

An Evaluation of Idasa's work in the DRC

March 2008

Idasa has been working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in support of police reform since November 2006. Recently, an evaluation process reviewed Idasa's work in the DRC. A review of documentation, and extensive interviews produced an evaluation that said the following about Idasa's work: "while ambitious in the Congolese context and the short time frame agreed for the project, there is no doubt that Idasa met its key obligations and successfully implemented what it had agreed and set out to do. This is no mean feat, and Idasa is to be commended on its achievement."

At the outset of Idasa's work, various government and donor initiatives were underway in support of the Security Sector Reform process and DFID contracted Idasa to implement a small project that would support existing initiatives and would amongst other issues address the needs of civil society.

The overall objective of the project has been for Idasa, in partnership with DFID and SAPS to provide advice, technical support and facilitate information exchange in support of the processes of Police Reform in the DRC; as well as build capacity of stakeholders to be effective participants in the police reform process in years to come.

Specific objectives were as follows:

Provide technical assistance to the PNC, the CSRP and its working groups

Produce a proposal for a five year Police Reform Support Programme agreed to by all stakeholders

Build capacity in the media, civil society, the PNC and parliament to engage more effectively in the police reform process

Maintain the PNC radio communications infrastructure established as part of the election security programme

Provide the design and possible support for a gender and sexual violence support project to the REJUSCO programme; and

Strengthen the partnership between Idasa, DFID and the SAPS particularly around support to the PNC, CSRP, parliament, the media and civil society.

Idasa's specific Programme Activities included the following:

Civil Society preparation for participation in Police Reform including workshops, training course and study tour to South Africa which took place from Dec 2007-Feb 2007

Preparation for National Seminar on Police Reform and logistical support for Seminar, held in April 2007

Preparatory design mission to assess the situation following the national seminar, plan activities for the future and strengthen the SAPS/DFID/Idasa partnership. This was conducted in May 2007

Media reporting Media exposure and training workshop held in June 2007

PNC Study Tour to South Africa held in November 2007

Parliamentary Commission assistance Training workshop conducted by Idasa and the local South African Network on Defence and Security Management (SADSEM) partner, the Chaire UNESCO, to inform and strengthen the knowledge base of the commissioners on the topic of police/Safety Security reform and oversight.

Drafting of a proposal for a DFID five year assistance project on Police Reform for the DRC

Radio Communications project - Ongoing support and maintenance of the PNC radio communications established through DFID support as part of securing successful elections in the DRC.

Human Rights Needs assessment and preliminary activities in August-Sept 2007 in order to build awareness among the stakeholders and incorporate rights issues into the 5 year design process. Initiating a dialogue around human rights in policing with PNC and international partners, and identify possible human-rights-related activities in the overall police reform process.

Design exercise in September to develop a project of gender support to REJUSCO.

South African Network on Defence and Security Management - Idasa funded and sourced 5 additional DRC participants to attend the October 2007 SADSEM Certificate course on Security Sector Governance

Civil Society Processes including dissemination process of the results of the National Seminar in April 2007 to civil society structures and the public in general; a national civil society workshop on police reform in November with the broad objectives of: Building capacity in civil society on their role in police reform; Strengthening civil society organisations; and Developing a plan for further capacity building activities in the provinces.

Providing Knowledge Resources support to all stakeholders and interested parties through the provision of information and knowledge through research papers

Provision of detailed information (translated into French) about the SAPS reform process over the last decade; and facilitation of seminars and translation of printed material

Website that contains information related to, and useful for, the police reform process in the DRC - knowledge resources (in French) aimed at empowering anyone involved in the police reform process in the DRC.

Feedback from Stakeholders

Stakeholders agreed that the workshops facilitated by Idasa had added value to the ability of civil society stakeholders, including human rights lawyers, to engage on issues related to police and security sector reform. As one representative of civil society put it:

“The arrival of Idasa and DFID support was crucial to the engagement of civil society and the ability of civil society to say something intelligible about police and security sector reform”

This view was supported by another interviewee who noted that:

“DFID was the only partner that insisted that civil society be involved in PNC reform, and in the whole security sector reform process. Now, through Idasa, civil society can say something, and importantly, has a seat in the process where we had none before”

A Human Rights lawyer said:

“Prior to the dialogue police officers would simply refuse to discuss allegations of brutality and other abuses of Human Rights, it is now much easier to meet and to discuss these allegations with them.”

The Government of the DRC has agreed to two permanent representatives of civil society on the executive body of the CSRP and further representation in the CSRP’s working groups, which indicates respect for civil society voices in the reform processes.

Idasa also facilitated a capacity building workshop for 48 public representatives’ (Senators and MPs) on police reform and oversight functions. As with civil society, the consensus amongst senior representatives of this group was that the training was valuable. As one interviewee said:

“The training was very useful. The training was welcome. What is needed now is to see how we can implement what we have learned. So we need more training in police and intelligence oversight and civil-military relations. This would equip us to cope with the problems we are currently facing regarding security sector reform to improve security”

Senior members of the PNC also welcomed Idasa’s work in the DRC, which signalled a new approach to the police reform process. They openly admitted that at the outset they were dismissive of the need for any dialogue with civil society and attended the first meeting with a lot of scepticism but came away with a totally different perspective. They were also very appreciative of the study tour to South Africa which demonstrated the need for them to be a service to the community. It also gave them confidence that a large national organisation can undergo fundamental change.

As part of the support for the election process by the International Community DFID funded the establishment of a vast radio network throughout the DRC. This was one of the largest undertakings ever undertaken to establish such a vast communications network and all in the space of a few months ahead of the election. Given the huge investment in the communications infrastructure it would have been criminal not to have continued to develop the capacity of the PNC to ensure that it was fully utilised and that the organisation was capable of maintaining the system in the future. Interviews took place with the members of PNC directly involved in the project and also a number of officers at a police station who use the network as part of their daily work. All were greatly appreciative of the facilities and remarked how it had transformed their ability to work. Communication is the lifeblood of any organisation, none more so than a police service.

One senior officer remarked:

“This is like a dream come true, before we did not know what was happening a kilometre away, now we get the information within minutes and can respond”

The evaluation overall found that idasa’s work in the DRC was relevant, effective, efficient, had impact on intended beneficiaries; and was sustainable.

The evaluation team also made recommendations for phase III of the project, which included the following: Knowledge Resource Creation; Support for PNC Radio Communication; Support for CSRP; Support for SAPS to develop a reform-related programme of assistance; Civil Society capacity building on SSR; Addressing gender and sexual violence in SSR; Addressing Human Rights; Strengthening Parliamentary role in SSR; Strengthening media role in SSR.