorest and most marginalized groups in society”, it states that “MRG’s work focuses on non-dominant ethnic, linguistic or religious communities, who may not necessarily be a numerical minority.”

Minority Rights: There is no legally binding international convention that guarantees the rights of minorities in development. With the creation of the UN after World War II, the particular vulnerability of minorities to human rights abuses was recognised by the establishment the Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, followed by Article 27 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights specifically dedicated to minorities. A range of other instruments, followed. There are several international standards relating to minorities that together clearly delineate distinct rights for minorities in development. The key points in these standards are the right to participate, the right to non-discrimination, the right to development and the right to respect for other minority rights, such as the right to education in or of their language and to practise their own culture: *The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)*; *The UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981)*; *The UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986)*; *The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, the core international treaty for promoting the right to non-discrimination and is equally applicable to minorities)*; *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*.

Ignoring the rights of minorities weakens poverty reduction strategies and could prevent the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The exclusion of minorities from the benefits of development also has direct implications for security and stability. When political exclusion of minorities is compounded by economic exclusion, the propensity for impoverishment to lead to extreme or desperate reactions from minority groups is heightened. At the root of the problem is the continuing refusal of many governments to recognize the minorities that exist within their territory. Combating the poverty and exclusion of minorities means protecting their rights. Governments and development

agencies (be they multilateral, bilateral, development banks or international NGOs) need to mainstream the rights of minorities into development policies and practice. Incorporating minorities' rights into the development process, and making the fulfilment of these rights a goal of development, will strengthen the success of development. Minority rights, if fully respected, are a useful tool for overcoming many of the key barriers to development already identified by development practitioners<sup>59</sup>.

### Indigenous peoples

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants - according to a common definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means.

Among the indigenous peoples are those of the Americas (for example, the Lakota in the USA, the Mayas in Guatemala or the Aymaras in Bolivia), the Inuit and Aleutians of the circumpolar region, the Saami of northern Europe, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia and the Maori of New Zealand. These and most other indigenous peoples have retained distinct characteristics which are clearly different from those of other segments of the national populations. Considering the diversity of indigenous peoples, an official definition of "indigenous" has not been adopted by any UN-system body. According to the UN the most fruitful approach is to identify, rather than define indigenous peoples. This is based on the fundamental criterion of self-identification as underlined in a number of human rights documents<sup>60</sup>.

### Specific instruments on indigenous peoples' rights

- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UNDRIP. Adopted in 2007, the UNDRIP recognizes the wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples such as the right to unrestricted self-determination and inalienable and collective land and resource right. It also establishes guarantees against ethnocide and genocide.
- ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous Peoples. Adopted in 1989, it reflects changes in the position of indigenous and tribal populations and greater understanding of their position by governments, employers and workers.

### Human Rights Based Approach

MRG embraces the human rights-based approach (HRBA), which ensures that human rights are mainstreamed and internationally-agreed standards are applied when determining and assessing objectives and progress. At its core, the HRBA is a framework for analysing

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<sup>59</sup> Minority Rights and Development: Overcoming exclusion, discrimination and poverty, 29 May 2002, Paper submitted to the UN Working Group on Minorities.

<sup>60</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

development challenges and for planning meaningful responses. Rather than being an additional burden, human rights mainstreaming through the application of the HRBA, offers practical solutions to overcome some of the specific challenges that governments face and to make their ODA more effective and efficient. The HRBA is based on the recognition that human rights and development are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. This understanding stems from the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) and was further endorsed by the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. The mainstreaming of human rights into development cooperation has since gathered increasing political recognition among major development actors as essential to working towards effective, sustainable and just human development. It is enshrined in the Millennium Declaration<sup>11</sup> and has been taken up by the UN system, the OECD/DAC, and the EU. The HRBA represents a departure from traditional approaches to development assistance, which focused largely on needs of the poor and the provision of specific commodities and services to meet those needs. In contrast, HRBA looks to empower people through an inclusive and participatory approach focused on rights rather than needs. The particular human rights 'lens' essentially focuses on identifying *rights-holders* and *duty-bearers* in a specific development context. Once identified, it aims to analyse and promote the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights and the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil those rights<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> Integration of the human-rights-based approach into development policies: A guide for the new EU Member States, MRG 12 September 2011. This guide is a follow-up tool to Minority Rights Group (MRG) Europe's policy paper *The Human Rights-based Approach: A More Effective Framework for International Development Policies in New EU Member States*, which analyses the relevance of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) for New EU Member States.