

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
AND  
THE GOVERNMENT OF FIJI

NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON CIVIC EDUCATION (NICE)

MID-TERM PROJECT REVIEW

JULY 2009

## ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCF	Citizens' Constitutional Forum
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CWL	Catholic Women's League
DEX	Directly Executed Project (by UNDP)
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy
EU	European Union
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FHRC	Fiji Human Rights Commission
FDPA	Fiji Disabled People's Association
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCWF	National Council of Women Fiji
NEX	Nationally Executed Project (by Government)
NICE	National Initiative on Civic Education
NPO	National Planning Office.
NZ Aid	New Zealand Aid
PCDF	Partners in Community Development of Fiji
PSC	Public Service Commission
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
TISI Sangam	Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific

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## **Acknowledgements**

The reviewer would like to express his sincere appreciation to everyone who has assisted him in undertaking the NICE Project Mid-Term Review, in particular all those listed in Annex B Persons and Organisations Consulted. He has attempted to faithfully and impartially reflect the views and opinions of those consulted. He would wish however to apologise to anyone who feels that their views have not been adequately or correctly reflected.

## **Executive Summary**

The Mid-Term Review of the National Initiative on Civic Education (NICE) Project was undertaken in May - July 2009 at the mid point in the three year (2008-2010) life of the Project. The Review was requested by the Project Board essentially to assist the Board to assess such issues as the Project's performance to-date; its continued relevance, impact and sustainability of its activities; and also to provide recommendations for the future, in particular in light of the changes that have occurred, since its formulation and inception, in the environment in which it now operates.

The methodology used in undertaking the Review involved both a desk review of all Project related documentation as well as consultations with as many of the people directly involved with the Project as possible. These included members of the Project Board; members of the Advisory Committee; representatives of the Project's Implementing Partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs); Staff members of the UNDP Multi-Country Office and UNDP Pacific Centre; Project Team members; and other persons.

The body of the Report is divided into main two sections. The first presents the findings and an assessment of various aspects of the project. The second provides recommendations. The following attempts to summarise these findings and recommendations.

A very clear and unambiguous finding of the Review is the degree to which everyone consulted is convinced as to the need for civic education in Fiji, the more so given the prevailing political environment. Similarly, there is considerable support for, and recognition of, the role that the NICE Project can play in enhancing community awareness of civic education and related issues.

The review and assessment of various aspects of the Project's performance, in terms of the activities undertaken under each of the Project's five output areas, indicates that the project has indeed during the last eighteen months accomplished significant results, notwithstanding difficulties. The Report identifies factors that have posed constraints upon the progress of the Project, in particular those related to the original project design and project document; the series of events that have occurred since the Project was formulated; and issues related to resource constraints. Other aspects of the Project's

performance such as its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, sustainability and inclusiveness are also assessed.

In view of the importance to the Project of its relationship with its Implementing Partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) the Report details the activities undertaken to date by the Project to build the capacity of the CSOs and in various ways to prepare them to deliver community civic education. It also highlights the frustration on the part of the CSOs regarding delays in Project implementation as well as their concerns regarding delays in the disbursement of their grants.

Unfortunately a recurring feature during the Review, and thus also in the Report, relates to the current problem concerning of the Project's resources and how this is negatively impacting upon the Project's progress and threatening to jeopardize the likelihood of it achieving its potential.

In conclusion under findings and assessment the Report touches upon how the Project has managed, much to the credit of all concerned, to adjust to, and operate within, a politically sensitive and somewhat fluid environment. It also raises the question as to possible continued support to Fiji in the area of civic education after the current Project ends in 2010.

In terms of recommendations the Report inevitably returns to what is described as an "impasse" concerning Project resources and makes suggestions regarding the immediate use of existing resources as well as the possibility of securing additional resources.

In an attempt to address what the reviewer considers to be another key problematic area, namely the fact that the Project is working under an out-of-date project document, the Report makes recommendations regarding the need for, and some possible elements of, a project revision.

Further recommendations contained in the Report relate to possible improvements in various areas of project management and institutional arrangements, such as the Project Board, the Advisory Committee, and the Project's relationship with its Implementing Partner CSOs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background and Context of Project.

The genesis of the National Initiative on Civic Education (hereafter referred to as NICE) Project can be traced back to the Election Support Programme which the UNDP provided assistance to Fiji during the August 2001 elections. In the course of providing this assistance the UN Observer Mission identified the need for civic/voter education. As a result in September 2001 the UNDP fielded a Civic Education Assessment Mission in order to explore the possibility of developing a post-election civic education programme in Fiji.

Based upon the recommendations of this mission a number of subsequent activities were carried out under a Preparatory Assistance Project. These included the following:

1) *Baseline Study on Civic Education needs and attitudes towards democratic governance.* (Dr. Steven Ratuva. May 2003). This major survey was conducted to determine the prevailing level of knowledge, education needs, and attitudes towards democratic governance in Fiji. The survey was conducted over the period February to April 2003 and covered diverse groups (ethnic, religious, gender, age, geographical) of people in Fiji. The survey used a qualitative method of enquiry with 390 focus groups distributed throughout Fiji.

2) *Stock-take of civic education initiatives in Fiji.* (Dr. Arlene Griffen. April 2003). This exercise identified the numerous agencies involved in the area of civic and human rights education, their on-going and proposed activities, and the lessons learnt from their past activities.

3) *Stakeholders' Meeting* (May 2003). The aim of the workshop was to discuss the findings of the Baseline Study and to propose strategies for developing and implementing a civic education programme in Fiji. The workshop was attended by over 50 participants from a wide range of NGOs, CBOs, and government agencies.

The above mentioned three exercises contributed towards the eventual formulation of the Fiji Good Governance Programme of which the National Initiative on Civic Education (NICE) Project is a component. Originally the programme's three components consisted of a Support to Parliament Project, an In-School Citizen Education Project, and the NICE Project. With suspension of Parliament the programme currently consists of the second two projects.

The intended outcome of the NICE Project, as originally stated in the project document, was "Increased awareness of civic and human rights, including the role of Parliament, the rights of citizens, and democratic processes." The outputs and related activities by which the Project was envisaged to achieve its outcome were designed to build the capacity of relevant institutions, NGOs, CBOs and government agencies to undertake more effectively their civic education responsibilities. The means by which the Project was to achieve this would be by establishing and facilitating networking; supporting the development and dissemination of civic education messages, programmes and activities; and empowering the organisations to undertake more effective advocacy. At the time

when the Project was formulated (2006) it also had an immediate focus on voter education.

Originally the Project was to be nationally executed (NEX) with the Fiji Parliamentary Secretariat being the national executing agency. With the suspension of the Parliament it was agreed, in June 2007, by all parties concerned that the Project would be directly executed (DEX) with the UNDP as the executing agency. This change was reflected in a project revision as contained in Annex 11 of the project document.

## **2. Objectives of Mid-Term Review.**

The Project was signed in August 2006 and commenced implementation in late 2007 with the recruitment of the Project Manager. As originally formulated it is a three year project and therefore it was, by mid-2009 and after eighteen months of operation, due for a standard UNDP Project Mid-Term Review.

In addition to the normal reasons for undertaking such a review, the NICE Project Board has also specifically requested that the review place particular emphasis on examining the continued relevance of the Project, as originally formulated, and how it may need to be revised, particularly in the light of a number of key events that have taken place since 2006 and which have significantly changed the environment in which the Project is currently operating. Lastly, and depending on the degree to which the Project may need to be revised to reflect the prevailing environment, the exercise provides an opportunity to examine what resources would be required to enable it to fulfill its objectives.

The overall objectives of the review will therefore include:

- To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the project's implementation in achieving its intended outputs, including reviewing institutional arrangements; partnerships; risk management; project execution/implementation modalities; project management; and monitoring and evaluation.
- To assess the impact to date of the project.
- To provide an informed basis upon which to consider decisions regarding possible mid-term adjustments in the production of the project's outputs.
- To identify lessons from the first eighteen months of the project's operation.
- To assess the continued relevance of the project's outputs as contributions towards its medium and longer-term outcomes, with particular reference to the changed environment in which it now operates.
- To assess the longer-term sustainability of the project's outputs.
- To review the project's resources and to consider the need to mobilize additional resources.

## **3. Methodology of Mid-Term Review.**

The methodology adopted for conducting the Mid-Term Review was as participatory as possible and involved the following elements:

### **A) Desk Review.**

This was undertaken of all relevant documentation concerning the project. A list of the documents that were made available at the commencement of the review, as well as the additional documents that subsequently become available during the course of the review, is included in Annex A below.

### **B) Interviews and Discussions.**

These were conducted in person with as many of the individuals and organizations involved with the project as possible. In the case of two CSO representatives based in Nadi consultation took place via e-mail and telephone. In the case of one of the donor representative, who was out of the country at the time of the MTR, consultation took place by way of e-mails.

A list of the concerned individuals and organizations consulted is given in Annex B below. These are presented under the following groups: NICE Project Board; NICE Project Advisory Committee; NICE Project Implementing Partners/CSOs; UNDP Multi-Country Office and UNDP Pacific Centre; NICE Project Team; and Other Persons Consulted. The Terms of Reference of the Mid-Term Review, together with a letter of introduction from the UNDP, was sent to those concerned prior to their consultation with the reviewer so that they were aware of the purpose and nature of the exercise and could be prepared accordingly.

During the course of these interviews and discussions the reviewer posed a series of questions in order to obtain specific information regarding the Project. Some of these questions were essentially common to all the above mentioned groups of individuals. However others were more tailored to reflect the different relationship of those in the various groups vis a vis the Project. In summary the questions attempted to elicit information from those interviewed regarding how in general they believe the Project has performed to date; how, more specifically as a member of one of the above groups, they have related to the Project; and how, given the changed environment in which the Project now operates, they consider it may need to be modified.

In the interest of frankness and confidentiality, the reviewer undertook to ensure that, whilst the information derived from the interviews and discussions would provide an essential input into the review, the identity of the specific individual or organisation with whom interviews and discussions were held would not be disclosed.

The First Draft of the report was shared with, and commented upon by, the UNDP MCO as well as the UNDP NICE Project. The Second Draft of the report was shared with, and commented upon by, the Government, the NZ Aid, the EU, and the UNDP MCO and Pacific Centre. The reviewer took into consideration the various comments received and, where he deemed appropriate, he incorporated them into this, the Final Report.

The NICE Project Mid-Term Review was undertaken over 25 days during the period May to July 2009 by Tim Howick-Smith, an independent consultant,

The Terms of Reference of the Mid-Term Review are attached as Annex C.



## **II. FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Project Design and Project Document**

As mentioned in the Background and Context of Project section above the various stages that contributed towards the formulation of this Project involved extensive work which was undertaken over a considerable period of time.

However, and notwithstanding these commendable efforts, a number of significant problems have arisen in using, as the guiding document for the Project, a project document which was based to a large extent on 2003 data and information, but which was not formulated and signed until 2006, and which only started implementation in late 2007. These can be grouped under the following:

1. Those that can be attributed to incorrect assumptions and/or an inadequate understanding and assessment of the precise nature and extent of the activities, and sub-activities, that the Project would actually have to undertake in order to achieve its stated outputs. Consequently the timeframe assumed for certain activities has proved to be unrealistic. In large part these concerned the envisaged role that the CBOs would play in the implementation of the activities of the Project based upon assumptions about their capacity. Specifically, their capacity to run civic education programmes; their ability to communicate civic education messages with due neutrality and political impartiality; their ability to train their own facilitators in a manner to ensure international standards; and their capacity to manage and report on the use of resources as would be required under the Project. The Project established that in order to conduct nation-wide community civic education activities, as envisaged in the project document, it would instead be necessary to engage the CSOs in Fiji. These were found to have the outreach networks and, with training, the capacity to conduct community civic education. In fairness to those who drafted the project document it would perhaps have been difficult to have foreseen the need for engaging CSOs rather than CBOs as implementing partners unless the relative capacities of the two groups had featured more prominently in the Stock-take of Civic Education Initiatives in Fiji exercise which was undertaken in 2003. Nevertheless, the need for the Project to work through CSOs rather than CBOs represented a fundamental change in the Project's implementation strategy.

It has also been pointed out that the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) lacked some internal logic, did not provide for means/indicators of verification, and did not make reference to risks and the assumptions upon which it was based.

2. Related to the above are the problems that have arisen, and have now become a major obstacle to the progress of the Project, due to the fact that the resources originally assigned to undertake a number of the Project's activities were found to be insufficient.

3. Those problems resulting from the various changes that had already occurred between the formulation and approval of the Project, in 2006, and the subsequent commencement in the implementation of the Project in late 2007. Specifically, the project was designed during the period when electoral democratic rule prevailed in Fiji, and with the

expectation that the Project would commence implementation prior to the 2006 elections. In reality the Project only commenced implementation in late 2007 – early 2008 by which time the 2006 elections had been held and, of particular significance, there had been a military takeover of the Government.

In retrospect, it would perhaps have been advisable to have at least revised the project document in late 2007 or early 2008 to reflect the significant changes that had, by that time, already occurred since the project document had been formulated. It appears that this may not have been undertaken at that time due to concerns that this might have led to further delays in starting the actual implementation of the Project. The only substantive (as distinct from financial) project revision that was undertaken in 2007 is contained in Annex 11 to the project document. This officially changed the management arrangements of the project from NEX by Government to DEX by the UNDP. This revision did not involve any other substantive changes to the Project.

In addition to the above project design related limitations the relevance of the original project document has also been further reduced due to the events and changes that have subsequently occurred between 2007 and mid-2009, in terms of the environment in which the Project operates. Consequently certain of the Project's activities clearly cannot be met, at least as originally envisaged, during the current life time of the Project (2008-2010). With the elections being currently deferred until 2014, and with the Office of the Supervisor of Elections focusing until 2011 on the introduction of electronic voter registration, the scope for Voter Education before the end of 2010 has become somewhat limited. Similarly, the activities under the Leadership and Negotiation Skills output, that relate to facilitating response to parliamentary inquiries and MP and constituency meetings and workshops, cannot be undertaken under the prevailing circumstances. Even if none of the three design related limiting factors listed above existed at the commencement of the Project a project revision would still be justified based upon the implications of the subsequent change in political circumstances upon the environment in which the Project currently operates.

The disparities between, on the one hand, what the original project document sets out in terms of activities to be undertaken and the related resources required and, on the other hand, what those subsequently implementing the Project consider are the activities and resources actually required for the Project to achieve its stated outputs, are clearly hampering the Project's progress. From discussions with the various parties it appears that in the absence of a thorough appreciation of, and consensus upon, this matter the Project has reached something of an impasse in terms of agreeing on precisely what it needs to do from now on and, closely related, on the resources that are required. Consequently, it is strongly recommended below that this critical issue needs to be urgently resolved and reflected, it is recommended, in a substantive project revision.

With the benefit of hindsight a longer project duration than 3 years would perhaps have also been far more realistic.

## **2. The current overall position of the Project.**

The Project is currently in a precarious position and unless urgent measures are taken there is a distinct risk that much of what the Project has managed to achieve, particularly with respect to its relations with its Implementing Partner CSOs, could unravel placing the future of the Project in jeopardy. Whilst the need to adhere to a project document is well understood it should by now be clear that the original project document was already in need of substantive revision at the inception of the Project; that aspects of it were based upon assumptions that have since been found to be inaccurate; and that it has been rendered even more out of date due to a series of events that have significantly altered the environment in which it is currently and (likely until the end of 2010) expected to operate.

The need for civic education at this time in Fiji is without doubt. The NICE Project has the potential to make a significant contribution in this regard which stands to benefit the nation. However, unless the current impasse is urgently resolved the Project will lose whatever momentum it has managed, with much effort, to achieve. With only approximately 18 months of the Project's life remaining it is essential that there be no further delay in its implementation if indeed it is to achieve its outputs. The Project appears to have a "window of opportunity" to make a significant contribution and certainly this should not be missed. It is for this reason that recommendations have been made below regarding the need for an urgent approval for the release and reallocation of existing Project funds as well as for the preparation of a substantive project revision.

## **3. Project Performance**

### **1. Activities carried out under each of the Project's output areas.**

Between the time when it commenced implementation in late 2007-early 2008 and the time of the MTR (mid-2009) the NICE Project has, under each of its output areas, carried out the following summarized activities:

#### **Output 1. Capacity Building and Networking.**

The activities undertaken by the Project in regard to this output have included the following:

- The Project office was set up to support the various activities of the Project.
- Potential CSO partners were identified through a capacity assessment exercise detailed in related May 2008 report.
- Information seminars and consultation meetings were held with community leaders in the four administrative divisions of Fiji.
- The 13 CSOs were recruited as the Project's Implementing Partners.
- The target group populations in the four divisions consisting of women, youth, people with special needs, communities living in informal settlements, and faith-based communities were identified and assigned to the various CSOs.

- A Stakeholders' Meeting was organized and held in September 2008 with participants from both Government and Civil Society. This activity did not feature in the annual work plan but was requested to be convened by the Project Board.
- The Advisory Committee was established and two meetings were held during which the CSO grants guidelines were developed and endorsed.
- A public relations campaign was initiated with the media consisting of press releases, press articles, TV interviews, and training of TV journalists on civic education issues.
- Two issues of the Project Newsletter, "Civic Beat", have been published.
- Civic Education (together with Advocacy) training was provided to the Public Service Commission Trainers including sessions on the Foundations of Democracy; Human Rights and Democracy; Good Governance, Advocacy and Democracy, and Elections and Democracy.
- The Project made a presentation to officials of the Methodist Church in order to introduce the Project and the Project's understanding of the concepts of civic education and democracy.

It should be noted that the project document envisaged working through CBOs rather than CSOs. Being much smaller and localized the CBOs would have required much smaller grants. However, their coverage and influence is so localized that the Project would have had difficulties to have nation-wide impact. In addition the CBOs are in general less experienced than the CSOs and would have required even more training thereby prolonging the preparatory activities prior to the actual delivery of community civic education. The CSOs however tend to work on a national scale but obviously this requires far larger grants are needed to support their community civic education activities.

At the outset the Project found, in the prevailing political environment, a wide spectrum of political positions amongst the CSO community with which it was to operate. As a result the Project had to select its implementation partners from various sides of the spectrum. It also had to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in order to build a coalition of CSOs with a significant degree of consensus on key Project issues such as democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, nation-building, etc. on which there had previously been substantial divergence. To have accomplished this, particularly under the prevailing environment, is indeed a highly commendable achievement on the part of the Project.

### **Output 2. Develop and Disseminate Civic Education Messages.**

The activities undertaken by the Project in regard to this output have included the following:

- The framework for a Community Civic Education Curriculum for Fiji was developed and endorsed at the Stakeholders' Meeting in September 2008 and a core set of civic education messages were identified and developed.

- The Project also undertook a 10 day workshop with the Implementing Partner CSOs to localize the Civic Education Curriculum Framework by identifying local issues and their root causes, and appropriate civic education responses.
- The Project has conducted a number of subsequent workshops with the CSOs to further develop and review the civic education curriculum materials.
- In response to the Request for Proposals the Implementing Partner CSOs submitted proposals for civic education activities that will address the needs of their assigned target groups. The Project has assessed these proposals.
- The Project convened a meeting in April 2009 with the implementing partner CSOs in order to discuss the ramifications for civic education in Fiji under the new legal order. The resolutions of this meeting are referred to under the Changed Landscape and Possible Ways Forward section below.

However, in regard to this output it is most important to note that due to the critical issue of Project resources, which is referred to extensively elsewhere in this Report, the feedback to the CSOs on the feasibility of their proposals and the related disbursement of grants is pending. This situation has resulted in two of the original 13 CSOs withdrawing, at least for the time being, as active implementing partners.

It is also clear that the Project found that the activities and sub-activities involved in regard to this output were, if to be undertaken thoroughly, far more numerous, elaborate and time consuming than had been envisaged in the project document in which they were also significantly under-resourced.

### **Output 3. Leadership and Negotiation skills.**

The activities undertaken by the Project in regard to this output have included the following:

- Advocacy training is being provided to the Public Service Commission trainers as part of the Civic Education Programme being undertaken by the PSC Training Centre.
- Training in advocacy has been provided to all CSOs and two CSOs (FCOSS and CCF) were identified to specialize on the advocacy work in selected communities.
- Advocacy workshops were conducted in Labasa and Lautoka. These involved the CSOs active in the districts together with the Ministry of Regional Development (Commissioners and District Officers), Provincial Councilors, Advisory Councilors, and Town Administrators. The purpose of these workshops was to provide advocacy skills to both the CSOs and Government's regional development counterparts to assist in the promotion of community development needs. A similar workshop is scheduled to be conducted in Savusavu in July 2009 and subsequently similar workshops will be carried out in other districts such as Taveuni, Rotuma, Naitasiri, Kadavu, and Suva.

In regard to this output it should be noted that, in view of the prevailing situation, the Project needed to give additional time and effort into ensuring that the Government and the community leaders clearly understood, and were comfortable with, the Project and its

objectives. This was undertaken through the community leaders' consultations and through presentations at various Government fora.

#### **Output 4. Voter Education.**

The activities undertaken by the Project in regard to this output have included the following:

- Appropriate methods for voter education were identified.
- A Voter Education Framework was developed.
- The Project developed a number of modules based upon the Voter Education Framework, relevant parts of which are now incorporated into the Civic Education Framework modules.
- Also related to this output was the Electoral Education aspect of the PSC Training (referred to under output 1 above); the meeting held in April 2009 with the implementing partner CSOs in order to discuss the ramifications for civic education in Fiji under the new legal order (referred to under output 2 above); and the subsequent workshops held with the CSOs in order to further develop and review the civic education curriculum materials (referred to under output 2 above).

In regard to this output, and with the deferment of national and municipal elections, the Project has had to change its focus to incorporating electoral education and voter education into its community civic education activities.

#### **Output 5. Project Impact Survey.**

The activities undertaken by the Project in regard to this output have included the following:

- The Perception Index Study was undertaken by a research team led by Dr. Steven Ratuva. The preliminary findings were presented to the Stakeholders' Meeting in September 2008.

A number of the CSOs consulted commended the Project for having undertaken the Perception Index Study and found it to be an important source of information. However, when, for reasons which remain unclear as yet to the reviewer, this Study was not made available to the CSOs there was, particularly on the part of some, considerable disappointment. In the case of one CSO it had, prior to the Perception Index Study being undertaken planned to carry out its own study though be it in a less extensive form. However, when it knew that the NICE Project would be carrying out the Perception Index Study it decided to cancel its own study and the funds involved were redeployed. With the subsequent non-release to the CSOs of the Perception Index Study this CSO finds itself without the benefit of either its own study or that undertaken the Project. It is not clear as to why Project Board decided (Minute of the Board Meeting 22 January 2009) that the Perception Index Study should not be released nor apparently was the reason for this decision conveyed to the CSOs. If the decision was due to the fact that the Study contained information that was considered too politically sensitive then perhaps

this should at least have been explained to the CSOs. Alternatively, and if feasible, certain sections of the Study could have been withheld. Suspecting that it might be due to its political sensitivity, but in the absence of an explanation as to why the Study was withheld, has led some of the CSOs to raise the question as to why, if they are the Project's Implementing Partners, they cannot be entrusted with such important information.

See related comments under Recommendations section below.

## **2. Factors that contribute to the progress of the Project**

a) An extremely important factor that has contributed to the progress of the Project has been the consensus, particularly amongst the CSO community with which the Project works, on the need for and importance of civic education in general, and the role of the NICE Project in particular, especially at this time in Fiji. There is also a very evident commitment on the part of all those involved with the NICE Project to strive to make it work

b) Also of considerable importance is the fact that, notwithstanding the sensitivities that are inherent with civic education, particularly in the prevailing environment, the Project continues to be allowed to undertake its activities.

c) Undoubtedly another factor which contributes to the progress of the Project is the neutrality, impartiality, and international experience the United Nations is seen to bring to the Project.

## **3. Factors that pose challenges/constraints to the Project**

a) Amongst the factors that have posed challenges and constraints for the Project can be included, as detailed above, the original project design and the project document.

b) Obviously of considerable importance to the progress of the Project has been the series of events that have occurred since the formulation of the Project as well as those that have subsequently occurred during its implementation, especially as they directly impact upon any work in the field of community civic education. These have resulted in the need to both adjust and, at times, defer the work of the Project. For example, with the abrogation of the Constitution the Project had to revisit the civic education curriculum it had developed with its implementing partners in order to remove any reference to the abrogated constitution; and also to introduce references to international standards, treaties and conventions. Certain Project activities had to be put on hold during the public consultations related to the People's Charter. In addition the Project has had to take into careful consideration the impact upon Project activities of the Public Emergency Regulations as they relate directly to issues such as public gatherings, the encouragement of participation in civic education, and freedom of expression. In parenthesis, the fact that the Project has basically been given a blanket authorization to continue with its activities

without the need to apply for permits is a testament to the degree to which it has managed, under the UN umbrella, to maintain its political impartiality and neutrality.

c) An important factor that now poses a critical constraint upon the progress of the Project is, as emphasized in this report, that of the availability of sufficient resources.

#### **4. Effectiveness**

As detailed in sub-section 3. 1. Activities carried out under each of the Project's output areas above, the Project activities have to a significant degree been implemented in accordance with the project plans. Where the implementation of certain planned activities was either delayed, or has yet to take place, this has primarily been due to the fact the activities and sub-activities involved in regard to this output were, if to be undertaken thoroughly, far more numerous, elaborate and time consuming than had been envisaged in the project document and/or they were significantly under-resourced.

To the extent that the outputs have been achieved they have contributed to the Project's intended outcome, namely increased awareness of civic and human rights, including the role of parliament, the rights of citizens, and democratic processes. However, as a result of various political events since 2006 the contribution to some of these areas has of necessity had to be curtailed or modified.

The approaches and structures utilized by the Project to deliver the outputs would appear to be effective.

Whilst it is considered that the Project partner organisation can and did work effectively together the working relationship between the Project and its Implementing Partner CSOs has, since the second quarter of 2009, been placed under considerable strain due to the effects of resource constraints and the delays in Project implementation.

#### **5. Efficiency**

The technical resources available to the Project appear to be adequate. However, it is recommended below that the Project Advisory Committee be reactivated with amended Terms of Reference.

As mentioned throughout the report the financial resources available to the Project have been found to be inadequate to fulfill all the Project plans.

Whilst some concern has been expressed as to whether the funds are being spent in accordance with Project plans the reviewer believes that this concern essentially stems from a difference in the interpretation of the term "default budget" which clearly needs to be resolved.

As referred to elsewhere in the report, particularly section 3. Factors that pose challenges/constraints to the Project above, the Project has been faced by a number of



unforeseen problems. The Project has dealt with the effects of the changes in the political environment particularly well. The resolution of the problems stemming from what the reviewer considers to be an out-of-date project document and resource constraints will require resolution by the concerned Project partners. The report makes recommendations in this regard.

Concerning the capacity of the Project partners the Project is, under its Output 1. Capacity Building and Networking, endeavoring to enhance the capacity of its Implementing Partner CSOs.

Under DEX execution arrangements the Project is subject to UNDP's monitoring and reporting requirements.

## **6. Relevance**

Whilst the Project itself remains highly relevant in addressing the identified needs, issues and challenges the original design warrants revision and the approach has had to be modified in some areas in order to respond to changing circumstances.

The Project still has the potential to address the identified needs of the community.

## **7. Impact**

The project document identifies a series of intended beneficiaries of the Project. These can, at least to some extent, be grouped and the potential impact of the Project upon these various groups be seen as subject to a "ripple" effect. As with a stone dropped into a pond the ripples start in the middle and can only then spread out. The initial, and perhaps the most direct, intended beneficiaries of the Project are the organisations and institutions, in particular the CSOs as well as the media, with whom the Project initially works in order to enhance their capacity to undertake civic education at the community level. Through the subsequent civic education activities of these CSOs the next range of intended beneficiaries are all those at the community level, throughout Fiji, who will as a result of the Project have a better understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities. The ultimate intended beneficiary of the Project will be the nation itself. It is hoped that the Project, together with other related initiatives, will contribute to the national cultivation and dissemination of the principles and practices of universally recognized human rights and civic responsibilities as a basis for stable, peaceful coexistence, democratic governance, participatory nation building and thus to the avoidance of further internal conflicts and political upheavals from which Fiji has repeatedly suffered.

It is still too early see the ripples from, or impact of, the Project at the community or national levels. However, the Project has, after considerable preparatory work, reached the stage where its impact on the CSOs, and their capacity to deliver community civic education, is indeed discernable.

As mentioned under Output 5. Project Impact Study above, a Perception Index Study was undertaken in September 2008.

## **8. Sustainability**

Through the work of the Project with its Implementing Partner CSOs it will increase the awareness of the community in regard to a range of civic education and related issues and, it is reasonable to expect, ultimately contribute to bringing about desired changes in the behavior of people.

Stakeholder Meetings, Board Meetings, Advisory Committees, and the Project's ongoing discussions with the UNDP MCO and with its Implementing Partner CSOs provide for the involvement of the Project's stakeholders.

The report makes a number of recommendations as to how to the Project's sustainability can be enhanced.

Although capacity building is at the core of much that the Project sets out to achieve the project document does not clearly establish what the anticipated end of project situation should look like in terms of the specific capacity of the institutions and organisations that are receiving assistance from the Project. In addition it is not clear as to what is envisaged at the end of the current Project by way of an "exit strategy" and whatever is deemed appropriate successor arrangements. It is therefore recommended below that these areas receive more attention in the suggested project revision. Particularly in view of the fact that the Project is, by necessity currently being implemented under DEX/UNDP arrangements, there is obviously a need, (in fact it is a DEX requirement), to determine in consultation with all parties concerned, where the type of civic education related activities that are currently being undertaken by the NICE Project and its partners should institutionally reside after 2010.

Meanwhile, and in the interest of sustainability, the Project has set itself end of project criteria, and is giving due attention to the need to achieve as much as possible during the life of the Project in terms of the following: Enhancing national acceptance of, and support for, the role of civic education in the development and nation building of Fiji; developing, together with CSOs, a national civic education curriculum; and ensuring that the concerned CSOs have the skills and capacity to undertake civic education programmes including the training and accreditation of a pool of civic education trainers and facilitators.

As with the impact above, it is still early to determine the Project's longer-term sustainability. However, it is reasonable to anticipate that once community civic education curriculum has been introduced and the trainers and the facilitators trained then the CSOs will be in a position to successfully run community civic education programmes in the future.

## **9. Inclusiveness**

As a result of the extensive selection process undertaken by the Project for the identification of community civic education partner organisations the Project has entered into partnership with an impressive cross-section of NGOs/CSOs thereby ensuring that the eventual delivery of community civic education will reach different sectors of society, including women, youth and persons living with disabilities throughout Fiji. The Fiji Disabled People's Association is particularly pleased to have been selected as an implementing partner tasked with helping to deliver community civic education in view of the fact that the special needs of their membership tend to be overlooked if, as usually happens, it is assumed they can be addressed by other CSOs.

## **4. Project Management and Institutional Arrangements**

### **1. Stakeholders' Meetings**

The UNDP and the Fiji Parliament Secretariat held a Stakeholders' Meeting on 19-20 May 2003 to discuss the country's needs in civic education as well as the elements that should comprise a civic education programme in Fiji. A second Stakeholders' Meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008 to discuss the progress of civic education in Fiji and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2003 Stakeholders Meeting. This meeting had the following objectives:

1. To communicate to stakeholders the main features of the NICE Project as a result of the deliberations at the first Stakeholders meeting held in May 2003, and the activities undertaken by the NICE Project so far.
2. To present the CSO-target mapping exercise, inform Stakeholders on the process followed, and introduce the Implementing Partner CSOs emerging from the exercise.
3. To present the key results and findings of the Perception Index Study and present a comparative analysis (where possible) with the 2003 Baseline Study results and findings.
4. To present, debate and endorse a draft Civic Education Framework based on which the NICE Project and Implementing Partner CSOs will develop a 'national' community civic education curriculum and associated training modules.
5. To agree on the way forward for the NICE Project to engage with the Implementing Partner CSOs, the communities and other special groupings in Fiji.
6. To establish an Advisory Committee to work closely, in an advisory role, with the NICE Project and partner agencies in the development of the Civic Education Curriculum and associated materials.

### **2. Project Board**

The Board consists of representatives of the Project's two donors, New Zealand Aid and the European Union, the Government, and the UNDP. The NICE Project Manager also attends in an ex-officio capacity. The representative of Government on the Board is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. However, the Aid Unit and its staff, in particular the Principal Administrative Officer from the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance, have been standing in for the Permanent Secretary when he has been unavailable to attend.

To date there have been seven meetings of the Project Board (30 July 2007, 13 December 2007, 31 January 2008, 25 March 2008, 3 September 2008, 22 January 2009, and 4 March 2009..

For recommendations regarding the Project Board see below.

### **3. Advisory Committee**

The composition of the Advisory Committee consists of four representative CSOs (on a rotational basis), and senior participants from academia, Fiji Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Supervisor of Elections, the In-School Citizenship Project, and the NICE Project Manager. Since the inception of the Project there have only been two meetings of the Advisory Committee (8 October 2008 and 19 November 2008).

For recommendations regarding the Advisory Committee see below.

### **4. Project Implementing Partner CSOs**

The reviewer consulted all 13 of the NICE Project Implementing Partner CSOs. He visited and held discussions with the 11 CSOs based in Suva and consulted with Fiji Muslim League and the Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam representatives in Nadi by telephone and e-mail. The list of those consulted in these organisations is listed in Annex B below. The following attempts to summarize these discussions, and in particular, to highlight what is considered to be the most important issues. In order to respect the confidentiality in which these discussions were held, as stated under Methodology, what was shared with the reviewer during these discussion will not be attributed to any specific individual or organisation.

A notable factor from these consultations was that, despite what may have been regarded at the outset of the Project as a fairly diverse group of organisations, there was a high degree of commonality in their views and experience working with the Project. Where divergence of views and experience were expressed they seemed mainly attributable to variations in their organizational structures.

Without exception all the CSOs consulted were resolute in their conviction as to the critical need for, and importance of, undertaking community civic education in Fiji. With equal conviction they expressed the view that the political events that have occurred since 2006 should not deter the pursuit of civic education, but rather that such events should only be seen as emphasizing how the nation could indeed benefit from appropriately designed and delivered civic education.

Clearly many in the CSO community consider that the NICE Project has an extremely important role to play at this time in civic education in Fiji. Many of the CSOs also recognized the benefit to all concerned as a result of the Project being implemented under the “umbrella” of the UN, and the importance of the values of impartiality, neutrality and the international experience this brings to community civic education in Fiji.

Some of the CSOs raised questions as to the rationale for the division of geographical and other areas of responsibilities assigned to the various CSOs, whilst others suggested that

the Project could perhaps have worked with fewer of the more experienced CSOs, particularly those with nation-wide coverage.

The CSOs expressed appreciation for all the various workshops and training that had been undertaken by the Project so far. They commended the Project for the quality and comprehensiveness of the training and materials provided. A number felt that the training had enhanced their capacity and given them greater confidence in their work. One of the many challenges faced by the Project has been to take a somewhat diverse group of CSOs, initially each with its own views and level of understanding of community civic education and, through an extensive and iterative consultative process, reach the stage where there appears to be an advanced consensus on critical issues such as the civic education curriculum. Some of the CSOs who have previously been more involved in civic education felt at times that the duration of the workshop could have been reduced.

All the CSOs expressed, to a lesser or greater extent, their concern regarding the delays that have occurred in the Project's progress in arriving at the point where it is actually delivering civic education to the community. Specifically they are collectively anxious that the agreement on the civic education curriculum, development and translation of materials, training of trainers, training of facilitators, and the pilot phase all be expedited in order that the ultimate community level implementation of the civic education activities can commence as soon as possible. In many cases this concern has resulted in considerable frustration on the part of the CSOs. In one case it has actually led to a CSO officially withdrawing, at least for the time being, from the Project. In another case a CSO has, again for the time being, suspended its participation in further training activities by the Project. During discussions with a number of the other CSOs it became apparent that others would also seriously consider withdrawing from participating in the Project unless they saw faster progress in the above mentioned activities in the very near future.

It is evident that some of the CSOs do not fully understand, or accept, the amount of time and effort that the Project has had to invest in what might be considered as preparatory activities prior to being able to actually deliver community civic education. In the case of a few CSOs visited they actually queried why a mid-term review was being undertaken when, as one CSO representative put it, "the Project hasn't even started". A number of the CSOs focal point persons with the Project have experienced difficulties with their executives who continue to raise questions regarding the progress of the Project.

Closely related to the above mentioned concern on the part of these Implementing Partner CSOs is their concern over the delay in the disbursement to their organisations of an initial grant to cover the costs that they have already incurred since joining the Project, and that they will have to incur in preparing for their participation in the civic education pilot phase. CSOs were required to submit their respective implementation proposals to the Project by end January 2009. Having worked hard to achieve this deadline there is considerable disappointment that the anticipated grant payment has still not been released. The frustration expressed over the delay in the anticipated disbursement of this grant seemed in general most pronounced from those CSOs who had assigned senior salaried staff to work with the Project as opposed to the CSOs who had assigned their

volunteers. The former group of CSOs expressed the view that they have been paying their staff whilst they participate in the Project's activities such as workshops. Whilst they appreciate the benefit that they may have derived from this training, it has taken their staff away from their other planned organizational duties and, now with the delays in Project implementation, they are questioning this investment of time and resources. Some even expressed the view that their CSOs were up to now actually "subsidizing" the Project.

Several of the CSOs commented on a number of times when the schedule of Project events was changed at short notice, and the disruptive effect that this had on their plans for other activities, or resulted in them being unable to always send the same person/s to Project events.

The delay in the Project reaching the point where the CSOs can actually deliver community civic education has also created other problems. Most of the CSOs have already identified the civic education facilitators who they would like to employ. However, with the delay in the Project's progress, a number of these people have since decided to undertake other activities, as a result of which replacement facilitators will now need to be identified. A number of the CSOs expressed the concern that further delays in the delivery of civic education will have a negative effect on their credibility with their constituent communities. It was also mentioned that some communities had previously experienced delays and disappointments in the delivery of other services and that, if they had a similar experience with the NICE Project, it might also reduce the effectiveness of the civic education messages delivered.

## **5. Project Resources**

The fact that the Project, as originally formulated, was found to be significantly under-resourced and would therefore need additional funding if it was to achieve its objectives was originally raised in the Project Board Meeting in September 2008. In the absence, in the interim, of either a full recognition of this assessment, and/or a solution being found, the Project has now reached the current impasse. Specifically there is a lack of sufficient funds for the training of the Facilitators and to pay the Implementing Partner CSOs to enable them implement their community civic education activities.

Contributing to this situation is an apparent lack of consensus on the precise interpretation of the "default budget" under which the Project is currently operating, as well as importantly, a collective understanding of the actual status to-date of donor contributions to the Project.

The Government, on its part, has stressed the importance of making the necessary resources available that will enable the Project to fulfill its intended outcomes.

## **6. The Changed Landscape and Possible Ways Forward**

The Project is to be highly commended for the manner in which it has continued to adjust to, and operate within, a politically sensitive and somewhat fluid environment that could not have been foreseen at the time the project document was formulated.

Since the Project was designed a number of significant events have occurred that have changed the landscape or environment in which the NICE Project operates. As a result, and particularly in certain areas, it can be argued that the pre-conditions for civic education (as identified in the UNDP Civic Education Practical Guidance Note) are no longer met. However, all those with whom the reviewer consulted were convinced that, not only was there an even greater need to undertake civic education in the prevailing environment, but that much could be achieved as long as due consideration is given to the context in which a project such as the NICE would operate.

The NICE Project held a meeting with its Implementing Partner CSOs on 20 April 2009 which was specifically convened to discuss civic education in Fiji under the new legal order. The resolutions, summarized below, that were reached at the meeting serve to provide valuable guidance in the light of the prevailing circumstances.

- That civic education delivery should continue given the fact that, if there was a time that Fiji needed civic education it, was during this political process.
- That civic education needs to be modified to respond to the current political process and the associated information needs.
- That civic education content should not be localized, but must be based on universal principles and practices of democracy.
- That the first phase of civic education should address the fundamentals of democracy as there is a need to raise awareness on the key principles of democracy and how democracy functions, and to demonstrate the benefits of democracy and of pursuing its principles.
- That civic education should be designed in such a way as not to be seen to be inciting the public but rather to be raising awareness on the fundamentals of democracy.
- That civic education must be consistent with the political issues on the ground if it is to be meaningful and relevant to the people, and that this will include taking into consideration what needs to occur prior to the next elections.

As it currently stands the NICE Project is due to finish at the end of 2010. References and recommendations are made in this report concerning the issues of sustainability.

The proposed project revision exercise would provide an opportunity to put in place an exit strategy and/or explore successor arrangements, amongst which could include either an extension of the NICE Project beyond 2010 or a follow-up project to provide appropriate support through the UN system to Fiji in preparation for the envisaged elections in 2014. A compelling Discussion Paper along these lines was recently prepared by the NICE Project.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. Project Resources**

As emphasized throughout this report it is considered absolutely critical for the current impasse concerning the Project's resources to be resolved as soon as possible. Until this is achieved significant progress of the Project is on hold and its credibility and future are at risk. In this regard it is essential that the parties concerned settle, once and for all, the issue of the Project's financial management and reporting to the donors, over which there appears disagreement, and which has clearly contributed significantly to this impasse.

It is therefore recommended to address the current situation in the following two stages:

##### **a) Existing Resources**

During the course of the MTR consultations, the current donors have clearly stipulated that they will not be providing additional funding to the Project beyond the resources that they have already allocated. Consequently, it is recommended that an immediate priority must be given to reaching an agreement as to how the existing funding can best be used. This will entail assessing which aspects of the Project's outputs and activities should be given priority for implementation within the available resources. These will undoubtedly include the key pending work with the Implementation Partner CSOs in terms of whatever can be achieved in delivering civic education at the community level. Similarly it should involve the release and reallocation of resources that were assigned to output areas such as Voter Education which, with the deferment of the elections, cannot now be implemented as envisaged within the life of the Project.

Whilst the substantive and financial content of this immediate measure would need to be reflected in the recommended subsequent project revision, it should not have to wait for it to be prepared. Instead it is recommended that agreement be reached, in the interim, as to the reallocation of existing Project resources based upon a revised RRF under current budgetary allocations. In the course of this exercise consideration should also be given, in terms of available Project resources, as to the implications of the recent currency devaluation.

##### **b) Additional Resources**

In order to enable the Project to undertake additional activities beyond those that will be possible with existing resources it is recommended that discussions be entered into with all potential additional donors as soon as possible. For this purpose it would be advisable to prepare another draft RRF that would anticipate further funding and identify options in terms of what activities could be undertaken by end of the Project. This draft RRF will essentially replace the draft RRF that was prepared in March 2009. On the basis of these initial discussions it should be possible to derive at least a notional estimate as to how much additional funding could be expected, as well as importantly, those aspects of civic education that the donor/s would be most interested to support. This information will be



essential in the drafting of the framework, timeframe and indicative budget of the recommended substantive project revision and in finalizing its accompanying RRF.

## **2. Project Revision**

As mentioned elsewhere in this report the reviewer considers that a substantive “root and branch” project revision is long overdue and is now crucial in terms agreeing upon, and guiding, the future of the Project. The need for a project revision may seem so self-evident as to raise the question as to why it has assumed such emphasis in this report. However, the need for a project revision appears, somewhat surprisingly, to have only received brief prior attention. The constraints faced by the Project in using the original 2006 project document, and whether there was therefore a need for a project revision, was raised at the March 2009 Board Meeting. However apparently this option was not pursued with the Board deciding on the alternative approach of what was then referred to as “adaptive management”.

The proposed project revision would, amongst other aspects, need to include the following:

- a) An update of the Situation Analysis in terms of the events that have occurred since the formulation of the Project in 2006; their implications upon community civic education in Fiji; and hence an up-date of the problem that the Project attempts to address.
- b) How the Project’s original strategy will need to be adjusted to respond appropriately to the prevailing and foreseeable situation.
- c) A revised Results and Resources Framework to reflect what the Project intends to accomplish in term of activities and outputs between mid-2009 and the end of 2010 with the existing and any additional resources mobilized.
- d) A focus on those outputs and activities which are considered core to the objective of the Project and the identification, to the extent possible, of those outputs and activities that one could envisage could be continued notwithstanding further changes which might occur in the political environment.
- e) Provisions for monitoring the progress of the Project and for evaluating its impact. These should include those achievements identified by the Project Team which will need to be reached before the Project’s closure in order to ensure the sustainability of its activities and outputs
- f) Specific reference needs to be made, as described elsewhere in this Report, in regards to what is envisaged will happen when the current Project ends in late 2010 in terms of the sustainability of the Project, including an exit strategy and/or successor arrangements, etc. Particularly in view of the fact that the Project is currently implemented under the DEX/UNDP arrangement the project revision should at least initiate consideration as to

viable potential custodians for on-going community civic education after the Project's closure at the end of 2010. Ways and means need to be further explored as to how this area of work is to be adequately embedded in appropriate local structures.

It may also be opportune to use the project revision exercise to start exploring what sort of assistance the UN system may be able to provide in the area of civic education post 2010.

The actual process of preparing the project revision is also important. The reviewer considers that it should definitely be led by the NICE Project Team and the UNDP MCO, in its executing agency capacity. On the basis of the experience of the first eighteen months of the Project's implementation the Project Team and the UNDP MCO are well positioned to lead this exercise. In this regard, a significant amount of the work that such a revision would entail, both in terms of substance as well as related resource requirements, has already been undertaken. Nevertheless, it would be important to ensure that the Project Team's involvement in preparation of the project revision does not impact negatively upon the progress of urgent on-going project activities.

However, is also essential that the preparation of the project revision is undertaken in full consultation with the other parties concerned, in particular with Government, with the Donors (both existing and potential), with the Advisory Committee, and with the Implementing Partner CSOs. This inclusive approach should result in the project revision providing the vessel with everyone concerned with the Project "on board".

The involvement, from the outset, of any potential donors will be essential. In this regard it would also be advisable if the envisaged future outputs and activities, as well as the related resources required, can be presented in a "modular" manner that may meet the specific areas of interest and available resources of potential donors.

The involvement of the Implementing Partner CSOs will not only enable them to contribute their substantive input but will also provide the opportunity to verify that what is envisaged can indeed be implemented within the time and resources available.

It should perhaps be added that in undertaking the preparation of a NICE Project revision lessons learnt during the initial period of the Project, and taken into account in such a revision, can also potentially serve to benefit the UNDP, the Project's current donors, and others in the international community contemplating undertaking community civic education programmes and projects elsewhere, particularly in the Pacific region.

### **3. Project Management and Institutional Arrangements**

#### **1. Project Board**

##### a) Terms of Reference

It is recommended that the TORs of the Project Board be revisited and revised in order, amongst other aspects, to emphasize that, as the Project's governing body, its roles and responsibilities should relate primarily to issues of governance and policy rather than management and administration.

##### b) Representation

The Government has agreed to the suggestion that the Government's representative on the Project Board should in future be the Permanent Secretary to the National Planning Office. However, it has requested that UNDP submits an official invitation to the Permanent Secretary to the NPO accordingly.

It is strongly recommended that UNDP's representation on the Project Board be more clearly understood and recognized, by all concerned, as being in two capacities. The first is in its more traditional capacity as a "funding agency" in which it is accountable to the Executive Board of the UNDP for all aspects of the Project's operations. The second is in its somewhat unusual additional capacity, in the case of the NICE Project, as the "executing agency", in which it also assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for the Project's implementation. With this in mind it is also strongly recommended that, to the full extent possible, all management and administrative related issues are resolved between the Project Team and the UNDP MCO, in its capacity as the Project's executing agency, prior to Board Meetings. This will enable the Project's Board Meetings to focus on issues pertaining to policy and governance.

##### c) Documentation

It is recommended that the Board reaches a consensus as to precisely what project reporting and other documentation it requires, and in what format this should be presented, in order to facilitate its deliberations. Related to this it is strongly recommended that the Project Team and the UNDP MCO, in its capacity as the Project's executing agency, work closely together in the preparation and presentation of the project reporting and other documentation to the Board.

##### d) Frequency

With a view to ensuring that a number of key issues regarding the Project are thoroughly resolved as soon as possible it is recommended that the Project Boards meets at least every three months.

#### **2. Advisory Committee**

Particularly in view of the nature of the Project such an advisory body has the potential to contribute significantly to its successful implementation. With this in mind the following recommendations are proposed:

a) Terms of Reference

The TORs of the Advisory Committee need to be revised in order to place due emphasis on its core role and responsibility, namely to discuss substantive civic education issues from the representative viewpoints of its members and to provide advice and guidance to the Project accordingly. On policy and governance issues the Project Board should however remain the Project's ultimate decision making body.

b) Membership

With the departure from Fiji of Dr. Steven Ratuva it would be advisable to try to replace him with another academic involved with civic education, governance, and/or community development. Also with the departure from Fiji of Ms. Felicity Heffernan (former Supervisor of Elections) it is recommended that Mr. Soro Toutou (currently Deputy Supervisor of Elections) be asked to participate in the Committee. It is also recommended that the Programme Specialist (Governance) from UNDP's Pacific Centre be invited to participate in the work of the Committee.

c) Frequency

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee meets on a regular basis, and not less frequently than every three months.

### **3. Project Implementing Partner CSOs**

The need to urgently resolve the current impasse related to Project resources which has resulted in crucial work with, and by, the Project's Implementing Partner CSOs cannot be over-stated. Specifically, they need to receive the initial grants to cover their expenses and enable them to prepare for the delivery of civic education at the community level.

It is recommended to explore with the CSOs, as soon as resources are available, ways and means in order to expedite the work in finalizing the civic education curriculum, development and translation of materials, training of trainers, the training of facilitators, and initiating the pilot phase.

In the event that, for one reason or another, one or more of the CSOs that were originally involved with the Project withdraw their participation it will be important to ensure that the geographical, demographic, or other area/s of responsibility assigned to them is carefully assessed in order to determine whether one of the remaining CSOs can take over their designated area/s of responsibility or whether it will be necessary to recruit a replacement CSOs with the requisite field of expertise and constituency.

It is indeed advisable to try to re-engage both ECREA and also Transparency International.

It is also most important to regularly review the Project timelines with the CSOs and, once agreed upon, ensure that they are adhered to. In the event that it is necessary to make subsequent changes to the timelines the CSOs need to be advised as to why this is necessary and consulted concerning the revised timeline.

In order to ensure that the recommended project revision is realistic in terms of the time and resources required for the implementation of activities it would be important to involve the Implementing Partner CSOs, as appropriate, in the project revision exercise.

It is essential that the Project Team continues to make sure that the channels of communications with the CSOs are well maintained and that they are at all times kept informed of, and feel involved with, the Project's progress.

#### **4. Project Partners**

In the interest of maintaining good relations with the Project's donors it is important that their role in, and support for, the Project is at all times given due visibility and recognition.

It is recommended to maximize working relationship with the Office of the Supervisor of Elections that seems very keen to cooperate with the Project as appropriate.

Similarly, mutual benefits will derive from a continued close collaboration with Citizenship (In-School) Education Project especially with regard to youth, the more so given the anticipated reduction in the age of voting.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities of Parties to the Project.**

With a view to ensuring optimal working relationships and cooperation between all the parties concerned with the NICE Project it is recommended that an early opportunity be taken whereby the parties revisit their understanding, perception, and expectations of their own respective role/s and responsibilities and that of the other parties. It is believed that this will bring out any misunderstandings/misperceptions on the part of the various parties and thus help to clarify areas where there may be either an overlap, or a gap, or a need for greater delineation regarding respective roles and responsibilities. This exercise could perhaps be undertaken at the time of the project revision and should ideally involve revisiting all the various Project related relationships.

#### **6. Political Situation**

The NICE Project represents an extremely laudable endeavor to maintain a space for dialogue between the interim government, civil society and the international community. To its credit the NICE Project has indeed managed, not without difficulties, to operate within a politically sensitive and somewhat fluid environment, and to establish and maintain a stance of political impartiality and neutrality. It is absolutely critical to the success of the Project that it continues to be regarded, by all parties concerned, in this way.

#### **7. Risk Management**

Related to the above, it is important for all those involved with the implementation of the NICE Project continue to frequently review the risks involved, to ensure that mitigation measures are in place, and that, to the extent possible, the Project is implemented with sufficient flexibility to enable it to adjust appropriately to changes in its environment.

It is also recommended that, in order to compartmentalize the risks associated with working with a diverse range of Implementing Partner CSOs in the current environment, the individual MOUs with them be finalized as soon as possible as these will stipulate roles and responsibilities.

### **8. Impact**

It is recommended that the proposed project revision should incorporate ways and means to assess the impact of the Project. Related to this should include consideration of further work with the Perception Index data base.

### **9. Sustainability**

It is recommended that the proposed project revision includes reference to the set of end of Project criteria developed by the Project and detailed under section II 3. Project Performance sub-section 8 Sustainability above.

Particularly in view of the fact that the Project is currently operating under a UNDP/DEX execution arrangement it is strongly recommended that the proposed project revision includes specific reference to an exit strategy (a UNDP/DEX requirement) as well as successor arrangements indicating options as to where any Project related activities should reside post 2010.

### **10. Perception Index Study**

The Perception Index Study cost in the region of \$30,000 and contains an immense source of valuable information that would also be extremely useful for the CSOs working with the Project on community civic education, and who will no doubt be involved in any follow-up studies. It is therefore recommended that further consideration be given to its release, either in part or whole to the CSOs.

Particularly given the recent departure from Fiji of Dr. Steven Ratuva, the Study's Lead Researcher, it is also recommended that every effort is made to ensure that the immense data base from which the Report was extracted is preserved. With a view to the sustainability of the Project's outputs it is important that this valuable tool is carefully retained and entrusted, under the Project's successor arrangements, such that it can continue to be used into the future to assess developments and progress in civic education in Fiji.

### **11. Comments on the Draft MTR Report**

In response to the second draft of the MTR report the reviewer received many comments which, whilst of immediate relevance to the report itself, are ultimately of even greater significance to the Project and its future. The reviewer considers that a number of these comments raise key Project related issues which needed to be "flushed out" and which warrant serious further consideration. It is therefore strongly recommended that these comments be thoroughly reviewed and used as a basis for what would seem to be much needed, and in many cases overdue, discussion and, in the interest of the future of the Project, speedy resolution.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion it is important to reiterate that, without exception, all those consulted during the MTR, were adamant as to the critical need for community civic education in Fiji, particularly at the present time, and following recent events. Secondly, and notwithstanding the obvious challenges, that appropriately designed and delivered community civic education should be undertaken. Similarly there was a unanimous consensus as to the key role that the NICE Project should, and can, play in this important area.

There is evident appreciation of what the Project has already achieved in terms of the various activities and outputs referred to in the Report, despite the various difficulties encountered. Particularly noteworthy has been the way in which the Project has managed to operate in a sensitive and fluid environment, and to bring together as its Implementing Partners an impressive range of diverse CSOs who, with support from the Project will be well positioned to deliver civic education at the community level in Fiji.

There is therefore, without doubt, great potential and considerable expectation as to what the Project can achieve through its work with the Implementing Partner CSOs, initially at the community level, but also ultimately at the national level.

Whilst the Project has managed to achieve significant progress under a number of its output areas there has, for reasons discussed in the Report, been considerable delay in the Project arriving at the stage where the Project's Implementing Partners CSOs can actually start delivering community civic education.

The Project is not only at its temporal mid-point; it is also at a critical place. The future of the Project will depend upon whether a number of key issues are given due recognition and receive urgently attention.

In the conduct of this MTR the reviewer did not set out to be provocative. However, it is apparent from some of the comments, particularly on the second draft of the report, that the exercise has indeed provoked reactions which, whilst primarily directed at the report, clearly raise matters that are ultimately of even greater significance to the Project itself and its future. Notwithstanding whatever value or otherwise may be found in the MTR report per se, the reviewer considers that the decision to undertake the MTR was indeed opportune. In the process of the MTR, a series of issues that are key to the success of the Project have been brought out. As referred to in the Report's last recommendation these issues warrant serious attention, further discussion, and hopefully urgent resolution.

In conclusion the reviewer would like to thank again all those who have, in many ways, assisted him in undertaking this review. He hopes that the Report will at least in some way make a contribution to the future success of this important Project.

## V. ANNEXES

### Annex A. Documents reviewed

- NICE Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference.
- The NICE Project - Its genesis – prepared by Project Manager.
- UNDP/Fiji Parliament Survey Report – Baseline Study on Civic Education needs and attitudes towards democratic governance. Dr. Steven Ratuva and Mr. David Hegarty. May 2003.
- Stock-Take of Civic Education Initiatives in Fiji. Dr. Arlene Griffen. April 2003.
- Broad-Based Civic Education – Capacity Assessment and Preparatory Activities.
- UNDP and Government Fiji Good Governance Programme NICE (Component 3) Project Document and its (11) annexes.  
Including Annex 11. Revision to the Project Document.
- NICE Project Inception Report. 10 December 2007.
- Report on the selection process of Community Civic Education Partner Organisations.
- Project Manager’s Progress Report to the Board 31 January 2008.
- Project Manager’s Report to the Board. February – March 2008.
- NICE Project Stakeholders’ Meeting. Concept Paper. 18 September 2008.
- Project Manager’s Report to the Board. September 2008.
- European Union Monitoring Report. 10 November 2008.
- Project Manager’s Report to the Board. January 2009.
- Project Manager’s Progress Report for Year 1 of Implementation (2008). 23 January 2009.
- Project Manager’s Progress Report. First Quarter of Year 2 of Implementation. January – March 2009.
- NICE Project Communication Strategy.
- NICE Project Risk Log. 15 December 2008.
- Civic Education Trainers/Facilitators Code of Conduct.
- Perception Index Study.
- NICE Project Board Meeting Minutes for 30 July 2007, 13 December 2007, 31 January 2008, 25 March 2008, 3 September 2008, 22 January 2009, 4 March 2009 meetings.
- Report of Stakeholders’ Meeting held on 18 September 2008.
- Nice Project Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes for 8 October 2008 and 19 November 2008.
- Report of NICE Implementing Partners Meeting to discuss Civic Education in Fiji under the new legal order. 20 April 2009.
- UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures.
- UNDP Finance and Budget User Guide on Direct Execution (DEX) Finances.



## **ANNEX B. Persons and Organizations Consulted.**

### **I. NICE Project Board Members**

Mrs. Elina Lobendahn -Volavola	Ministry of Finance
Mr. Tom Wilson	New Zealand High Commission
Ms. Ritva Sallmen	European Union
Mr. Toily Kurbanov	UNDP Multi-Country Office, Suva

### **II. NICE Project Advisory Committee**

Dr. Steven Ratuva	University of the South Pacific
Mr. Aleksio Sela	Citizenship Education Project
Ms. Alisi Daurewa	Partners in Community Development of Fiji
Ms. Faye Volatabu	National Council of Women
Mr. Hassan Khan	Fiji Council of Social Services
Mr. Kitione Radrodoro	Fiji Human Rights Commission
Mr. Soro Toutou	Office of the Supervisor of Elections

### **III. NICE Project Implementing Partners**

Ms. Chantelle Khan	ECREA
Mr. Waisale Ramoce	ECREA
Ms. Fay Volatabua	National Council for Women Fiji
Mr. Ciaran O'Toole	CCF
Ms. Sereima Lutubula	CCF
Mr. Hassan Khan	FCOSS
Ms. Adi Finau Tabakaucoro	Soqosoqo Vakamarama
Ms. Elenoa Ralulu	Soqosoqo Vakamarama
Ms. Susana Evening	Catholic Women's League
Ms. Acela Naisara	Catholic Women's League
Ms. Akuila Rewatabua	Fiji Disabled People's Association
Ms. Sumasafu Vilsoni	Fiji Disabled People's Association
Mr. Isikeli Kini	Methodist Church of Fiji
Mr. Jainan Prasad	Shree Sanatan Dharm Pratinidhi Sabha Fiji
Ms. Suliana Siwatibau	Transparency International
Mr. Apisalome Tudreu	Transparency International
Ms. Zena Sherani	Transparency International
Ms. Alisi Daurewa	Partners in Community Development Fiji
Mr. Setefano Nauqe	Partners in Community Development Fiji
Mr. Mohammed Mustapha	Fiji Muslim League
Mr. Francis Ashok Mani	Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam

### **IV. UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO) and UNDP Pacific Centre**

Mr. Brian Lenga	UNDP MCO
Mr. Iresh Lal	UNDP MCO
Ms. Nurina Widagdo	UNDP Pacific Centre
Mr. Ronald Ho	UNDP MCO

Ms. Radilaite Lele Nawalowalo	UNDP MCO
Mr. Mohammed Mozeem	UNDP MCO

**V. NICE Project Team**

Mr. Mark Borg	Project Manager
Mr. Mike Zulu	Civic Education Specialist
Mr. Oscar Tembo	Advocacy Specialist

**VI. Others Persons Consulted**

Ms. Faga Semisi	New Zealand High Commission
Mr. Reggie Dutt	Fiji Human Rights Commission
Mr. Joseph Camillo	Fiji Human Rights Commission

## **ANNEX C. Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference.**

### **NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON CIVIC EDUCATION (NICE) MID-TERM REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR THE REVIEW TEAM**

#### **1. Background**

The Fiji National Initiative on Civic Education (NICE) is a broad-based project directly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and supported by the EU, NZAID and the Government of Fiji (hereinafter referred to as “Partners”).

It seeks to work with the widest possible cross section of the community to create a sound knowledge and better understanding of people’s civic rights and responsibilities.

It promotes people’s involvement in national governance through better use of their democratic institutions.

NICE is one of three components of a UNDP/Fiji Government initiative on Good Governance (Fiji Good Governance Programme) with the overriding long-term objective of creating a peaceful and stable Fiji, where everyone has respect for democracy, human and civic rights.

#### **Project Components**

The NICE project has the following components:

- i. Capacity Building and Networking:** Under this component, the project works on a communications strategy and embarks on establishing a network of partners involved with civic education and other interest groups.
- ii. Develop and Disseminate Civic Education messages:** To develop civic education messages to be disseminated through appropriate modes, with each designed to suit its intended target group.
- iii. Leadership and Negotiation Skills:** To empower individuals and communities to use existing avenues and institutions to address issues that affect them and encourage them to actively participate in the policy-making process.
- iv. Voter Education:** To inform and educate citizens on the importance of voting in a democratic society, widening their knowledge on issues related to elections/voting and encourage their participation during municipal and national elections.
- v. Project Impact Survey:** The impact of civic and voter education programme on people’s understanding and attitudes towards democracy and good governance measured. This would be an exercise similar to the baseline survey.

## **Project Implementation Modalities**

The National Initiative on Civic Education Project is being directly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. The project office is located at Clarke Street the project and has the services of 8 staff, including a project Manager, 2 International UNVs, 3 National UNVs, and 2 office support staff. Close partnership for implementation has been established with key stakeholders from the government and NGO's that promote civic education and human rights.

### **2. Aim and Objectives of the Mid-term review.**

This mid-term review is requested by the NICE Project Board to assess the progress and performance of the project. The aim of the review of the Project is to assess project achievements, impacts, and lessons learned. The review has been commissioned at a time when the project is facing some difficulties in fully carrying out its responsibilities because of external factors and financial constrains. The four key players (the Government of Fiji, NZAID, EU, and UNDP) would renew their commitments to the project based on the findings of the mid-term review.

The overall purpose of this review is twofold:

- i. Learning and improvement: It is intended that the outcomes of this mid-term review will provide useful and relevant information to the ongoing scope of work of the partner institutions; explore why the interventions implemented by the project succeeded or not; and provide guidance for implementation mechanisms of subsequent Civic Education project interventions to be carried out in the next year or so of the project.
- ii. Accountability: The mid-term review is also an instrument for the overall accountability system of the project. Consequently, the review will assess whether or not the project plans are fulfilled and resources are used in a responsible way.

The mid-term review aims at assisting partners to assess sustainability of activities, approaches and structures initiated or supported by the project, and provide recommendations for the future. Specific objectives of the review will be as follows:

- (i) ***Assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation***, including assessing the institutional arrangement, partnerships, risk management, monitoring and evaluation, project implementation and project management.
- (ii) ***Evaluating the impacts of the project*** and the contribution of the outputs to the overall purpose.
- (iii) ***Providing guidance*** on establishment of critical benchmark baselines for impacts assessment
- (iv) ***Assessing the long term sustainability*** of project interventions.
- (v) ***Identifying lessons learned*** on the strategic approach (strategic processes and mechanisms chosen to achieve the project objectives).

(vi) *Assessing the proposed work Plan by the project team* including variances in the respective components and the financial allocations against the provisions in original project document.

### **3. Scope of the Mid-term Review.**

Within this framework, specific issues and questions to be addressed will include, but not be limited to, the following:

#### **Effectiveness**

- i. Are the activities implemented in accordance with the project plans? If not, why?
- ii. What outputs have been achieved? To what extent do they contribute to the objectives?
- iii. How effective are the approaches and structures in delivering the desired outputs? How can they be improved?
- iv. Do the partner organizations work together effectively? Is the partnership structure effective in achieving the desired outputs?

#### **Efficiency**

- i. Are the available technical and financial resources adequate to fulfil the project plans?
- ii. Are the funds being spent in accordance with project plans and using the right procedures?
- iii. Have there been any unforeseen problems? How well were they dealt with?
- iv. Are the capacities of the partners adequate?
- v. What have been the roles of the partners and staff and are they appropriate?
- vi. Is there an effective process, built into the management structure for self-monitoring and assessment, reporting and reflection?

#### **Relevance**

- i. Establish whether or not the design and approach are relevant in addressing the identified needs, issues and challenges?
- ii. To determine the potential of the project contributing to the strategic policies and programmes of the Government and in addressing the identified needs of the community.

#### **Sustainability**

- i. Is the project bringing about desired changes in the behavior of people and the community?
- ii. Are all key stakeholders sufficiently and effectively involved? Are there expectations met and are they satisfied with their level of participation?
- iii. Are alternative or additional measures needed and, if so, what is required to ensure continued sustainability and positive impact?

### **4. Methodology**

The methodology for the mid-term review is to be developed through consultation with the project team taking into account the budget and the TORs. The methodology adopted

should update the preliminary issues, questions, methods of data collection and analysis that will be undertaken. It should encompass a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The methodology should also allow for wide consultation with all interested partners and stakeholders and should include:

- a) A desktop review of all relevant documentation, including (but not limited to):
  - i. The project document, contacts and related agreements
  - ii. Annual work plans and budgets
  - iii. Progress Reports
  - iv. Technical Reports
- b) Face to face interviews and discussions with all key stakeholders involved in the project to ensure that the review is carried out in a participatory manner. A list of key partners and stakeholders would be identified at an early stage and consultation process developed. All stakeholders consulted should be in a position to present their views in confidence to the team and to identify issues, opportunities, constraints and options for the future.
- c) Electronic interviews through teleconference or written comments – e.g. Email, where partners cannot be reached for face to face interviews.

UNDP will assist with the organization of meetings and discussions, and inform the relevant stakeholders of the review process and their role in it, well in advance.

## **5. Reporting/Feedback**

The reviewer shall be responsible for the following reports, which are to be submitted to the National Initiative on Civic Education Board:

- i) A report outlining the proposed methodology and detailed responsibilities of each team member to be submitted prior to the onset of the assessment process.
- ii) A findings report, which should include the following:
  - a) An assessment of the performance of the project, based on the project document, contracts and agreements.
  - b) Identification of the main lessons learned.
  - c) Recommendations based on the assessment of the project performance in light of the current circumstance.

## **6. Timing and Schedule**

The mid-term review is tentatively scheduled to be carried out during the period 21 May to 7 July 2009 for a total of 25 working days broken down as follows:

- i. Review of background documentation and preparation of methodology – 2 days.
- ii. Discussion and agreement on proposed methodology with project partners - 2 days
- iii. Assessment of project progress and performance – including field visits and interviews with project partners and key stakeholders – 6 days
- iv. Analysis of findings and production of draft report – 5 days

- v. Debriefing – presentation and discussion of findings to project partners – 1 day
- vi. Finalization/revision of the report and submission – 2 days.

## **7. Management and Coordination Arrangement**

The Consultant shall be reporting directly to the Governance Team at the MCO, who shall exercise oversight throughout the duration of the consultancy engagement.

## **8. Duty Station**

While conducting the mid-term review in Suva, Fiji, the consultant is required to travel to the project site and meet with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders, who will be jointly identified by the project team, to conduct interviews. The consultant might also be required to travel outside of Suva on a need basis.

## **9. Qualifications and experience**

- Advanced University Degree in Civic Education, Elections, Political Science, Public Policy and Administration, Governance, International Development and/or Evaluation
- Familiarity with the characteristics of civic education and human rights in the Pacific preferred.
- Proven experience in project evaluations and formulations.
- Prior experience of working within the United Nations Development Program preferred.
- Experience in gender analysis preferred;
- Strong conceptual and analytical skills;
- Excellent English writing and communication skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills; and
- Ability to meet deadlines;

## **10. Scope of Bid and Payment process**

This consultancy will be undertaken using the Special Services Agreement (SSA) contracting modality where the contract price is a fixed output based price regardless of extension of time. In accordance with UNDP procurement guidelines prospective applicants are required to include in the computation of their contract price professional fees, travel and daily subsistence allowance.

## **11. Application requirements**

Applicants should send information on referees, an updated current CV and a cover letter setting out:

- How the applicant meets the selection criteria
- Evaluation approach and methodology
- Proposed costs for undertaking this consultancy