A “Democracy Building” Development Project Indicator for NGOs and International Organizations

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Abstract

The article offers an easy-to-use indicator for scholars and practitioners to measure whether non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and government policies and projects meet the criteria for “democracy” that have been established by various international treaties and that are recognized by experts in the field. Use of this indicator on more than a dozen standard interventions funded today by international development banks, United Nations organizations, country donors, and NGOs reveals that most of the major actors in the field of development are actually failing to promote democracy and good governance and points to the specific areas where they need to improve in order to fulfill democracy, governance and rights criteria. This article also offers a sample test of the indicator using the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) as a case study.

KEYWORDS: governance, democracy, human rights, sustainable development, civil society, justice, indigenous peoples, minority protection, development policy, World Bank, UNDP, EC, millennium development goals, UNHCHR

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Introduction:

We live in an Orwellian age where police are “peace” officers and War Departments are “Defense” promoters. Many critics similarly charge that “democracy building” and “legal empowerment” projects are more likely about opening up eco-systems and societies for sale of their resources, hiring of women in foreign funded factories, promoting global integration in ways that destroy cultural autonomy and sustainability and dismantling local sovereignty and self-reliance than they are about democratization. Some have even begun to use the term “rights wash” to expose “rights” and “democracy” projects that are the equivalent of symbolic whitewash. Such projects are often disguised transfers of funds through “training” or “capacity building” or overseas “study tours” that merely proselytize to (or add to the resources of) the biggest rights offenders or aid a few symbolic victims without treating any of the root causes of their harms. Yet, they loudly publicize these interventions as promoting “reform.”

While experienced advocates for protection of communities and citizens can easily see behind the slogans used for justifications of projects of governments and donor organizations in the fields of “democracy,” “governance” and “human rights” throughout the world today, most administrators and citizens lack the skills and tools to quickly scrutinize these projects. There is no easy way for non-experts to understand if there really is anything behind the slogans or if the slogans are being used to shield hidden agendas. Moreover, disputes over spending on these projects often become politicized, with little standardization on which to seek agreement and to base an argument on either side. In this field, as in many others, there are no simple screening tools that can test and expose justifications made by governments and private organizations in this field and reclassify them in categories where they belong. Nor are there simple tools that can identify quality projects that deserve public support as models for promoting international humanitarian goals and principles.

In the absence of clear standards, many development actors of good or dubious intent are left to justify interventions on the basis of the importance of the symptoms they are treating rather than on actual measurable impact that they say is too difficult or costly to determine. Too often they end up measuring benefits in terms of the amount of funds they transfer to self-interested parties who are redefined as the beneficiaries (the “stakeholder” implementing agents who are often the cause of the harms) rather than either the public in developing countries that is harmed or excluded from participation or the public in developed countries that is paying for the interventions. They make little or no attempt to define any clear measurable impact criteria that fit their stated missions and uphold international law (Lempert, 2008).
In answer to this challenge in the development field, recent articles by this author have taken some of the initial steps to establish indicators and benchmarks through which the public and organizations can hold international development actors accountable to international law and to their mission statements for their interventions. These inexpensive and easy-to-use tools can create accountability and transparency in the use of public funds in development interventions.

This author has begun to offer a series of “litmus-test” type indicators that can be used relatively quickly and easily, starting with a general indicator for “sustainable development,” the global goal of all development interventions including those in the governance area (Lempert and Nguyen, 2008), as well as indicators for whether projects promote “dependency” or self-reliance (a key feature of “democratization) (Lempert, 2009a), whether evaluation systems protect the public (Lempert, 2009c), among others. To supplement indicators, the author has also published ethics codes for professionals working in the field that protect public beneficiaries and legal requirements (Lempert, 1997). The author has also used the standard defined for democracy in this article as the basis for an indicator for a specific application, to democracy and human rights education (Lempert, 2009b).

The goal of this piece is to offer a clear measure for “democracy,” “human rights” and “governance” projects based on objective internationally agreed standards that have long been recognized by the internationally community. This article offers and tests an indicator that actualizes these international agreements on “universal” principles of rights, democracy and governance. The piece applies the practical experience of the author with these principles in evaluations of the work of organizations in the international system in this field, in an effort to systematize measures and standards for practical implementation.

The benefit of such an indicator is that it can separate the self-interested donor projects that are designed to promote donor country and international donor interests (access to resources and markets; control over and favors from governments in “client states”) from interventions that legitimately seek to promote agreed humanitarian and international legal objectives with clear results. Such an indicator can be used to troubleshoot and force accountability on what now amount annual to tens or hundreds of millions of dollars of international spending. It can detect interventions that are intentionally or mistakenly designed to promote slogans and symbols (such as promotion of secular human rights “Bibles”) or to cover up inhumane acts with symbolic “rights wash,” and help to redirect funds towards initiatives that achieve real empowerment and political protections for vulnerable cultural groups and individuals.

An additional value of an indicator to test the democratization impact of donor interventions is that it is a step in integrating different interventions in various “sectors” into an holistic approach to development. An integrated
approach can prevent imbalances and destabilization of countries, cultures, and their governmental and non-governmental systems that occurs with piecemeal and targeted interventions aimed at sectors and slogans. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the international donor community, for example, originally committed in 1992 to a set of holistic principles, often referred to as the Rio de Janeiro principles or the Rio Declaration, for achieving “sustainable human development” including democracy (equality and choice) alongside protection of resources and overall balance of population with resources and production (U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). These were later placed in a framework of measurements for “Millennium Development Goals” (MDGs) that included the treaty goals to promote democratization and recognition of other rights treaties. Nevertheless, the idea of integrating these concepts so that democratization, rights and governance include such fundamental and priority concerns as the protection of long-term sustainability of cultures and of countries (passing on these assets to future generations) has still not entered into the goal of “human rights, democracy and good governance” (the fifth of the eight goals in the Millennium Declaration) or even into “governance” projects that are now key interventions that are touted as promoting the MDGs (U.N. Millennium Declaration, 2000). This article shows how these concerns can be integrated in ways that put the principles into practice, some twenty years after the Rio Declaration.

Beyond simply exposing waste or hidden agendas, for the peoples of developing countries and for professionals, an indicator can also serve as the basis for initiating political or even legal action against invasive or harmful activities that previously were difficult to hold to a common professional standard.

Though this tool is primarily useful as a public accountability tool, it also has scholarly applications. For political and social scientists, the generation of a new indicator offers a way to classify and measure the phenomenon of interventions by governments and private actors in weaker countries. It also continues to apply simple principles of equity and symmetry as basic building blocks for a social science of social measurement and challenges disciplines to assure they are building such systems of measurement, (Lempert, 1996).

While some political scientists and other social scientists have argued that the widespread abuses of development funds make it clear that it is better to do nothing and to leave other societies alone than to claim to “help” and “democratize” them (since hidden or subconscious objectives, or simple inability to achieve results will always exist in this area), this author does not believe that even a mountain of evidence proving that most projects fail will be enough to stop those who want to try to build a more “democratic” and “humane” world. There are cases where efforts do make a difference to protect rights and improve people’s (and peoples’) lives. This piece begins with the assumption that the best
way to stop funding for projects with hidden agendas or weak design, is to expose those hidden biases and to offer a practical way to support and improve those approaches that are beneficial. The constructive social science and policy tool offered here can be used in several different ways as part of a solution, both by theorists and practitioners.

The article begins by defining “democracy” according to basic internationally agreed treaty principles that can be placed into an indicator, compares existing indicators used by political scientists and practitioners to the international standards to which they have agreed, explains why several international “democracy” projects now fail in the absence of an indicator, then offers a new indicator and tests it on several categories of projects. The piece includes a detailed example of how to use the indicator on an organization like the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Principles of Democracy:

There already is a starting point of “universal” concepts on democracy and governance that have been signed by the international community. Though there are disputes among political scientists as to how to define and measure democracy and how to avoid normative or cultural biases, these disputes are either over the fine points or are attempts to justify particular ideologies, individuals or regimes; often failing to note that certain universal norms already exist. In fact, internationally agreed principles on democracy reflect an almost mathematical set of axioms of symmetry and equality in dealings. These can easily be used as an established measure for holding international actors accountable to these very principles of democracy on which they have agreed. Since they come out of international treaty agreements, they can also be directly applied.

Defining the Principles by International Standards: Essentially, the body of international treaties reiterates the simple principle of the “Golden Rule” of symmetrical treatment and applies the rule at two levels within States and the international system: cultures and individuals. The treaties also establish a principle of survivability of these interests in political systems; the principle of governance to protect the sustainability of cultures and the human potential of individuals.

While this may sound surprisingly simple, it is in fact possible to develop a very good and universal indicator of democratization principles for the world community reflecting this agreement simply by starting with this principle for the two levels of actors and adding this third condition of sustainability to which the international community has also committed itself. These three principles are generally stated by Political Scientists as:
1. Federalism (as the key recognized means for achieving the ends of Cultural Sustainability Protections) – a balance of power between human groups;

2. Equity/Individual Rights (Symmetry) – a balance of power between individuals; and

3. Good Governance (Protection and Development of Assets) – ability of the overall system to ensure the enforceability of the rights to survival, sustainability, and self-determination of peoples (cultures) and individuals.

This definition of governance as protection of assets is even more basic than the complicated definitions and indicators of governance used by most political scientists, but it can also be used to generate a simple and powerful indicator of effective democratic governance.

The principles, recognized as the fundamental issues in political science, are about relative power in ways that create equitable balances for survival. In short, the fundamental principle of democracy is not about the existence of specific institutions that are the means to specific ends but about the assurances of achieving the ends of equity and survival. Democracy is about specific ends; the balance of power to ensure survivability of cultures and individuals. Particularly in interventions in foreign countries, where power is exerted in different ways through different cultural mechanisms, understandings, and tools, the important focus on achievements in democracy, governance and rights is not about the creation of specific institutions that may or may not fit those societies, but about overall balances; the impacts on relative power of identifiable cultural groups and individual interests that are different in each setting.

How the Principles are Understood in Treaties: These three principles have been asserted several times in international treaties, including laws like the Genocide Convention, conventions, and declarations, as follows:

1) Equality of cultural groups/ through means like federalism or autonomous power: Several international treaties are designed specifically to asset the principle of cultural equality and protection of self-determination and autonomy that underlies federalism. While the U.N. system itself was a contract between those nation states that had political power and not directly with all of the world’s cultures, it reflects the same principle with the idea of cultural protections enacted into law at the time of the founding of the United Nations in 1948. These treaties include the:

   - U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) establishing the idea of cultural diversity and difference and protection of cultural groups as a key democratic principle;
- U.N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN ICCPR, 1966): under Article 1 and then reinforcing cultural rights under Article 27.
  o Article 1 – “All peoples have the right of self-determination. … economic, social and cultural development.”

- U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), itself described as “an integral part of the development of … a democratic framework based on the rule of law.”
  o Article 2 notes the principle for the international community to safeguard for all groups “the right to enjoy their own culture”
  o Article 4 reiterates the treatment of minority groups “in full equality before the law”;
  o Article 8 restates the “principle of equality”

- U.N. Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (2007) asserting that “indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples” and upholding the principle that “control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions”
  o Article 1 iterates the “right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”;
  o Article 3 reasserts the principle of “self determination”;
  o Article 4 reiterates the “right to autonomy or self-government”

2) Equity/ individual rights: The counterpart to international treaties for protections of cultural groups is the set of treaties enumerating the types of individual interest groups that deserve political equality. These include the:

- U.N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN ICCPR, 1966) protecting individuals on the basis of their:
  o Article 2 – “Race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property [class], birth or other status [state versus citizen]”
  o Article 26 iterates that “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.”

- U.N. Declaration of Political, Economic and Cultural Rights (UN ICESCR, 1966) recognizing the “equal and inalienable rights of members of the human family.”

Though these are not at the status of law, like the Crime of Genocide, the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court does criminalize “widespread or systematic practices” that “constitute a serious attack on human dignity or grave
humiliation or degradation of one or more human beings” (Rome Statute of the ICC, 1998).

3) **Sustainability of these units (the protection of assets) through good governance:** International treaties assert the role of governance as directed towards the ends above. The Rio Declaration defines sustainability with reference to the fundamental balance of population and resources, and reiterates the needs of a governance system to serve this end and to protect cultural diversity. Principle 22 of the convention promotes community and cultural identity as a key unit of sustainable development (Rio Declaration, 1992).

Governance, itself, can also be simply defined, from management theory (as protecting or increasing wealth/assets) and political science theory (defining “who gets what, why, and how”), as:

- the protection and development (how) of all assets within a human system (what) for the next generation by the current generation (who).

This is a restatement of the ultimate goal of sustainable development in the legal terms of “fiduciary” responsibility between different generations for a specific and measurable end; assuring that the per capita value of all kinds of assets that are part of human systems are protected and passed on to future generations, including natural resource assets, cultural heritage, and social institutions and infrastructure. All other concerns like participation, specific institutions of decision-making and their rules, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, etc., are merely the “means.” Means will differ by context without a specific formulaic approach that fits all.

**Discussion of the Principles for Application:** The implication of the “Golden Rule” and “sustainable human development” principles as the basics of sustainable democratic systems is that the key measures of democratization are assessments of balances of power and protections of sustainability. The focus must be on whether systems offer true equity to the different cultural groups and individual interests (that need to be defined in each context) as the appropriate ends, not whether inputs build particular institutions or practices. The measure of democracy is really a measure of relative power, balancing the potential of abuse and inequity of power (and use of resources) by powerful groups (abusers) and interests against the potential for losses by a victimized less powerful group (victims). The analysis of equity is one of how the different sources of power are used by different groups, not simply whether particular institutions or mechanisms exist (party systems, voting, newspapers). It is the sources of power (wealth, weapons, information, access networks, etc.) that are the determining factors of inequities and the key areas on which any democracy interventions...
which need to act and offer measures. Effective projects will offset inequalities and protect real balances in ways that assure real protections.

Economists looking to measure the benefits of these projects in economic terms can link these imbalances to economic losses using long term measures of human adaptation and diversity that promote survival. When used properly, the fundamental principle of economic theory is that it is competition, autonomy (in control of one’s capital in all of its forms, including culture, human potential, and resources, as determined by cultures and individuals themselves), and of diversity that are the real measures of long-term asset value of human systems (Lempert, 1996). Ultimately, this kind of measurement of imbalances can offer valuations that can be used for cost-benefit measures of the value of interventions in terms of promoting overall human well-being. To do that, we need to assure that economists focus on these legally recognized assets and on issues of long term human survival and diversity, and that they can combine these with a basic indicator measuring power imbalances that can undermine the full expression of this diversity.

Note that a key source of confusion among many social scientists and practitioners in democratization is that the ends of democracy have been confused with means in an attempt to oversimplify what is misunderstood. Often there is a cultural bias among those coming from more powerful countries and cultures that assumes that the distribution of cultural groups and of interests is similar across countries and that a similar mix of institutions can be applied in different countries to achieve what is viewed in powerful countries as an effective means of achieving “democracy” or cultural and individual equality. This confusion has led many practitioners to standardize a list of means or to focus on a particular type of equality that may end up destroying cultural or individual diversity in order to achieve it (in obvious violation of international treaties).

The way that democratization has been taught in the U.S., for example, follows democratic principles but partly introduces confusion.

- The concepts of both cultural equality (through mechanisms like federalism) and individual rights/equality of citizens have been basic to an understanding of democracy. However, in countries like the U.S. where there was historically no idea of sustainable development and cultural protection after the allocations of powers among States, the mechanism of federalism lost its original meaning for protecting cultural diversity and autonomy. Measures of cultural equality and strength of cultural autonomy and diversity have now been replaced with measures of “decentralization” rather than of survival of the cultural rights and cultural diversity that international treaties now acknowledge as in need of special political protection.

- The idea of good governance has only recently been understood to be that of protection of assets as the earth’s natural assets are now recognized as...
disappearing from overuse or neglect and jeopardizing human diversity and survival. The ends of governance that are well understood in the business word (protecting per capita wealth/assets for future generations) have been blurred to focus on processes rather than on actual results. Too often, good governance has been described in terms of existing institutional mechanisms – separation of powers/three branches of government; a party system; civil society and the press acting to assure transparency and accountability – rather than on how they work to achieve the ends of sustainable cultural protection and overall per capita asset protection. The “three parts of government” are really just another way of understanding balancing of power and protection of resources through safeguarding and development of resources. But they are only a means to those ends and the ends need to be measured to determine if the systems are really effective. Similarly, there has been a false idea that a “Bill of Rights” actually implies rights without actually focusing on the measures of power and equity of citizens that are the ends of these legal recipes and the of institutions that are claimed to protect such rights.

Indicators in the Field and the Lack of an Indicator for Project Interventions:

Though there has been an attempt to develop indicators for measuring success of democracy and governance interventions, the current indicators are not used for screening interventions to assure that they comply with international law or with the appropriate ends of democracy and good governance. They can better be described as diagnostics to assure the use of certain inputs (processes or means), rather than measurements of specific democratic ends or goals.

Overview of Current Indicators: International treaties fall short of providing any measures of relative power or impact on relative power that can be used in indicators. Political science indicators and attempts by development agents to actually define their impact on the three fundamental universal principles of democracy and governance have also fallen short, though there have been a number of different efforts.

The problem with the indicators that have been developed by political scientists and development practitioners is that they focus on checklists of potential “means” to achieving a specific forms of democratization “ends,” but do not offer any direct measures of the real ends of democracy and governance (balances of power and sustainability). Nor do they demonstrate any real linkage between the means they offer or institutions that they promote and claim to be essential features of democracy, and the actual goals of balancing power and promoting sustainability in very different cultural contexts. In short, they do not
show progress on the principles but only measure inputs and random results. Moreover, the results they measure on one dimension (such as increasing individual rights) may violate competing principles (self-determination of cultures). By not looking at the overall impact on interrelated goals, the current approaches actually hide failures and distort democratization interventions.

Most of the Political Science indicators of democracy or governance try to offer an overall country measure in one or a few dimensions. By contrast, development organizations offer long checklists on dozens of project categories that are not standardized according to impacts on the goals of democracy. Overall, current indicators are really more like diagnostics measuring the existence of particular features of governance that might or might not have any significance in terms of the ends of democracy and that are not linked to those ends. Though there is some crossover between indicators developed strictly by Political Scientists to use in data set measures, and those developed by development organizations to use to inform policy interventions, there are no specific indicators for measuring the democratization impact of specific interventions.

**Indicators used by Political Scientists with Some Policy Crossover** – The danger of practitioners applying most of indicators currently offered by political scientists, is that they measure symptoms of inequalities (torture, imprisonment, shutting of newspapers) and offer lists of inputs (e.g., competitive elections) that may or may not address those symptoms and that lack a direct relation to underlying power imbalances and inequities. None offer an indicator that can be used as a standard for all types of democracy and governance interventions or for all types of societies, including traditional cultures or even ancient Greece and colonial America, where “democratic” institutions lacked the institutional features of contemporary State systems.

The literature contains many articles elucidating and attempting to improve current approaches, such as a recent piece by Munck and van Verkuilen evaluating nine different indicators, commenting on their methodological problems and subjectivities and their value for political scientists seeking data sets for regression analyses for country comparisons. Almost all of these indicators have the flaw of being process rather than results oriented and generate aggregate measures (e.g., “competitiveness of participation”) that have no direct measurable link to power imbalances. None seem to include any evidence of sustainable development and robustness of cultural systems. They reflect a bias of political scientists and lack of understanding of real pressures on cultures and individuals in the developing world and on traditional societies. Political scientists, living and working in industrial settings, focus on “State” and political institutions and processes in industrial societies, using this as their model (2002).
Among the indicators that are most widely used are two that are developed by international donors and that serve to justify government interventions; one designed by the World Bank and one supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Both are typical of how indicators fail to reflect international principles.

- **World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators** – The World Bank’s governance indicator does not seek to promote the international principle of democracy. “Democracy” is less a concern of the Bank than “governance,” which is defined in terms of ability to manage international loans in a stable way. The Rio Declaration objectives of protecting assets for sustainable development are almost entirely overlooked in the World Bank’s approach to governance, even though the Bank’s indicator dates from the 1990s and the time of the Rio Declaration and should incorporate it. The World Bank aggregates data from 30 organizations and its measures include: “voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.” Many of the measures are perceptual, and they have a selective bias against small minorities and in favor of majority rule (tyranny of the majority), in opposition to the established principles of the international community for democracy as a balance of power that would protect cultural and individual rights (Kaufmann, Kraay, Mastruzzi, 1997).

- **Freedom House Indicator** – Freedom House is a U.S. government-funded, politically established organization dating to 1941, whose ratings are now used by the Millennium Challenge Corporation as the basis for U.S. government interventions in governance. Its indicator aggregates several sub-measures; combining, for example, sub-categories of “political rights” and “civil liberties” based on measures of structures and processes, without any direct measure of power imbalances or how the relative balances fit into culturally sustainable protections. Freedom House measures process but not ends in seven major categories: electoral process; civil society; independent media; national democratic governance; local democratic governance; judicial framework and independence; and corruption. It then provides a composite score of how “democratic” a country is overall. The approach is a bit like creating a gross consumption or productivity index that does not incorporate long-term concerns for survival of particular systems. High “freedom” could destroy a particular minority or the system, itself, but Freedom House’s measure of “democracy” does not account for the sustainability of the system or of individual groups and interests within it (Freedom House, 2006).

Political scientists and other research organizations have come up with a number of other indicators that are used in political science data sets but do not seem to be used at all by development organizations. These indicators have little applicability to measuring democratic performance in line with the ends
established by the international treaties. They do not measure ends of equality and democracy in line with underlying principles. Among the better known are:

- **Polity IV** — This is a ranking index of countries, using a set of 21 points for “autocracy” and “democracy” combined measures. It focuses on the governing authority and its process characteristics but not on power imbalances in typical stratification categories like class, gender, ethnicity/religion/nationality, or kinship (Marshall, Jaggers, Gurr, 2006).

- **Polyarchy 1.2** – This data set offers only the process measures of “competitiveness and political participation” (Vanhanen, 2000).

- The *Economist* magazine uses an “index of democracy” based on five categories: free and fair election process, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture with 60 questions including attempts to measure “capability of civil servants to implement policies” which are processes that are often unrelated to the essence of democracy and could just as well be used to measure the efficiency of a dictatorship (Kekic, 2007).

- **Bertelsmann Transformation Index** – This is an example of a governance index that measures goals of economic transformation (“governance for growth”) and of “political management of change on the way to a market based democracy” that are in direct odds with the international goals of sustainable human development as defined by treaties and principles of democracy (Bertelsmann, 2006, page 10). The index looks at five subjective categories: “stateness,” “political participation,” “rule of law,” “stability of democratic institutions,” “political and social integration” – e.g. “political party system,” and “extent” to which “democratic institutions [are] capable of performing.”

**Indicators used by Development Community for Project Design:** Though one might expect practitioners to have clear and simple indicators to support and justify program spending, the reality is that development bureaucracies appear to be even more confused about the goals of democracy interventions than political scientists, despite the apparent clarity of principles in signed international treaties that they often cite in their work. None offer an indicator that can be used as a standard for all types of democracy and governance interventions. Four major donors have reached only the following level of sophistication in this field.

- **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Rights List** – Starting in 1985, Charles Humana began to measure international compliance with the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Yet, he did so in a format that does not look at outcomes of equity and power imbalances and that substitutes procedural measures for those ends (Humana, 1992). Humana employed a list of 40 questions that based on processes rather than on outcomes and sustainability in order to derive a country rank. His list of
measures includes “democratic elections,” “freedom of speech,” “independence of courts,” and incidence of torture. UNHCHR does not appear to have progressed beyond this in its own screening or results measurements.

- **USAID Democracy and Governance Indicators** – USAID has a set of indicators for its Democracy and Governance programs that go beyond the Freedom House score and that are geared to measure “performance” after the fact, rather than to inform the design and objectives of a project to see if it can achieve results at all or to establish a common measure that fits international principles (USAID 1998). USAID makes no attempt to standardize all democracy and governance interventions or offer a definition of “democracy” or “governance” and its underlying principles or goals. Instead, USAID bureaucrats have compiled 200 pages of logistical frameworks (logframes) that send every kind of democracy and governance project to a different sub-category. USAID uses the department categories into which USAID is structured such that the program titles and their inputs have themselves become the ends to achieve, including: “rule of law and respect for human rights,” “genuine and competitive political processes,” “politically active civil society,” and “accountable and transparent government institutions.” The measures they offer as outputs are often indistinguishable from inputs. Among them, for example, are “Number of NGOs that identify business advocacy promotion within their mandate,” and “Number of commercial laws submitted to legislature that were drafted or reviewed by advocacy groups” (page 42) and “Number of new courts opened in rural and urban areas with concentrations of marginalized populations” (as a measure of “equal access to justice) (page 44). What is interesting about these measures is the level of cultural bias they incorporate into what the international community has offered as universal principles. Of course, it would be be impossible to apply this kind of indicator to democracy in Ancient Greece or even to the U.S. continental Congress in the 18th century, or to traditional justice systems, without concluding that they were failures in “democratization” according to USAID. The ideological implication of these measures is that the real goal of “democratization” is not to follow international principles at all but to industrialize societies and destroy their traditions in order to fulfill other USAID sub-goals that are presented simultaneously, such as: “Support a Market Based Economy.” One might suspect that similar underlying measures and biases inform many of the other indicators in the field, though they are not as explicit as in this manual.

- **United Nations (U.N.) System** – Like USAID’s approach, the U.N. has a similarly long list of considerations and contexts that are offered as a checklist but not integrated into a single indicator and where the underlying principles are easily lost (Landman, 2006).

- **European Union** (European Commission (EC), European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Council of Europe (CoE)) – The
European Union has not progressed in constructing any indicators though they held a conference in 2002 and have published some guidelines that are mostly in the form of diagnostics of problems to be addressed rather than program evaluation and design tools that can be used for accountability (EC, 2002; Commission of the European Communities, 2001; EC undated, pre-2003).

Indicators as diagnostics: It would be more realistic to classify the existing indicators, above, as diagnostics of political systems and political processes rather than as real policy tools for accountability. Diagnostics, when appropriate, can provide useful information on symptoms and suggest areas where there may be priority needs, but they do not screen solutions or determine whether “solutions” have unintended consequences. In some cases, diagnostics can be valuable in measuring change and can be used in an indicator of whether a project is designed correctly and will achieve proper results, though they may not be screening devices in themselves. The key to a good diagnostic is to link the measures of symptoms and systems with the ends or results; something that the above indicators never do explicitly because they do not set a clear definition of the universal principles of democracy that they are trying to achieve. In some cases, they substitute other goals that fit their self-interest or cultural biases, such as the transition to a “market economy” and the public institutions that are found in industrial societies.

The approach of this author, in various international projects for major donors (the U.N. system, the European Union and its donors, the World Bank, USAID, and other actors) in the field of democracy, human rights, and governance, has been to attempt to define some logical categories that are universal across cultures and to place the end goals of democratization – the goals of achieving equality and sustainability – directly in the context of the diagnostic rather than detached from it. This author has used categories that are common to other indicators but with a somewhat different approach along with extra categories and emphasis. Such a diagnostic can start to generate the kinds of measures that could be used in an indicator. If a project is designed correctly in accordance with international principles, it should be using diagnostics to identify appropriate interventions to achieve the internationally agreed ends of democracy and governance.

The approach of this author has been to apply an eight category diagnostic:

- Cultural equality and (minority) cultural protections like federalism, including concepts of sustainable development built into the function of governance (1)
- Individual rights balances and legal culture (1)
- Citizen power in governance (measurement and control over assets) – Democratization through citizen oversight over and equality of participation in decision-making and enforcement in five areas (5):
  o Agenda setting (media, equal education, civics education);
  o Civil society, including citizen oversight of the private and community based sectors;
  o Legislation functions and processes;
  o State administration including military and police power as a key special category; and
  o Judicial process

- Legal training for the profession (1) – an additional category of legal culture and rule of law

Some of the measures differ in that they start with criteria of equal power and ability to participate in each system based on the sum total of resources (the ability of an ordinary citizen to open or use a media outlet or to run effectively for public office regardless of wealth, connections, social status, ideology, etc.) rather than simply on whether the law allows “access” or whether officials persecute certain groups.

The author has also developed a diagnostic of educational approaches for democratization – a measurement of internalization of democracy criteria in the educational system and the culture (Lempert, 1995). This political cultural approach to rights education and civic skills also seeks to avoid the cultural biases and blinders that many political scientists bring, in order to fully diagnose the spread of universal principles of democracy in a particular sector.

The Problem with Many “Democracy” or “Governance” and “Human Rights” Projects and the Real Value of an Indicator Based on the International Universal Principles:

Far too many “democracy” projects today do little to acknowledge power imbalances and the legacies of colonialism that have been the basis for groups seeking protection through treaties and international law. The historical legacy has left most of the countries of the world with State systems that violate rights of minority cultures, empower foreign and local businesses and elites, and endanger resources and prospects of sustainable development of future generations. Many critics of international development see the agendas of international organizations as using these legacies for their contemporary benefit rather than seeking to measure the problems and reverse them (Korten, 1995; Gardner, 1980). Cynics charge that most international interventions, particularly in the areas of governance and “democracy” are really just forms of preparing foreign systems for trade relationships that extract the resources of a developing country.
(including educated people through “brain drain” and women’s labor for factory work) and colonize rural and indigenous peoples so that they are part of homogenized industrial systems and conforming workers and consumers.

While the international principles of democracy are simple and not so difficult to measure or estimate, most projects tend to just focus on specific institutional results or laws and policies that could easily hide an agenda to promote globalization and erase diversity and difference.

Critics of global interventions today by the developed countries in the developing world cite the following types of failures that an indicator can actually test, as a way to either expose or defend these interventions. Among the commonly noted criticisms made by activists in developing countries as well as by those who hold power and oppose interventions that seek to primarily benefit foreign interests are that projects support these hidden and un-democratic agendas:

- Promotion of a form of “civil society” that is really an unsustainable foreign funded creation designed to copy foreign systems and link local change agents with foreign organizations, in order to undermine local sovereignty and cultural diversity. Not only are many transplanted “foreign NGOs” seen as a symbol of dependency and implantation of foreign ideologies, but they are also seen as a means by interests in developed countries to replace functions of government in recipient countries that need to be fixed rather than transferred out of government. Thus, these NGOs erode good governance in the name of building “democracy and participation.”

- “Strengthening of political parties” in ways that make these organizations and the businesses that fund (corrupt) them, the shadow systems of government, easily vulnerable to the control of foreign and local financial interests. Critics claim that the promotion of Party systems and electoral governance over other kinds of citizen powers is really aimed at creating mass politics that makes the public in developing countries vulnerable to manipulation by the wealthy or by other unaccountable entities (such as corporations) and often by foreigners, with the pretext that citizens are freely choosing these elites and that these are the only legitimate choices.

- “Rights” projects that seek to promote and homogenize a particular social group, such as women or minorities, in the name of making them “equal” rather than protecting them in sustainable social roles. Critics claim that these projects often promote an approach to democracy that is actually one of majoritarian tyranny in which minorities are leveled or given symbolic visibility, but are often economically, socially, and politically weakened, with their cultures and once sustainable practices ultimately slated for destruction and homogenization. They charge that the goal of “rights” is to uproot people from their social systems and resources, to make them even more vulnerable to
exploitation by economic forces (such as foreign employers) in the name of “democracy.”
- “Awareness” projects that provide symbols and proselytize but that do not achieve any real changes in behaviors and may even stigmatize victims. Critics charge that these projects have become the modern form of missionary work, where “rights awareness” without any real shift in power is similar to the promotion of the Bible in the days of colonization. In some cases, there is a direct parallel to missionary work, with rights and democratization serving as the secular moral code of today that is presented as a contemporary “Bible” in the form of empty slogans and substitution of symbols for real empowerment, enforcement, and institutional change.

It is possible to use a relatively simple indicator to separate failures from successful projects, without having to focus on the means to democracy, but simply by looking at whether the fundamental principles are appropriately measured and incorporated into a system of objectives.

### The Indicator of “Democratization” that Can Measure the Impact:

To make it easier for organizations and contributors to democratization to differentiate between effective and ineffective (or hidden agenda) approaches, the indicator below with three categories (and 13 simple questions) can quickly employed, even by non-experts, as a litmus test of “democracy,” “governance,” and “human rights.” By asking these 13 easy “Yes or No” questions and then counting up the results (possible 16 points), one can determine the relative value of a project or intervention by the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 16 points</td>
<td>Comprehensive approach to democratization in line with the Rio Declaration and International Human Rights Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 9 points</td>
<td>Partial Solution that promotes a specific group or is only partly sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 points</td>
<td>Unsustainable Quick Fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0</td>
<td>Project with Hidden, Anti-Democratic Agenda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the indicator is not an absolute scale since it is not offered as a social science research tool but as a project evaluation and selection tool. It is best used to show the relative value of different projects, with some leeway offered in judgments for calibrating the indicator for specific needs of the user and for application to meet the specific needs of countries. Like most indicators, answers to each question would need to be “calibrated” to assure that different
observers make the exact same determinations. To do so would require a longer
c Manual for standardized, precise answers across observers.

Also, the purpose of the indicator is not to measure “Gross Benefit” or
“cost-benefit.” It is not intended to weigh the economic or other value of
promoting one group or the number of people in one group or the amount by
which members of one group are helped against the overall losses that members
of another group, or the political system as a whole, suffer through selection of
priorities. It is not an economic calculation or a Pareto optimal indicator (offering
only short-term measurable positive benefits to all groups without any sacrifices
by any groups for the long-term). It is merely designed to test the relative
democratizing impact or direction of particular approaches as consistent with key
international values that define democratization and action to avoid potential
harms from taking a particular approach.

Measures/ Sub-Factors: Below, is an explanation of how anyone can apply the
test to any project by asking the 13 questions and recording the scores. Most of
the questions are clear cut “Yes, comprehensive” (2 points), “Yes” (1 point) or
“No” (0 points or negative points for harms). In cases where there is a judgment
call, you can opt for a “Debatable” (0.5 points for benefits and 0 points for harm).

The measures of performance can be placed into three categories:

1) **Positive Beneficial Impact on Democratization** (Changing the balance
of powers between cultural groups; categories of individuals, or both)
that provides a measurable benefit (6 possible points for four
questions);

2) **No Negative or Adverse Impacts** to compete with or reverse the
benefits from intervention (either creating other imbalances of powers
and rights as side effects, or replacing government functions or citizen
controls over government) – with negative points for impacts that may
indicate a hidden agenda and positive points for safeguarding against
these harms (6 possible points for 6 questions); and

3) **Sustainability of the Impact** through systematization and
institutionalization of the change.

These three categories are the key to scoring success of any change:
benefits minus negative impacts, with a bonus for the long-term continuation of
the overall benefit.

The first category is itself a screening to test whether a project actually
achieves anything in the area of democratization and good governance at all, and
whether it can even be scored within the overall category of democracy projects.

It is assumed that projects will follow the standard procedures of
analyzing root causes, looking at behaviors and incentives rather than symptoms,
establishing appropriate logical frameworks with interventions targeted to specific
measurable outputs, with outputs clearly understood as different from inputs, and with benchmarks and cost-benefit analyses of such interventions. These requirements are subjects of other articles on project design, management, and implementation. (In fact, most of these steps appear to be missing from most projects, especially in this field, with misunderstanding of beneficiaries as different from “stakeholder” implementers.) (See Lempert, 2008.)

| 1. Positive Beneficial Impact on Democratization: | This is the category that can be used for screening whether the project and spending really have any substance and fit into the category, or could potentially have substantive benefit. 4 questions and a potential score of 6 points (with two questions offering a possible 2 points). A project that does not score more than 1 point in this category is already partly suspect as being driven by an outside agenda to favor a specific group rather than to promote real democratization and good governance. |

**Question 1.** *Democratization test:* Since this category is easily politicized, it is best to split the democratization test into two questions to avoid falling into the trap of assuming an impact when there is really only a focus on symbols or symptoms.

(Positive Test) The project achieves a change in the (measurable) balance of power between specific and measurable categories of cultural groups or individuals (class, gender, ethnic or religious minorities, social roles, etc.) that moves a system towards equality.

(Negative Test) The project addresses actual imbalances of power not by addressing symptoms and/or through promoting short-term transfers of funds from donors or spending between groups inside the country, or through a short-term reconciliation between groups that can occur without real changes in power, but by addressing root causes of the imbalance of power (unequal distribution and access to the actual sources of power: financial, military, networks and skills, attitudes) through a social or cultural or institutional

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1 Many examples of this for systems like the European Commission (EC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Australia’s Agency for International Development (AusAID), New Zealand AID, Great Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other donors are contained in various reports completed by the author that should, by law, be published in full on websites with their appendices and easily available to the public. However, organizations also routinely de-publish or destroy evaluations that do not directly promote their goals of continuing funding and seeking additional funding for the same interventions. The outlines of approaches are owned by and are available from the author and some of these may be subsequently published in future articles.
change. Examples of “buying off” certain groups rather than changing the culture and that are not really steps towards democratization (Piven and Cloward, 1993) include: distribution of resources through legislation and forcing of policy choices; increasing “awareness;” creating new bureaucracies that have no new independent representational power of the victimized group; “capacity building” of the people who are at the wrong end of the power imbalance; creating new treaties or legislation that are not enforceable because incentives and real power have not changed; or by working with an existing institution (“courts”) or “sector” (“justice”) in ways that do not change the role of the victimized group.

Scoring:

Yes, Overall, on all groups and categories -- 2 points
Yes, on a specific power imbalance category of the project -- 1 point
No – 0 points

**Question 2.** Measurements. The project has a means of measuring the disparity in power between groups and measures the disparity before and after the project.

Scoring:

Yes - 1
Debatable - 0.5
No - 0

**Question 3.** Real impact without backlash. The project has measured and can claim that there will not be any backlash in response to the change in power, or use of power to subvert an apparent change in power balances through an informal or other formal system that will have the effect of reversing a positive change (e.g., extra-legal killings or other coercion and control recreate a repealed government “death penalty” by moving it underground) or that will result in an eruption of tension or social violence that could be worse than the power imbalance (e.g., there is insufficient control over the abusive group and/or no attempt to work with the incentives and behaviors of the abusive group for change, they feel threatened by the empowerment of their victims and seek to reassert their authority in new forms of violence).

Scoring:

Yes - 1
Debatable - 0.5
No or not relevant - 0
Question 4.  *Promotion of good governance in furtherance of democracy*: The project supports measurement of all assets in the country and their protection, through a sustainable development framework such that resources within each cultural group and within the system, overall, are stabilized, and “democracy” and “equality” are not just excuses for a shifting of or mortgaging resources in ways that could potentially jeopardize the overall system (using the system’s resources now to pay for “rights” of one particular group, and reducing the chance of a sustainable future within the resource base, calling this a “popular” or “democratic” choice). Any sale of resources to fund an increasing population, any shift of resources from the young to the elderly (for pensions and away from education), any borrowings now for “the poor,” and other shifts that place the burden on future generations (reducing their per capita access to a resource) and/or that could change the culture for future generations without identifying an “aggressor” group that is transferring funds or power to a “victimized” group, is likely an example of a “good governance” project that is really about co-opting a government to follow an foreign policy agenda rather than about building real democracy globally or inside of a country.

Scoring:  
Yes, Overall, a full framework for protection is promoted – 2 points  
Yes, the project promotes “efficiency” in ways that save or increase the efficiency of resources in at least one sector and increase the overall value of assets in the country – 1 point  
No – 0

2.  *No Negative or Adverse Impacts*: Two categories of three questions each.

2 a).  *No Negative or Adverse Impacts on Relative Balances of Power*: The project does not seek to favor one group at the expense of others. (3 questions and a potential score of 3 points or a loss of 3 points.)

Question 5.  *Foreign interests*. There is no political empowerment benefit to foreign interests that could compete with or trump the local interests, and no promotion of foreign trade, commerce, or political or military alliance that is linked to the change, and the project takes active steps to prevent this. Foreign corporations/investors cannot use governance changes to increase their power relative to any interests in the country or to exploit any group or workers or resource in the country.
Scoring: Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
Debatable or not relevant - 0
No – (-1) (Loss of a point)

**Question 6.** The overall balance of groups and powers in the system. The promotion of a specific right does not prejudice others, such as support for business rights and owners without also promoting the competing check that should be protected such as labor, consumers, and communities, or the living (access to current resources through “rights”) over future generations, and the project takes active steps to prevent such imbalances.

Scoring: Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
Debatable or not relevant - 0
No – (-1) (Loss of a point)

**Question 7.** The competition between cultural and individual rights. The focus on either individual empowerment or cultural empowerment is not used to jeopardize rights at the other level (individual or cultural) in ways that could make the overall system unsustainable or reduce overall diversity in the system and the project takes active steps to prevent imbalance. (E.g., the approach to women’s rights is not designed to industrialize the society and eliminate a previous culture that could be restored to sustainability in a different way.)

Scoring: Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
Debatable or not relevant - 0
No – (-1) (Loss of a point)
2 b). No Negative or Adverse Impacts on the Political/Government System:
The project does not seek to distort the overall governmental system in order to promote a particular group or policies. (3 questions and a potential score of 3 points or a loss of 3 points.)

**Question 8.** Sustainable consumption by all groups and controls against militarism that promotes expansion/imperialism to meet this over-consumption. The empowerment does not promote factors contributing to or continuing a cultural system of expansionary (imperialistic) militarism or over-consumption by a specific group or by the overall system that would jeopardize the resources and survivability of a culture within the system, of the whole system, or of a neighbor (e.g., higher population or consumption without development would threaten rural cultures or neighboring societies) and the project takes active steps towards sustainable consumption.

**Scoring:**
- Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
- Debatable or not relevant - 0
- No – (-1) (Loss of a point)

**Question 9.** Government functions and balance with civil society. The project does not replace a government function or transfer it to another place like civil society because of current underperformance but addresses the failure in the appropriate place in the system without creating a duplicative and/or weaker system and takes an active step to prevent against a potential harm. (e.g., NGOs are not public service providers but provide for private needs and have a role in trying to improve government action; businesses are not “corporate citizens” but are producers to be taxed and regulated to fund public functions, etc.)

**Scoring:**
- Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm through measurements and clear concepts of government organization and functions
- Debatable or not relevant - 0
- No – (-1) (Loss of a point)

**Question 10.** Citizen powers. The project does not increase the power of officials or designated representatives over citizens (e.g., supporting strengthening of an “institution” that empowers
officials rather than increasing the role of the public using the government function, such as empowering the public with legislative power and skills rather than strengthening particular officials to legislate better; identification as government officials as “duty bearers” and empowering them to resolve victimization rather than addressing a power imbalance and its behavioral causes and incentives; or arbitrarily appointing certain civil society groups as the representatives of citizens even without accountability to those citizens) nor does it create new public bureaucracies without a real change in citizen power and in appropriate government functions such as protection of assets, and takes active steps to prevent against harm.

Scoring:  
Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm  
Debatable or not relevant - 0  
No – (-1) (Loss of a point)

### 3. Sustainability of the Impact through Systematization and Institutionalization

The project doesn’t just seek short-term impact but institutionalizes a process of promoting equity and democracy in the governmental system and/or culture. (3 questions and a potential score of 4 points.)

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**Question 11.**  
**Sustainability of the intervention/impact.** The project is self-sustainable within the country’s resources and has continued local financing and management, with freedom from continued foreign or institutional funding that would create dependency on outsiders for achievement of the project goals.

Scoring:  
Yes - 1  
Debatable - 0.5  
No - 0

**Question 12.**  
**Institutionalization of measures.** The project builds and institutionalizes an in-country monitoring system of political equality and sources of power (financial, military, institutional, civic skills, networks, access) and of threats and changes, as well as measures of the “deep structures” of power in terms of control and shifts in resources and vulnerability, and seeks to institutionalize these monitoring systems in the country in a way that is invulnerable (government, constitution, and/or civil society) with mechanisms for citizen intervention to assure the monitoring.
Question 13. *Institutionalization of enforcement mechanisms.* There are continuing enforcement mechanisms to ensure that changes are not just on paper or temporary shifts of resources but there is cultural continuity through institutional enforcement and overall skills, attitudes and demands for the change and continuing changes.

Scoring: Yes - 1
Debatable - 0.5
No - 0

How Some Organizations Do:

After understanding how the test works, it is easy to apply to every new case in just a few minutes and with close agreement among any one using it. Below are more than a dozen examples including many of the standard approaches that are now widespread in the field, showing how different organizations and projects score, from best to worst. These examples include the author’s ranked assessments using the same determinations for all projects. Rather than score specific projects in particular countries, some of the projects are generalized in project categories that are common in the field, showing the range of scores that they earn depending on which particular features are included in certain types of projects by specific donors and proponents.

Note that even though not every question applies to every kind of project, the scoring is still designed to yield a scoring spread that leads to categorization and comparison and that also shows how some projects in a category can do better or worse depending on their attention to specific project features that are highlighted in the scoring system.

Before reading these results, consider the following. Most “self-rating” systems using indicators grossly over-inflate results because of the natural tendency to look uncritically at one’s own projects (why there is a need for clear and objective grading standards) and because there is a tendency to avoid considering several organizations at once when rating those organizations one favors. Any rating instrument needs to be “calibrated,” i.e., tested for consistency using the same test question multiple times on multiple organizations in order to reveal differences. Each observer doing the test ultimately reaches some internal consistency after a number of tests, but different observers are likely to come up with different results because they are “harder” or “softer.” The scores below are
those consistent with the judgment of the author and they are an example of strict
application of the ideas, such that weaknesses are revealed as areas where
improvement is needed. If such a tool is ultimately adapted by professionals and
subject to multiple tests, there would ultimately be a consensus on the scaling and
the rating system.

Note that while it might seem difficult to hold entire organizations to this
standard (beyond simply individual projects), this is exactly what strategic
planners and organizational experts who measure governmental and non-
governmental organizational performance are required to do in order to determine
whether they are efficiently fulfilling their missions or whether they are even
adhering to them. In some cases, where organizations are challenged for violating
their charters, violating their public purpose, or going beyond their legally
established objectives (“ultra vires”) it is this kind of test that could be used to
determine whether organizational charters should be revoked, management
replaced, or organizations changed.

While many articles might simply stop here, the value of an indicator is
that it actually be used and that it be subject to debate and criticism as part of a
process of working towards professional standards. The first step towards putting
such professional tool into practice is the detail below that works through this
process of application and calibration.

Models of Comprehensive Democratization: 10 to 16 points. The examples that
fall into this category are rare.

- U.S. and Allied De-Nazification of West Germany after World War II –
  Though it would take an historian to sort out specific institutional changes in
  Germany and whether the U.S. and Allies established hegemony over West
  Germany that disempowered it, and though it can be debated whether
  Germany’s political system now protects against some kinds of stratification
  that enforce inequalities, the far reaching and comprehensive social, cultural,
  and institutional changes made in West Germany to remake the country’s
  civic culture and to create a non-imperial, federal, democratic West Germany
  can roughly be scored at 10 points. This is a model intervention, but it also
  occurred under rare and specific circumstances.

- Unseen America Projects, Inc. and similar civil society projects in Democratic
  Experiential Education (Lempert, 1995) – The teaching of civic skills in ways
  that democratize the structure of educational institutions, link students and the
  community, changes university funding and investment, and promote
  approaches that create tolerance for cultural groups while also empowering
  students from all backgrounds, scores exceptionally well, up to 11 points (4
  plus 3 plus 2 plus 2), missing only points for not seeking to change
government systems of measurement and sustainability, which are outside the
specific focus of this kind of democratization project. Other approaches to civic education score positively but with fewer points because of the lack of institutional and structural changes that accompany them. This is a small project and its impact is targeted. It can’t be compared to the De-Nazification of West Germany for its scope, but it scores well because it is consistent in its objectives and these follow best practices in meeting international goals of democracy, even in a limited scope.

Partly Sustainable Solutions that Promote a Specific Group: Most single dimensional democratization projects, promoted directly by vulnerable groups seeking to empower themselves, are in this category, with scores of 6 to 10 points. Note that rights organizations, promoting their own interests or a professional goal, do not really do democratic development, but work to effectively empower a specific group in ways that promote some aspects of democratization.

- Women’s Suffrage Movements and Feminist movements that followed – In industrial countries, the women’s movement is an example of one that changed the culture and institutionalized those changes and measures for a single group, and it can be scored as a whole up to 10 points for its comprehensive effects on population and goals of peace, though less for individual components. In developing countries, however, similar projects often erode traditional cultures or promote less comprehensive changes in ways that are designed to push women into the labor force and increase consumption for foreign businesses, making them only partial solutions or even failures that might earn only a few points, with some purely symbolic projects or those seeking just to exploit women’s labor for foreign companies or for higher production and consumption even earning negative points. Other civil rights movements can be scored in the same way but they may score a bit lower compared to women’s rights because the original women’s movement promoted reduced consumption (family planning) and peace (a change in men’s roles, not just “masculinization” of women) and did not erode cultural identity to promote homogenization. (See example of current “anti-discrimination” projects, below.)

- Terralingua Project (Biological, Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, at www.terralingua.org) with the United Nations Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organization (UNESCO) to systematize information on endangered languages and to advocate for protection (similar to a project for a Red Book for Endangered Cultures) – This project to promote cultural rights (language and indigenous peoples in their eco-systems) earns up to 9 points as a model for promoting cultural diversity in a coordinated way with civil society and government institutions. It does not aim to be a comprehensive democratization project that changes governance and it partly fails in overall
Partial Solution: Projects that Might be Democratic or Anti-democratic, Depending on How they Are Structured: Falling into a separate category are sets of projects that have the same label describing them but that have extremely variable results depending on the intentions and structure of the projects. “Civil society” and “community governance and growth” projects can either promote democracy or undermine it in the guise of democracy, and this is where the indicator questions are important in setting the criteria. The disparity between appropriate and inappropriate approaches is huge, with scores ranging from 12 points to (-6) points. This category serves as a reminder that there is a need to be wary and to look behind the names of projects to apply real tests to evaluate what they do.

- “Civil Society” Building Projects – Theoretically, where the proper role of civil society is understood as reinforcing and balancing interests, a project can score well, up to 12 points, but in most existing projects, where a foreign donor is seeking to force other countries to a particular model and to use NGOs to promote foreign agendas or replace certain parts of a government, the indicator easily reveals these approaches as undermining democracy, with a score as low as (-6) points.

  o Theory: Though there does not seem to be an existing model of an appropriate civil society project anywhere, civil society promotion projects that understand that the role of civil society is to meet private needs and to promote ideas for governmental improvement, through sustainable (locally funded) organizations, balancing powers and rights of
all groups and institutionalizing measures of equity in society, can potentially earn up to 12 points.

- **Reality**: Most current civil society support projects, with European Commission or other donor country funding, use the slogan of civil society to undermine democracy, and the indicators can reveal this quickly by looking at whether the approach is one of promoting pluralism and equality through sustainable local institutions or whether it pushes a foreign agenda for specific results by specific NGOs promoting foreign interests through locally unaccountable, foreign funded stakeholders. Most foreign civil society projects do not empower citizens with skills and balance powers. Instead, they create dependency and use foreign funding to promote foreign agendas, often destroying cultural diversity (replacing real community organizations and cultures with Western style organizations) and replacing government functions with foreign funded providers, thus also weakening good governance. These projects can score as anti-democratically as (-6) points, the worst possible score of an intervention.

- **Integrated Community Development Projects of Foreign NGOs and of Development Banks and Country Donors that have Local Governance/ Local Democracy Components** – NGO projects that promote governance and self-reliance in sustainable ways in minority communities to empower those communities and improve their governments can show a democratic benefit with 4 points while the standard international bank project that is described as “democratic” actually undermines it and is strongly anti-democratic with a score as low as (-5) points.

- **Successful NGO Approaches**: The Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific’s project with the Muong in Viet Nam is an example of one such successful (and rare) inclusion of democratization in a poverty reduction project. NGO projects for integrated community development (generally including health, infrastructure, education, and environmental management interventions) that include aspects like infrastructure “user groups” with local self management and taxation, are forms of empowerment that score points for sustainability and changing balances of power. Where these projects also seek to build community pride of particular localized minorities and teach the protection of assets through long-term sustainable development planning, they earn an additional point.

- **Anti-Democratic Approaches of the International Development Banks and Country Donors**: The typical understanding of “democracy” among the community development projects, such as the SEILA (“Stepping stone”) project in Cambodia of the UNDP, World Bank, the Asian Development
Bank (ADB) and Great Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID), the Sekong Ethnic Peoples Development program in Laos, and very similar models in several other countries, is a foreign initiated meeting among villagers to discuss what they want to buy with free money that foreigners throw into their communities for investment projects for growth. The reason these projects undermine democracy is because they do nothing to empower communities or the public or minorities (and earn 0 points in the first category of questions) and actually create dependency, promote productivity, exploitation of resources, and higher consumption in ways that undermine sustainable development, and undermine the fiscal responsibility of communities by replacing local tax structures and community ownership and responsibility with grants, scored at (-5) points.

Unsustainable Quick Fix: Most projects that work directly with groups that are abusing their power and that seek to enlighten or pressure them through financial incentives (such as promoting trade), are at best quick fixes, and score from 0 to 5 points. The vast majority of international projects that show any positive results at all, are in this category.

- **Human Rights Training for Police and Judges, projects of the UN and other donors** – Projects like these can earn up to 4 points if applied correctly and where there is an incentive or understanding by rights abusers (police and judges) that it is in their interest to respect human rights of prisoners, criminal defendants, and citizens (often it is when there is a combination of outside scrutiny or these changes are conditions for some other kind of assistance). There are still some differences of opinion as to whether projects like these really change any balances of power unless laws and incentive systems are also changed, and whether they are sustained in country training systems and advancement procedures. Projects that just offer “training” and “awareness” without any other leverage might score 0 points or 1 point.

- **“Justice Sector” Projects for “access to justice” projects of the UN, World Bank, European Community and country Donors** – A common fault of “justice” sector projects is that they actually do nothing to measure and reverse injustice/inequality and merely reinforce or legitimize citizen use of an unjust system to create the illusion of promoting democracy. Subsidizing lawyers for the poor is a short-term, unsustainable change that substitutes for the democratization and socialization of decision-making and citizen initiated prosecutions and civil suits against officials and elites who abuse their power and that would earn more points. At best, a project that creates a government fund for criminal defense lawyers earns 3 points but many of these projects earn only 1 point or 0 points.
Failures that appear to have other agendas: International organizations working in areas like “justice” and “anti-discrimination” and building “parliamentary” and “government” “capacity,” claim to be doing much more than they really are and the test exposes them, quickly as promoting hidden agendas that undermine democracy rather than promote it, with scores of 0 to as low as (-5) points. Whether they begin with hidden intentions or whether projects are subverted, given that donors work with elites who have power and they are unwilling to uphold international standards to help weaker groups to challenge that power, is unclear, but the results are the same.

- **UNDP Projects for Minority Integration or “Anti-Discrimination”** (e.g. “Roma” projects) – While projects like these appear to be democratic, they are actually designed in ways that destroy cultural rights and aspirations for autonomy and protection of identity, in order to homogenize minorities in industrial, mass consumption society and score 0 points. A project like this could score 2 points for democratization and 2 points for sustainability, but easily loses 4 points because of the impact on cultural protection and sustainable development and the chances for leveling everyone to the same low standard of mass culture and “equality,” thus having no real democratization benefit at all, and 0 points overall.

- **“Rights” Projects of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** – Though mandated to implement the human rights treaties that are at the basis for the design of the democracy indicator, UNHCHR actually scores as anti-democratic, (-1) points when held to its own standards. (The scoring for this project is described in detail as an example of how to use the indicator.)
  - Note that specific projects to promote signing of international treaties and awareness of those treaties that are the mainstay of cooperation projects between UNDP and UNHCHR, scores 0 points. The projects violate international principles on international democracy (a legislative majority can’t allocate funds to lobby its minority members to join the majority) and have little or no impact on democracy given that signing treaties does not in itself change a balance of power. While the treaties could have some impact, the method of promoting treaties acts to undermine the cultural rights traditions in the countries that are targeted in order to promote foreign interests and the projects have no net democratic gain.

- **“Democracy Dialogues” and “Legal Conditions” of the European Community** – In several countries, the European community and other wealthy countries engage in “dialogues” with government elites to seek to convince them to agree to certain international rights protections such as eliminating the death penalty or adopting particular laws or treaties, but these purportedly democratic approaches score 0 points or (-1) points for reasons similar to the
scoring of the UNHCHR’s approach to treaty promotion. While some of the changes may have marginal benefit, they focus almost entirely on formal agreements not on real changes in power imbalances and on preventing backlashes, and they are conducted in ways that do not recognize local traditions on rights nor do they seek to reverse or take responsibility for legacies of colonialism (colonial institutions and cultural changes) that undermine democracy in most of the former colonies (most of the countries) of the world. These legal changes are generally a prelude to entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) or into political blocs like the European Union and are less about democracy than about entering new alliances that undermine cultural sustainability and other rights and treaties; concerns of democratization that the EC ignores in favor of promoting “trade” and “harmonization.”

- “Efficiency of Justice,” “Administration of Justice,” and “Judicial Independence” Projects of the U.N., World Bank and country Donors – At best, these projects earn 1 point for efficiency but often they deserve negative points for seeking to replace traditional justice mechanisms and for increasing powers of unrepresentative justices, thus reinforcing the inequities and lack of democracy in the system and making power more efficient, especially for foreign investors (potentially (-2) points). Most projects to train judges without making them more accountable or representative of the public, or that make them more independent of other branches of government, also reinforce their lack of accountability to the public and their abusiveness.

- “Parliamentary Support Projects” of the U.N. system and country Donors – Projects like these are described as promoting “democracy” but they do nothing to empower citizens to control bureaucracies or even their own representatives and can be scored as anti-democratic – (-2) points. The project earns no points in the first category and loses points by empowering current Parliamentarians and the Parliamentary bureaucracy over citizens. Some of these projects that seek to link Parliamentarians with foreign powers to promote trade agendas can probably be scored as even more un-democratic.

- Governance “Capacity Building” Projects of the U.N. system, the World Bank, and other “Development” Banks and country Donors – These projects are usually described as promoting the efficiency of governments efficient in carrying out functions to protect citizen interests (the citizen “beneficiaries” who are usually replaced in these projects by government officials as the “direct” beneficiaries) but they score as anti-democratic – (-2) points or even worse (-5) points for projects that work with Ministries of Finance and Trade to promote globalization agendas for the benefit of the donor countries. They have no democratizing impact (0 points in the first category) because they do not change any inequities in power and do not make countries more
sustainable. The projects are usually covers for transfer of resources from foreign government officials to their counterpart government officials in poor countries with the intention of buying future favors through the strengthening of power of officials and creating closer relations (through “study tours,” purchases of cars and computers, and hidden financial transfers that raise salaries (often through “per diems” or banquets). They also subsidize elites in poor countries by using funds from foreign taxpayers so that the wealthy in poor countries can continue to hoard their wealth without raising their taxes.

- Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and governance/"human rights based approach” of the UNDP, with MDGs for “poverty reduction” to be built into national or local government agendas through rights “action plans” and proselytized to the public – This is an example of an international project with a hidden agenda to treat the symptoms of poverty in ways that promote globalization and commercial interests of the major powers and it scores an anti-democratic (-4) points. The UN system now touts this approach though it violates the U.N.’s own Rio Declaration and other U.N. treaty obligations. The current “Human Rights Based Approach” to rights focuses on short-term claims of benefits to competing groups in ways that end up postponing poverty, using up resources to feed growing populations in ways that promote trade, and undermining sustainable development planning and cultural diversity rather than changing tax structures to reduce the power of elites. (Some of the scoring for this project is described in the scoring for UNHCHR, since it has also adopted the MDGs as a priority.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring of UNHCHR on the 13 component questions of the indicator:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Information for Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCHR’s Organizational Mission (Claim) and Mandate according to UNHCHR’s founding charter:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is to work for the protection of all human rights for all people; to help empower people to realize their rights; and to assist those responsible for upholding such rights in ensuring that they are implemented.” The priority is stated as “addressing the most pressing human rights violations … particularly those that put life in imminent peril” with the measure of impact as “substantive benefit that is accrued … to individuals around the world” Its operational mission is defined as “working with governments … and the United Nations system to develop and strengthen capacity … for the protection of human rights” (UNHCHR, 2008) “Mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: … To promote and protect all human rights for all … To promote and protect the right to development … To provide technical assistance for human rights … To play an active role in removing obstacles to the realization of human rights … To play an active role in preventing the continuation of human rights violations …” found on the UNHCHR website and in its strategic document (UNHCHR, 2005, including UN General Assembly Resolution 48/141)</td>
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UNHCHR's Activities in practice (from its website, UNHCHR, 2005):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Human rights “challenges” in order of priorities are listed as follows:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;Poverty is the gravest human rights challenge in the world&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. &quot;Discrimination&quot; on the basis of “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. “Armed conflicts and violence”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. “Impunity … Laws that are constantly breached … cases of torture … excessive use of force … redress for victims of discrimination … economic and social rights.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Democracy deficits …so that physical integrity is protected and freedoms of participation, elections, assembly, association, opinion, expression and information are guaranteed.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. “Weak institutions”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Activities for “closing the gap” are:

“first and foremost working with Governments … in dialogue with them” through “policy advice,” Government “reporting to treaty bodies” “of course, with the consent of the Government” including “capacity building” though “As the Secretary General noted … ‘technical assistance and long-term institution building are of little or no value where the basic principle of protection is being actively violated’” (page 17)

Areas of focus include “a) Human rights law, policy and institutions … b) Human rights methodologies”

Targets include: “The Millennium Development Goals … for poverty reduction” and “economic, social and cultural rights,” “peace building and peacekeeping” and “Strengthening the rule of law” in the “justice sector” and “Engaging civil society”

Overall analysis of UNHCHR as an actor promoting democracy

There are several contradictions built into the role, mission and strategy of UNHCHR, not the least of which is the choice of “democracy” as the fifth priority of an organization whose very mission of promoting “equal rights” and rights treaties should define it first as a democracy building organization rather than one of fighting “poverty” which is the role of other organizations. The setting of the MDG’s as a target, when only ONE of the MDGs promotes “good governance” actually reverses the organization’s priorities and also potentially undermines its commitment to the Rio Declaration making “sustainable development” the key to long-term poverty reduction rather than short-term advocacy for economic transfers to the poor. Defining its actions and primary partner as governments (elites) and failing to commit to measures of power imbalances, essentially means that the UNHCHR has no real tools to change power imbalances and no clarity on measuring the goals established by its mandate. This makes it easy for the organization to become co-opted and to help those who abuse power to better hide their abuses and to use symbolism as a replacement for real action.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Positive Beneficial Impact on Democratization:</td>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Democratization Test:</strong> The organization/project achieves a change in the (measurable) balance of power?*</td>
<td>UNHCHR would claim that they promote “all rights” and deserve 2 points while cynics would say that by working with governments and promoting slogans without any clear measures of power imbalances and how they are changed, they deserve none. In looking at actual impact of UNHCHR programs on groups, it is clear that they highlight risks and violence to particular groups in particular countries, though not in a clear and systematic way. By reducing some violence and pushing some bad actors to improve practices, they do shift some resources to some groups, even if the benefit is just temporary. <strong>1 point.</strong></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The organization/project has a means of measuring the disparity in power between groups?</td>
<td>UNHCHR has “monitoring” and uses international rights treaties to list rights practices. They measure gross human rights violations – deaths, torture, imprisonment, abuse of process. They also measure some barriers to empowerment of some groups and work with NGOs that do these measurements, such as women’s groups. Technically, this is not really a measure of “balance of power” between all groups and is more about categories than about power. They also do not appear to measure their effectiveness in terms of a “before” and “after” intervention. However, they make the effort to measure and occasionally do long-term studies for specific groups with partners. <strong>1 point.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The organization/project achieves measurable real impact without a backlash?</td>
<td>UNHCHR would claim that their work has little backlash because they work directly with elites/abusers. On the other hand, elites who work with a foreign project often learn to stop the action that foreigners measure while continuing the abuse of power in other dimensions that are not the target measures. This question asks whether or not UNHCHR is aware of how abusers can shift their behaviors to circumvent treaties and monitoring that are just formalistic bureaucratic tools, and whether they measure this to assure that there are really changes in power that are not circumvented. The reality is that they do not focus on this. This question really fine tunes the first two questions. If the first two questions gave an organization the benefit of the doubt, this one draws the line. <strong>0 points.</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
4. **Promotion of Good Governance in Promotion of Democracy**: The organization/project supports measurement of all assets in the country and their protection, through a sustainable development framework?*

UNHCHR technically has the mandate to uphold the Rio Declaration and promote sustainable development, which means a measurement of assets and a protection of per capita assets for each cultural group and for countries as a whole. Like much of the UN system today, UNHCHR is not following this mandate and is following the quick-fix “poverty reduction” approach of the MDGs that allows for mortgaging assets in order to treat poverty. In other words, it promotes “economic rights” to consumption now while invading the rights of future generations to environment and culture. This is bad governance and undermines democracy.

0 points.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>II. a) and b)</th>
<th>No Negative or Adverse Impacts (Total)</th>
<th>(-4) points</th>
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5. The organization/project does not empower foreign interests in ways that could trump local interests?

Cynics would say that rights treaties are a way to promote a single world system and to industrialize all countries and this is what the MDGs are doing, with UNHCHR’s blessing (promoting a single set of policies, promoting State education, etc.). Note that UNHCHR is not putting political rights or rights of cultural sustainability on a par with economic and social rights that temporarily buy off the poor. This suggests strongly that UNHCHR is promoting a foreign agenda and not upholding its treaty mandate. Since UNHCHR is not specifically promoting rights of corporations or business, this makes the issue one that is debatable rather than clear cut.

0 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. a.)</th>
<th>No Negative or Adverse Impacts on Relative Balance of Power: (-1 to +1 per question)</th>
<th>(-2) points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. The organization/project promotes the overall balance of groups and powers in the system without prejudicing other categories?

In many countries, and particularly where UNHCHR works with UNDP to promote the ability of certain groups to seek social benefits in the “Human Rights Based Approach” to the MDGs, UNHCHR actually causes an imbalance in country planning and jeopardizes particular rights without placing rights in the framework of sustainability of various cultures and a balance between future interests of the young and current demands of the elderly. Given that UNHCHR is not paying attention to future rights – long term rights to enjoy the environment, to enjoy cultural heritage – but is promoting transfer of benefits quickly to the poor, they are not balancing rights in keeping with their mandate.

(-1) points.
7. The organization/project does not promote individual or cultural rights in order to jeopardize the other category?

In many countries, and particularly where UNHCHR works with UNDP to promote the ability of certain groups to seek social benefits in the “Human Rights Based Approach” to the MDGs, UNHCHR’s approach is to promote individual rights of particular groups (women, children) in ways that erode culture and promote industrialization and globalization. UNHCHR’s work to protect minority rights is largely at the level of protecting individuals from harm without taking a more global perspective of harms to culture that are caused by globalization and other long-term processes. International rights declarations mandate the UNHCHR to protect cultural integrity, but it is not fulfilling its mandate and has politicized its agenda. This question is not duplicating the scoring on the previous question because the previous question applies to individual future interests that are broader than culture. (-1) points.

8. The empowerment does not promote factors contributing to or continuing a cultural system of militarism or over-consumption by a specific group or by the overall system?

By promoting the short-term poverty reduction (poverty postponement) agenda of the MDGs through a rights based approach of the poor to resources rather than a long-term approach to protection and sustainability, the UNHCHR is promoting increased consumption and population growth that promotes competition over scarce resources. (-1) points.

9. The organization/project does not replace a government function or transfer it to another place like civil society?

UNHCHR works with governments and does not transfer government functions away. At the same time, it does no analysis of appropriate functions in governance. 0 points.
10. The organization/project does not increase the power of officials over citizens nor create new public bureaucracies without a real change in citizen power and appropriate government functions?

Although the UNHCHR is now trying to “partner” with civil society, its mandate is to work with governments/elites and to meet their needs. The direct stakeholders are government officials who are seeking to increase their power and resources and status and this is how UNHCHR appeals to them to promote rights. The current language of “rights” projects is one that identifies governments as “duty bearers” rather than one that seeks to identify abusers and change their behaviors, and this sometimes means the creation of inappropriate government functions to address a problem where the real need is to empower civil society. The creation of new government bureaucracies like Ombudsman and government commissions, and reliance on goodwill and training of government officials ultimately empowers government officials who currently hold power.

(-1) points.

III. Sustainability of Impact through Systematization and Institutionalization: 1 point

11. The organization/project is self-sustainable within the country’s resources and has continued local financing?

UNHCHR generally provides grants (not loans) and does not build sustainable funding mechanisms for NGOs, government agencies, or specific human rights activities in countries. While it sometimes builds systems for government monitoring and training, rather than just short term capacity building, it is debatable whether there are any long-term funding commitments and whether there is real cultural change in the countries. Though rights are claimed to be “universal,” UNHCHR rarely works within the thinking of local cultures to find the universal values in country traditions in order to restore them and more often works hegemonically to claim that these are superior ideas coming from powerful countries to the less powerful, thus weakening any chance for real sustainability.

0.5 points.

12. The organization/project builds and institutionalizes an in-country monitoring system of political equality and sources of power (financial, military, institutional, civic skills, networks, access) and of threats and changes?

The kind of monitoring that UNHCHR does is on specific activities but not on the sources of power and who controls it. Even while seeking to promote better use of military and police powers, for example, or judicial decisions, UNHCHR does not seek to measure movements towards public control over the military or democratic choices of judges and participation in juries.

0 points.
13. There are *continuing enforcement mechanisms* to ensure that changes are not just on paper or temporary shifts of resources?

UNHCHR would argue that its treaty reporting and monitoring activities and its work with NGO partners that do monitoring are part of a systematic effort to ensure enforcement. Promotion of the “Optional Protocols” of international treaties that grant access of aggrieved parties to international court systems also constitutes promotion of enforcement mechanisms. However, these mechanisms are all currently extremely weak and UNHCHR does not have any component working with potential plaintiffs to prepare them for taking test cases to international courts to apply international law, nor does it promote democratization of judicial selection or promotion of juries and other active citizen judicial mechanisms. This makes the overall enforcement impact debatable.

0.5 points.

**Total:**

| (-1) points. Anti-Democratic impact. Though UNHCHR has a marginal democratic benefit in certain categories (2 points) and these are partly sustainable (1 point), the politicization of UNHCHR's current strategy in terms of partners and choice of priorities and rights results in an overall impact that weakens cultural protection, country sustainability, protections for future generations, and citizen empowerment (because of the focus on government support). Thus, the overall impact of this international “rights” organization is actually the reverse of what it claims and is inconsistent with the treaty obligations and mandate that it is required to uphold. It fails when held directly to its own standards. |

* Questions 1, 4 and 12 offer up to 2 points for comprehensive solutions.

**Conclusion: Solutions:**

The irony of exposing the flaws in development projects today is that the “experts” who are in the position to make changes have little incentive to change, while those who are best protected by change are the least informed and least organized about where or how to begin to push for reforms. An indicator can facilitate change, but like other improved tools, it must be in the hands of those willing and able to use it.

Organizations that score the worst on the new indicator in this article will likely not even recognize their failures.

- They are likely to say that principles of “democracy” are “too hard” to apply or that there is no real agreement, or they are likely to cherry pick the approaches to democracy that best meet their hidden agendas, such as choosing individual rights to trump group rights in ways that allow globalization to crush minority ethnicities. In taking the
comprehensive, multi-dimensional package of this indicator in the established project areas of “democracy, governance and human rights,” they will likely seek to whittle it away into separate categories and sectors. They may say that this business-like approach that introduces a variety of professional expertise takes the artistry and “humanistic” or “human” judgment out of their work, though in fact it does the opposite by applying their own standards to their work.

- At the same time that they criticize such an approach as “too hard” to apply, they may make the contradictory claim that the lack of “cost-benefit” analysis doesn’t tell them how resources should be allocated to their already ongoing projects even when this indicator reveals those projects as in violation of their own regulations, standards, and international laws, all to which they turn a blind eye.

- They are likely to respond defensively to suggestions for more public oversight of their work and to claim that accountability is a form of “policing,” even though they accept the idea of “accountability” as one of the key principles of good governance. They are likely to say that oversight implies “mistrust” and that their good faith is being questioned, in the premise that they are above the law and the public is (by their design) ignorant and uninformed about what they do. They may say that holding a government official accountable for results is unfair because there are “too many factors.”

Overall, such responses from many “professionals” in “good governance” will demonstrate exactly why many of the people in place in current systems are part of the problem and not the solution. Indeed, the only real solution is mobilization of the public.

This author has suggested the formation of Donor Monitor NGOs that act as public advocates (Lempert, 2008) and has designed a full set of other governance reforms in media, organizational oversight, private attorneys general and other citizen powers that would promote professionalism and accountability at the level of constitutional changes (Lempert, 1994) as well as educational and cultural reforms (Lempert, Briggs, et. al., 1995). But who will fund and promote them?

In short, foxes have entered the henhouse in design and implementation of democracy building projects in international development as well as many other governmental systems, and there is a need to devise better oversight systems. The only way that change can really occur is if the public acts collectively to protect their interests.

This article offers one tool, a weapon of empowerment, to at least facilitate that effort. It takes away excuses that oversight is too difficult for ordinary citizens and that we must simply wait, pray, and rely on experts to
change in ways they have little incentive to change, rather than to take on the burdens of citizenship to protect our own interests.

As with any new social scientific tool for measuring social behaviors, the next steps are for readers to apply it and to offer their own adjustments and additions as well as to work in collaboration to build a base of data using the tool for scoring additional organizations and projects. The editors of this journal, in recognition of the value of expanding the use of tools among scholars and for real world applications on policy, have agreed to make this indicator available freely and to offer an opportunity for feedback and exchanges on the use of these and other new tools presented in this journal. Readers may also contact the author.

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