MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

Independent Evaluation of The Eu-Funded Project:
Coordinated Public Action on Racism in Development

April 2008

This is an independent evaluation of the Minority Rights Group International (MRGI's) project, Coordinated Public Action on Racism in Development, funded by the EU (NGO co-financing). The project ran for three years from 1 January 2006 until 31 December 2008. It had as its overall objective to utilize public opinion and the media to put pressure on development actors in 10 EU member states[1] to tackle discrimination in development; it sought to increase public awareness on the practical steps that can be taken to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and on the poverty and needs of minority and indigenous communities. In particular, the project involved the creation of an online database - the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples[2] - the production of an annual *State of the World's Minorities* (*SWM*) publication[3] - and the design and undertaking of media and online campaigning.

This evaluation focuses on a review of the project's planned activities and results and includes some conclusions about whether the project has met its overall objectives.

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[1] Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Finland, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom
[2] The online directory is here: http://www.minorityrights.org/6065/the-directory/the-directory.html
[3] http://www.minorityrights.org/990/state-of-the-worlds-minorities/state-of-the-worlds-minorities.html

1. ACTIVITIES

The project outlined 10 main activities.

1. Design online resource

A professional web-design company was commissioned to design the Directory, which was accomplished according to schedule (though the content was seriously delayed; see below). The website performs nearly all the tasks envisaged, such as housing comprehensive information on the world's minorities, regular updates of this information (including an ability to subscribe to a monthly e-bulletin), and encourages users to take specific actions on a particular issue (such as signing a petition or sending en email to a policy-maker) thus supporting campaigns. It does not include routing the user to material appropriate to all the groups originally envisaged, such as age appropriate summaries for children; MRGI deemed this too complex a concept to deliver given the number of staff on the project and the need to concentrate on delivering the core activities on the project such as media coverage and campaigning.

The Directory is now established as a unique resource intended for policy-makers, journalists and the public globally; there is no similar source with this depth of information and up-to-date snapshot and analysis of issues affecting minorities around the world. Feedback to MRGI suggests that the Directory has been received overwhelmingly positively by policy-makers, minority communities and NGOs. The Directory is sustainable as MRGI is committed to maintaining and updating it in future.

2. Research content on minorities and indigenous peoples' worldwide

This task was seriously delayed and proved more time-consuming and difficult than envisaged, mainly as a result of the poor quality of the consultant who was hired (after an external tender) as the editor of the Directory and the *SWM*. The final editorial checks of the database content were completed in mid-February 2008, and the database went live shortly after.

Twenty-one experts contributed the content on minority communities around the world, as envisaged. The content includes data on minorities' social, economic and legal position and includes the country's legal and political situation and historical context, as well as contact details of organizations and sources for further information, as planned. The sections are regularly reviewed by MRG staff and two external experts.

Only a limited amount of the material has been translated into Spanish and French; only some of the navigation tools, for example, although what were deemed the most useful tools were translated alongside some of the most relevant sections of the site.

3. Commission and produce personal stories

This activity was delayed and commenced when the organization recruited a new Head of Communications, in October 2006. It has since become an integral part of MRGI's media work. A dozen personal stories by men and women from minority groups around the world have been commissioned and published, outlining the personal challenges

they face and, often, how they are being overcome.[4] Targeted mainly at journalists, these stories include testimonies as to double discrimination faced by women in Africa. A series of personal testimonies on the effect of climate change on minorities was commissioned, which was a key factor in securing media coverage.

4. Commission and edit film/audio material.

The project plan envisaged commissioning the shooting of three pieces of film material to place with broadcasters. However, the recruitment of a media team with good media contacts resulted in the broadcast of news reports on BBC World, the BBC international channel and the UK's Channel 4 News, on the subjects of Iraq and the Chagos Islands dispossession (and also a report on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme on Roma in the Czech Republic). In this light, MRGI considered that the target of three films had been accomplished, thus the funds set aside for the films were utilized for research and journalism fees to produce material to update the database, advocacy briefs and online campaigns.

5. Edit content for particular audiences to produce audience-specific routes through the media

The project plan envisaged creating routes through the Directory for different target audiences, such as journalists and school children. It also envisaged translating the main routes through the database and campaign materials into the 7 main languages spoken in the 10 target states. These activities were first delayed by the delays in the project overall and then reduced in scale; MRGI identified lack of sufficient capacity and funds as reasons and that this was too ambitious a commitment. Three press releases were translated into Hungarian in 2008, and three press releases were translated into Spanish. Otherwise, reliance was placed on most EU countries having news wire agencies that would themselves translate material.

6. Call for additional material from partners, inter-governmental organizations, researchers

MRGI's partners and other minority organization have been involved in the gathering of information and commenting on the material related to their countries, as envisaged in the project plan. Sometimes at MRGI's request, several minority organisations have fed in comments on the Directory, either praising it or suggesting amendments; this has helped improve or update the content.

7. Begin ongoing, rolling programme of updating material

The project plan envisaged updating the Directory's content either after major changes in country (eg, conflict or national elections) or otherwise every 18 months. This was done, and two external writers were commissioned to do updates; once a month, they and MRGI identified countries needing to be updated. Press clippings were also compiled, involving a round up of news in the countries MRGI works in, on an every day basis, and which also fed into updating the database. In crisis situations such as Russia's invasion of Georgia, the conflict in Sri Lanka and ethnic violence in Kenya, MRGI made a small write-up of the events on the cover page of the database which was

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[4] http://www.minorityrights.org/7596/so-what-do-you-do/fakhteh-zamani-.html

then linked to the country entry and/or to the affected minority group. Thirty-one country pages were updated between January and October 2008, for example.

8. Design, launch and run overall media and online campaign and specific issue campaigns within the overall campaign – 10 launches, mobile exhibition

The project plan envisaged that the main elements involved in the campaign would be the selection of specific campaigns on particular issues, launch events, e-presentation initiatives, postcards, nurturing journalists, the production of press releases and media packs and talking to key development institutions to alert their staff to the existence of the Directory.

MRGI has run two major online campaigns run throughout the period, both launched in 2008:
- Show of Hands[5] - on how minority communities are affected by climate change
- Trouble in Paradise[6] - on the eviction of the Endorois community from land in Kenya

Various campaigns material on these and other issues on minorities have been produced, including a regular e-bulletin that is sent to 5,000 contacts and, notably, briefings and reports directed at the media and decision-makers, including:
- *Voices that must be heard: Minorities and indigenous people combating climate change*, November 2008[7]
- *Kenya six months on: A new beginning or business as usual?*, August 2008[8]
- *One year on: Counter-terrorism sparks human rights crisis for Sri Lanka's minorities*, December 2007[9]
- *Assimilation, exodus, eradication: Iraq's minority communities since 2003*, February 2007[10]

Considerable work has been done to engage with key journalists and to alert institutions about the Directory (see further media work, below). With some other aspects of the project plan, there have been considerable changes, as MRGI communicated to the EU in its reports of 2007 and 2008:

- Launch events were originally intended to be held in each of the 10 target countries. However this was reduced to one, the reasoning being that it was better to focus staff time and resources more on securing mass public and media responses to the campaign, rather than on physical launches that might attract only dozens of people, and on the understanding that a launch is best

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[5] http://www.minorityrights.org/6673/a-show-of-hands/a-show-of-hands.html

[6] http://www.minorityrights.org/6777/trouble-in-paradise/trouble-in-paradise.html

[7] http://www.minorityrights.org/7491/briefing-papers/voices-that-must-be-heard-minorities-and-indigenous-people-combating-climate-change.html

[8] http://www.minorityrights.org/7096/briefing-papers/kenya-six-months-on-a-new-beginning-or-business-as-usual.html

[9] http://www.minorityrights.org/4583/briefing-papers/one-year-on-counterterrorism-sparks-human-rights-crisis-for-sri-lankas-minorities.html

[10] http://www.minorityrights.org/2805/reports/assimilation-exodus-eradication-iraqs-minority-communities-since-2003.html

accompanied by the release of a briefing or report on a particular subject and tied to a particular event.

- The original idea of holding a mobile exhibition was changed to an online photographic exhibition provided by minorities around the world and focused on the key campaign themes. The reasoning behind the change was that such an online exhibition would be more likely to attract media and public attention to the Directory, reaching a larger audience.
- The original idea to produce postcards in seven languages was shelved given MRGI's learning since planning the project that securing publicity for an online resource is more effectively secured through using email marketing and promotional tools. The budget allocated to postcards was re-allocated to developing campaign materials and the online exhibition.

9. Carry out analysis, write and produce an annual 'State of the World's Minorities' publication – one per year

Three editions of the *State of the World's Minorities* have been published according to schedule under this programme: the report for 2008, which focuses on climate change, and the report for 2007, which focuses on 'peoples under threat' from conflict, and the report for 2006. All these editions include a ranking of the countries where minorities are most at risk.[11] The *SWM 2008* received widespread media coverage in the target countries, featuring in the Finnish, French, Spanish and UK print media and radio in the Netherlands. The report includes overviews of key developments, both positive and negative, for minorities, detailed information on specific countries while personal testimonies of minorities affected by climate change run throughout.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Project progress has been regularly monitored, as envisaged, with the holding of quarterly planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings. All editions of the *SWM* have been evaluated; MRGI meeting minutes following the launches record a number of points to improve future editions. Media coverage has been tracked and the 'hits' recorded. Some aspects of website usage have been tracked, such as the number of users, their country of origin and their time spent online, but not all those envisaged in the original plan: the usage of particular pages on the Directory has not been tracked, nor has the signature of users (eg, whether they are from government or academia). This means that monitoring against expected results is not possible (see further sections 9 and 11 below).

The original plan was to fund an evaluation involving face-to-face meetings in three of the 10 target countries and for an 8 days per diem to be provided; however, as MRGI previously proposed to the EU, it was considered that it would not be an optimal use of funds for the evaluator to travel and that email and telephone conversations would suffice.

11. Other key issues: The delay in project implementation and campaigning

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[11] http://www.minorityrights.org/990/state-of-the-worlds-minorities/state-of-the-worlds-minorities.html

AS MRGI has reported to the EU, the activities described above were affected by substantial delays in the project's initial phase, for a number of reasons:

- MRGI had problems recruiting a suitable Head of Communications, who would manage the project; the person was recruited in October 2006 – instead of January 2006 - after several advertisements and an agency search process.
- MRGI also had difficulties recruiting suitable writers to the project who had the requisite minority and writing skills expertise combined, as well as suitable peer reviewers for the content of the Directory. The consultant recruited to oversee the database project, and to edit the *SWM*, provide to be poorly organized, to lack editorial judgement and to have insufficient minority expertise. This meant that the final texts delivered to MRGI were, on closer examination, of varying quality.
- MRGI accepts that the delays in finalizing the contents of the database were due to an underestimation of the complexity of the work. Six months is viewed in retrospect as far too short a timescale to produce minority profiles for every country in the world including unrecognized territories. There was also an expectation that partner organizations would send in more material for Directory than they actually did.

MRGI took a number of steps to remedy these problems:

- The Head of Communications, the Media Officer and the Production Coordinator were all deployed to work virtually full-time to get the Directory finished.
- The Head of Communications undertook the major part of editing the *SWM* after October 2006 so that the consultant could focus on the Directory.
- Once the consultant's contract expired, in-house resources were deployed to sort out the quality of the material

The delays in the production of the Directory had serious knock-on effects on other aspects of the project. Time spent on the Directory's editorial and contents problems meant there was far less time that could be devoted to campaigning work, to conduct online advocacy or write briefing papers. The most serious overall impact of the delay was that there was a far shorter time than originally envisaged to run the overall campaign within the three year programme; MRGI's ability to generate significant public action (which takes time and consistent application) became much more limited. Many of the campaigning elements of the project became unachievable. MRGI held a planning meeting in January 2008 to identify a range of campaign options within the context of the constraints, and whittled the options down to two major campaigns. MRGI reported to the EU that it would be extremely difficult to meet the project's original targets given that they were based on the campaign running for much longer; since some of the project's targets were unrealistic anyway (see below), it would be more accurate to say that meeting the targets became impossible.

2. EXPECTED RESULTS

The project outlined two expected results with a number of 'objectively verifiable indicators of achievement'.

Expected Result one: Targeted media make use of the resources on minorities provided through the programme and broadcast the message to put pressure on development actors in 10 EU member states

This result was achieved. The overall number of media hits, detailed below, is impressive in light of the very limited capacity available to the organization to devote to this area of work - the Communications team which lead the campaign consisted of only FTE 3.6 staff. The project secured increasing media coverage over the three years with online coverage more than doubling over the period. The coverage has been overwhelmingly in 'quality' media, read by decision-makers. MRGI is the leading, and virtually the only[12], organization in the EU achieving media attention on the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples.

It should be said that the issue of minorities is (almost by definition) an exceptionally difficult one on which to secure media coverage, especially in the print media where there is less space, and the figures for coverage reflect that. The target of 600 for print media stories was unrealistic. That said, the media hits obtained show that it is possible to secure significant media coverage on the difficult issue of discrimination. Given the difficulties with the delays in the project and the reduced time available for campaigning and media work, it was also surely right for the media focus to be on the English language media outlets, which have bigger audiences and where the MRGI staff team has better existing contacts.

The quality of the media coverage was often good, repeating the project's and MRGI's key concerns about minorities and focused on discrimination. For example:
- An article in the *Guardian* (UK), for example, states: "Political and social discrimination faced by many indigenous communities in their own countries means that not only are they the hardest hit, but are also least likely to benefit from the distribution of relief aid in climate-related disasters, according to MRG".[13]
- An article in *Le Monde* (France), states: « Certaines minorités ethniques sont particulièrement menacées de disparition par les bouleversements climatiques, selon le rapport annuel sur l'état des minorités dans le monde de l'organisation Minority Rights Group (MRG), publié mardi 11 mars. Une étude portant sur plusieurs désastres environnementaux récents dans le monde montre que ce sont les minorités et les groupes indigènes qui ont été le plus touchés par les changements climatiques tandis que, quand une catastrophe naturelle survient, ils sont les derniers auxquels l'aide parvient, souligne le MRG.C'est l'Afrique qui devrait être parmi les continents les plus touchés.»
- A BBC news report covering MRGI's report on Iraq noted that 'religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq are facing unprecedented levels of violence, according to a study by a human rights organization… The authors say the situation is steadily deteriorating and they are calling on the international community and the Iraqi government to recognise the special vulnerability of the country's minorities'.[14]

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[12] Survival International, which focuses on tribal peoples, is the other main organisation
[13] Annie Kelly, 'Indigenous people must be included in climate change talks, campaigners say, *Guardian*, 20 November 2008,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/nov/20/climatechange-poznan
[14] Jane Peel, 'Iraq's minorities "face violence"', BBC News, 27 February 2007,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6398659.stm

Indicator: At least 600 stories in the print media across the 10 EU member states conveying how discrimination impedes development, on the practical steps that can be taken to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and on the poverty and needs of minority and indigenous communities.

Indicator: At least 360 stories in the broadcast (radio/TV) media across the 10 EU member states conveying how discrimination impedes development, on the practical steps that can be taken to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and on the poverty and needs of minority and indigenous communities.

Achieving these indicators proved beyond the capacity of the project. Table 1 shows that the project achieved 33 print media 'hits' compared to the target of 600 and 110 broadcast media 'hits' compared to the target of 360. The project did not have a target for online hits.

Table 1: Overall number of media hits in target countries

	2006	2007	2008	TOTAL
Online	33	54	83	170
Broadcast	29	53	28	110
Print	8	14	11	33
TOTAL	70	121	122	313

Source: Figures provided by MRGI

Online 'hits' included an impressive range of the big international media which tend to be picked up by other media and blogsites, notably Agence France Press, Associated Press, Reuters, Reliefweb, Interpress Service, Oneworld, IRIN and Alertnet. In 2008, the broadcast hits included securing 10 items of coverage on BBC World and World Service radio, with very large audiences. The *SWM* publication, either in full or a substantial part, appears on several important websites, such as UNHCR, the UN's NGLS and BBC news.

Of the print media over the three years, the most prominent coverage was secured in the UK newspapers (all the principal dailies such the *Independent*, *Times*, *Guardian, Scotsman* and *Telegraph*, as well as the *Economist*) as well as in *Le Monde*, with mentions in Spain's *El Mundo* and *El Pais.*

Table 2: Country breakdown of media hits

	2006	2007	2008	TOTAL
International *	43	68	49	160
Belgium	1	0	8	9
France	0	2	3	5
Spain	1	3	21	25
UK	24	48	21	93
Denmark	0	0	1	1
Ireland	0	0	2	2
Hungary	0	0	3	3

Finland	0	0	6	6
Netherlands	1	0	8	9
Sweden	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	70	121	122	313

Source: Adapated from figures provided by MRGI
* Means media viewed/listened to across all or virtually all the EU states, such as Reuters, Oneworld, Interpress service, and also the international services of the BBC (for example, BBC World and World Service radio).

Table 2 shows that the overwhelmingly majority of coverage in the first two years of the campaign was in the English-language media. By the third year, however, the campaign was securing coverage more broadly across the EU target countries, with a significant increase in the Spanish media. Some countries have been difficult to secure print and broadcast media coverage in at all – none was secured in Sweden, Hungary and Denmark, and only one in Belgium, during the project, for example.

Very little media coverage was obtained in Hungary, as Table 2 indicates. The original budget included an allocation for some days worked by a project officer in Hungary but MRGI later chose to reallocate the budget for this. This was in line with the decision to not recruit freelancers in Spain and France, which was discussed with the EU in interim reports, and due to the fact that MRGI had achieved coverage in the French and Spanish media from London; this change was shown in the revised budget sent to and agreed by the EU. MRGI believed that the budget did not cover the scale of the ambition of this part of the project and that the funds were better deployed elsewhere. An MRGI visit to Hungary suggested that the media there was distinctly not engaged on Southern development and minority issues, and that overseas development aid has very low profile among the public and government in Hungary. Thus the media aims regarding Hungary were clearly over-ambitious. Even if media coverage had been secured, it was unlikely to translate into real pressure on Hungarian decision-makers to change policies. The conclusion of the EU's project monitoring report of 8 December 2008, that 'in hindsight, Hungary is not a good candidate for the proposed intervention', appears justified.

An indicator attached to the specific objective/purpose was: At least 10 per cent of the population in each of the ten target states read/listen to/see at least one of the items of media coverage produced (ie, a total of approximately 21.6 million people)

Table 3: Percentage of the population viewing/listening to media coverage

	1. Population	2. Total viewers/ listeners over 36 months	3. % of population viewing/ listening
Belgium	10,403,951	8,355,706	80
France	62,150,775	5,450,851	9
Spain	40,491,051	14,154,470	35
UK	60,943,912	371,726,353	> 100
Denmark	5,484,723	5,472,557	99
Ireland	4,156,119	22,179,133	> 100
Hungary	9,930,915	4,245,571	43

Finland	5,244,749	7,432,613	> 100
Netherlands	16,645,313	10,323,300	62
Sweden	9,045,389	7,722,710	85
TOTAL		457,063,263	

Source: Adapted from figures provided by MRGI
Note 1: Column 2 is the total number of people viewing/listening to media where MRGI has secured media coverage over the 36 months of the project. Column 3 is a calculation of these listeners compared to population figures; of course the same listeners/viewers may be counted twice or more.
Note 2: A considerable proportion of the viewership/listenership figures for non-English-speaking EU countries result from people accessing English-language media rather than national media.

Table 3 shows that the target of reaching 21 million people with at least one item of media coverage over the lifetime of the project has been clearly exceeded. The figures show that MRGI has secured media coverage with media organizations with a total audience of 457 million, counted over the three years of the project.

> ***Expected Result two: The site is used by a large number of people to gather information about the development situation of minority communities, the practical steps to avoid conflict and the impact of discrimination on development***

This result was achieved in that the site has attracted a large number of people, although some of the specific indicators were not met.

Indicator: At least 8,000 users in EU member states visit the website each month (after the launch in month 7 – 240,000 visits in total in 2.5 years) and spend at least 5 minutes each on the site.

Website users from the 10 target countries numbered an average of 3,450 a month in the seven months from June-December 2008. Users spent an average of 2.43 minutes on site.

Prior to June 2008 MRGI used a standard website tracking service called AWstats, which counts visits from search engine 'crawlers' as well as real (human) visitors and therefore produces profoundly inflated statistics. MRGI was advised that a log-file based tracker like AWstats was not appropriate for its needs, and that it should be using a 'page-tagging' system like Google Analytics. The organization moved to Google Analytics in May 2008. In October 2008 a comparison was made between the two systems, which confirmed that the initial project targets (which had been made based on the inflated AWstats figures) were unrealistic. This table demonstrates the extent of the discrepancies:

	Visitors	Unique Visitors	Average time on site
AWStats	41860	30367	04:05
Google Analytics	12922	9802	03:08

Indicator: Of the above all our major target groups are represented in reasonable proportions, ie, at least 10 per cent of users are academics, NGOs and government respectively.

MRGI did not have the means to fully assess the signature of the users; however, it was able to analyse a portion of the email addresses that signed up to the media list and campaigns. From the 5000+ addresses MRGI looked at the most common email suffixes help determine a rough demographic:

Origin of Email Address
General/untraceable (eg. Hotmail, yahoo etc)	1,376	42%
Organisations with the .org suffix	1,056	33%
Academic (eg, .edu, .ac and suffix specific to individual institutions such as utoronto.ca)	413	13%
Government	168	5%
International Organisations (eg. with the .int suffix, EU, UN and foreign affairs ministries)	148	5%
Other organisations (NGOs, media etc)	86	3%
Total number analysed	3247	

Indicator: Of these, a reasonable spread across the 10 target countries is achieved – a minimum of 5 per cent of 8,000 users each month are from each of the target countries.

User figures by country per month for the months June-December 2008 were:

United Kingdom: 2,332
Hungary: 205
Netherlands: 184
France: 168
Sweden: 154
Belgium: 134
Spain: 85
Ireland: 86
Denmark: 55
Finland: 49

The UK accounted for 67 per cent of the users. Hungary and the Netherlands were the only other countries surpassing the 5 per cent target.

Indicator: There are no less than 1,500 visits per month to pages on campaigns that raise double discrimination and issues affecting minority and indigenous women.

For the reasons outlined above, MRGI was not able to assess visits to individual pages prior to June 2008. Google Analytics reports data on unique visits to pages that were accessed via the MRGI homepage for the period June 2008 – December 2008:

Campaigns
Main campaigns page: 1,715

A Show Of Hands Campaign:4,213
Trouble in Paradise: 1,011
World Directory of Minorities: 1,382

Other pages
News: 1,247
Reports: 1,102
Publications: 1,382
Law: 1,575

It should be noted that this list does not include further click-throughs to pages; thus users who accessed the Trouble in Paradise campaign page via the main campaign page will not be reflected in the figures above.

3. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

> ***Overall objectives. Through public opinion and the media, to put pressure on development actors in 10 EU member states to tackle discrimination in development, resulting in better development programmes that reach the poorest, reduce inequality and reduce inter-community tension and conflict.***

Indicator: Eight key development institutions report that they have adopted new pro-minority/IP policies, methods or have been able to improve inclusion of minorities and/or IPs in their work

Indicator: At least 16 key development institutions report heightened awareness on these issues from their audiences and media coverage and pressure to improve policies and implementation.

Indicator: At least 20 minority or indigenous communities report that development assistance from key development actors to their community has improved, with independent verification of some of these cases.

These objectives were always going to be extremely difficult to achieve in their scale (the large number of development actors) and depth (actual policy change or reported heightened awareness); with the delays in the project, and the little time devoted to sustained campaigning, they became even more so. However, there is evidence that the project, especially in providing a greater information underpinning to MRGI's broader work, has helped contribute to identifiable policy change in at least two UN agencies:

- MRGI's Director sits on a small working group helping UNDP to develop, for the first time, an organization-wide policy on minorities and development, set to be a step-change in the way UNDP views minorities.
- UNICEF has recently commissioned MRGI to conduct an internal review of the organization's global programming on minorities, in which around half of all its country office programmes will be reviewed.

These are the first international organizations to form corporate policies on minorities in development, and thus the MRGI influence is very significant.

Government-level influence has also been obtained. As a direct result of MRGI's work (advocacy and information) for the more effective participation of minorities in decision-making, the Iraqi government in 2008 overturned a previous decision to remove the reserved seating arrangements for minorities in provincial government. This move, for which MRGI was the main advocate in Iraq and internationally, will go some way to ensuring the better protection of minority interests at provincial level.

MRGI also conducted training sessions on minorities in development for the Swiss, Finnish and Swedish governments' development ministries.

The project has made progress in putting the issue of discrimination against minorities more on the radar screen of some development actors and that some of the latter already working on minority/IP issues are now more aware of the concerns being raised by MRGI. For example:

- UNHCR now has links to the Directory's country pages on its site.[15]
- At a meeting in the UK Parliament in December 2006, the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Juan Mendez, was asked by an MP whether his office published a watch list of countries; he replied that there was no need for him to do that, as MRGI was already doing so with Peoples Under Threat[16], part of the *SWM* work.
- The office of the new UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, Francis Deng, monitors a small number of indices to identify country situations of concern; according to information provided to MRGI, Peoples Under Threat has been first on the list of indices being considered.
- Since the publication of MRGI's report on Iraq[17], the organization reports that the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq has actively sought out its views and has been keen to have contacts with it, while being more aware of the situation of Iraq's minorities and uses the analysis in the report.
- The Peoples Under Threat ranking is becoming a standard tool for use by some UN actors, academic institutions and NGOs in risk situations. One new initiative using it is the Genocide Prevention Project, launched at the end of 2008.[18]

The project has also better enabled MRGI to input its analysis into the thinking of some development actors. For example:

- A ECOSOC report draws on analysis provided by MRGI on how climate change and pressure on land resources are affecting minorities and indigenous peoples.[19]

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[15] http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4954ce1123&skip=0&query=world%20directory%20of%20minorities

[16] http://www.minorityrights.org/837/peoples-under-threat/peoples-under-threat-2008.html
[17] http://www.minorityrights.org/2805/reports/assimilation-exodus-eradication-iraqs-minority-communities-since-2003.html
[18] See http://www.preventorprotect.org/overview/other-indices.html

- MRGI's submission paper on minorities in Sri Lanka was referenced several times in the OHCHR's Universal Peer Review report on Sri Lanka in May 2008.[20]
- The UK Home Office's *Country of Origin Information report* for Iraq for 2009 quotes MRGI's briefing on Iraq many times.[21]
- MRGI staff provided comments on drafts of the International Council on Human Rights Policy's recent report on climate change and human rights.[22]

Some comments received by MRGI also highlight the utility of the work undertaken during the project:

- Gay McDougall, UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, said of the *SWM 2007*: "If you need any more evidence of the threats faced by minorities in the world today, just look in this report".
- Annet Ijff, Head of Department for Democratisation and Peacebuilding of ICCO/Kerk in Actie in the Netherlands, said of MRGI's work in 2007/08: "In terms of significant changes we observed among your most important relations a change in their attitude or practice, which we consider a huge achievement in the field of advocacy..."

The project has helped some of MRGI's partners:

- Many states do not recognize minority groups; in these cases in particular, an authoritiative publication, such as the database, recognized by international organizations and which articulates minorities as established facts, can significantly boost minority groups position and ability to influence in-country.
- The Mandayan and Turkmen groups in exile from Iraq report that they have used the Iraq report in their advocacy towards governments in Sweden, Germany and Jordan.
- On the Show of Hands campaign Anna Pinto of Meitei, India, said.: "You could say that the campaign and briefing paper added substantial weight to the issues raised by IPs. Certainly we would use the interviews on your website when we approach development actors from governments to socially conscious private corporations, financial institutions etc".
- The Endorois community in Kenya reports that MRGI's campaign has been vital in raising its profile and to its advocacy and legal work towards the government and the Africa Commission on Peoples Rights. Wilson Kipkazi, of the Endorois Welfare Council said: "The launch of the Trouble in Paradise online campaign is a mile stone in the Endorois community's struggle to be recognized as a people who have a right to the natural resources on their land. The world is a global village, and to address issues online will expose human rights violations against minority and indigenous peoples that have been conducted until now with impunity. Natural justice must prevail at all times…We have discussed with our

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[19] ECOSOC, Issues paper - Preparatory meeting: 'Land and vulnerable people in a world of change', 2008, p.3,
http://www.un.org/ecosoc/docs/programme/ECOSOCPrepMtgIssuesPaper.pdf
[20] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR%5CPAGES%5CLKSession2.aspx
[21] Home Office, UK Border Agency, Country of Origin information report: Iraq, 12 January 2009, at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html
[22] ICHRP, *Climate change and human rights: A rough guide*, ICHRP, Geneva, 2008, p.2.
http://www.docstoc.com/docs/1077334/Climate-Change-and-Human-Rights-A-Rough-Guide

community and found out that the support through petitions has created great impact on many occasions, thus we believe this will assist the Endorois community realize their dream in the long run. The community too, do agree that the campaign reflects their aspirations and goals."

In summary, the project has helped contributed to important policy changes in some key international organizations, put minority rights more firmly on the map of some key institutions and prepared the ground to achieve influence over policy-making in the future. It has contributed to increased media and some public awareness of minority rights and discrimination in development, notably through the individual campaigns and two key outputs – the online Directory and the *SWM*.

4. OTHER IMPACTS: INTERNAL LEARNING

Although not an expected result of the project, the work has contributed to significant internal learning in MRGI, setting up the organization for improved media, campaigning and project management in the future:

- The project has made media work more central to MRGI's activities. Staff have gained greater experience of doing media work and have made contacts with a new range of journalists and have developed a database of contacts. Some journalists has been made aware of MRGI's work for the first time, giving the organization a higher media profile and a firmer base on which to conduct future media work. Good contacts have been developed particularly with BBC World Service radio. Specific media techniques have been learnt, such as targeting individual journalists with specific media releases, rather than sending out general releases. MRGI has become more strategic in its media work, ensuring that topical issues are central to its research, and that briefings/reports are timed to be launched at key moments.
- The launch of online campaigns has also made campaigning work more central to MRGI's activities. The project has enabled MRGI to move towards becoming more of a concerted campaigning organization, partly as more non-campaigns-focused staff become convinced of the benefits of such work by playing a role in it. (Conversely, it should also be said, however, that some other staff may feel more cautious about campaigning after some of the difficulties encountered in this project). MRGI now has a much better understanding of online campaigning having developed a realistic assessment from this project as to the time and capacity needed to develop and sustain online campaigns and a better sense of needing to design campaigning tools to fit specific campaigning asks.
- The profile obtained by the *SWM* and the Directory has enabled the organization to develop new contacts with policy-makers and decision-makers, which will surely prove useful for future work. The initial groundwork for future influence may have been laid. A key is to ensure that the *SWM*, and other main publications, are effectively distributed to key targets.
- The Directory has become a valuable in-house resource for MRGI's research, supporting its policy and analysis work.
- The engagement of experts and readers to write and review the Directory's content has enabled the organization to make new contacts with important actors in the field of minorities, aiding the organisation's policy and analysis work.

- In-house knowledge of online technology has dramatically improved, with experience of using online campaigning tools and techniques, for the first time, which will support future campaigning and other activities. Prior to undertaking this project, MRGI had a rudimentary corporate understanding of on-line technology.
- The project has stimulated interest from some of MRGI's partner organizations in training on doing media and campaigning work, which will lead to improving their capacity. The establishment of the Directory has also, in a limited way, enabled partners to deepen their interaction with MRGI and each other, also helping to build their media and campaigning potential.
- The difficulties encountered in undertaking the project, together with the challenges posed anyway by the scale of it, have made senior managers in MRGI even more aware of the potential pitfalls of large projects and the need for careful project design and supervision.

On the negative side, the key points concern choice of objectives, campaign techniques and organizational culture.

The project made some assumptions at the beginning that could not be fulfilled, such as about the number of individuals that can be persuaded to take action and the ease with which development actors would act under pressure of media coverage. Campaigning requires attainable objectives to be set in order to attract the public to support them and also to allow staff to see that they are achieving them. Once it became clear during the delays in the project that some of the project's objectives and results, especially the campaigning elements, were unachievable, the project goals could have been more drastically re-evaluated than they were, to set more realistic and shorter-term goals. A planning meeting was held in early 2008 to consider the range of campaign options – meetings could have been held earlier to review objectives and the quarterly meetings could have produced more far-reaching remedies.

It is hard to establish in advance of a campaign what campaigning techniques are likely to work, especially for organizations with limited experience of campaigning. The campaigning techniques chosen were in some cases unlikely to achieve fully the objectives, especially given the time available after the delays in the project. Online petitions were a new way in which MRGI sought to mobilize individual supporters behind a campaign, but they might only succeed when a very large number of people are mustered behind a very specific goal directed towards a specific target. The 'take action now' section of the 'Show of Hands' campaign on climate change is a letter to the President and member states in the UN Framework on Climate Change calling for the adoption of a resolution to hold an expert workshop on the impact of climate change on minorities.[23] This ask is probably a bit dull and its targets not specific enough to attract large numbers of campaign supporters to a topline 'take action' ask. Campaigning also usually requires taking a stronger position and exposing particular actors as the 'bad guys' on particular policies. The 'Trouble in Paradise' 'take action' ask – an online petition that calls on the Kenyan government to protect the traditional way of life of the Endorois community – is more specifically focused on its target but probably not hard-hitting enough to attract sufficient public support (and wider media coverage) or to pressure the Kenyan authorities; it is unclear if the latter would respond to a petition. The

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[23] http://www.minorityrights.org/7117/a-show-of-hands/take-action-now.html

campaign might have made more of a connection to the tourism company and the large number of European visitors to Kenya.

Campaigning often requires making enemies of targets but organizational culture as a whole needs to be comfortable with this. Difficulty in establishing strong campaigning asks is not untypical in organisations making a transition from being policy- and advocacy-oriented towards being focused on campaigning and public mobilization. The organization may have needed in this project to be clearer about how much weight to give to campaigning in its work, and whether indeed it is striving to be a 'campaigning organisation', and if so to be clear about how this changes organizational culture and staff attitudes.

The substantial internal learning gained by working on this project, and the significant media successes gained from it, put MRGI in a much better position to move forward on this than before the project began.

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5 April 2009