

# **Evaluation of the OHCHR *Indigenous Fellowship Programme and Minority Fellowship Programme***

## **Final Evaluation Report**

*An external consultant has prepared this report. The views expressed herein are those of the Consultant and therefore do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of OHCHR.*

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## Composition of the Evaluation team

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## **ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY**

### **Acronyms**

CAGI – The *Centre d’Accueil de la Genève Internationale* / International Geneva Welcome Centre  
CTMD – Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division  
DEXREL – Donor and External Relations Section (OHCHR)  
EMRIP – United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization  
FOTCD – Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (OHCHR)  
HRE – Human Rights Education  
ICJ – International Commission of Jurists  
IFP – OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme  
ILO – International Labour Organization  
IMADR – International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism  
IPMS – Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (OHCHR)  
ISHR – International Service for Human Rights  
METS – Methodology, Education and Training Section (OHCHR)  
MFP – OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme  
MRG – Minority Rights Group International  
OHCHR – Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
OMCT – World Organization Against Torture (*Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture*)  
PFII – UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
PPMES – Policy Planning Monitoring & Evaluation Section (OHCHR)  
PSMS – Programme Support and Management Services (OHCHR)  
RPTC – United Nations Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation  
TESPRDD – Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures, and Right to Development Division (OHCHR)  
UNCT – UN Country Teams  
UNDP – UN Development Programme  
UNESCO – UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization  
UNFCCC – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change  
UN HCR – UN Human Rights Council  
UNITAR – UN Institute for Training and Research  
UNOG – UN Office at Geneva  
UPR – Universal Periodic Review  
UNVFPI – UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples  
WCC – World Council of Churches  
WIPO – World Intellectual Property Organization  
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

## **Terminology: What is a Fellow?**

A UN *fellow* refers to someone that is currently participating in a UN *Fellowship*. The UNDESA *Handbook for Fellowship Officers of the United Nations System* (2020) defines a Fellowship in the United Nations System as follows:

[A] specially tailored or selected training activity that provides a monetary grant to a qualified individual for the purpose of fulfilling special learning objectives; such training, which may be of at least 30 days duration...and may take place in an appropriate training institution, usually abroad, should be in response to nationally approved human resources, policies and plans, and should aim at impact and relevance for all stakeholders involved. [page 5]

*Fellows* fall under the general category of ‘trainee’, but also have some specific characteristics. An important aspect of a fellowship, as stated in the quote above, is the aim of impact and relevance for all stakeholders. The fellow, in addition to receiving on-the-job training, is also considered to have a level of expertise that can benefit the training institution or office.

## **Description of terms and programmes referred to in this report:**

**Fellow:** a participant in one of the annual OHCHR Fellowship Programmes in Geneva. This is a basic training in international human rights law and standards, on UN Human Rights Mechanisms, to develop advocacy and leadership skills and network among themselves and with key stakeholders in Geneva (Member States, Civil Society Organizations, other UN entities, academic institutions, etc.), for individuals from Indigenous and Minority communities who are already working with local and national organizations to promote human rights for their communities.

**Former Fellow:** a Fellow that has gone through the training programme, and is back in his/her own country/community.

**Indigenous Fellowship Programme:** created in 1997 through GA Resolution 50/157. Held annually in Geneva, the Programme started as a 6 months training programme in English. Today, the Programme is held for a period of 4 weeks and is available in 4 linguistic components: English, Spanish, French, and Russian.

**Minorities Fellowship Programme:** inspired by the Indigenous Fellowship Programme, this programme was created in 2005 initially for 3 months in English and now offered for a four-week period, in 3 linguistic components: English, Russian and Arabic.

**Senior Minority or Indigenous Fellowship Programme:** A three- to four-month fellowship at OHCHR Headquarters in Geneva. The participants from 2011-2018 were not Former Fellows, but starting in 2019 Former Fellows were recruited into this position.

**Regional or National Minority or Indigenous Fellowship Programme:** from 2010 – 2019, Former Fellows were placed for an on the job training at OHCHR Country or Regional Office or other UN office for a period of three months to one year.

**Senior Fellowship Programme:** created in 2020 in response to the pandemic crisis, which prevented the regular indigenous and minorities fellowship programme from being held in Geneva. This programme combined, and expanded upon the *Senior* and *Regional/National* Fellowship programmes that provided practical training periods of up to one year

## **Acknowledgements**

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This evaluation recognizes all interviewees, who took time to speak about the Fellowship Programmes. Very special thanks to the Former Fellows for their clear perspectives expressed in the interviews, and for the candid responses in the survey.

It was a privilege to speak with so many committed and informed activists from all over the world. I hope this report reflects these communications.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

### *Background of the programmes*

Indigenous Peoples and Minorities represent some of the most vulnerable groups in the world today, and violation of their human rights is an ongoing problem everywhere in the world. The *Indigenous Fellowship Programme* (IFP, 1997–present) and the *Minorities Fellowship Programme* (MFP, 2005–present) are OHCHR’s flagship Geneva-based training programme designed for indigenous peoples’ and minority rights defenders. The IFP and MFP are designed as catalysts for building and reinforcing individual and institutional capacity of civil society actors, in order to engage more effectively in key human rights promotion and protection activities benefiting indigenous peoples and minorities at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The IFP training programme was the first of its kind to bring individuals from marginalized, often remote, indigenous communities to Geneva. Since the launch of the training programme in 1997, 463 indigenous individuals (217 men and 246 women) from over 70 countries, representing all regions the world have completed the course. The MFP is OHCHR’s most comprehensive training programme for human rights and minority rights defenders belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Since its inception in 2005, 204 minority rights defenders have been trained in the MFP, including 112 men and 92 women from 72 countries. Normally organized on a yearly basis, these have been adapted for the pandemic situation in 2020 and 2021. Former Fellows have been placed for periods of up to twelve months in Field offices around the world, and at the UN Headquarters in Geneva and New York. In addition there have been 10 Senior Indigenous Fellows and 10 Senior Minority Fellows since 2011, and 13 Indigenous and 8 Minority Regional or National Fellows since 2010.

Direct funding for the IFP comes from the UN Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC). Extra-budgetary, earmarked contributions support specific components of both programmes, Norway and Russian Federation. Ford Foundation from 2021. Indirect funding is provided by partners that sponsor travel (Deusto University) or accommodation (CAGI) for some of the participants.

### *Evaluation Background*

These programmes have not yet been externally evaluated, and the purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent report on the programmes, meant to serve several purposes. This evaluation takes both a summative and formative approach. It examines the results and impacts over the duration of the programmes, and especially the past six years (2015-2019). It addresses the impact of the programmes, according to the goals that OHCHR has defined for them. It also identifies things that are working well in both programmes, and areas where change is needed. It is also intended to aid in efforts to institutionalize and strengthen the programmes, including securing funding.

The evaluation team consisted of one person, Dr. Jennifer Hays, Professor in Anthropology at UiT – the Arctic University of Norway, who worked in collaboration with IPMS, and with the support of the PPMES and the Reference group. Support with translation in French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic was organized by IPMS and provided by Senior fellows and former fellows. The evaluation period began in September 2020. The original time assigned for the evaluation was four months, but this was extended to seven months to provide more time for the extensive data collection and analysis.

## Methodology

The theory of change used in this evaluation likens the training during the Fellowship Programmes to a rock tossed into a pond, and the *immediate outcome* is the visible splash. This has been documented in surveys that the fellows took upon completion of their course; these documents were reviewed for the evaluation. The ‘ripple effects’ are *intermediate outcomes* that this splash produces as the Fellows return to their countries and begin to employ the skills that they have learned, train others in their communities, and make use of UN mechanisms. Ideally these will contribute to the desired long-term *ultimate outcomes* – but these results are not always easy to identify. This evaluation focuses primarily on the intermediate outcomes.

To understand how the Fellowship Programmes created and contributed to more lasting positive changes, and the supporting and limiting practices and external factors, a total of 100 individuals were interviewed, as individuals and focus groups in **65 interviews**. Interviewees include: Former Fellows and Senior Fellows from **38 countries** (balanced in terms of gender); representatives of Field Offices, OHCHR staff in Geneva; UN entities; representatives from UN Human Rights Mechanisms (some of whom were also former fellows); Permanent Missions in Geneva; and partner organizations, including universities and civil-society and non-government organizations based in Geneva. Interviewees were asked to describe their experience with the training programmes themselves, and to identify concrete ways that they contributed to positive change – as well as limitations to this change.

A **survey** was developed mid-way through the evaluation, based on issues that came to the fore during the first phase of interviews, and was distributed to all Former Fellows for whom contact information was available, through email and facebook. The survey was designed to gather quantitative data relating to the fellows themselves, their experience with the programmes, its relevance, and the impact of the programmes on their work and the situation in their countries. It also included spaces for open-ended responses for several of the questions that provided context, and additional qualitative data. The survey was translated into French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. There was a total of 160 respondents, with between 130-145 answers to most questions; about half of these were women. For both interviews and surveys, specific questions provided data on gender and disability inclusion within the programmes. This provided highly consistent information about general trends. In particular the survey allowed for very small minority opinions, which were analyzed as ‘flags’ for potential issues regarding gender and disability that the programmes should be alert to.

In addition, I was added to the two existing Facebook community pages of the Fellowship Programmes, and I was invited by the network of former Minority fellows to join an internal Global Consultation that they organized in March 2021.

Data from interviews with Former Fellows was triangulated with the survey data, and these perspectives were also compared with those provided by other stakeholders. The data collected in this study was extremely consistent, and led to several important findings.

## Main Findings

**i. Relevance:** The data collected during this evaluation strongly indicates that the Fellowship programmes are extremely relevant to all of the immediate stakeholders, including Fellows, the rights-holders, and duty-bearers including the OHCHR, other UN entities, NGOs, and other partners. No interviewee or survey respondent indicated that the programmes were not relevant. A key successful strategy employed is gathering fellows in Geneva, where they can gain practical experience with the UN human rights mechanisms, meet relevant UN, NGO, and government representatives, and learn from each other. Fellows are selected to be

representative of diverse countries and groups, must belong to a minority or indigenous peoples and have already demonstrated commitment to indigenous or minority rights. The structure and content of the programmes are guided by UN policies and principles, and are continuously revised in response to feedback from previous fellows and in communication with incoming fellows and their organizations. All of these approaches maintain a high level of relevance for both programmes.

**ii. Effectiveness:** This evaluation found extensive evidence that the positive results the programmes are aiming for are being achieved, despite operating on minimal resources, and in a global context where many factors interfere with achieving the aims of the programmes. The strategy of gathering Fellows in Geneva allows for numerous other enabling factors, including developing international networks, actively participating in UN mechanisms, and developing awareness of the global scope of indigenous and minority issues. There are several important limiting factors, including: global situations such as the current Covid 19 pandemic; unsympathetic and in some cases oppositional national governments; reprisals; and social or cultural limitations related to stigma or gender norms. A major limitation is a lack of adequate and secure funding for the programmes.

**iii. Efficiency:** The evaluation found that the IPMS has used the resources available to them efficiently, including stretching limited human and financial resources to maximum effect and capitalizing on intellectual resources available in Geneva, partnerships with universities and civil-society organizations, and the enormous good will directed towards these programmes. However, a lack of sufficient financial and human resources compromises the efficiency of the programmes, and greatly increases their fragility.

**iv. Impact:** The evaluation found that the Fellowship Programmes have contributed enormously to increased access to UN human rights mechanisms by indigenous peoples and minorities. Evidence for this impact was provided across interviews with all stakeholder groups, and reflected in quantitative data gathered by the survey. Despite a lack of funding and serious limiting factors, the programmes are making a very significant contribution to both immediate and demonstrable improvement of indigenous peoples' and minorities' rights, and establishing conditions for broader and longer-term enjoyment of their rights. Capacity-building of individuals leads to increased access to decision-making, and to the strengthening of networks at various levels. The evaluation found that follow-up support for networking and training would greatly contribute to these longer-term impacts.

**v. Sustainability:** The results, achievements, and benefits that build upon the Fellowship programmes are likely not only to be durable, but also to accrue over time as former fellows continue to build upon their experiences, capacity, and skills gained from the fellowships, and to train others in their communities and countries. Sustainability would be enhanced through greater follow-up. The evaluation found, however, that sustainability is or could be greatly reduced by a lack of human resources, administrative complications related to the complexity of the programmes, and an overall lack of sufficient or predictable financing.

**vi. Gender and disability inclusion:** The programmes use strategies specifically designed to integrate women, and more recently LGBTIQ+ individuals and differently abled people. This begins with the selection process, and a focus on intersectionality, and on international mechanisms as they are relevant to minority and indigenous women and people with disabilities, is included in programme content. The evaluation found that despite extreme cultural diversity, the programmes had managed to create a safe and positive environment for women, sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities. A few uncommon problems are reminders that work to maintain gender equality and to incorporate people with disabilities requires constant effort and awareness.

## Lessons Learned

**Effective communication:** Teaching effective communication skills increases the fellows' ability to talk to governments and other important stakeholders. These skills have increased many former fellows' ability to advance agendas for their people. However, these skills will not work in situations where negotiation is not possible, with extremely repressive regimes.

**Visibility:** Participation in EMRIP, the Forum on Minority Issues, and other mechanisms makes fellows visible. It provides valuable experience, important skills, and for many fellows this has moved things forward within their countries. This visibility can also lead to reprisals from states.

**Length of the programmes:** Decreasing the length of time of the programmes has had both positive and negative effects. It allows for more participants; however, it also makes it much more intense. There are indications that the shorter time may be particularly problematic for individuals representing marginalized subsectors of society.

**Funding:** Reducing funding limits the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. A relatively small funding increase will go a very long way towards addressing most of the shortcomings described in this evaluation.

## Good Practices

The evaluation found evidence of many good practices that should be continued, and possibly could be replicated.

**Programmes structure:** Bringing together indigenous and minority human rights defenders from around the world to Geneva is central to the achievement of the results. Some of the good practices noted below depend upon this general practice of gathering fellows at the headquarters of the UN; if this practice were changed many of these would no longer be possible.

**Hands-on experience:** A strong focus on the practical aspects of utilization of UN Human Rights Mechanisms, and participation in them, provided invaluable information, skills, competences, perspectives, and networks for the fellows.

**Facilitation of international networks:** By drawing upon the intellectual resources available in Geneva, the programmes helped the fellows to create an international network. By bringing together fellows from all over the world, and investing in interpretation, the programmes further enhance international networks, and comprehension of global dimensions.

**University preparatory programmes:** Pre-programmes focusing on the theoretical basis of indigenous peoples / minority rights, were valuable for the fellows that had the opportunity to participate in them, preparing them for participation in the programme in Geneva. Uneven application of this practice is a shortcoming (see Conclusion 6).

**Senior Fellowship Programmes:** The redirection of funding allotted for the IFP and MFP to engage Senior Indigenous and Minority Fellows at the Field Offices was an effective and positive response to the crisis created by the Covid 19 pandemic.

**High managerial engagement with the programmes:** Programmes are highly responsive to the individual and country needs, changing circumstances, and the highly complex situation.

## Conclusions

**1) The programmes are extremely important globally.** The fundamental finding of this evaluation is that the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship programmes are filling an extremely important gap in global efforts to address human rights. The programmes provide access to, and training in how to engage with, UN human rights mechanisms addressing some of the

most vulnerable segments of the global population – indigenous peoples and minorities, who are the target of some of the most severe and systematic human rights abuses in the world today. There are no other programmes that provide the type and level of training that the IFP and MFP offer to some of these sectors of the global population.

**2) The programmes are highly relevant**, and there is great interest in and support for these programmes from all stakeholder groups. This was unanimously confirmed in interviews and survey.

**3) Overall, the programmes are very effective**, with very high impact of the at the community and country level, and at the global level. The overwhelming majority of fellows return to their home countries and continue to work towards securing greater human rights for their communities, either through their employment or voluntarily, and their ability to do this work effectively is greatly enhanced by their participation in the fellowship programmes.

**4) Bringing Fellows to Geneva is key.** The format of the programmes prior to 2020, with its emphasis on the combination of practical hands-on training and theory, is effective in achieving the goals for individuals, their communities, and at the country level. There is no other way for fellows to gain the practical experience that they can in Geneva.

**5) For many fellows, the length of time of the programmes is too short** for all of the content that it includes, in particular those with no prior experience, and those from highly disadvantaged groups or certain regions. This finding should be balanced with the fact that for many the programmes were the right length, and with current budget and management capacity in mind. The effectiveness and impact of the programmes are evaluated very highly even by those that said it was too short.

**6) The preparatory programmes in Bilbao and Moscow provide important background and preparation for Spanish and Russian Fellows before the Indigenous Fellowship Programme in Geneva.** The language groups in the IFP that do not have this background (French and English) are at a disadvantage when they come together in Geneva. The first preparatory programme for the MFP was held in Strasbourg in 2019; this is not yet integrated into the programme. The lack of consistency in the offer of the University programmes across the language groups in the IFP creates a point of inequality between the language groups and makes it difficult to address all of the fellows equally in terms of programme content. The MFP could also benefit from integrated preparatory programmes.

**7) The Senior Fellowship programmes are relevant**, and their expansion during the pandemic is an indication of the resilience of the programmes, and the important need at the country and regional level. Some problematic aspects of the expanded programmes are a result of the quick shift that needed to be made. Once it is possible to hold the programmes in Geneva again, the balance between the regular fellowship programmes, and the expanded Senior Fellowship programmes, will need careful consideration.

**8) The impact of the programmes could be greatly enhanced through better follow up**, and more engagement with field offices in the home countries of the former fellows. More could be done to facilitate the development of country and regional networks of former fellows, to connect former fellows with country and regional offices, and to support training projects.

**9) Some logistical problems seriously interfere with the efficiency of the programmes and add to their fragility**; many of these are related to a lack of resources. These include problems with payment of stipends, with accommodation, and with interpretation. The latter two stem from a lack of resources, but play out as inefficiency and compromise the reputation of the programmes.

**10) The lack of human resources** dedicated to the programmes compromises the short- and long-term effectiveness, efficiency, short- and long-term impact, and sustainability of the programmes. One individual has primary responsibility for running both Programmes. This makes the programmes dependent on one person, very vulnerable, compromises efficiency and the long-term effectiveness and impact of the programmes.

**11) Gender equality** is thoroughly covered by the programmes, but requires ongoing attention. Incorporation of sexual and gender minorities and people with disabilities is in early stages and can be strengthened. Concerns expressed regarding gender issues, and of those with disabilities were minimal, but are flags for issues that need ongoing attention.

**12) Overarching issue: Serious reprisals** directly linked to their participation in the Fellowship Programmes affect a small but growing percentage of fellows and former fellows. These can happen at any stage of participation, including before they even leave their country to come to Geneva. These are frequent enough, and in some cases serious enough, to warrant concern. Even where former fellows do not experience reprisals, in some cases fear of them can inhibit their activities, reducing the impact of the programmes. In cases where severe reprisals occur, responsible staff at IPMS have taken appropriate actions to mitigate risk and to address urgent cases.

**13) Overarching Issue: Funding.** Despite the overall very strong evidence that the programmes are highly relevant and effective, and enormous evidence for their impact, funding for the programmes is limited and in some cases vulnerable, diminishing the efficiency and sustainability of the programmes. The programmes currently operate on a very limited budget. Many of the limitations of the programmes could be overcome or reduced with increased funding. This financial vulnerability puts the long-term sustainability of the programmes in question.

**Overarching Conclusions 12 and 13 together represent the biggest challenges that the programmes face.** Increasing violence against indigenous peoples and minorities continues despite significant improvement in many areas. This situation calls for greater investment in support for indigenous peoples and minorities rights. Currently there is a lack of sufficient and secure funding to operate these highly relevant and effective programmes with maximum efficiency, or to expand in ways that could multiply their already substantial impact.

The programmes are extremely vulnerable to shifts in global funding priorities, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Indigenous and Minorities Fellowships Programmes are making a vital contribution to the global indigenous peoples and minority rights movements against human rights violations. Securing greater visibility and financial support for these programmes would represent a huge step forward, and it would be a very cost-effective investment.

## **Recommendations**

**The general overarching recommendation is that the programmes should be strengthened wherever possible.** This follows especially from Conclusions 1, 2, and 3 regarding the global importance of these programmes and their relevance, effectiveness, and impact, and Conclusions 12 and 13, regarding the major challenges. All of the recommendations are aimed at reinforcing vulnerable areas of the programmes and building upon positive aspects.

**1) Structure of the Programmes:** The current structure of the programmes, which involves bringing people to Geneva for an extended period of time in order to engage in practical as well as theoretical training, and networking, should be maintained. To make the programmes more effective, some aspects of this structure should be revisited. (Conclusions 4, 5, 6) The following points need

careful consideration, also in relation to each other: *Length of programme vs. number of fellows; University pre-programmes; and Interagency Cooperation.*

**2) Senior Fellowship Programme:** *The Senior Fellowship Programme should continue and be better incorporated (Conclusion 7). The increased placement of former fellows in the country and regional offices in 2020 is likely to increase the national and regional impact of the fellowship programmes, and should be continued, including after the COVID-19 crises, where possible.*

**3) Follow up:** *Follow-up and support for fellows when they return to their home countries should be strengthened (Conclusion 8). This will greatly improve the long-term effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the programmes. Three sub-recommendations follow: Country and Regional Offices should be more consistently incorporated into the follow up process when fellows return to their countries; There should be increased facilitation of network-building among former fellows at national and regional levels; and Seed funding for on-the-ground projects should be made available*

**4) Logistic problems:** *Problems that can be addressed with little financial investment should receive immediate attention. Those that require funds should be prioritized where possible to ensure efficient running of the programmes and enhance effectiveness and impact (Conclusion 9). Two sub-recommendations follow: Solutions or a back-up plan should be in place to ensure fellows receive stipends in Geneva; Interpretation should be prioritized.*

**5) Staffing of the Programmes:** *At least one additional professional staff member should be dedicated to the running of the programmes. (Conclusion 10) An additional professional staff member(s) will increase the short- and long-term efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programs.*

**6) Gender and Disability issues:** *Specific focus on questions relating to gender and disability should be ongoing and enhanced within the programmes (Conclusion 11). Gender equality is already a strong point within the programmes; however, issues can arise unexpectedly and ongoing attention to this issue is critical. The active recruitment of people with disability and sexual and gender minorities should be strengthened.*

**7) Reprisals:** *The issue of reprisals should be continually revisited to ensure that the optimal responses can be made in case of threats or actual reprisals (Conclusion 12). Steps are already being taken to prevent and to mitigate reprisals throughout participation in the programme, starting from the interview process. The handling of reprisals against former fellows requires careful, ongoing consideration involving the IPMS and top management of the OHCHR, in communication with UN bodies dedicated to dealing with reprisals. Actions already in place to prevent and address reprisals should be reinforced.*

**8) Funding:** *Given the overall very strong agreement regarding the importance of the programmes, they need increased visibility and a greater commitment of funding (Relevant to all conclusions). Given the extensive evidence for the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programmes, efforts should be made at all levels of the OHCHR to simultaneously increase visibility, secure greater funding and reinforce the staffing base. This includes increasing the visibility of the programmes to governments and private foundations that might support through extra-budgetary contributions.*

These programmes are unique as they directly target beneficiaries, and are serving some of the least visible and most marginalized, vulnerable, and in some cases threatened, communities in the world. There is enormous evidence for the impact of both fellowship programmes, despite clear limitations and complications. The impact could be greatly reinforced, institutionalized and increased, through securing the commitment of more resources to the programmes. All options for increasing funding should be explored.

*This is a grass roots project on an international level. The UN facilitates government and public institutions – all are out of reach for civil society, in particular minorities. I wish they had funds to organize more. (Female MFP, Interview)*

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*The influence of the indigenous fellowship program changed my life. I was able to make better decisions because of the tools that I was able to acquire during the training. I wish I could acquire more knowledge and apply it in my community. (Female, IFP, Survey)*

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*I was an activist before participation in the MFP, but I didn't really know how to use the mechanisms... afterwards the doors are open to address the UN and the government. (Female, MFP, Interview)*

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*The best thing about the Fellowship programme was the capacity built on how to effectively use the UN System to advance the work of my communities. As a young advocate, it gave me an appreciation of the global efforts of indigenous peoples' practitioners all working to better advance the protection of indigenous peoples. (Male, IFP, Survey)*

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*I realized that my challenges were not singular, others have it even worse. The fellowship allowed us to understand and respect each other's experiences and to develop empathy... That has been one of the greatest things of meeting people from diverse backgrounds. (Male MFP, Interview)*

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*I now know that I have an obligation. I realize that the circumstances of other indigenous peoples are even more difficult than mine. I can stand on the international world stage and call out my government and my family won't be murdered. I have a responsibility to global Indigenous peoples, as well as to my own. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

## I. Introduction

### I.1 Programme background

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (IPMS) has two human rights training programmes: the *Indigenous Fellowship Programme* (IFP, 1997–present) and the *Minorities Fellowship Programme* (MFP, 2005–present). These two annual Fellowship Programmes are OHCHR’s flagship Geneva-based training programmes designed for indigenous peoples’ and minority rights defenders. These programmes, normally organized on a yearly basis, have been adapted for the pandemic situation in 2020 and 2021 (see below). They consist of extensive and comprehensive training and capacity-building programmes targeted specifically at indigenous and minority representatives worldwide, and are designed to strengthen their knowledge on the UN system and international relevant human rights instruments and mechanisms, and their advocacy and leadership skills, so they can better promote and protect the rights of their communities and constituencies.

The IFP and MFP are designed as catalysts for building and reinforcing individual and institutional capacity of civil society actors, in order to engage more effectively in key human rights promotion and protection activities benefiting indigenous peoples and minorities at the national, regional and international levels. Both Programmes also provide an opportunity for former Fellows to be selected as a Senior Indigenous or Minority Fellows (previously referred as “Regional or National Fellow”) in OHCHR Regional or Country presences, in UN Peacekeeping Missions in a UN Country Team (UNCT), or in the office of a UN Resident Coordinator.

The *Indigenous Fellowship Programme* (IFP) was established on the basis of the GA Resolution 50/157, the *Programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People* (1996). Under section 2, *Activities of the Coordinator and the Centre for Human Rights* (the UN entity that preceded the OHCHR), point 13 is:

Create a fellowship programme, in collaboration with the Advisory Services of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and Governments, to assist indigenous people wishing to gain experience in the different branches of the Centre and in other parts of the United Nations system.

The IFP was established the following year, in 1997. The programme is designed to build the capacity and expertise of indigenous representatives on the UN system and mechanisms dealing with human rights in general, and indigenous issues in particular, so they are in a better position to protect and promote the rights of their communities at the international level. Since the launch of the training programme in 1997, 463 indigenous individuals (217 men and 246 women) from 70 countries, representing all regions the world have completed the course (see Table 1). A stated aim of the programme is that they in turn provided human rights training to many more in their communities. The IFP is offered in four different languages: English, French, Spanish and Russian. Two of these languages receive prior theoretical training at partner universities prior to the programme in Geneva: Spanish-speaking at the University of Deusto in Bilbao for two months, and Russian-speaking at the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, in Moscow, for a few weeks (from two to four). The French- and English-speaking programmes do not currently include prior University-led preparatory training courses.

The *Minorities Fellowship Programme* (MFP) is OHCHR’s most comprehensive training programme for human rights and minority rights defenders belonging to national or ethnic,

religious and linguistic minorities. At the end of the MFP, the Fellows should have a general knowledge of the United Nations system, international human rights instruments and mechanisms in general and those relevant to minorities in particular, have strengthened their advocacy and leadership skills and be capable of further training their communities/organizations. The Programme furthermore serves as an opportunity for human rights activists working towards the protection and promotion of minority rights to expand their partners' base by building a strategic dialogue with Fellow activists from across the globe, the United Nations, relevant Geneva-based NGOs, amongst other partners. The MFP is offered in three linguistic components: English, Russian and Arabic. Since its inception, 204 minority rights defenders have been trained in the MFP, including 112 men and 92 women from 72 countries (see table 1).

**Table 1: Participation in the Fellowship Programmes, breakdown by gender**

<b>INDIGENOUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
ENGLISH COMPONENT 1997-2019	70	77	<b>147</b>
FRENCH COMPONENT 2000-2019	50	29	<b>79</b>
SPANISH COMPONENT 2000-2019	67	73	<b>140</b>
RUSSIAN COMPONENT 2005-2019	30	67	<b>97</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL COMPONENTS:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>463</b>

<b>MINORITIES FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
ENGLISH COMPONENT 2005-2019	54	52	<b>106</b>
ARBIC COMPONENT 2007-2019	42	19	<b>61</b>
RUSSIAN COMPONENT 2014-2019	16	21	<b>37</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL COMPONENTS:</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>204</b>

- Statistics provided by the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (IPMS)

Both training programmes were put on hold in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The IPMS has adapted to this situation by expanding and combining two other programmes.

The *Senior Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programme*, had been in place since 2011. Under this programme, one selected individual from each category (indigenous and minority) came to Geneva for three to four months. Over the years, there have been ten Indigenous<sup>1</sup> and ten Minority<sup>2</sup> Senior Fellows (4 men and 6 women for each), representing all of the global regions the programmes are targeting. In 2019 the programme began recruiting former minority fellows to the senior fellowship programme and synchronising timing of this with the annual Fellowship Programmes, so that they could support the new fellows as they arrived in Geneva for the programme, thus creating a clearer bridge between the two fellowship programmes.

Under the *Regional or National Minority or Indigenous Fellowship Programme*, Former Fellows from either the IFP or MFP were placed in OHCHR field offices. Since the programme began

<sup>1</sup>Indigenous fellows came from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, North America, and Latin America.

<sup>2</sup>Minority Fellows came from Asia, (mostly Eastern) Europe, and the Middle East / North African region.

in 2010, thirteen Indigenous and eight Minority Regional or National Fellows have represented all of the programmes global regions.

In 2020, when it became clear that the programmes could not gather the fellows in Geneva for the running of the fellowship programmes, the decision was made to use the funding instead to combine and expand these two programmes into the *Senior Fellowship Programme*. Over thirty Former Fellows (Indigenous and Minority, according to country needs) were posted as Senior Fellows in OHCHR regional or country offices, or other UN country presences. The initial appointments were for four months, starting in September 2020; most of these were extended to twelve months. Although this adapted programme is too new to determine its impacts, it has nonetheless become a focus of this evaluation, and will be described in the sections below.

**Funding**

*Direct funding* for the programmes comes from the UN Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC), and extrabudgetary funds; together these cover all of the costs of the programmes, including the salary of the Coordinator and administrative costs (13%). Funding from the RPTC is committed to the Indigenous Fellowship Programme through the UN system. Extra-budgetary, earmarked contributions make up a substantial portion of the programme budget. These are made voluntarily by governments and are decided on a yearly basis. Two national governments currently support specific components of the programmes, Norway and the Russian Federation. The Norwegian government contributes to the MFP and is earmarked specifically for religious minorities, and the Russian Federation provides funding for the Russian-speaking component of each programme. The Ford Foundation has recently committed US\$ 200,000 for 2021, and indicates plans to repeat this donation for 2022; this funding is not earmarked for any specific group.

**Table 2: Direct Funding committed to the programmes for 2021**

Type	Source	Programme	Earmark	Amount US\$
UN	RPTC	IFP	None	300,000
Extra-budgetary	Norway	MFP	Religious Minorities	300,000
	Russia	IFP / MFP	Russian-speaking	215,000
Private	Ford Foundation	IFP	None	200,000
<b>2021 Total Budget from Direct Funding</b>				<b>1,015,000</b>

*Indirect funding* through participating partners also contributes significantly in ways that do not directly go through the UN accounting systems. Through Deusto University, the Basque government provides funding for travel of Spanish-speaking participants to Bilbao, from there to Geneva, and then back to their home countries. The *Centre d’Accueil de la Genève Internationale*, (CAGI, International Geneva Welcome Centre) provides a subsidy for the hotel stays of the fellows while they are in Geneva that covers 50-80% of accommodation costs in Geneva, and local travel. The level of this subsidy varies depending on resources available at CAGI, and in 2019 the subsidy was available only for the Indigenous Fellowship Programme and not for the Minority one. See also section S4.

## **I.2 Stakeholders**

These training programmes involve major in-house/cross-branch cooperation, including OHCHR's Country and Regional offices, as well as inter-agency cooperation within the UN. Other partners include universities and UN independent experts, diplomatic missions based in Geneva, and other Geneva based NGOs and intergovernmental organisations.

### ***Internal stakeholders include:***

- Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (IPMS)
- Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service (PPMES)
- Programme Support and Management Services:
  - Finance and Budget Section
  - Human Resources Management Section (Partnerships and Affiliated Workforce Unit)
- FOTCD (for presentations during the course, exchange of country information, selection of Fellows; for placing Senior Fellows in field offices)
- TESPDD and CTMD (presentations during the course, especially on UN Human Rights Mechanisms)
- Communications Section
- DEXREL (on fundraising and reporting to donors)
- Executive Office (for DHC/HC's participation)
- OHCHR Regional and Country Offices, including UNCT's Senior Human Rights Advisers and UNCTs who host Senior Fellows

### ***External stakeholders include:***

- Former Fellows (both Indigenous and Minorities) and their organizations/communities
- Selected UN Independent Experts who regularly provide briefing sessions to the fellows, including members of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), Special Rapporteurs, and members of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies
- UN agencies (e.g. ILO, UNDP, FAO, UNITAR, WIPO, UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO, UNFCCC and UNHCR) and entities such the EU Delegation in Geneva and the Council of Europe
- Funding states (Norway and Russian Federation)
- States that participate in bilateral meetings with fellows and facilitate dialogue with other member states (including Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Kenya, Mexico, Thailand, South Africa, and Switzerland)
- Other donors (Ford Foundation from 2021)
- Partner Universities (Deusto University, Spain; Peoples Friendship University of Russia)
- Partner CSOs and NGOs based in Geneva (e.g. ISHR, IMADR, MRG International, UPR-Info, WCC, OMCT, ICJ, International Committee of the Red Cross, Frontline Defenders, and others)
- Local Swiss partners (e.g. Geneva International Welcome Center (CAGI) and the City Government of Carouge and the Swiss Federal authorities in Bern)

## **I.3 Evaluation Background**

This evaluation takes into consideration the Indigenous Fellowship Programme (IFP; in operation since 1997) and the Minority Fellowship Programme (MFP; since 2005), since their inception, with primary focus on the work, processes and progress towards results for the period of the last two OHCHR Management Plans, since 2014. Both of these programmes

have had internal impact assessments (IFP in 2006 and 2010, and the MFP in 2010). These assessments, which resulted in reforms of the programmes, were based on questionnaires completed by the former Fellows. The programmes have also been internally reviewed each year, based on feedback from the participating Fellows and observation, and adjustments have been made in response to this feedback. Neither programme had yet been submitted to an external review process, or to an in depth evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative data. The purpose of this evaluation therefore is to provide an independent report on the programmes, which is meant to serve several purposes. It will evaluate the impact of the programmes, according to the goals that OHCHR has defined for them. It will also identify things that are working well in both programmes, and areas where change is needed. It will also serve to aid in efforts to institutionalize and strengthen the programmes.

This evaluation takes both a summative and formative approach. It examines the results and impacts over the duration of the programmes and especially the past six years (2015-2019). It also provides recommendations to inform the future work of the IPMS (and possibly other OHCHR human rights training programmes). The success and impact of the adaptations to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (in particular the expansion of the Senior Fellowship Programmes and the Regional / National Fellowship Programmes) is not evaluated per se, as this aspect programme is just beginning and data is insufficient. However, the ability of the programmes to respond to this global crisis, the manner in which they responded, and the sustainability of this adaptation are addressed in this evaluation. Furthermore, Senior Fellows have provided important information and assistance (for example, with interpretation) throughout the evaluation.

The intended audience for this evaluation includes the internal and external stakeholders listed above, as well as potential supporters and any additional partners. The level of interest in the programmes on the part of stakeholders expressed during the evaluation has been very high.

The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Jennifer Hays, Professor in Anthropology at UiT – the Arctic University of Norway, in collaboration with IPMS, and with the support of the PPMES and the Reference group. Support with translation in French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic was organized by IPMS and provided by Senior fellows and former fellows.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation period began in September 2020. The original time assigned for the evaluation was four months, but this was extended to six months to provide more time for the extensive data collection and analysis (see *Methodology*, below).

***The general objectives of the evaluation, as outlined in the ToR, are:***

- **To identify areas of strength and areas of weakness** in the planning and achievement of results – including in the area of gender and human rights integration;
- **To produce useful lessons learned and good practices** that illustrate successful strategies and areas for improvement in the achievement of results;
- **To produce clear and actionable recommendations** identifying concrete actions and responsibilities for OHCHR to undertake towards these ends.

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<sup>3</sup> Translation was provided by: Manuel Lopez Delgado (Spanish); Antiné Sonde (French); Amri Sherzamonov (Russian); and Omer Al-Shariqi (Arabic)

**The evaluation questions have been outlined in the ToR, framed along the OECD/DAC criteria** (questions and related findings are detailed in section 2, below):

- **Relevance:** the extent to which the Fellowship Programmes are relevant to the mandate of OHCHR, its comparative advantage, and the needs of stakeholders (primarily rights-holders);
- **Efficiency:** the extent to which the Fellowship Programmes have economically converted resources into results in the course of its term;
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which planned results and objectives of the Fellowship Programmes have been achieved, at outcome and output levels;
- **Impact orientation:** the extent to which the strategic orientation of the Fellowship Programmes points toward making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable changes on the human rights issues relevant to Indigenous Peoples and Minorities;
- **Sustainability:** the degree to which the changes achieved last in time, and the sustainability of the programme itself within the OHCHR
- **Gender and human rights integration:** the degree to which a gender and human rights perspective has been integrated in the Fellowship Programmes, and the degree to which the results obtained have contributed to gender and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, with emphasis on women rights and disability inclusion.

#### **I.4 Theory of Change and Methodology**

*Empowerment through Human Rights Education (HRE) unleashes expectations in people and the confidence to act for social change leading to more just and equitable societies where everyone understands their common responsibility to make human rights a reality in each community and in society at large.*

OHCHR 2020, *Evaluating the impact of Human Rights Training*, p 18

#### **Theory of Change**

The UN Human Rights theory of change and results framework identifies two general targets in the overall strategy to ensure that human rights aims are achieved: *rights holders* (to claim their rights), and *duty-bearers* (to comply with human rights obligations) (UN 2017). As programmes with the aim of building the capacity and expertise of indigenous and minority community representatives, the IFP and MFP are focused almost entirely on the rights-holders (though an ultimate outcome would be increased action by the duty-bearers, see below). The approach of both of these programmes is one of Human Rights Education (HRE), with the primary emphasis on the empowerment of key individuals, through training designed to enable them to further enact social change within their own communities, societies, and nations. The ambitious aim of these Fellowship programmes requires bridging the sometimes enormous gap between international instruments and mechanisms designed at the global level and the very local challenges of some of the world's most marginalized, and in some cases most geographically remote, communities.

Measuring the impact of HRE is notoriously complex, for several reasons. Such programmes are designed to be a part of a long-term process, and to build upon the existing capacities and experiences of participating individuals, making it difficult to attribute specific changes to any one source. The ultimate outcome of HRE – sustainable social change – is influenced by numerous social, political, economic, environmental, and other structural factors. In the case

of both the IFP and MFP, these factors are largely determined by the nation and region from which participating members come. The extent to which social change can occur, and the necessary conditions for it, are highly dependent upon these contexts. The IFP and MFP focus on rights-holders; the extent to which they will be able to enact positive change depends also on duty-bearers (who are not a primary target of these programs) and on wider society. Furthermore, the existing capacities of the Fellows can vary enormously depending on access to education and resources within their countries. For all of these reasons, an evaluation of global programmes such as the IFP and MFP must take into account the need to simultaneously provide access to specific global instruments and mechanisms designed to be universal – but to do so for individuals coming from extremely different backgrounds and environments.

The Theory of Change utilized in this evaluation is the *Human Rights Education Results Chain*, a model of which is depicted for the Fellowship Programmes on page 8. The OHCHR guidance booklet provides a vivid image, likening the training activity itself to a rock tossed into a pond. The immediate outcome is the visible splash that occurs upon impact; the intermediate outcome is the ‘ripple effect’ as the initial learner transfers what they have gained from the training to others, and otherwise works towards human rights and affects their local and national environments; and the ultimate outcome is the ‘waves at the shoreline’ representing broader social change. While the splash from the initial impact is clearly attributable to the ‘output’, and the ripples observable to a certain point, their contributions to the strength of the ultimate waves are highly dependent upon the state of the water, into which other rocks are being thrown, and which is affected by broader environmental conditions. Likewise, while the immediate outcome of a training programme may be quite visible and measurable, and intermediate affects clearly attributable, the ultimate outcomes are affected by a complex and changing conditions. Nonetheless, it is possible to trace the effects of the initial output by carefully following some of these ‘ripples’ as they expand outwards, sometimes connecting with the motion of similar forces moving in the same direction.

This evaluation concentrates primarily upon the connections between the immediate ‘splash’ produced by the fellowship programmes (the output), and the ripples that continue to radiate after fellows return home (intermediate outcomes). The evaluation also sought indications that these have contributed towards the long-term ‘ultimate outcomes’. These are broadly defined as an overall increased empowerment of key stakeholders – indigenous peoples and minorities – and the improvement of their situation within their states, and an ultimate global outcome that IP and Minorities move towards self-determination at all levels. Where clear connections between these processes have been found, the evaluation identifies and highlights them.

### **Methodology**

The global pandemic has had an effect on both the methodology used in the evaluation, and also the focus. Instead of being conducted in person, all interviews were held electronically; the data gathering process is described below. In addition, instead of taking place during an ongoing process of holding annual training programmes, this evaluation took place in a moment of sudden forced adaptation. The programmes have been completely restructured – at least temporarily – to adapt to a new situation defined both by restrictions that prevent the programmes from being carried out as usual, and by a dramatically shifting global situation in which new threats demand new responses. This complicates both the summative and formative aspects of this report, and the evaluation has striven to present conclusions that reflect both the strong and consistent responses, and also the uncertainty of the future.

This evaluation uses the DAC evaluation criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability*, and will mainstream the Gender, Human Rights and Disability

# Outcome Model - OHCHR Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programmes

Based on the Human Rights Education Results Chain, OHCHR 2020

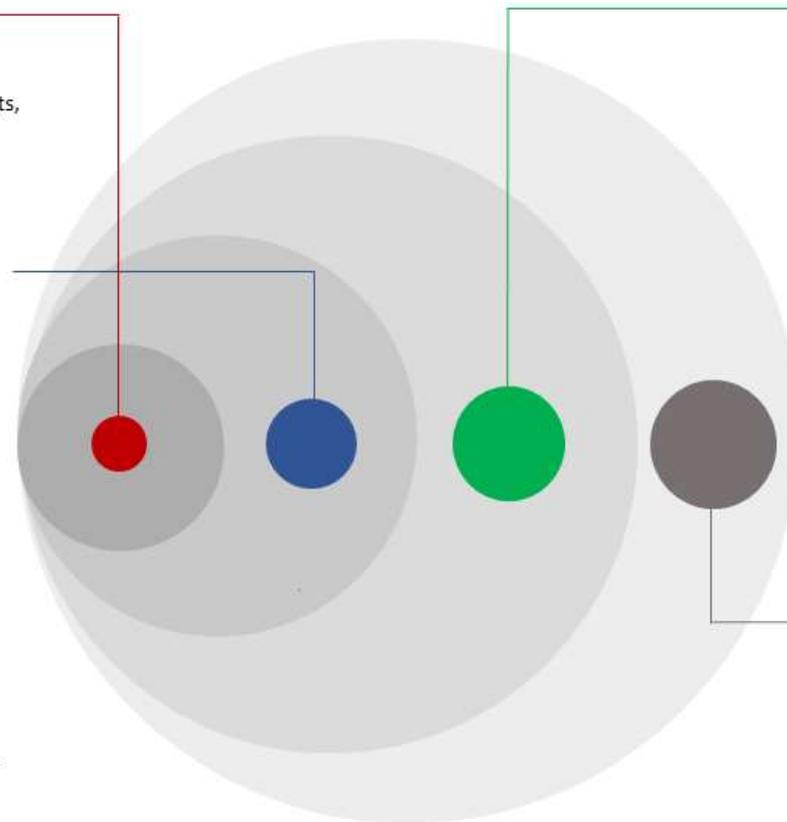
## OUTPUTS

IFP and MFP training sessions in Geneva  
Workshops, lectures, exercises, assignments, discussions, dialogues, institutional visits, networking, participation in UN forums, country reviews and other key meetings

## IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Fellows express and demonstrate:

- Increased understanding of the international human rights system and the tools available to them
- Increased capacity to apply this knowledge to their relationships with their states, and to address local cases
- Increased capacity, confidence, and motivation to take on leadership and other positions that will enact and promote positive change
- Increased awareness of the global dimensions of their situations and what they share with other groups
- Development of global networks with those working towards similar goals – including other Fellows, key individuals at OHCHR and other UN entities



## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Training sessions for community members and/or for wider society, including duty bearers
- Fellows placed in positions to promote and enact positive change
- Fellows involved in processes that lead to change in the direction of increased rights for indigenous peoples and minorities
- Increased awareness among indigenous peoples / minorities within the country about their rights
- Increased capacity within indigenous and minority communities to promote and enact positive change at local and societal levels
- Increased capacity within indigenous and minority communities to address rights violations at local, national, and international levels
- Perceivable increase in willingness by duty-bearers to support IP / minority rights

## ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

### Within States

- Increased empowerment of Indigenous and Minority communities to exercise their human rights
- Overall improvement of the Indigenous/minority rights situation within their States

### Globally

- Indigenous Peoples and Minorities everywhere move towards realization of their rights at all levels

inclusion (UNEG 2014). It has three main areas of focus. It evaluates the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the programmes, through identifying specific, identifiable outcomes following participation. A secondary focus is on the structure of the programmes themselves, including their location in Geneva, the design of the training modules, methods of evaluation, and the efficient use of resources. The logistics of arranging programmes such as these – which bring individuals from (often remote places) around the world, involve multiple sections of the OHCHR and the UN, and that collaborate closely with non-UN bodies (such as universities and NGOs) – are extremely complex, and this is also taken into consideration. Finally, the evaluation considers the broader context in which the programmes are operating, including funding and general global context and the constraints and opportunities that these create.

The Outcome Model on page 8 represents the Theory of Change described above, where the red circle represents the *outputs* of the programme, as listed in the model. The *immediate* outcomes of the programmes (the blue circle in the attached) are clearly documented by the internal reports following each training session, and in the profiles of, and reports by, former Fellows. It is clear from a review of these documents and from qualitative and quantitative data gathered in this evaluation that the immediate results of both the IFP and the MFP include dramatic increase in awareness, confidence, and capacity in the areas defined by the programmes, as listed in the attached model.

The main focus of this evaluation is on the interaction between this level and the *Intermediate* outcomes (the green circle in the attached), tracing the impacts in the years that followed the Fellows’ participation in the programmes to the present. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, gathered from interviews and an online survey, this report describes the extent to which the immediate outcomes of the programmes have created ‘ripple effects’ – individually, locally, and societally. Data collected include information about training sessions held at community and national levels; the positions in which the Fellows are currently employed or otherwise active; and the extent to which they are involved in identifiable processes of change (national dialogues, legal processes, introduction of policies, instruments ratified, etc.). The evaluation also collected information about increases in capacity and awareness, on the part of local communities, national governments, and civil society, in ways that promoted positive change and addressed human rights abuses.

It is important to note that the impact of the IFP and MFP cannot be fully measured by workshops held, court cases brought, policies created, or instruments ratified. One reason is that such outcomes are often the result of outputs and influencing factors from multiple sources; they are also not the main focus of the fellowship programmes. Furthermore, the overall global human rights situation is affected by numerous variables. In some areas, in some ways, the situation is worsening dramatically. In such circumstances, simply maintaining a focus on indigenous peoples and minorities is itself an achievement.

*The **intangible benefit** that the fellowship is providing is impossible to measure, sometimes it materializes two years later, not right away*  
(UN agency representative)

\*

*The most important impact may be keeping things as they are – not letting them get worse. The fact that indigenous peoples’ rights continue to work at all is a huge achievement.*  
(NGO representative).

The programmes were not evaluated by the extent to which they contributed to the *ultimate* outcomes (represented by the gray circle), as this is difficult to measure. However, the informed and effective participation of indigenous peoples and minorities in the processes that affect them is a crucial goal, and is a central indicator that is used. It was clear from the evaluation that such participation was fostered by the Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programmes, and that they created ripple effects that continue to spread outwards.

## ***Gender and disability***

A focus on gender and disability inclusion has been integrated throughout the evaluation, including ensuring a representative portion of women and differently abled people among the interviewees. The survey was very evenly split between men and women. There have been very few disabled participants in the programmes; one was interviewed and three answered the survey. Gender non-conforming participants have only recently become an area of focus and was not specifically addressed in the evaluation, although where it is relevant it is discussed.

In addition to ensuring representativeness in interviews, the evaluation also sought to determine the extent to which the programmes integrated gender and disability in terms of: representative inclusion among the Fellows; ensuring equal access to all activities regardless of disability and gender; creating an atmosphere of inclusion and tolerance; providing training regarding the relevant UN Mechanisms supporting gender and disability inclusion; and highlighting relevant sections of Mechanisms focused on Indigenous Peoples and Minority rights.

## ***Data sources and collection methods***

Data has been collected through document review, interviews, and an online survey. Relevant initial findings from interviews were followed up with other stakeholders in subsequent interviews and focus groups. Fundamental issues that surfaced relating to relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the programmes, as well as gender and disability inclusion, were also investigated in a survey. This process of triangulation has revealed a number of highly consistent themes regarding the programmes, which are presented in this report.

In addition, two previous drafts of this report have been submitted to the Reference Group, one halfway through the interview process and a second when the data collection process was mostly completed. Following the second report, the findings were presented three times: to the IPMS, to the Reference Group, and to a network of former fellows (see below). Written and oral feedback on these draft reports and presentations has provided invaluable clarification, information, and perspective on both programmes and their strengths and shortcomings; this has been an important source of information. The conclusions and recommendations of this report are the product of an independent evaluation and are based on data gathered from the following sources.

***Document review*** began during the Inception phase of the evaluation and has been ongoing, providing background, complementary and supplementary information. The documents reviewed are listed in Annex II, and cited in the report where relevant.

***Interviews*** were conducted in two phases: early November through mid-December (the first draft of the report, submitted 18 December, was based on this data), and early January through February. In the first phase a few individuals from key stakeholder groups were interviewed in order to obtain a general picture of the issues that were arising, and this initial data was used to elaborate the interview guides.

The interviews were conducted via Zoom, Skype, or in some cases phone calls, depending on the preference of the interviewee and internet connection. Early in the process Zoom was the main platform used, but Skype was used from mid-January for most interviews. A total of 100 individuals have been interviewed in 65 interviews, as individuals and focus groups. Interviewees were identified from a list provided by IPMS and include: Former Fellows and

Senior Fellows from 38 countries;<sup>4</sup> representatives of OHCHR Field Offices from six countries;<sup>5</sup> OHCHR staff in Geneva; five UN entities;<sup>6</sup> eleven representatives from UN Human Rights Mechanisms (some of whom were also former fellows); four States' Permanent Missions in Geneva; and partner organizations including universities (two) and civil-society and non-governmental organizations based in Geneva (ten). A breakdown of interviewee categories is included as Annex II, and interview questions are included as Annex III.

Most interviews were individual, and some were conducted in small groups of up to three interviewees. Interviews with English and French speakers were conducted in those languages. Interviews with Arabic-speaking fellows were also conducted in English or French. Interviews with the Russian fellows and partners were in English, but in some cases with the presence of an interpreter for assistance where necessary. Interviews in Spanish were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter (see footnote 3). Interviews with individuals lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. Group interviews were 1.5 to 2 hours long.

Overall, interviewees were easy to contact and willing to discuss, and highly forthcoming in interviews. Despite their busy schedules, almost all of those contacted, in all categories, expressed a strong interest in being interviewed. Focus groups were mainly with Former Fellows, Human Rights Officers and NGO representatives; all of these were characterized by pleasant camaraderie and forthcoming responses. Although there were some cases of difficult internet connections, but the vast majority of the interviews were smooth. Despite the limitations, online interviews have proven to be an acceptable and effective data collection method.

Interviews were not recorded with audio or video recording. The interviewer (Hays) typed the conversations during the interview, resulting in full transcripts of each meeting. Interviewees were informed of this method of recording. They were also informed that the data they were providing would be presented anonymously in the report. All identifying information has been removed from the illustrative quotes that are used in this report.

Qualitative data from the interviews with different stakeholders has provided narratives regarding the programmes, filling in the details from various perspectives. The survey data highlights some key points, supporting the narrative, and illustrating it with graphic representation. Triangulation of data from these different sources has provided strong results; there was striking consistency in the themes identified by key stakeholders regarding the programmes.

A **survey** was developed mid-way through the evaluation, based on the interview guide that had been developed for former fellows. Both the survey and the guide reflect the general evaluation questions and issues that came to the fore during the first phase of interviews. The survey was designed to gather quantitative data relating to the fellows themselves, their experience with the programmes, its relevance, and the impact of the programmes on their work and the situation in their countries. It was translated into French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. The questions are listed in English in Annex III.

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<sup>4</sup> Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi (3), Chad, Cambodia, DRC, Ecuador (2), French Guyana, Hungary, India, Iraq, Israel, Kenya (2), Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico (2), Moldova, Morocco, Nepal (3), New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russia (4), Rwanda, Syria, Tunisia, UK, USA, Ukraine, Yemen.

<sup>5</sup> Belgium (Europe Regional Office), Thailand (Southeast Asia Regional Office), Chile (South America Regional Office), and Colombia, Tunisia, and Uganda Country Offices.

<sup>6</sup> The ILO, WIPO, the FAO, UNCCC, and UNITAR

The survey was created on the platform Survey Monkey, and circulated among former fellows on each of the Fellowship Facebook pages, with posts in each language. It was also sent by email to all former fellows in both programmes, with a short introduction in each language. The survey itself and the introductions on Facebook or by email clearly stated in all languages that the survey is meant to be anonymous, and that they are not required to answer any questions that could compromise anonymity. The survey was closed on 8 March, and at that time 160 former fellows had participated. This represents 24% of all fellows that have participated in both programmes since their beginning. Among those that have participated in the fellowship programmes since 2014, the response rate was 34%. Female/male response ratio is 51/49, and the ratio of indigenous to minority respondents is 60/40. Not all of the respondents answered all questions; the number of respondents ranged between 128 and 160 for quantifiable questions, and 89-135 for open ended questions. Where quantitative survey data is cited, the percentages are calculated based on the number (n) that answered that particular question. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

This survey provides data regarding current activities of former Fellows, including their work, education, and human-rights focused activities, and the connection between these activities and the IFP or MFP. It provides data on the impact, relevance, and effectiveness of the programmes, and it also allows for the separation of data by programme, gender, year of participation, and other variables. The survey had straightforward questions and was designed to be answered easily on a phone. Most of the questions provide a scale of answers for respondents to choose from, generating a clear graphic representation. Four questions provide space for participants to identify an answer where providing all choices is not realistic (nation, identity, etc.). Four general questions are open-ended, and fourteen others provide additional space for open-ended answers; all eighteen of these questions generated a high number of responses. These open-ended answers have also been analyzed quantitatively on key points, as indicated in the report, and are a source of some illustrative quotes in this report. As with interviews, all survey quotes in this report have been anonymized.

In addition, I was added to the two existing Facebook community pages of the Fellowship Programmes for current and former fellows; the one for Indigenous Peoples (with 244 members) and one for Minorities (171 members). Through these pages I was able to have direct contact with former fellows, and I was specifically invited by the network of former Minority fellows to join an internal Global Consultation that they organized in March 2021. In this online meeting, I had the opportunity to present the initial findings of the Evaluation to former fellows themselves, and to validate the information I gathered from them. This feedback strongly confirmed the initial findings.

### ***Limitations of data collection***

As noted above, the pandemic situation has limited in some ways the type of data that could be collected. Had travel been possible, methods would have included participating directly in events attended by Fellows and other stakeholders – which would have provided the opportunity to observe and to engage in spontaneous conversations, and to hold more efficient interviews and focus group meetings. In online interviews it is somewhat more difficult to establish rapport and to read non-verbal cues. These disadvantages were offset by some advantageous factors. Conducting interviews online allows for many more people around the world to be interviewed than would have been possible otherwise, unless they had gathered for a meeting (which, though possible, would not have included several of the people interviewed). Because people are becoming accustomed to online meetings, this format no longer feels strange, and interviewees and interviewer both easily adapted to it.

Neither the interviews nor the survey data are based on random samples, and both could reflect selection bias. Efforts have been made to minimize this through triangulation of data.

The selection of interviewees was based on information provided by the IPMS. Many of the Former Fellows were specifically identified as those that had achieved important positions – in local or national political offices, within the UN system, or otherwise, and/or were otherwise doing important work on behalf of their communities. A good number of them were senior fellows. The selection of former fellows interviewed was representative of those that were particularly active, and that had been identified as suitable interviewees by the IPMS. It might therefore be expected that both satisfaction with the programmes themselves, and an estimation of the impact of the programmes would be higher than average among this group. The interviews do reveal a high level of satisfaction with the programmes, and a high estimation of their relevance and impact. At the same time, they also reveal clear and critical reflection upon the programmes and their limitations, and many former fellows volunteered suggestions for improvement.

The survey distribution was not selective; it was sent to all former fellows for whom current addresses were available, and was available on Facebook. Respondents are not necessarily statistically representative of all former fellows. It is possible that the high level of involvement in activities related to human rights reported in the survey, for example, partly reflects an increased likelihood of those involved in such activities to participate in the survey. However, two factors indicate that the survey results are representative of overall trends regarding the programmes, even if this data might skew somewhat towards high relevance and impact, and general positive views of the programmes.

First, the survey results were highly consistent from the early responses through to the final responses, indicating that the data patterns are generally consistent with the population measured. For questions regarding general impact and relevance of the programme, the survey results are also very consistent between the two fellowship groups, between male and female respondents, among language groups, and across the years. Secondly, the survey data correlates strongly with the data from interviews and focus groups, both with former fellows and with other stakeholders.

Throughout the entire research process, survey responses, individual stakeholder interviews, and focus group discussion have strongly supported the other data sets.

## **1.5 Analysis of data**

Clear patterns emerged in the data, relevant to both summative and formative analysis. Narratives from the interviews have been analyzed for themes and points of emphasis, and categorized and associated with the identified outcomes at the different levels. Quantitative survey data supports and illustrates the findings of interviews.

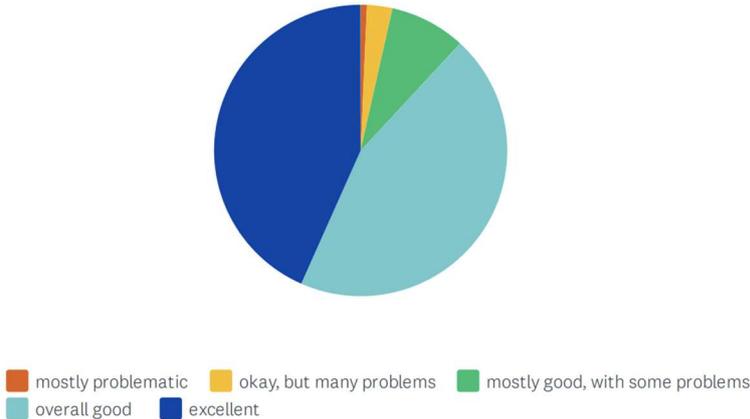
For example, the vast majority of responses were highly positive towards the programmes in general. A striking consistency regarding the importance of both programmes across all stakeholder groups became evident very early in the interview processes. The survey results support this general finding. This is illustrated by responses to question 7, which asked respondents to rate their experience with the programme they participated in. Out of 143 respondents, 88% chose the answers *overall good* or *excellent* (see Figure 1, and Annex V for other graph survey results cited in this report). A smaller number gave less strong responses: 8% said the programme was *good, with some problems* and 3% said *okay but many problems*. Even those with less enthusiastic responses ranked the relevance and impact of the programmes highly.

Some interview and survey responses contained criticism. Although in some cases quite strong, this was generally constructive and within an overall clear recognition of the importance of the programmes. Where these critiques formed patterns and appeared in both survey and interview, and especially when confirmed in focus groups and/or by other stakeholders, they are closely examined in this report.

**Figure I: Responses to survey question 7 (Quantitative survey data are in Annex V)**

Q7 How would you rate your experience with the Programme on the following scale?

Answered: 143 Skipped: 19



There were two survey responses with strong critiques, including the single respondent to question 7 that rated the programme (MFP) *mostly problematic*. These are outliers and do not represent a pattern of responses. However, where these rare strong criticisms, or other unique responses, point to potential problem areas, these are treated as ‘flags’ that programme managers should be alert to, and are noted in relevant sections of the report.

Specific suggestions for the programmes were provided by most interviewees, and in the open-ended survey questions. These suggestions were based on their informed perspectives as an individual participant in one of the programmes, or as a key stakeholder (in some cases interviewees were both). Suggestions were categorized and analyzed according to the frequency with which they were volunteered in open-ended questions, and the justifications and context provided in interviews, focus groups, and meetings. The nature of the experience and level of involvement of the individual making the suggestion (fellow, administrator, partner, etc.) were also taken into consideration. Final recommendations in this report are derived from this data, also with consideration for the financial situation of the programmes, their role within OHCHR and the UN, and global considerations.

*I cannot stress enough how important this programme is. To learn about these mechanisms – you can’t get that kind of training anywhere else. We need more opportunities for people to do these things, and to take the experiences back home. These are people that have worked hard with their communities on the ground and now they have access to global tools – it changes lives. That one person lights a spark and brings it to another – then you’ve got a bunch of stars. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

## 2. Main Findings

### Evaluation Criteria

#### i. RELEVANCE (R)

**RI: What has been the relevance of the Fellowship Programmes to the national human rights situations in the origin countries of the fellows and the needs of the relevant duty-bearers and right-holders?**

*Before I was a fellow, we were fighting for our rights, but we did not have a clear strategy. I did not understand EMRIP, the UNPFII, the Voluntary Fund or how to apply. In the programme, I learned to identify the mechanisms, laws, and places where we could make presentations, and I could transfer this information to my colleagues. The programme was very important for me, and for my community. (Male, IFP, Interview)*

The data collected during this evaluation strongly indicates that the Fellowship programmes have been highly relevant to all of the immediate stakeholders. In interviews, former fellows described a dramatically increased understanding of the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and ability to use them, greatly increased skills and competence, and greatly increased confidence in approaching government and other national and international stakeholders. The thematic areas covered in the programmes have been carefully designed and adapted over several years to meet the general needs of the target populations (indigenous and minority groups), and each year they are further tailored in order to be relevant to the specific incoming fellows, their organizations, and the situation in their origin countries. This clear relevance is underscored by the survey results: 90% of the respondents to this question (n=144) rated the programme as either *very relevant* or *extremely important* in relation to their interest and the situation in their countries; all the rest answered that it was *somewhat relevant*.

Importantly, not a single respondent chose the answer *not very relevant*. Likewise, not one single interviewee said that either of the programmes were unnecessary, redundant, or a waste of resources. Every interviewee said that the programmes should be continued, and most indicated that it should be strengthened wherever possible. This strong agreement regarding relevance is highlighted in quotes that appear in boxes throughout this report.

The programmes are also relevant to duty-bearers, including the OHCHR, other UN entities, governments and NGOs. During the training programmes, fellows learn how to present their cases in the formats, and using the language, required of specific forums (such as EMRIP, the UN Forum on Minority Issues, the Permanent Forum, the Human Rights Council and its UPR, and the Human Rights Treaty Bodies) or to be understood by their governments. This creates the possibility for dialogue with governments and other duty-bearers, and greatly facilitates efforts to support their causes, for UN, States' Permanent Missions, and other human rights mechanisms. In addition,

*This programme targets groups within societies that are often invisible. It is also beneficial to the UN; it brings in the reality of the people on the ground. (Director TESPRDD)*

\*

*I learned how to use the words of the UN, to speak like a lawyer. Indigenous peoples usually take the approach of a complaint, but we learned how to communicate in a different way, a smart way, so someone won't realize you are complaining. (Female, SF/IFP, Interview)*

\*

*Our participation in the programme wasn't only training for the fellows – they are experts, they gave me suggestions as well. The program is very highly regarded in international negotiations relevant to indigenous peoples (UN agency representative)*

the fellows bring a high level of expertise in their particular field to the UN, enhancing the knowledge and capacity of those who engage with them during the programmes.

The placement of the Senior Fellows in UN field offices has augmented the relevance of the fellowship programmes at the country and regional level, in keeping with the UNDESA definition of a fellowship as having *impact and relevance for all stakeholders involve* (see page v). Based on interviews with Senior Fellows and Field Officers, these placements increase the capacity of the field offices to address minority and indigenous peoples’ rights issues, has strengthened the connection between the offices and these communities, and has contributed to a diversity of perspectives in the field offices. The decision to make placements at such a large scale, and the arrangements, were made rapidly in response to a global crisis. With time to carefully plan placements and duties, in communication with field offices, these placements have great potential to strengthen the fellowship programmes, as well as country and regional programmes.

**R2: Have the strategies used to achieve the planned results of the Fellowship Programmes been adequate to the fellows and the context of their countries?**

*For me, knowing the United Nations system, living it, touching it, hearing it and smelling it was empowering... having experienced it not only strengthened my capacities, but also my spirit of defender of my culture and land. For that I am very grateful and my commitment to my people has grown stronger. (Woman, IFP, survey)*  
\*  
*I feel strongly that the programme needs to be done in Geneva – the physical fellowship period should not be replaced. (Male, MFP, Interview)*

A key aspect of the strategy employed by the Fellowship programmes involves bringing the fellows to Geneva. This element makes the programmes much more complex, but is integral to their functioning and success. Being there, at the UN offices, meeting people and visiting relevant UN offices provides understanding of what the standards and mechanisms offer that could not be gained any other way. The

UN system (referred to in interviews as a ‘beast’, an ‘octopus’ and a ‘labyrinth’) is enormously complex and being there physically is critical in order to comprehend the system itself, and to know how to make use of it to advance the claims of their communities.

Each of the fellowship programmes is timed to coincide with major events and processes addressing their stakeholder group: The UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) in June or July, and the UN Forum for Minority Issues, held in November. These meetings, which last for about a week, are scheduled during the last week of the fellowship programmes, and fellows are trained how to make interventions, and encouraged to use this space to do so. During the duration of the Fellowship, the Fellows also have the chance to observe the sessions of the Human Rights Council & its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process & the sessions of several UN Treaty Bodies (such as the CRC, CERD, CEDAW, and the HRC).

*During the programme I made a statement at EMRIP, where I talked about the problem of mining without Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). Following this presentation, I made a partnership with an NGO in Geneva who have a very large network at the international level. They helped me give a request to CERD... only 6 months after my training, I could send a letter demanding that FPIC be respected and the president intervened and stopped the mining company. This is very rare... My community had already made many requests, but this was the first time it was investigated. (Male, IFP 2018, Interview)*

The contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in Geneva is also an important aspect of both programmes. The experience and contacts that fellows make in these situations provides them with an understanding of the mechanisms that that are available, training in how to use them, and the confidence and support to do so. Sometimes these connections have clear results, as illustrated by the quote in the box above.

The length and format of both programmes have varied over the years. In the initial years the length was over several months with a limited number of participants, gradually decreasing to a number of weeks, with largely increased numbers of participants, thus offering training to a greater number of participants, but in a more condensed – and intense - format. This strategy has allowed for more fellows to be trained, ultimately benefitting a greater number of individuals, communities, and countries.

However, for those individuals that do not have a background in law, or who have had little or no experience with the UN system, this time period can be too short. This perspective was volunteered in interviews with former fellows early in the research process, and continued to be emphasized throughout stakeholder interviews, by both former fellows and others that contribute to the programmes in Geneva.

Based on the initial findings, a question was included in the survey regarding the length of the programmes. The majority, 54%, said that the programme they participated in was the right length, and 45% said it was too short (n=143). Only two respondents said it was too long (1.4%).

Question 12 of the survey asked the open-ended question, ‘how could the programme have been better?’ Almost a third of the respondents (29%, n=131) said that it should be longer. Suggestions range from at least a week longer, up to one year, with the majority suggesting a few weeks or a month of additional time. It is clear that somewhat longer programmes would better serve significant percentage of the participants.

The reasons provided in both interviews and in the survey for needing more time in their programme centered around several issues: 1) more time is needed to reflect upon and fully absorb all of the information that is being offered; 2) the intense schedule does not allow enough time to follow up on other important opportunities in Geneva including networking and discussing with permanent missions, NGOs, or other relevant stakeholders; 3) more time is needed bond and discuss with other fellows; 4) more practical experience is desirable; 5) the schedule is physically tiring; and 6) It takes time to adapt to the city; for many fellows is their first visit to Europe and they needed to learn how to navigate Geneva, and to simply experience it.

It is important to note that people from some regions, or in other disadvantaged categories, are more negatively affected by a short programme; this should be considered together with the issue of education, described on the following page.

*For me it was okay, but I thought the younger, less experienced ones were not getting too much from the content, time was short. Some of them come from a totally different background and could not catch everything. (Male MFP, Interview)*

\*

*Most IP from Africa come from rural areas, they don't have an academic background, they have not been to Europe, do not understand the language. They need more time to absorb all the information communicated to them. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

\*

*Although I was busy learning and in a beautiful place where the laws are respected, the time seemed perfect to me, in fact I felt desperate at the end of the program to return to my community to share what I learned. (Female, IFP, Survey)*

*One month for the programme is too short considering the volume of information we get, its intensity and diversity of the group... there is no time for reflections (Female, MFP, Survey)*

\*

*I feel that the time was too short to build a network, to give proper thought to the different institutions. Three months would have been much preferred. (Male, IFP, Survey)*

The pre-programmes at Deusto University in Bilbao, for Spanish speakers, and at the People's Friendship University in Moscow, for Russian speakers, provide theoretical background for Indigenous Fellows from these language groups prior to the programme in Geneva. This is an effective strategy that greatly prepares fellows for their time in Geneva (see also section Ef4 and Conclusion 6). For the MFP, the first preparatory training programme for the three linguistic groups (English, Russian and Arabic) was held in Strasbourg, France in 2019, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law at the University of Strasbourg and the Council of Europe. Although only implemented for one year, indications are that such preparatory training can also benefit the Minority Fellowship Programme.

The Senior Indigenous and Minority Fellowships have offered a limited number of former Fellows placement in Field Offices (since 2010) for several months each for on-the-job training. Starting in 2019, both Senior fellowships at HQ were timed to assist with the regular Fellowship programmes. In 2020, when the annual programmes were cancelled due to the pandemic, the Senior fellowship programme was expanded to allow for the placement of Senior fellows in field offices. Initial results indicate that this was an effective strategy, both in terms of re-purposing the funds, and also towards building the capacity of both fellows themselves and the field offices to address Indigenous peoples and Minority issues.

### **R3: How was the process of planning and selecting the strategies to achieve the intended results of the Fellowships programmes, including the selection of the fellows and the preparation of the training programmes?**

For each yearly cycle, the programmes start with the selection of fellows. In recent years, up to 1500 applicants apply for around 30-35 places in each programme, each year; a rate of up to 50 applicants per fellowship slot. A short list is first created within IPMS. At the individual level, criteria for selection include those who are working for or recommended by an organization, that have shown leadership skills and a desire to influence the political agenda, and are committed to using their experience to further train their communities and others in their country. Language is an important requirement for understanding the content of the programmes. There is no education requirement, however the majority of participants have a higher degree. Educational differences among groups and in different regions will also affect the amount of time needed to understand the 'language' of the UN and to be able to navigate the system.

Although prior experience can indicate commitment, the selection process also looks for those who have not had the opportunity to participate at the international level, in order to enhance capacity within groups that are underrepresented. Diversity within the selected group is an important consideration. Fellows are selected to allow for a balance in gender, and a geographical distribution of participants. For both Indigenous peoples and minorities, there has been an effort to get a diversity of groups from within regions and countries; each year countries that have not previously been included are prioritized in the selection process. From minorities, representativeness is sought according to the type of minority group they belong to: national, ethnic, religious or linguistic. In the call for applications, emphasis is placed upon gender balance, sexual and gender minorities, disability, and youth.

Spanish-speaking fellows for the IFP are selected in close cooperation with Deusto University, and those for the Russian in cooperation with the OHCHR Project Office in Moscow. The FOTCD geographic sections also participate in the selection process, and help with due diligence work on the ground. Former fellows are also used during the initial screening process, because they know the field; however, care is taken not to create a situation in which certain groups are over-represented in this process. Once the list of candidates has been narrowed, OHCHR colleagues in FOTCD, both in Geneva and in the field presences, are

consulted regarding the final selection. In some cases, members of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and EMRIP may also be consulted to verify the candidates. In both the survey and interviews, a small number of respondents indicated that the selection process is not sufficiently transparent; this should be considered as it could leave the office open to criticism. However, the evaluation did not find problems with the selection process.

The content of each programme is re-evaluated each year, based upon the evaluations of the previous year, and finalized in discussion with incoming fellows and their organizations, as well as university partners. Each year a pre-training needs assessment survey is sent to candidates to determine their educational background, professional experience, affiliations, and their previous experience with UN meetings; candidates also rank their individual and organizational training needs. This information is then confirmed in group calls among the different linguistic groups.

Once the specific needs are established, partner stakeholders are contacted and invited to join the programme. This process is usually conducted 3-4 months before the start date. The draft agenda for the programme is sent to the Methodology, Education and Training Section (METS), and the methodology is discussed with them. The training agenda is also shared with former fellows who provide feedback in light of their own experiences in the programme.

**R4: Were the relevant stakeholders, strategies and policy frameworks at the international and national levels consulted during the planning process of the Fellowship Programmes?**

The programmes are guided by international policy frameworks and strategies. The most relevant stakeholders at the UN level are involved in each programme, and are in regular communication with the relevant persons at IPMS regarding programme content

OHCHR Regional and Country Offices are included in the planning process. For the regular fellowship, around a month before the start of their programme, fellows are introduced to relevant country offices, are asked to give the incoming fellows an introductory overview of the UN system. Colleagues from some offices have been very active, and have organized training on indigenous or minority issues at the country level. The level of engagement varies across the offices

For the Senior Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship that started in 2020, the Field Offices were included in the processes of identifying fellows with expertise that was relevant to their country needs and political situation, and played an important role in determining their role within the office. Some offices reported working closely with IPMS; others said that they were not very involved with the decision-making processes around the new Senior Fellowships. The inconsistency and in some cases gap in communication relates to the fact that the changes were being implemented in responses to a crisis, and they are not seen by this evaluation as representative of an ongoing pattern.

ii. EFFECTIVENESS (E)

EI: What evidence of positive results obtained by the Fellowships Programmes can be found? To what extent were planned results actually achieved?

*When I went back to my community, I felt a sense of responsibility to advance what we had done. I shared the mechanisms that we can use in our strategy at the local, national and international level – all the reporting that we can use. I was approached by the National Human Rights Institute, they wanted me to sit on the national level foreign policy consulting panel. There are only 15 members, and I am the only indigenous person. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme made me visible. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

There is extensive evidence that the positive results the Fellowship Programmes are aiming for are being achieved, despite operating on minimal resources, and in a global context where many factors are working against the aims that the programmes. As described in the Theory of Change section, these results are divided into immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes. Positive results at the immediate level are evidenced in the documentation of earlier evaluations of each programme, and in the profiles of former fellows, who clearly describe the positive impact of their participation in the IFP or MFP (OHCHR 2017b). These immediate results, which correspond to the outcomes described in the chart, were also found in this evaluation, and are listed below.

This evaluation focused also on the *intermediate* effects – the ways in which these immediate results translate into long lasting effects for individuals and positive change for indigenous and minority communities. Evidence for these changes comes from interviews with former fellows in which they describe the effect of their participation in the MFP or IFP on the current positions they hold and activities they are involved in, and specific stories that link their actions or position with events or social changes. Evidence also comes from observations by other stakeholders that participate in the EMRIP, the Forum on Minority Issues, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the HRC and UPR process, and human rights treaty bodies. They describe a noticeable ability of former Fellows to express themselves in a way that respects the formalities of the context and allows for their voices to be heard.

*The fellows are the biggest assets that we have. We can see the difference, they know how to engage, how to make points without disturbing the smooth running of the session. The fellows do not use inappropriate language, they will use terminology in line with the UN. It is important that the representatives know how to make their statement, to make their voices heard. (Stakeholder Permanent Mission in Geneva)*

\*

*In Geneva, we learned how to negotiate with our governments, to lobby, to claim our rights. I used the methods I learned to make land claims. My community did not have cultivatable land and we started a campaign to claim our right to land. I had dreamed of doing this, but without knowing how. In Geneva I learned how to approach my government. (Male, IFP, Interview)*

The evaluation has found evidence for the following positive results.

**Individual fellows:** Fellows acquired or increased understanding of the international HR system in general, and of the particular tools available to them, and capacity to apply this knowledge to their relationships with their States. They also acquired or increased understanding of how to address States and international bodies, and the language to use to express complaints. Because of this, they often gained respect from their governments and other organizations. They demonstrated an increased capacity, confidence, and motivation to take on leadership and other positions that will enact and promote positive change; this also often increased access to jobs and other opportunities related to human rights work.

Fellows described an increased interest in minority or indigenous peoples’ rights issues, and a desire to learn more (often through further study), along with an increased awareness of the global dimensions of their situations and what they share with other groups. In many cases, this facilitated the creation of global networks with those working towards similar goals – including other Fellows, key individuals at OHCHR and other UN bodies. This often led to increased recognition of, and respect for, them as individuals and of their communities.

... it helped me with confidence in my efforts dealing with our Customary land tenure, and ensuring amendments to the constitution that cater for indigenous peoples’ security, traditional governance, sustainability and participation. (Male, IFP, Survey)

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The life-changing element was that it gave me the importance that I did not feel before. The fact that you can go to a meeting say what you think, to give a report and to be responded to politely. It made me realize how important the program is. (Female, MFP, Interview)

One month earlier I had heard that there were no indigenous peoples in that country; because of [the fellow’s] advocacy there were recommendations in the UPR (NGO representative)

\*

The communication I learned has been a very important tool. I have initiated actions that generate social changes, and training in different communities about our rights and the mechanisms. Large mega-projects have been canceled for now, thanks to the information the presenters shared with us. (Male, IFP, Survey)

**For communities:** In some countries, the participation of fellows from previously unrecognized groups has resulted in recognition by the government. One particular case was noted by NGO workers, Human Rights Officers, and the involved fellow, in which a formerly resistant state recognized the existence of Indigenous Peoples following the advocacy by a Fellow from that country, ahead of the UPR process.

In some cases, the familiarity with the mechanisms that participants gained in Geneva has led to successful challenges of illegal activities on their territory (see the quote on page 16, and box to the left). Training by former indigenous fellows has led to increased awareness within the community of their rights as indigenous peoples; in some cases, recognition of themselves as indigenous peoples

**For countries:** Many former fellows are making use of international mechanisms, submitting reports to relevant human rights treaty bodies and to the UPR, and drafting policy with in their countries that correspond with international mechanisms. Over 65% of survey respondents indicated that they are using international mechanisms promoting indigenous or minority rights. In some countries, increased awareness of indigenous and minority rights issues by governments is directly linked to Fellows and their participation, as illustrated by quotes throughout this report.

I have sent messages to the Special Rapporteurs on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and on Minority Issues on several occasions. To date, 12 cases have been registered on my behalf and two individual complaints in the Human Rights Committee have been considered, and decisions have been made on them. (Male, MFP, Survey)

Senior Fellows are more attuned to some of the realities we ought to be looking at, and that are even more critical in the Covid Crisis. (OHCHR Country Office)

Placement of Senior Fellows within country or regional offices that have little experience and expertise with indigenous or minority issues has led to an increased awareness and activities of these issues in country offices, and in some cases, increased capacity to address them.

## **E2: Where positive results of the Fellowships Programmes were found, what were the enabling factors and processes? What lessons have been learned?**

### **Enabling factors include:**

**Being able to visit offices and meet relevant people.** This includes the participation of key stakeholders in both programmes, and the opportunity to learn about and network with different UN entities, NGOs, and government offices in Geneva.

**Active participation** of fellows in mechanisms such as the EMRIP, Forum on Minority Issues, UPR process, and treaty bodies is also central.

**Being a part of a global group** sharing similar concerns is also a key factor leading to greater awareness and recognition of local specificities and global patterns.

**Regional courses** – for Russian and Spanish speakers, participation in the University pre-courses also facilitated the sense of indigenous identity, and prepared Fellows for the Geneva part of the course.

**Programme leadership** – including the responsiveness of the programmes to feedback from the fellows, as well as to changes in external situations (for example sudden shifts in funding, and the global pandemic), and committed and enthusiastic programme management.

### **Lessons learned re: enabling factors include:**

**The current structure of the programmes** is central to the achievement of the results. This includes bringing together indigenous and minority activists from around the world to Geneva, and putting them in direct contact with other relevant stakeholders, and UN mechanisms.

**The content of the programmes** in Geneva, with a focus on both theoretical and practical aspects of utilization of UN mechanisms, training, and contact with NGOs and permanence missions provided invaluable information, skills, competences, and perspective for the fellows.

**Participation in relevant UN mechanisms** provides important concrete experience, increases confidence, and leads to ongoing participation in national and global forums, and in some cases to identifiable results.

**Preparatory courses** with an academic focus on the theoretical basis of international law and human rights, indigenous peoples/minority rights, and connecting UN mechanisms with regional or national legislation, policy, and mechanisms relevant to the particular language group (i.e. Russian Federation for the Russian speakers; Latin American region for the Spanish speakers) was extremely valuable for those that had the opportunity.

## **E3: What prevented the Fellowships Programmes from achieving results? What lessons can be drawn from this?**

This evaluation has found that the Fellowship Programmes have achieved very positive results that would not otherwise have been possible. There are some things that have limited the efficiency of the programmes, and as consequence the results, these are discussed in *Efficiency*, below. This section focuses on larger barriers to the achievement of results. These are outside of direct control of the OHCHR, but within the scope of issues that the programmes are addressing, and crucial to consider, both as an important context, and because they signal the great need for the programmes themselves.

## **Global pandemic**

The current situation makes it impossible to convene the fellowships in Geneva, and obviously greatly interferes with the programmes. The Covid-19 pandemic has furthermore increased the vulnerability of the target groups, and made it more difficult for the former fellows and their organizations to operate effectively. The long-term impact of this pandemic on indigenous peoples and minorities is still unknown, but it will continue to resonate, and calls for greater attention to these groups.

*After Covid, there will be a fight for who gets to have their say – Indigenous peoples are already at the bottom. What happens to us? How do we make sure our voices keep getting heard when things go back to 'normal'? We need to make sure the Fellowship programmes are not overlooked. The next few years are crucial. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

## **Political, social, and economic contexts in home countries**

The evaluation revealed several important limiting and interfering factors connected to the nature of human rights violations experienced by the fellows. These cannot be directly addressed by the programmes, but they do relate to the ultimate outcomes the programmes are aiming for and that the fellows are being trained to address in various ways.

Repressive practices by some governments, non-recognition, local and national conflicts, mass migration, and generally unstable situations are a reality in many parts of the world. Such conditions limit work and advocacy possibilities in home countries, and can limit avenues for addressing the situation at the UN. Repressive social contexts also limit possibilities at home. For example, indigenous and minority women may be greatly empowered by their experience at the UN, but their efforts to act are undermined by gender restrictions in their home country and/or culture. Worsening economic conditions exacerbate political and social problems, increase the likelihood of incursions and exploitation, and generally affect indigenous and minority groups worse than others. Finally, in some countries, non-state actors, including drug cartels and extractive industries, violate indigenous peoples and minorities' rights. These actors are often supported either explicitly or tacitly by states, and are often outside the reach of human rights mechanisms.

*My community is extremely traditional, as a woman I cannot have a big influence on the decisions made by our leaders... I am the only active woman in my community. I am looking for alternative ways of implementing local projects related to women. Mostly, I have to keep this work anonymous. (Female, MFP, Survey)*

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*It is complicated now for nomadic communities, because of terrorism. (Male, IFP, Interview)*

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*I cannot do all of the work that I was doing, because of drug smuggling and traffickers, it puts me in danger. I cannot move free in my own land right now like I used to. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

These factors are largely out of the control of the programmes themselves, but it is important to do whatever possible to mitigate them. There are examples of cases in which participation in the programmes has led to successful action addressing serious political and social issues (see section E1). The evaluation found that all those responsible for the programmes were keenly aware of these external factors and seeking to find the most effective methods to address them. These require ongoing discussion around strategic solutions.

## **Reprisals**

A specific and highly problematic expression of the factors noted above is reprisals, experienced by some of the fellows because of their association with the UN or participation in activities directly related to their fellowship period or training. These range from mild harassment to the murder of family members. A total of 13 individuals indicated on the survey that they had experienced either *serious (affecting work and/or living situation)* or *extremely serious (including threats or harm to the fellow, their family, or others)* reprisals as a result of their

participation in one of the fellowship programmes – this is 10% of the 132 who responded to the question. A further 26 (20%) said they experienced some reprisals but it was manageable. There have been cases where, after making a statement, fellows received death threats or threats to their family. In extreme cases they could not go back to their home country and had to request asylum status

Of those that reported serious reprisals, ten had participated within the last six years. Ten of the 13 were from Indigenous communities. This matches other data indicating that reprisals for participating in UN programmes are increasing, and that indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable.

These figures do not tell the whole story. Some survey respondents who answered that they had experienced no reprisals (70%) nonetheless stated in the comments that their actions were severely curtailed in order not to draw the attention of the authorities. Others said that their whole communities experience reprisals and other violence directly related to their activism on a regular basis. It is important to note that the reprisals may not be due only – or primarily – to participation in the IFP or MFP; other activities or actions may also be a reason. Nonetheless, a 10% rate of serious reprisals is a major concern.

*I have just completed a big report about human rights in my country – but it cannot be launched. If I did that, I would be taken out within hours. It is important to implement what you learn, but the context prevents it. (Male, MFP, Interview)*

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*I was very careful in the speech that I made in the UN Minority Forum – I knew I could face reprisals if I said the wrong thing. I told others too – make sure to say things based on data. (Female, MFP, Interview)*

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*Because I did not go back to my country, I did not face reprisal. But I would have been questioned and detained. I cannot make a statement. (Male, MFP, Interview)*

\*

*I have not received direct reprisals, but the retaliation has been against my people – murder and political persecution of leaders, imprisonment of traditional authorities, land dispossession... (Male, IFP, Survey)*

*I was tortured and lost both of my kidneys (Man, MFP, Survey)*

\*

*I received death threats by mail with my photo on national newspaper clippings (Male, IFP, Survey)*

\*

*I had to stop denouncing the constant and systematic violations of the human rights of my people and I cannot travel out of my municipality. (Woman, IFP, survey)*

\*

*I was wanted by the national intelligence service following my participation in a UN human rights treaty body meeting. (Man, IFP, survey)*

This evaluation found that involved parties, in particular at IPMS, are acutely aware of the sharp increase in reports of reprisals against former Fellows. The Section is taking preventative measures, and acting as swiftly as possible in response to urgent threats; this has occupied significant working time for the Coordinator and the Chief of Section. Various other Sections of OHCHR have been following closely each single case of reprisal, and have provided necessary support to concerned fellows or former fellows. In acute instances, the Chief of Section seeks solutions at his, or higher, levels; in some instances the Chief of Branch and the Director of the Division. Other involved parties include dedicated staff in the Civic Space Section, and the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, particularly in cases requiring emergency mode.

Further analysis of the response of the OHCHR and other UN agencies to reprisals is outside the scope of this report. However, this evaluation emphasizes two important points regarding the increase in reprisals, along with general violence, against indigenous peoples and minorities, both of which are relevant to results.

First, reprisals clearly limit results of the fellowship programmes, and in some places largely prevent their achievement (along with general violence towards minorities and indigenous peoples).

Second, it is this very situation that highlights their enormous importance on a global scale. Increasing reprisals and violations call for heightened efforts to address them, at all levels, which in turn calls for increasing resources dedicated to these efforts.

The issue of reprisals should be understood as a reason to strengthen the programmes and improve risk management. Unfortunately, as described below, the fellowship programmes are constrained by financial vulnerability.

**Financial constraints:**

The IFP and MFP are operating on a limited budget and are vulnerable to factors such as changes in individual donor countries' priorities and global economic trends that can lead to reduction in the budget of the programmes. A lack of consistent funding for some central elements of the programmes also interferes with their functioning. A lack of funding is the reason for having only one Fellowship coordinator, instead of one for each of the two programmes; problems associated with this are described in section E1 below. Insufficient funding for adequate interpretation, and for carrying out the preparatory training courses for every linguistic component, are further examples of ways that financial constraints limit the effectiveness of the programmes.

On a larger scale, the limited budget decreases the scope and flexibility of the programmes, making it difficult or impossible to address the issues related to efficiency (described below) and also limiting the ability to deal with the factors highlighted above.

**Lessons Learned – factors that prevented results from being achieved:**

An overarching lesson learned is that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of this type of programme by simply looking for improvement in the overall situation – great advancements in some areas are offset by limits in others. This is illustrated by responses to question 28 of the survey, which asked former fellows to indicate on a sliding scale in which direction the level of recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples or Minorities moving in their country – getting better, getting worse, or staying the same; the scale went to 5 in each direction. The cumulative result showed that the situation was getting slightly worse overall; answers averaged out to negative .5 (n=127). About two thirds of respondents answered that things were either staying the same (34%) or getting better (30%). The remaining 36% said that it was getting worse – with more than half of these answers towards the far end of that scale (20% answered with negative 4 or 5).

This is a very imperfect measure of the totality of the indigenous peoples and minority right situation globally. What it illustrates, however, is that the measure for identifying the effectiveness of the programmes greatly depends upon country and region. There is certainly improvement in many places, and as described in section E2, the Fellowship programmes have contributed – and continue to contribute – to this improvement, or perhaps to a holding of the line. In many places, however, there is a significant decline in the human rights situation for minorities and indigenous peoples in many parts of the world. This highlights the great importance of, and need for, the Fellowship programmes. Specific lessons learned include:

**Counterforces outside the reach of the programmes greatly limit effectiveness:**

There are important forces that work against achieving the results of the programmes, as identified above. In such cases, it is critical to consider the role of the IFP and MFP in finding more effective ways to address these challenges.

**Reprisals:** In some ways, participation in one of the programmes increases people's visibility in ways that might make them more vulnerable to mild or severe reprisals. At the same time,

however, it gives them the skills needed to more effectively challenge their governments in a constructive, and non-violent way (see quote box below).

**Vulnerability of target group:** The same factors that prevented the achievement of results also clearly illustrate the vulnerability of the people that the programmes is designed to address, and the critical importance of these programmes that are empowering them.

*Participation in the MFP raised my reputation. Anytime there was something regarding human rights, I would be contacted. But in my country 'human rights' has an association with being a spy and having an agenda against the state. So, the fellowship affected my employment opportunities. I work in public institutions, and twice I had a direct reply that as an activist I cannot be a part of that institution, or that if I want a job I should become silent. (Female, MFP, Interview)*

\*

*Due to my participation as a UN endorsed fellow, I am a recognized human rights defender and even though this has affected my lifestyle, my constant "name and shame" threat has worked so far. (Man, MFP, survey)*

\*

*We do not have enough minority and indigenous rights advocates. Even though minority and indigenous rights are at the heart of the most serious human rights violations taking place in the world, this is not receiving the attention it deserves. It is uncomfortable, unpopular – but we NEED minority and indigenous rights advocates, to make sure the issues are raised, to put pressure on governments, to make sure they engage actively on these issues in the UN. This is the bigger objective the programmes pursue – creating more advocates. It is very important. (Stakeholder PM)*

**iii. EFFICIENCY**

**EfI: How efficiently have the Fellowship Programmes been in using the human, financial and intellectual resources at their disposal to achieve targeted outcomes? To what degree do the results achieved justify the resources invested in them?**

This evaluation finds that the Fellowship programmes have used the available human, financial and intellectual resources efficiently in very many ways. However, the lack of sufficient human resources dedicated to the programmes has also undermined this efficiency, creating unnecessary strain and interfering with the smooth running of the programmes, as well as creating an area of high vulnerability for the programme.

**Efficient use of resources:**

*Human:* The programmes have minimal dedicated staff; this is efficient in a limited sense, but not in the long term (see *Problem areas*) below. There is one Coordinator for both Programmes (who is also running the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples). The evaluation found that the current Coordinator brings a high level of competence, commitment, energy and experience to the position. The IPMS Chief of Section provides strong support, spending approximately 20-25% of his time managing the Fellowship Programmes. Since 2019, the Coordinator and the Chief of Section have taken advantage of the Senior Fellowship based at HQ Geneva, and engaged Senior Fellows to help with the running of the annual programme; the evaluation found that this strengthened all of the Fellowship programmes. In addition, in the context of the redesigned 2020 Senior Fellowship Programme, three additional IPMS staff members also support the programmes at 20-25% of their working time (formally included in their respective work plans) providing each support and supervision to a group among the 35 Senior fellows in the field. The support provided by Senior Fellows at HQ level is efficient; but also requires extra supervision responsibilities – see *problem areas*, below.

*Financial:* In addition to the salary of the Coordinator, fundamental expenses for the programmes are for travel, accommodation, and stipends for the Fellows. The actual running

of the programmes is efficient financially. Implementing staff at IPMS minimizes expenses, and they receive partial support for transportation and accommodation from partners. The stipends fall within the low range of acceptable allowances, in order to accommodate as many as possible. This is efficient – but could create other problems as Geneva is an expensive city to live in. OHCHR Administration is currently looking into this issue in connection with standardization of the fellowship programmes within all OHCHR Fellowship programmes. Requirements to pay higher stipends could result in lower numbers of fellows. Given concerns about the length of each programme, some alternative arrangements could be more cost effective; possibilities and related considerations are outlined in the recommendations.

*Intellectual:* The Fellowship Programmes in Geneva draw upon the rich intellectual resources housed at various UN offices, UN Human Rights Mechanisms, civil society organizations, States delegates and other human rights stakeholders in Geneva. The volume of relevant experts based in this city allow for a very high level of knowledge, skill, and experience to be communicated to the Fellows. This also increases the financial efficiency of the programmes, relying on in-house contributions during running of the programmes in Geneva.

*Partnerships:* The partnerships with Deusto University and The People’s Friendship University add human, financial and intellectual value to the programmes. Some of the travel coordination is done by the Universities; Russian funding to the fellowship programmes helps cover the travel costs of fellows, and funding from the Basque government to Deusto University indirectly supports travel costs of the Spanish speaking fellows. Furthermore, the intellectual resources at these Universities are drawn upon in a way that complements the programmes. CAGI also subsidizes a significant portion of the budget for accommodation (see section S4)

#### **Problem areas:**

*Human Resources:* As noted above, there is only one permanent staff member currently coordinating both Fellowship Programmes, as well as the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples. This position is currently only at a level P3 position within the OHCHR, and was only recently “regularized” as fixed-term staff after several years as a temporary staff member. The demands of coordinating both the content and much of the logistics of the three programmes is clearly too much for one staff member. There are two administrative assistants at PSMS, but one of these positions is currently open, resulting in a current lack of support. Although this is temporary and more administrative support will certainly help, this does not solve the overarching human resource problem.

To illustrate the human resources required, in 2019 the Indigenous Fellowship Programme alone received over 1500 applications, in various languages. Processing all of these, (including vetting, short-listing and interviewing candidates and doing background checks) is extremely time consuming, and represents only a fragment of one of the programmes. In addition, it is the Coordinator that troubleshoots problems, whether these are immediate and relate to the running of a programme in process, or to larger and longer-term issues, including in some cases difficult situations that former fellows find themselves in (see section on *reprisals* above). When solutions to problems become difficult, the Chief of Section will step in. Although the Coordinator and Chief of Section have found creative solutions in engaging Senior Fellows for support, these are temporary positions and thus require a lot of mentoring and training, in some cases adding to the Coordinator’s workload.

A lack of adequate dedicated staff compromises the programmes for several reasons: 1) there is little back-up support in the case of immediately urgent situation; 2) in some cases the programmes cannot run as smoothly as they would if the Coordinator was not responsible for so many aspects; 3) there is little opportunity for sharing of specific programme knowledge

and history, making the programmes overly dependent upon one person. This is a major point of weakness, and in the long term is not an efficient use of resources.

*Interpretation:* Both of the programmes are multilingual and require simultaneous interpretation for presentations made jointly to all fellows. This is a large expense and has been reduced in order to save funds. Alternatives have been tried, such as dividing the Fellows into language groups for some meetings, so that they can receive presentations by native speakers, and of informal translation; however, these solutions both have serious drawbacks. Lack of adequate funds for interpretation decreases the efficiency of both programmes.

*This is the only programme with different languages – it is really fantastic; it is a strength. We always have a challenge with interpretation at OHCHR – we don't have the resources. It is expensive, but we should preserve it. (Human Rights Officer)*

### **Achievement of Results**

This evaluation finds that the programmes have made efficient use of funding, human resources, intellectual and other resources available in Geneva, and partnerships. However, a lack of available human resources, and adequate funding for specific elements of the programmes, in particular translation, have compromised the long-term efficiency of the programmes. As described in section E3 above, and elsewhere in this report, the programmes have achieved very positive results, despite interfering factors beyond their control, and a limited budget. Given this, the evaluation finds that the results not only justify the resources invested in them, but call for greater investment. These issues are further discussed in the conclusions and recommendations.

#### **Ef2: Have the organizational arrangements used in the management and implementation of the Fellowship Programmes been adequate to the priorities, needs and context of the fellows and their countries?**

The evaluation does not find specific problems with the hierarchy of management or other organizational arrangements. Neither has the evaluation found thus far problems with any specific individuals or offices that are involved in the Coordination of the programmes; to the contrary, interviewees from various OHCHR offices consistently expressed a high level of commitment to these programmes. However the structure in which the basic management and implementation of both programmes is the responsibility for only one person is unstable and creates problems in the short term, and potentially in the long term.

#### **Ef3: How has been the communication and coordination among the Fellowships Programmes and other units within OHCHR in terms of programmatic, financial and administrative issues?**

The Director of TESPRDD and the Chief of RLDB expressed strong support for the programmes, awareness of the serious issues they are addressing, and good communication. Communication with Administration around the Senior Fellowships was lacking, and also with some of the field offices; as noted above this was a result of the fact that the combining and expansion of these programmes was a sudden decision in response to an emergency situation, with little time for approval or implementation. Interviews with several Human Rights Officers indicated that there is close communication with them in general, and in particular with specific individuals that provide substantive input to the programmes.

#### **Ef4: What have been the roles of duty bearers, national stakeholders, partners organizations and other UN agencies in the achievement of results? What has been the strategy and methodology used to work together, communicate and disseminate results among them?**

The programmes draw upon several national stakeholders, partner organizations and other UN mechanisms and other entities for both logistic and substantive support. This section is based primarily on interviews with these stakeholders and IPMS, and describes their roles. Several of these stakeholders also contribute financially; this aspect is described in the background section. There is no regular report made to stakeholders about the programmes, communication with them has primarily focused on their particular contribution.

### **National stakeholders:**

*Norway* provides support for the Religious Minorities Fellowship Programme which includes an Arabic language speaking dimension. This had been a previous component of the Minorities Fellowship Programme but was discontinued in 2015. Norway began funding the reintroduction of this part of the programme in 2018 in the interest of supporting human rights for religious minorities.

*Russia* provides support for the Russian speaking components of the programme.

*Switzerland* hosts and organizes the institutional visit of both the Indigenous and Minority Fellows to the Swiss Confederation in Bern and provides subsidy to the accommodation and local transport of the Fellows through CAGI, which is a Swiss government entity.

Diplomats from the Permanent Missions of these and several other national stakeholders regularly provide briefings to the fellows during their stay in Geneva. These include:

*Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Kenya, Mexico, Thailand, South Africa, and Switzerland*

### **Partner Organizations:**

*Deusto University:* Spanish-speaking Fellows go to Bilbao for 2 months before the IFP to participate in the *Programa de Formación en derechos Humanos Para Líderes Indígenas de América Latina* (PFDHPI-AL). This cooperation began in 2000; it is primarily academic and theoretical, and was designed as a complement to the IFP. The Human Rights Centre at Deusto also has a strong connection with NGOs and CSOs in the Basque Country, and Spanish-speaking fellows have conferences and institutional visits with these and with the Basque Government during their time in Bilbao. Deusto Partners cooperate with the Indigenous Fellows Coordinator to select the fellows, and coordinate the logistics of the participation in communication with each other.

*Peoples Friendship University of Russia:* Russian Indigenous Fellows attend a theoretical academic programme here before traveling to Geneva to begin the Fellowship. The University training programme for indigenous peoples started in 2008 in partnership with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). The OHCHR country office in Moscow collaborates with the office in Geneva to select the fellows and OHCHR HQ has a contractual arrangement with the University.

*The Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale (CAGI):* the Geneva Welcome Centre is an important local partner in Geneva. They subsidize a significant portion of the fellows' accommodation and local transport in Geneva. They also provide practical information to the fellows about getting around in the city and links the Programmes with the Swiss Permanent Mission to the UN, who facilitates the fellows' regular study visit in the Swiss Federal Government in Bern. This is a very effective and important partnership, that greatly enhances the capacity of the Fellowship programmes – although recently available support has fluctuated (see also section S4). The CAGI representative also indicated that their capacity is greatly enhanced through the fellowship programmes.

### **United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms:**

Participation in annual sessions of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) for Indigenous Fellows and the UN Forum on Minority Issues for the Minority Fellows is a very important part of both programmes.

The UN *Special Rapporteurs* for Indigenous Peoples Rights and for Minority Issues play key roles in upholding the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and Minorities and are both important resources for, and take a special interest in, the Fellowship Programmes.

### **Other UN entities:**

The ILO, FAO, WIPO, UNFCCC, and UNITAR all contribute to the substantive content of one or both of the programmes. In addition, since 2000 English-speaking indigenous fellows have participated in the annual *Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking Capacities of Indigenous Representatives*.

During interviews, representatives from these organizations emphasized: the critical importance of the programmes; the high level of interest, commitment, and experience of the fellows; and the benefit that their organizations receive from their participation in the programmes – in particular from their interaction with the fellows. All said that the fellows and the programmes, could benefit from having more time to engage with their organizations.

In particular, the ILO and the FAO indicated that greater cooperation between OHCHR and their offices could be highly beneficial to all stakeholders, including the fellows themselves, their organizations, the UN entities, and the international indigenous peoples and minorities rights arenas. See also conclusions and recommendations.

### **Ef5: How effectively does the programmes' management monitor and evaluate the performance and results? Is relevant information and data systematically collected and analyzed to feed into management decisions?**

The collection of relevant information and data, and use of it to adjust the structure and content of each programme, is clearly evident in the qualitative and quantitative data presented in the yearly programme reports. Adjustments to the programmes have been made each year, in response to feedback from the Fellows. These annual reports are shared primarily within IPMS, and with the partner universities. Although there are no wider annual meetings to assess the programmes, when there is an ongoing evaluation, the reports are shared circulated more widely among stakeholders within OHCHR.

### **Ef6: How efficiently are the Fellowship Programmes supported by other parts of OHCHR and UNOG, especially its administrative and finance services?**

Other parts of OHCHR are supportive of the Fellowship programmes. The Director of TESPDD, and the Chief of RLDB have provided important support in general, and the evaluation noted that there was particular support addressing urgent situations involving reprisals. The evaluation found strong support from Human Rights Officers in various Sections and Branches, including Civic Space Unit and the Special Procedures Branch.

Administration provides important support, especially dealing with issues regarding payment of stipends, support to travel of Fellows, health insurance and other administrative aspects. However, a lack of consistency among various types of Fellowships throughout OHCHR and managed by various sections complicates the support that they are able to provide. The office is currently seeking to establish consistency through an in-house policy in order to better support these and other fellowships.

One important problem in this cooperation stems from an apparent incompatibility of UN financial systems, and guidelines for fellows, with the economic and practical situation of many of the fellows. The late distribution of stipends to the fellows has been an important limiting factor in the smooth running of the programmes. These funds are ultimately released by UNOG, and fellows need to receive them at the beginning of their stay in Geneva to cover living expenses there. Over several years, the experience of the programmes has been that these funds are not released in time for them to be distributed to the fellows upon their arrival in Geneva. This delay is caused by a combination of several circumstances: 1) the UN payment system is designed to deposit money into bank accounts; 2) many fellows (especially from indigenous communities) do not have bank accounts nor credit cards; 3) the alternative, to write a check, is expensive, complicated for UNOG, and requires special procedures that require more time. These factors are complicated by 4) communication lapses between IPMS and UNOG, and the fact that 5) necessary information about Fellows attending the programmes is sometimes received late, also creating delays. Because of all of these factors it is difficult for the Coordinator to time the request from UNOG to ensure that the money is released at the right time.

*It was complicated for the Coordinator, he was always lending money and writing it down. It was a chaotic situation, and it continued to the end of the course. (Male, MFP, Interview)*

The problematic result is that some fellows are in Geneva for up to two weeks with no money. This is not a tenable situation and lack of resolution would cause the programmes to collapse. To avoid this, the responsible persons at OHCHR have often decided to advance from their personal funds to cover the expenses of the fellows until the stipends are delivered. In other cases, fellows themselves have loaned money to each other. In all cases this solved the immediate problem but created other difficulties and potential complications, and is not a viable long-term solution.

It should be emphasized that this problem cannot be resolved by informing fellows that they should arrive in Geneva with enough funds to cover their expenses for the first days of their programme. Many of the fellows simply do not have access to enough money to do this.

**iv. IMPACT ORIENTATION**

**II: To what extent have the Fellowships Programmes contributed to increased access to UN human rights mechanisms by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities?**

*I don't know of any other programme that has this level of impact in these individuals. They are already very successful and important in their communities. But to come here to Geneva – it gives them a lot. (Stakeholder Permanent Mission in Geneva)*

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*After participation in the IFP, I was able to lobby at the UNPFII, and advocate to make the voice of my community heard at the international level. I used the special procedures through the various reports presented such as the rights of indigenous peoples, and human rights defenders. Within EMRIP, I was able to address the issues of concern to community members from my country to help us advance indigenous issues. Also, I was able to submit recommendations on my country during the sessions of the Human Rights Council (Male, IFP, Survey)*

The evaluation found that the Fellowship Programmes have contributed enormously to increased access to UN human rights mechanisms by indigenous peoples and minorities. This is supported by qualitative data; former fellows describe in interviews and open-ended survey

questions the way that participation in the IFP or MFP increased their access UN human rights mechanisms. Quantitative data also reflects this: 66% of respondents state that they have used UN instruments and mechanisms (n=128); 78% report that they have participated in other global forums, and 75% have participated at the regional level (n=109). 58% of respondents said that the Fellowship programmes had a strong or very strong impact on their ability to promote human rights in their country (n=132).

Furthermore, the large majority of former Fellows engage with training programmes at the national or local level in order to bring the knowledge they have gained back to their communities. In addition to data from interviews, 94% of respondents (n=133) had conducted at least some training, 69% indicated that they had participated in several sessions or that it was part of their work.

*I have designed and led trainings on Indigenous Peoples' rights both at the local and national level, in areas related to understanding the basic human rights of indigenous peoples, and the available protections. I have also looked at FPIC and its applicability within my community. I have provided training on indigenous governance as an integral element of self-determination, land rights, indigenous economies and indigenous peoples and climate change. (IFP, Male, Survey)*

**12: What, if any, evidence is there that the programmes have resulted in improvements in the enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities? What has been the contribution of the programmes to the achievement of these results?**

The evaluation has found both qualitative and quantitative evidence of a significant increase in awareness of indigenous peoples and minorities rights on the part of former Fellows and their communities, and increased use of mechanisms, as described above. There is also evidence that the programmes have contributed to improvements in the enjoyment of rights by Indigenous peoples and Minorities, through increased access to international mechanisms as described above, and by increasing the competence and capacity of individuals.

It is important to remember, however, that there are strong forces working against the enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities, including authoritarian governments, violent cartels, and extractive industries, as described in section E3. In this current global situation, as highlighted by the quote of an NGO representative on Page 9, simply maintaining a focus on indigenous peoples' and minority rights continue to work at all itself an achievement. This underlines the importance of the programmes in these circumstances.

**13: To what extent are the programmes making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities? Or how likely is it that it will eventually make this contribution? Are the Fellowships Programmes strategy and management in this area steering towards impact?**

Broader and longer-term enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities have to do with the ultimate outcomes described as "waves on the shoreline" in the OHCHR publication on HRE (see *Theory of Change* Section). These are not attributable to any one factor, and may take time to become evident. Furthermore, there are many forces working against them, making it difficult to measure the impact of any one effort by looking at the global situation. However, a fundamental condition for obtaining greater enjoyment of rights is the ability of members of Indigenous and Minority groups to recognize, stand up for, and articulate their rights, and to do so in constructive, effective ways that are heard and recognized by governments and other stakeholders. This includes knowing at which level particular violations

need to be addressed, and which people to address them to, and which mechanisms can be engaged, as well as knowing which individuals, offices, and bodies can be allies in such efforts.

*When I went to Geneva, I had been a Human Rights activist for more than 3 years. In Geneva, I learned what it meant to fight peacefully. I learned a lot about the UN Human Rights system – treaty bodies, specific treaties, and their relationship with my country, how to report issues, what I should do if we have a problem here in my country facing any issues related to Human rights. It impacted my life. I have a lot of things to do now, the way is clear for me now, how to fight for Human Rights, how to put pressure on the government. I came back and started to practice this knowledge. I have conducted several training sessions about the Human Rights system, and visited several countries. My country will be up for UPR in January, and I am working with a team to write a report about Human Rights issues. We also focus specifically on gender issues, especially rape. (Male, MFP, Interview)*

This evaluation finds that the IFP and MFP are very clearly building the capacity of individuals, and greatly contributing to their ability to further build capacity within their countries. This was evident from the qualitative data gathered, in which all those interviewed reported specific examples of capacity building that occurred. Many survey respondents also provided positive examples in open ended questions.

*The Fellowship was very valuable, especially understanding how diplomacy is working, how to make a claim and how to submit them, and to develop an effective strategy – I understood from the Fellowship that it is possible to work in a cooperative way. (Female, MFP, Interview)*  
\*  
*The IFP built my capacity in human rights... since I came back home from Geneva, I have had opportunities to occupy positions in my country, including the director of our indigenous organization, a member of the land commission, and member of parliament. (Male, IFP, Survey)*  
\*  
*When I was working with EMRIP, I was in constant contact with fellows – I saw an exponential increase in engagement following their participation in the programme (Human Rights Officer)*

Survey results show that 79% of those employed are working in a field directly related to human rights (n=134); 88% report that they are involved in other efforts related to Indigenous peoples or Minority rights (N=139). In addition to training (see section 11), Former Fellows are involved with efforts to improve their rights at the national level; through creating and supporting local NGOs (62%), national dialogues (51%), the introduction of policy (43%), and legal actions (40%); 12% report involvement in processes relating to ratifying or signing international instruments (n=128).

The programmes are also helping Fellows to create networks at the international level that they can draw upon for support when needed, including at UN entities. In some cases, networks at the national and regional level are also being strengthened – although this is an area in which more support could be provided; see section 15 below, and S3.

*I never knew what the FAO was, but I had a chance to meet the head of their Indigenous Peoples' Section. We talked about traditional fisheries, and he invited me to share experiences from my region with the FAO...I think that our people really benefitted from my experience, because I later had the chance to take two more local people to meet them. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

According to the findings of this evaluation, the IFP and MFP are the only efforts at the global level that have the potential to make such a substantial contribution in capacity building for these groups. Through this capacity building, and with stability of dedicated resources, it is

very likely that these programmes will make substantial long-term contributions to broader and longer-term enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples and Minorities.

*Through the programme, many minority communities feel empowered and their voices heard. When I took the floor in the HRC, this was welcomed by my community... it was the peak of a crisis and we were in danger. This programme had a very positive impact for me and for the wider community I belong to (Male, MFP, Interview)*

**I4: To what extent are the programmes assisting in self-development of indigenous peoples and minority representatives, e.g. in accessing decision-making positions within or outside of their countries?**

*The Fellowship Programme helped me understand how the system works, so now I am able to help and assist the seniors from my community that make decisions and apply for projects in my country. (Female, MFP, Survey)*

\*

*The programme provided me with a broad knowledge of international instruments and the rights and limits that exist as well as their application. This allows for authoritative advice to local leaders, who generally consult me on most of the decisions that must be taken and allows participation in all instances administrative politics of my territory. (Male, IFP, Survey)*

Participation in the IFP and MFP is clearly assisting in the self-development of indigenous and minority representatives; evidence for this was overwhelming in the stories told in the interviews, as well as in examples provided in the open-ended questions in the survey. In particular, access to decision-making positions within and outside of their countries was one of the main indicators of improvement in both individuals capacity, and for their communities self-determination. In the survey, 52% of respondents report either a *high level of influence over*, or the *ability to make important decisions affecting their community*. Another 47% report that they have *some influence*, or can *contribute opinions*, with only one respondent reporting that they had *no influence* (n=131).

**I5: To what extent have the Fellowship Programmes contributed to the strengthening the capacity of the existing networks of indigenous and minority organizations in their communities, countries or regions, through the transfer of values, knowledge and skills they gained from the Programmes.**

This evaluation finds that participation in the Fellowship Programmes has contributed to strengthening the capacity of existing networks, as well as the creation of new ones. However, more could be done, in particular with a greater emphasis on facilitating networking, and supporting training, in Former Fellows’ home countries – see below.

The large majority of Former Fellows become involved with training and other activities, including public awareness campaigns and founding NGOs, following their participation in the IFP or MFP, (see I1, and I3). It is clear that fellows are strengthening the capacity of their communities and existing networks, and also building new networks at the national level.

A loose network of minority and indigenous Fellows is maintained by IMPS, especially through social media, and a number of minority former Fellows have established their own networks. For example, former Minority Fellows have established a Core Group responsible for formalizing a network of former fellows and leading engagement with International Minority Rights mechanisms and consultations. The IPMS has also begun organizing regular online meetings in the programme languages, for former Fellows to provide first-hand information on their country situations to relevant UN Special Rapporteurs for their thematic reports to the HR Council or the General Assembly. In 2021 these meetings included one with the SR on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and one on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. In 2020 former fellows have provided an important contribution to the

development of OHCHR’s Guidance Notes on the Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities (13 May 2020).

*Before participating in the fellowship programme, I was just a project lead in community programmes. Now, I am founder and executive director of an Indigenous women’s empowerment network that advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups. (Female, IFP, Survey)*

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*When I was in Geneva, I was really impressed with international mechanisms... the International forum for minorities is the only place where minorities interact with government actors. I proposed to have something like this on the national level as well, and in 2017 we organized a minorities forum for the first time in my country. It is now organized on an annual basis, and the initiative is growing. There is now a sustainable platform for minorities in my country. (Female, MFP 2015, Interview)*

Several former fellows indicated that they would like to have more support in contacting the OHCHR country and regional offices, and in developing networks at their country level. In previous years, most former fellows have not had contact with field offices once they were back in their country. With the expansion of the Senior Fellowship Programme, there is an opportunity to strengthen these relations and to contribute to the development of national and regional networks. See also S3 below.

*I was already working with human rights before the fellowship – but now that I have the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples’ mechanisms, I have more information, a deeper understanding, and a network of people that I can contact if I need to find out more if I need to. Now I know about the language they use, what terms mean, how to apply to attend a conference, I know about the voluntary fund. I have helped people with applications, giving people the opportunity to be advocates for their community. I helped people not only from my own country, but I have also organized zooms to help people in other countries in my region. I am also helping people write reports about things going on in their communities, and figuring out who to send them to. (Female, IFP, Interview)*

**v. SUSTAINABILITY**

**SI: Are the results, achievements and benefits of the Fellowships Programmes likely to be durable?**

Based on interviews with fellows that participated in either the IFP or the MFP from 2001 through 2019, the evaluation finds that results, achievements, and benefits that build upon the Fellowship Programmes are likely not only to be durable, but also to accrue over time as former fellows continue to build upon their experiences, capacity, and skills gained through their participation. In particular, the programmes have created an expanding pool of highly competent and confident individuals that are trained to advocate effectively for their communities and participate in decision-making processes at all levels.

This is particularly visible at the international level, where a significant number of Fellows from earlier years of the programmes are now in high level positions, and have served (for example) as UN Special Rapporteur, on the secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UNDESA, at OHCHR, on EMRIP, on the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and on the UNPFII, as well as in high level political positions in their communities or national Governments, Parliaments including in the NHRIs. These former fellows unanimously identify participation in the IFP or MFP as a key initial step on their journey to becoming activists and political figures serving indigenous peoples and minorities. Expanding this pool of effective high-level activists is central to the durability of the results, achievements, and benefits as it reduces dependence on a small number of individuals, allows for greater and more diverse representation.

Former fellows have also actively participated to a high degree in processes promoting their rights at the national level, including the introduction of policy and the creation or support of government positions and NGOs devoted to the promotion of Indigenous peoples or Minority rights. The establishment of national structures and policy is key to the sustainability of the achievements of the programmes.

*After the fellowship, I was able to advocate the rights of IP on radio and television programmes, and produce a live talk show. The Fellowship boosts IP rights, maximizing the participation of indigenous peoples. Because of the fellowship programme, I am now serving as a member of UNPFII (Male, IFP, Interview)*

*As a leader of the indigenous community, I was able to bring about changes - especially having six seats in parliament for my community, a minister that represents us and seats in various national commissions. (Male, IFP,*

**S2: Are the fellows and their organizations willing and committed to continue working on the issues addressed by the programmes? How effectively have the programmes built national ownership?**

The evaluation found that Fellows that have recently finished a programme are – with few exceptions – actively engaged in efforts to work on Indigenous peoples and Minority rights, studying law or other relevant subjects, and/or pursuing positions that will allow them to gain further knowledge, skill, and experience. Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate an extremely high level of commitment to continuing to work for the rights of their communities or peoples at national levels. The Fellowship programmes have contributed to national ownership among the fellows.

*Some things cannot be done publicly, but only through the diplomatic missions – we need to remain connected. We don't expect the OHCHR to do everything – some initiative also has to come from us. But on a country level, having access to UN bodies working within the country, to continue to lobby and advocate – this will provide access to other diplomatic missions so that we know who to approach (Male MFP, Interview)*

*After completing the fellowship, we want to continue to do training and disseminate information to indigenous leaders – but it must be supported with funding. Many training activities are carried out free of charge, but many of us need funds for participant travel within the region, for training sites, supporting equipment – this is an obstacle for us. We hope that in the future there will be attention in terms of funds so that the knowledge we gain does not just disappear (Male, IFP, Survey)*

*In my case the follow up was good, I was given the opportunity to be a Senior Fellow for six months and it made a huge difference for me and for the communities I work with. It gave me the opportunity to implement my knowledge on a national level, and access to funding for implementation. But I also share the concern of other fellows about the lack of follow up in general. There is no clear mechanism for how fellows can connect with the office in the future. (Female MFP, Interview)*

However the evaluation found that when fellows return to their home countries, some do not receive adequate follow up and support to develop networks and strengthen their efforts to promote indigenous peoples' or minority rights. Some say they do not feel able to engage with the UN field offices in their countries, or to connect with networks of former UN fellows from their country or region. Others note a lack of funding to continue with training or other projects. Although follow up does happen on an individual level and in some forums, it has not previously been formalized or systematic. Many fellows use the Facebook pages to create and develop a network, but not all fellows are active on this site.

Initial steps have already been taken to develop and reinforce global, regional, and national networks. The adaptation of the programmes in 2020 and the placement of Senior Fellows in country and regional offices is a very positive step towards developing networks within countries and regions and could address an important need to build national and regional networks of former fellows and to connect them with UN country and regional offices.

**S3: Are the fellows and their organizations able to continue working on the issues addressed by the project? How effectively have the programmes built necessary capacity?**

The evaluation found that fellows are continuing to work on the issues the programmes aim to address. Both quantitative and qualitative data strongly indicate that their participation in the Fellowship programmes greatly increased capacity, in turn increasing the effectiveness with which they are able to contribute to the work of their organization or institutions at national, regional, and international levels. This also reinforces national capacity, contributing greatly to sustainability.

*My people, we face many threats to our rivers, our forests, and to activists that defend Human Rights. Thanks to the programme I was able to share what I learned with my people, and thanks to the communication tools we continue to defend our rights. (Male, IFP, Survey)*

\*

*Before I went to the programme, I was without experience but I had dreams of claiming rights for my community. I was in my second year of law at the university, and I was familiar with human rights – but I did not know how to do it, what method to use, and I didn't know there were indigenous peoples' rights. When I returned, I went back to my University – the professors didn't know about UNDRIP, so I was able to inform them, it was interesting for them too. (Male, IFP, Interview)*

**S4: Are the managerial, administrative and financial basis of the programmes optimized to ensure sustainability?**

The evaluation finds that the managerial, administrative, and financial sustainability of the programmes need to be addressed. The *managerial basis* (as described in section Ef1,) with only one dedicated staff member to coordinate both programmes (along with a third programme, the Voluntary Fund) is not sustainable. This is a serious weak point for the programmes.

The *administrative basis* for the programmes is functioning, and the evaluation found that there is a high level of competence and great appreciation for the importance of the programmes. However, as described in (section Ef6) administrative support, especially regarding payments of stipends handled by UNOG, is often too slow and too distant, and not always responsive to the needs of the programmes. Problems around payment of stipends to the fellows, if they continue or worsen, could compromise sustainability.

The *financial basis* of the programmes is currently fragile. Continuity of funding is critical to their sustainability, and although it has been consistent in recent years, there is concern that the programmes are vulnerable to economic downturns and changes in global priorities. Contributing governments express strong political support for the areas that they are funding; however ongoing funding is not guaranteed.

The programmes are also dependent upon the indirect support they receives from partners. Without CAGI's partnership, it would not be financially feasible to hold the fellowship in Geneva, where accommodation costs, would not be adequately covered by current stipends. In 2019, expected funding was not available for the MFP in November, creating an unforeseen

expense and huge logistic problem, and highlighting the vulnerability of the programmes. There is also concern that funding provided by the Basque government could be greatly reduced due to economic downturn – this funding is crucial for the participation of individuals from Latin America in the Indigenous Fellowship Programme.

At the same time, the commitment of support from the Ford Foundation indicates that new sources of funding could be opening up – this is an area that should be explored. Given this vulnerability and the need to secure more financial support, the evaluation found that both programmes could benefit from increased visibility.

**Sustainability Summary:** The evaluation finds that the results of the programmes are sustainable in many ways, including the creation of structures at national and regional levels and the building of capacity within former fellows’ home countries. However, the current structure of the programmes is vulnerable, and not sustainable. As described in section EfI, the current managerial structure is not adequate to run both programmes. This is linked to the fundamental issue of financing.

The dependence of the programmes on extra-budgetary contributions and on expenses paid by partners is concerning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the full economic impact of which will only be felt over the next few years. Initial indications are worrisome. It is not yet known how the global economic situation will affect the contributions of governments.

Although there is no long-term commitment from the Ford Foundation, their funding provides a needed injection of funds during the pandemic crisis, and sets a precedent for funding from private foundations. It also boosts the visibility of the programmes. See sections on conclusions and recommendations for further discussion regarding funding.

**vi. GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS (DISABILITY INCLUSION) INTEGRATION (G)**

The Fellowship programmes include strategies designed to integrate gender –both in terms of women and LGBTI individuals – and disability rights. This refers to both the inclusion of individuals from these categories into the programmes, as well as addressing these issues of inclusion within their communities and organizations, and in their own engagement with UN Human Rights Mechanisms. Interviews and responses to open-ended questions on the survey provided some specific examples of ways that female fellows and those with a disability are working to improve inclusion, as well as some limitations that they face.

**G I: Did the Fellowships Programmes plan and achieve results that contributed to gender equality and disability inclusion?**

*In terms of the defense of rights to land, territory and natural resources as well as in terms of IP rights, I am perhaps the only woman today who masters this kind of problem and that is why I am often called upon. (Female, IFP, Survey)*  
\*

*I have been involved exchange program and educating our fellow indigenous women and persons with different abilities in need to raise their voice to achieve economic, social and political self-sufficiency. (Female, SF/IFP, Interview)*  
\*

*I have been working on women’s human rights issues for several years, but I still learned a lot from the MFP, especially how to engage with the UN. (Female, MFP, Interview)*

A focus on achieving a balance of traditional gender categories has been integrated into the programmes since their beginning; this is reflected both in the numbers (Table 1, page 2) and in the qualitative and quantitative data gathered by this evaluation. More recently, the IPMS has identified Indigenous peoples and Minorities that are differently abled and members of the LGBTI community as a priority and encourages them to apply to the Programmes. This is part

of a broader advocacy campaign (including also indigenous youth and women) focusing on the intersectionality of human rights violations and multiple forms of discrimination.

### **Gender**

There is a good overall balance in the numbers of female and male fellows participating in both programmes. Within the IFP however, there is an imbalance among the Russian Indigenous fellows, where female fellows greatly outnumber male fellows. This is counterbalanced by a lower proportion of female participants among the French-speaking fellows, who are primarily from Africa and the French territories, as well as French-speaking Canada. The reasons for these imbalances have to do with local and regional cultural and economic dynamics related to gender, and are not entirely clear. It should be noted that there are male Russian former fellows, and female French-speaking ones, that have achieved high level positions within their countries and internationally.

The vast majority of female interviewees reported no feelings of exclusion from programme activities based on gender, and no male participants did. This is supported by the survey, in which 91.6% of respondents (n=143) reported that gender *did not* affect their participation in the programme. Twelve respondents (8.4%) indicated that their gender *did affect* their treatment or ability to participate fully in the programme; interestingly, half of these (6) were male (though examination of individual data indicates that two of these might not have understood the question). Five women and two men responded that their gender affected their experience *somewhat*, and one woman and four men said it did *to a great extent*. Of the 20 comments to that question, the majority indicated that gender balance had been very well handled and that there were no problems.

Only three of these comments expressed any problems relating to gender in either of the programme. One indicated discomfort walking in the city at night, indicating that safety issues could be a concern for some participants and should be considered in all situations related to programme activities. Another comment, by a male participant, said that the programme was targeted only at females (perhaps explaining the responses of the male participants noted above). This was not a dominant view, but it warrants attention. The third of these comments, by a female participant, noted that some male fellows 'did not behave well'. A few minor incidences involving inappropriate comments and behavior of male fellows towards women in the programmes were also noted in interviews. Although these issues do not seem to be frequent, given the diverse cultural range of participants and different expectations regarding gender behavior, clear guidelines during the programmes are important.

Gender discrimination may take place indirectly as a result of local gender patterns that disadvantage women, such as lower education levels or work experience, making them less likely to apply. Family responsibility is also important. The rules for fellowships do not allow for family to accompany, this may discourage women with small children or other family responsibilities from applying or attending.

### **Non-traditional gender categories**

LGBTIQ+ issues are not directly treated within the programmes, and in most years there have not been openly identifying LGBTIQ+ participants. However, the programmes have begun actively seeking to recruit fellows that with non-traditional gender identification, and thus far three former fellows have openly identified themselves in this category, as well as one fellow admitted for 2020 (who could not yet participate due to the pandemic). This issue has also been incorporated into the Deusto University component, and there are plans to address it more directly within the programmes.

## **Disability**

There were two former fellows that identified themselves as differently abled, and one other reported in the survey, for a total of three found in this evaluation. One of these was interviewed. Although she felt like the coordinators and other fellows were accepting, and accommodating overall, she reported that she could not participate fully in the programme because of her disability. This individual was a Senior Fellow at the time of the interview, and reports that the programme has been extremely valuable for her efforts to promote the rights of her community. This case supports the need to actively recruit, and accommodate, differently abled Indigenous and Minority Fellows.

*I would expect that there would be someone with a disability every year – but there was only one person before me. We need to keep more opportunities open for people with disability / there should be a kind of quota, every year. (Female SF/IIFP, Interview Kenya)*

### **G2: Were the choices made as to results and strategies of the Fellowship Programmes relevant to the integration of a gender and disability inclusion perspective?**

A focus on rights of women, sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities has been integrated into the fellowship programmes, along with a focus on intersectionality. Presentations on women's rights, with a particular focus on Indigenous or Minority women, are highlighted in the programmes. Many female former fellows return to their countries and work with organizations specifically focused on Indigenous / Minority women's issues; the former fellow with a disability (see G1) became Senior Fellow, and is actively working on indigenous rights for women and people with disabilities.

*After the fellowship, I got an opportunity to go back to Geneva for a meeting with CEDAW, and was able to speak on behalf of all Indigenous women in my country. This gave me a broader perspective on issues at the national level, and the international level. (Female, SF/IIFP, Interview)*

There are limitations; when female fellows return to their communities, they may face restrictions upon their ability to implement what they learned in the programme, because of gender dynamics in their communities (see also section E3). The evaluation found that although this limited the impact, the fellowship programmes were providing women from repressive societies and states with important communication and negotiation tools that they can use to strategically advance their rights, even in small increments.

### **G3: Were women and persons with disabilities consulted during the planning process and selected as fellows in the programmes?**

Women and their perspectives, have been actively integrated into both of the programmes since their beginning, and the selection of fellows was conducted with a clear focus on achieving gender equality from the start. LGBTIQ+ individuals and those with disabilities have more recently been actively recruited and selected for. Feedback from LGBTIQ+ individuals and those with disabilities has been given during the programmes, and taken into consideration in planning.

### **G4: Has the programme monitoring data been disaggregated by sex and disability?**

The data has been disaggregated by sex since the beginning of the programmes; see the table I on page 6. Only recently has data been collected regarding LGBTIQ+, as indicated above three Indigenous Fellows have identified as such. This evaluation only found three differently abled former fellows. Two were reported by the IPMS, and in addition to these two, a third

also identified as such in the survey. This fellow may not have reported their disability at the time, for any number of reasons. It will be important to continue to specifically seek people with disabilities and to make it clear that the programmes will accommodate them.

### 3. Lessons Learned

These programmes are considered to be ‘flagship programmes’ and their development and implementation could be relevant to other fellowship programmes. This section outlines some important lessons identified by the evaluation process.

It is important to keep in mind the complexity of these programmes, and of the global situation they are striving to address. They bring individuals from very different political and economic situations to a global center, creating a huge practical challenge. The fellows themselves have very different levels of education and experience, and face different forms of discrimination. In some countries, and in some ways, the human rights situation for indigenous peoples and minorities is steadily improving – but in others it is rapidly deteriorating. The programmes need to encompass this highly diverse reality – and they do, in many ways (see Good Practices, below). It also makes them extremely complex to design and manage. Given the high level of importance attached to the programmes, and their great relevance and impact, it is critical to continue to find ways to engage constructively with this complexity. The following lessons highlight some of the contradictory and complex aspects of the programmes.

**Effective communication:** Teaching effective communication skills increases the fellows’ ability to talk to governments and other important stakeholders. These skills have increased many former fellows’ ability to advance agendas for their people. However, these skills will not work in situations where negotiation is not possible, with very repressive governments.

**Visibility:** Participation in EMRIP, the UN Forums, and other mechanisms makes fellows visible. It provides valuable experience, important skills, and for many fellows this has moved things forward within their countries. This visibility can also lead to reprisals from authoritarian states.

**Length of the programme:** Decreasing the length of time of the programmes has had both positive and negative effects. It allows for more participants, and is more efficient in some ways, such as maximizing the benefit of translation services. However, reducing the length of the programmes also makes them much more intense. There are indications that the shorter time may be particularly problematic for individuals representing marginalized subsectors of society, including youth and in some cases women; individuals from some regions also tended to struggle more with the intense pace of the programmes.

**Funding:** A relatively small funding increase will go a very long way towards addressing most of the shortcomings described in this evaluation. For example, more funding will allow for: lengthening of the programmes without compromising the number of participants; effective pre-programmes to help individuals prepare for Geneva; more consistent translation; more effective follow up; and hiring another coordinator.

## 4. Good practices

The evaluation found evidence of many good practices that should be continued, and possibly could be replicated. Although, as indicated under lessons learned, the programmes can be complex to administer, the practices listed below are central to the great success that the programmes have had so far. As indicated in section 3 above, maintaining these good practices will require securing funding and other resources.

**Programme structure:** Bringing together indigenous and minority activists from around the world to Geneva is central to the achievement of the results. This kind of experience cannot be replaced by on-line or distance learning. Some of the good practices noted below depend upon this general practice of gathering fellows at the headquarters of the UN.

**Hands-on experience:** A strong focus on the practical aspects of utilization of UN Human Rights Mechanisms provided invaluable information, skills, competences, perspectives, and networks for the fellows. Participation in UN EMRIP and the UN Forum for Minority Issues and possibly in UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies and/or the HRC and UPR, was particularly useful to the fellows.

**Facilitation of international networks:** By drawing upon the intellectual resources available in Geneva, the programmes helped the fellows to create an international network. These include the relevant Sections within OHCHR; other UN entities; UN Special Rapporteurs and members of UN human rights mechanisms and treaty bodies; and Geneva-based international and regional NGOs and CSOs.

Furthermore, by bringing together fellows from all over the world, and investing in the necessary interpretation, the programmes are able to further enhance international networks, and comprehension of the global dimensions of indigenous peoples' and minority rights.

**University preparatory programmes:** A pre-programme focusing on the theoretical basis of indigenous peoples / minority rights, and connecting international mechanisms with regional or national legislation, policy, and mechanisms relevant to the particular language group (i.e., Russian Federation for the Russian speakers; Latin American region for the Spanish speakers) was extremely valuable for the fellows, and greatly prepared them for participation in the programme in Geneva.

**Senior Fellowship Programmes:** The redirection of funding allotted for the IFP and MFP to engage Senior Indigenous and Minority Fellows at the Field Offices was an effective and positive response to the crisis created by the Covid 19 pandemic. In most cases, this benefitted both the fellows and the Field Offices.

**High managerial engagement with the programmes:** The Coordinator and other managerial staff at IPMS are highly engaged with and committed to these programmes. This results in programmes that are responsive to the individual and country needs, changing circumstances, and the very complex situation described in Section 3 above.

## 5. Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on highly consistent data, including qualitative data from interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders, and quantitative data from the survey. Conclusions 1-3 relate to the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the programmes. Conclusions 4-6 relate to the specific structure of the programmes. Conclusions 7 and 8 relate to the Senior Fellowships and networking of Former Fellows. Conclusions 9 and 10 discuss some problem areas regarding the functioning of the programmes, and Conclusion 11 relates to Gender and Disability Inclusion. Conclusions 12 and 13 describe two major overarching challenges facing the programmes. Specific recommendations regarding these findings are provided in Section 6.

### **1) The programmes are extremely important globally.**

The fundamental finding of this evaluation is that the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship programmes are filling an extremely important gap in global efforts to address human rights. The programmes provide access to, and training in how to engage with, UN human rights mechanisms addressing some of the most vulnerable segments of the global population – indigenous peoples and minorities. These groups are the target of some of the most severe and systematic human rights abuses in the world today. They are also among the most marginalized and impoverished sections of the global population, with overall extremely low levels of access to national and international decision-making processes, and much lower than average access to institutions (such as education) that facilitate such access. There is no other programme that provides the type and level of training that the IFP and MFP offer to some of these sectors of the global population.

### **2) The programmes are highly relevant, and there is great interest in and support for these programmes from all key stakeholder groups.**

According to the data collected in this evaluation, all stakeholder groups consider these programmes to be highly relevant – there was virtually unanimous agreement on this point (see section R1). This was strongly expressed by interviewees from within the OHCHR. Other UN Organizations expressed strong support for the programmes, in particular ILO and FAO, which have formalized their cooperation with IPMS around indigenous issues through an exchange of letters. Special Rapporteurs, and representatives of EMRIP and the UNPFII unanimously emphasize the global need for the cultivation of international human rights expertise within indigenous and minority communities. Government representatives of Permanent Missions in Geneva and international NGO workers all volunteer time to the programmes and express great admiration for the fellows and the impact that the programmes make on them. Former fellows themselves, several of whom are currently in high level positions within the UN, recognize the importance of the programmes for their own Human Rights careers, and for the training of a new generation of indigenous and minority rights activists. There is a high level of commitment to supporting the fellowship programmes and the processes they engage with; specific recommendations are outlined in the following section.

### **3) Overall the programmes are very effective, with very high impact of the at the community and country level, and at the global level.**

The evidence collected in this evaluation indicates that after completing the programmes, the overwhelming majority of fellows return to their home countries and continue to work towards securing greater human rights for their communities, either through their

employment or voluntarily. Their ability to do this work effectively is greatly enhanced by their participation in the fellowship programmes. Fellows interviewed made specific connections between participation in the IFP or MFP and their ability to promote human rights in their countries. Other stakeholders, including governments, other UN entity representatives, high level UN human rights workers (including Special Rapporteurs) and NGO workers all described greatly increased effectiveness of indigenous and minority former fellows in their engagement with UN mechanisms and governments. The survey data confirms these strong results.

**4) The format of the programmes prior to 2020, with its emphasis on bringing the fellows to Geneva, and the combination of practical and theoretical training, is effective in achieving the goals for individuals, their communities, and at the country level.**

The evaluation found that the format of bringing fellows to Geneva – rather than holding regional programmes, or online alternatives – was a defining feature of the programmes and central to their impact. There is no other way for fellows to gain the practical experience that they can in Geneva: to meet with people from a wide variety of UN offices and understand their purpose, function, and how to access them; to meet with representatives of a wide variety of human rights NGOs. Although this aspect of the programmes creates challenges for management, and requires travel of the fellows, there is no substitute for this kind of training. See Recommendation I.

**5) For many fellows, in particular those with no prior experience, and those from highly disadvantaged groups or particular regions, the length of time of the programmes is too short for all of the content that it includes.**

The evaluation found that, although there was a high level of capacity built, for many fellows the pace of the programme was intense, and that they would benefit from a longer time, in order to become familiar with the UN, take advantage of their time in Geneva, to reflect upon what they had learned and to exchange with other fellows. For those fellows that had a fair amount of prior experience, a high level of education, and/or were familiar with European cities, the length of the programme was okay. However, a high percentage of survey respondents, almost half, indicated that they felt the programme was too short (see section R3). Although this feeling was expressed across the language groups and by both Indigenous and Minority Former Fellows, it was somewhat stronger among the Indigenous Fellows. Within that group it was the strongest among the French, followed by the English, Fellows. This is probably related to the lack of pre-programmes in these languages; see Conclusion 6.

This was a clear finding, but nonetheless needs to be balanced with the following considerations: 1) for many the programme was the right length. For those who have jobs, families, or other commitments, more than a few weeks would be less practical. 2) Within the current budget and management capacity, there is a need to maintain a balance between the length of the programmes and the numbers that can attend; lengthening the programmes would require reducing the number of participants (the programmes already receive up to 50 applications per space available). 3) The effectiveness and impact of both programmes are nonetheless evaluated very highly, even by those that said it was too short. Findings on the length of the programmes should be understood in this context. See Recommendation I.

**6) The preparatory programmes in Bilbao and Moscow provide important background and preparation for the Indigenous Fellowship Programme in Geneva. The language groups that do not have this background (French and English) are at a disadvantage when they come together in Geneva.**

The preparatory programme of two months in Bilbao provides Spanish-speaking fellows with a firm theoretical foundation in Indigenous peoples' rights, and the international mechanisms. The shorter (2 to 4 week) pre-programme at the Peoples Friendship University of Russia also provides theoretical background that prepares fellows for their experience in Geneva. There is no preparatory programme for the English or French speakers. Two important conclusions follow from this: First is that the lack of consistency in the offer of these University programmes across the language groups creates a point of inequality between the language groups that was pointed out consistently by Former Fellows from all language groups. The uneven situation is the most difficult for the French-speaking indigenous peoples, especially those that come from Africa (the majority). This makes it difficult to address all of the fellows equally in terms of content, and it undermines the sense of collectivity among the groups. The second conclusion is that the pre-programme serves an important function within the fellowship programmes, and is a model that could effectively be replicated and adapted for the other Indigenous language groups, and for the Minority Fellowship Programme. [See Recommendation I and Annex VI.](#)

**7) The Senior Fellowship programmes are relevant, and their expansion during the pandemic is an indication of the resilience of the programmes, and the important need at the country and regional level. Some problematic aspects of the expanded programme are a result of the quick shift that needed to be made.**

When the IFP and MFP meetings in Geneva were cancelled in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the IPMS had little time to prepare an alternative. Funding was redirected in order to create an expanded Senior Fellowship Programme, where former fellows were placed in UN country and regional offices. This adaptation served several important purposes. It provided further practical training to former fellows; it provided national and regional offices with highly valued local expertise in indigenous people or minority issues; it contributed to diversification of the offices; it provided opportunities for former fellows to connect with national and regional UN networks; and (although the focus varied in different offices) it provided an opportunity to gauge and address the impact of the pandemic on Indigenous and Minority communities, and provided an important link between the country offices and indigenous or minority communities in a difficult and unstable time.

However, because this alternative was developed quickly in response to the global pandemic, and was implemented while it was still under development, some aspects were inefficient, and planning was difficult. There was uncertainty about the length of the posts (resulting in some cases in missed opportunities), and about the status and role of the Senior Fellows; their relationship with the OHCHR, and to the IFP and MFP is not clear to all stakeholders. Despite the difficult start, the programme stabilized quickly and by 2021 it is fully operational, and moving into its second cycle, with the advantage of advance planning.

The current Senior Fellowship Programmes are operating on the budget that was originally intended for the annual fellowship programmes. Once it is possible to hold the programmes in Geneva again, the balance between the regular fellowship programmes, and the expanded Senior Fellowship programmes, will need careful consideration. [See Recommendation 2](#)

**8) The impact of the programmes could be greatly enhanced through better follow up, and more engagement with field offices in the home countries of the former fellows.**

In some countries, former fellows establish close contact with OHCHR or other UN field offices upon return to their home countries or regions, and can rely upon these offices for various kinds of support. However, this is not the case everywhere, and more could be done

to facilitate the development of country and regional networks of former fellows, to connect former fellows with country and regional offices, and to help start projects – especially training projects. This would allow fellows to build upon their experience in Geneva and to develop more substantial networks. Such networks could substantially contribute to the fellows' capacity for working towards human rights improvements in their communities and countries. They also provide an important safety net in the case of reprisals. [See Recommendation 3](#)

**9) Some logistical problems seriously interfere with the efficiency of the programmes and add to their fragility; many of these are related to a lack of resources.**

One important area of logistic complication involves incompatibility of UN bureaucratic systems with some members of the target group that do not have bank accounts, financial reserves, or credit cards – sometimes they do not even have an address. They also lack familiarity with UN systems needed to navigate problems when the logistical components supporting the programmes fail. When the stipends cannot be paid on time this compromises the programmes.

Other logistical problems stem from a lack of resources, but play out as inefficiency and compromise the reputation of the programmes. In some years accommodation was unsuitable and/or outside of Geneva, because of sudden unavailability of expected support. Another shortcoming involves the issue of interpretation for multilingual programmes. Professional interpretation is expensive, but necessary if fellows from different language groups are to receive the same information from presentations. In an effort to cut costs, the interpretation has sometimes been minimized. Alternatives such as different presentations given in the different languages interfere with the group dynamic, and risk providing different information. Informal translation is distracting, and can be inaccurate and inconsistent. Providing adequate interpretation is both logistically complex, and expensive, thus also a question of resources, [See Conclusion 13 and Recommendation 4](#).

**10) The lack of human resources dedicated to the programmes compromises the short- and long-term effectiveness, efficiency, short- and long-term impact, and sustainability of the programmes.**

One individual has full responsibility for running both the Indigenous and the Minority Fellowship Programmes, without a dedicated team, or another full staff member, for support. This is a serious shortcoming, for a few reasons. The evaluation found that the Fellowship programmes are currently strongly associated with the current coordinator. While his influence is seen as very positive and highly valued, this makes the programmes dependent on one person, and thus extremely vulnerable. In addition to this dependency, the running of these programmes – including managing the selection of fellows, the coordination of content, the logistics of visas, and travel, liaising with other stakeholders, and troubleshooting when things go wrong (among other duties) is too large of a job for one person. This situation compromises the efficiency and the long-term effectiveness and impact of the programmes.

While Senior Fellows and other temporary positions (such as consultants and interns) can provide support to fellows and help with certain tasks, they do not necessarily have the needed capacity, skills, or experience to support the coordinator in all the areas where support is needed. They sometimes also need training themselves (and can thus create further work for the Coordinator). Furthermore, these positions are not intended to transition into long-term positions, and thus cannot allow for effective transfer of programme knowledge and history. While they can provide support, temporary positions are not a solution to the problem of understaffing of the programmes. [See Recommendation 5](#)

**I1) Gender equality is thoroughly covered by the programmes, but requires ongoing attention. Incorporation of gender minorities and people with disabilities is in early stages and can be strengthened.**

Interviews and survey data indicate that the gender balance of fellows is generally equal, and that there is a clear focus gender issues within the programmes, including on intersectionality as an issue for indigenous or minority women and on relevant international mechanisms for women. Gender imbalances in particular regions highlights a need for greater attention to especially vulnerable groups; specifics of this would require further research. Although concerns expressed regarding gender issues were minimal, those found in this evaluation are flags for issues that need ongoing attention, including addressing cultural differences, appropriate behavior, and safety issues, and clearly defining *why* there is a need for specific attention to female indigenous and minority participants, as well as differently abled individuals and gender minorities.

Sexual and gender minorities and people with disability have only recently begun to be included. These are not groups that have traditionally been given high focus within Indigenous or Minority groups in general, so the fact that they are only recently being incorporated is not surprising, and it is a positive development. [See Recommendation 6](#)

**I2) Overarching issue: Serious reprisals directly linked to their participation in the Fellowship Programmes affect a small but growing percentage of fellows and former fellows. These are frequent enough, and in some cases serious enough, to warrant concern.**

These Fellowships are in part training programmes for persecuted and marginalized groups to help them better negotiate with their governments. Groups facing higher levels of persecution are simultaneously more in need of such a programme, and more vulnerable to reprisals. Some governments are hostile to indigenous or minority rights, and fellows risk being targeted for their association with the UN. These reprisals can be very serious, and have in some cases resulted in the death of family members and exile. Many others experience lesser but still highly problematic reprisals. Some Fellows and their communities are victims of ongoing general violence connected to their activism; participation in the Fellowship Programme can contribute to this general situation even when reprisals are not directly linked to UN activity. Even in cases where former fellows do not experience reprisals, fear of them can inhibit their activities, reducing the impact of the programmes.

In cases where severe reprisals occur, responsible staff at IPMS have taken appropriate actions, but they have limited means to address such situations, which also take a lot of time and focus. The OHCHR office in general has responded quickly and appropriately.

Reprisals against human rights defenders in the world are increasing, and the target groups of the fellowship programmes are within some of the most vulnerable categories. This global situation may not improve in the near future. This both increases the importance of the fellowship programmes, and requires careful attention to minimizing risk.

[See Recommendation 7](#)

**I3) Overarching Issue: Despite the overall very strong evidence that the programmes are highly relevant and effective, and enormous evidence for their impact, funding for the programmes is limited and in some cases vulnerable, diminishing the efficiency and sustainability of the programmes.**

The programmes currently operate on a very limited budget, making use of in-house resources efficiently – but also making compromises that reduce the long-term efficiency of the programmes (see also Conclusion 9). Furthermore, the evaluation found that many of the

greatest limitations of the programmes could be overcome with increased funding (see Conclusions 5, 6, 8, and 10). The programmes are dependent upon voluntary contributions from governments, and support from university partners that are also government funded. These sources could be vulnerable to economic downturns and changes in political priorities.

This financial vulnerability puts the long-term sustainability of the programmes in question. The relative lack of funding could be a product of low visibility of the programmes, low visibility of the OHCHR in general, or a general lack of global prioritization of Human Rights issues, in particular for minorities and indigenous peoples. See Recommendation 8.

**Overarching Conclusions 12 and 13 together represent the biggest challenges that the programmes face.**

Increasing violence against indigenous peoples and minorities continues despite significant improvement in many areas. In some cases, the violence is in the form of reprisals, directly linked to efforts to strengthen access to global human rights instruments. In others it is ongoing persecution, repression, and discrimination. Although this situation calls for greater investment in support for indigenous peoples and minorities rights, there is a lack of sufficient and secure funding to operate these highly relevant and effective programmes with maximum efficiency, or to expand in ways that could multiply their already substantial impact.

The programmes are extremely vulnerable to shifts in global funding priorities, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. Indigenous peoples and minorities stand to be among the most seriously affected by this pandemic, in the short and long term. There is a great need to secure support to address this serious and urgent human rights issue.

The challenges posed by strong external forces must be met with equally strong resistance. The Indigenous and Minorities Fellowships Programmes are making a vital contribution to the global indigenous peoples and minority rights movements against human rights violations. Securing greater visibility and financial support for these programmes would represent a huge step forward, and it would be a very cost-effective investment.

*The fellowship programmes are relatively low cost and low bureaucratic investment – not so much in comparison to the number of people that we help (OHCHR).*

\*

*The programme should have more funding, there needs to be more diversity within the UN. The UN has delegates and representatives, many come from positions of power and privilege and they are speaking on behalf of minority communities. We need more minority representation. (Male SF/MFP, Interview)*

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*The fellowship programme has been providing leadership to all of us in terms of how to support Indigenous youth, we are all trying to complement these efforts. We don't want to lose this. (UN agency representative)*

## 6. Recommendations

**The general overarching recommendation is that *the programmes should be strengthened wherever possible*.** This follows especially from Conclusions 1, 2, and 3 regarding the global importance of these programmes and their relevance, effectiveness, and impact, and Conclusions 12 and 13, regarding the major challenges the programmes, and the populations they serve, are facing. All of the recommendations in this section are aimed at reinforcing vulnerable areas of the programmes and building upon positive aspects. Recommendations 1 and 2 are presented in short form here. Please see Annex VI for a more detailed description of the pros and cons of various possible solutions.

### 1) Structure of the Programme:

***The current structure of the programmes, which involves bringing people to Geneva for an extended period of time in order to engage in practical as well as theoretical training, and networking, should be maintained. To make the programmes more effective, some aspects of this structure should be revisited.*** (Conclusions 4, 5, 6)

Annex VI outlines some alternatives that could allow the programmes to address the concern about length and intensity of the programmes and to balance that with considerations such as the numbers of fellows, programme content, and funding. These are not mutually exclusive, and different solutions might be better for the IFP and the MFP. All of these have potential advantages and disadvantages. The following points need careful consideration, also in relation to each other:

- *Length vs. numbers*

The balance between the length of the programmes, the number of fellows, and the content must be carefully considered. In particular, care must be taken not to reduce the impact, nor to further disadvantage the most marginalized communities.

- *University pre-programmes:*

The Pre-programme aspect of the IFP should be made as consistent as possible, both to ensure a more even starting point for all fellows, and to facilitate the group dynamic within the language groups. The most important barrier to implementing pre-programmes for the English and French language groups is financial. Ideally, these pre-programmes could be a collaboration between an academic institution and an OHCHR Regional office.

- *Interagency Cooperation:*

The OHCHR could collaborate with other UN organizations to offer an interagency programme.

**See also Annex VI.**

### 2) Senior Fellowship Programme:

***The Senior Fellowship Programme should continue and be better incorporated.*** (Conclusion 7)

The increased placement of former fellows in the country and regional offices in 2020 is likely to increase the national and regional impact of the fellowship programmes, and should be continued, including after the COVID-19 crises, where possible.

Unless other funding is secured, the Senior Fellowships will be scaled down when the regular fellowship is resumed. The Senior Fellowships should not replace the annual Indigenous and Minorities Fellowships that are held in Geneva. Both programmes should be made more visible, and possibilities for expanding the Senior Fellowship Programme without compromising the regular one, should be explored. The programmes are complementary, and can be mutually reinforcing; see also Recommendation 3 below.

In addition, the roles and duties of the fellows, and the length of time of their placement should be standardized and clearly communicated to the field offices, and others. A clear outline based on the experiences of the programme in 2020 could serve as the basis for further elaboration and communication.

### **3) Follow up**

***Follow-up and support for fellows when they return to their home countries should be strengthened.*** (Conclusion 8)

This will greatly improve the long-term effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the programmes. The following sub-recommendations would require relatively little financial investment relative to potential impact. They will require the investment of human resources. This could be integrated into the Senior Fellowships; see also recommendations 4 and 8.

- *Country and Regional Offices should be more consistently incorporated into the follow up process when fellows return to their countries.*

Even where there is not an opportunity for placement in the office, communication between former fellows and OHCHR/UN field offices should be ensured. Field offices are important points of contact for fellows in cases where support is needed (including threats of or actual reprisals, see below), it is important to ensure that these relationships are established. Former Fellows should be introduced to field offices as a valuable resource person within the country.

- *There should be increased facilitation of network-building among former fellows at national and regional levels*

The IPMS has already begun to facilitate network-building, in particular through Facebook sites. Support for networking at national and regional levels between former fellows would greatly enhance the long-term impact and effectiveness of the programmes.

- *Seed funding for on-the-ground projects should be made available*

It is recommended that, resources permitting, there should be a reserve of funds established to which former fellows can apply as seed funding for small local projects – in particular for training and information dissemination projects.

### **4) Logistic problems:**

***Problems that can be addressed with little financial investment should receive immediate attention. Those that require funds should be prioritized where possible to ensure efficient running of the programmes and enhance effectiveness and impact.*** (Conclusion 9)

- *Solutions or a back-up plan should be in place to ensure fellows receive stipends in Geneva.*

Possible alternatives to the current situation need further exploration. In the absence of solutions through UNOG for ensuring timely stipend payments for fellows, a small reserve of funds should be available for providing immediate payment to fellows in the case of

emergency, which will then be re-paid when their stipend arrives. Relying on programme managers' or other fellows' own money to provide this financial backup should be avoided.

- *Interpretation should be prioritized*

The multilingual aspect of the programmes is one of its strengths and should be maintained. This requires investment in interpretation. See Recommendation 8.

## **5) Staffing of the Programmes:**

***At least one additional professional staff member should be dedicated to the running of the programmes.*** (Conclusion 10)

This could be an equal partner to the current coordinator with shared responsibilities for different sections of the programmes, with division of labor based either on the coordinating aspect (i.e., logistics and content) or on the programmes (indigenous and minority). It could also be dedicated professional staff under the current coordinator. In either case, the support person should possess the requisite skills and not be in need of training, and should not be a short-term position such as a fellow or a volunteer. Another solution could be a small team of people dedicated to dealing with specific aspects of fellowship programmes, working closely with the programme coordinators. Advantages and disadvantages of this model would need to be explored.

An additional professional staff member(s) will increase the short- and long-term efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programs.

## **6) Gender and Disability issues**

***Specific focus on questions relating to gender and disability should be ongoing and enhanced within the programmes.*** (Conclusion 11)

Although gender balance, and gender equality, are already seen as strong points within the programmes, in multi-cultural programmes such as these issues can arise unexpectedly and interfere with group dynamics or cause other problems. A few such cases have occurred. It is recommended to have a training session very early in the programmes in which the issue of appropriate behavior and talk is addressed, to avoid any potential problems. It is also recommended that the reason for the focus is made clear. There should be ongoing attention throughout the fellowship period to potential gender specific issues, including safety, and to communication among the fellows.

A continuation of the strategy of actively recruiting people with disability and gender minorities is recommended; such groups are often victims of severe intersectional discrimination and would both benefit from the programme, and be advocates for greater equality within their communities and countries. The incorporation of specific sections within the programmes is strongly advised, and IPMS should develop simple guidelines on multiculturalism diversity gender and disability for the programme participants.

## **7) Reprisals**

***The issue of reprisals should be continually revisited to ensure that the optimal responses can be made in case of threats or actual reprisals.*** (Conclusion 12)

The increasing rate and severity of reprisals in recent years has been of great concern to IPMS and other OHCHR sections. Steps have already been taken in efforts to prevent, and to mitigate. The handling of reprisals against former fellows needs careful ongoing consideration involving the IPMS and top management of the OHCHR, in communication with UN bodies dedicated to dealing with reprisals. The following actions, most of which are already in place,

should be maintained and strengthened and in accordance with increasing incidence of reprisals.

- Information about reprisals is provided to fellows from the application stage, and is discussed at the time of acceptance into a programme.
- An extensive unit on reprisals is held early in the programme, including training on how to minimize risk and to handle indications of potential, or instances of, reprisals.
- Clear information is provided to Fellows about what giving a presentation at EMRIP the PFMI (for example) could mean, encouraging fellows to consider the implications
- Individuals that are identified as at risk should receive guidance and be in constant contact with an advisor.
- Clear protocols exist for dealing with actual reprisals
- IPMS provides support in building a solid regional network, including access to field offices, and a network of other former fellows – both in the country and in neighbouring countries, if quick exit is needed in the case of serious reprisals.
- Careful consideration is given to the link between social media and reprisals

## **8) Funding**

***Given the overall very strong agreement regarding the importance of the programmes, they need increased visibility and a greater commitment of funding.***

### **(Relevant to all conclusions)**

Given the extensive evidence for the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programmes, efforts should be made at all levels of the OHCHR to simultaneously increase visibility, secure greater funding and reinforce the staffing base. This includes increasing the visibility of the programmes to governments that might support through extra-budgetary contributions. The recent contribution by the Ford Foundation could be used as a motivation for other private funding sources.

These programmes are unique as they target directly beneficiaries, and are serving some of the least visible and most marginalized, vulnerable, and in some cases threatened, communities in the world. There is enormous evidence for the impact of both fellowship programmes, despite clear limitations and complications. The impact could be greatly reinforced, institutionalized and increased, through securing the commitment of more resources to the programmes. All options for increasing funding should be explored.

## **7. Annexes (Available upon request)**

**Annex I: Terms of Reference**

**Annex II: Table of Stakeholders interviewed**

**Annex III: Data collection tools**

**Annex IV: Documents consulted**

**Annex V: Survey data – graphs**

**Annex VI: Elaboration of Recommendation I**

**Management responses to the recommendations**

<b>Management response</b>		
<b>Evaluation title:</b> Evaluation of the OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme and OHCHR Minority Fellowship Programme		
<b>Structure of the Programme</b> <b>Recommendation 1:</b> The current structure of the programmes, which involves bringing people to Geneva for an extended period of time in order to engage in practical as well as theoretical training, and networking, should be maintained. To make the programmes more effective, some aspects of this structure should be revisited. (Conclusions 4, 5, 6)		
<b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted		
<b>Management comments:</b> When the COVID-19 situation allows, the Geneva-based Fellowship programmes will resume. Therefore, a good deal of the financial resources will be shifted back to Geneva and the Senior Fellowship Programme at field level will have to be reduced, though the aim is to maintain it to some extent in view of its large success during 2020-21 period. Field presences could also cost-share this programme as some have started to do (ROSEA, Moldova and ROSA). There will have to be a balance reached between the GVA-based programmes and the field-based fellowships.		
<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. To review the existing programmes taking a results-driven approach to determine the duration of the programme for maximizing impact and effectiveness.	IPMS/RoLENDB	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2022
2. To carry out a guidance note or study to identify needs for extra support for fellows with no prior experience and for preparatory course in particular for those who are from French speaking countries in Africa. Feasibility of options should be reviewed taking availability of financial resources into account.	IPMS/RoLENDB	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2022
<b>Senior Fellowship Programme</b> <b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Senior Fellowship Programme should continue and be better incorporated. (Conclusion 7)		
<b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Partially accepted, in view of potential financial implications that need to be met		
<b>Management comments:</b> With the current Senior Fellowship Programme deployed at country level, integration in wider OHCHR work and programmes has drastically improved. Most host offices in the field (e.g. OHCHR Regional & Country Offices, UNCTs and Peacekeeping Missions) expressed a wish that the Senior Fellowship Programme continue and be sustained financially. The two key actions identified below are largely dependent on financial and human resources available.		

As mentioned under recommendation 1, when COVID-19 situation allows, the Geneva-based Fellowship programmes will resume and therefore a good deal of the financial resources will be shifted back to Geneva and the Senior Fellowship Programme at field level will have to be reduced, though the aim is to keep it in a decent size in view of its large success during 2020-21 period. Field presences could also cost-share this programme as some have started to do (ROSEA, Moldova and ROSA). There will have to be a balance reached between the GVA-based programme and the field-based fellowships.

Key Action(s)	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. To review the goals and modality of the Senior Fellowship Programme in line with the goals of the IPMS to determine requirements for its sustainable implementation.	IPMS/RoLENDB with support of FOTCD/Field Presences and DEXREL	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2022
2. To ensure identified requirements (HR and financial) are properly reflected in the AWP/CP of the IPMS and when possible in field presences' AWP/CP.	IPMS/RoLENDB	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2022
<p><b>Follow up</b>  <b>Recommendation 3:</b> Follow-up and support for fellows when they return to their home countries should be strengthened. (Conclusion 8)</p>		
<p><b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted</p>		
<p><b>Management comments:</b>  Improvements have already taken place during 2021 with OHCHR field offices managing relationships with fellows in their country. Additionally, a formal network of former fellows has been established by former fellows, with the support of IPMS and an online platform has been created by the global network itself. It includes OHCHR former Indigenous and Minorities Fellows and until recently, coordination and consultation has taken place with the former Afro-descendants Fellows (Fellowship supported by ARDS) to include them in the platform (<a href="https://minorityfellows.net/">https://minorityfellows.net/</a>)</p> <p>Under Key action number 1, the development of a follow-up manual is proposed. A guidance note instead could also meet such objective.</p> <p>For IPMS the main follow-up objective is to ensure both the Section and Field presence maintain contact with, engage in activities and provide support when necessary to fellows after they have terminated their fellowship programme. This can also help preventing reprisals and, if they occur, to take action if required. PSMS will also be involved from its perspective in ensuring optimal administrative and human resource related follow-up and support to fellows.</p> <p>The Community of Practice meeting which has been institutionalized during 2021 along language groups (F, S, E) within the Senior Fellowship Programme has provided a regular feedback sharing of experiences, across both regions and linguistic groups.</p>		
Key Action(s)	Responsibility	Timeframe

1. To develop Follow-up Manual on Fellowship Programme by defining (i) the scope of follow-up, (ii) the system and modality, (iii) responsibility and (iv) a sustainable mechanism of communication for regular feedback and sharing it world-wide.	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2022
<p><b>Logistic problems</b>  <b>Recommendation 4:</b> Problems that can be addressed with little financial investment should receive immediate attention. Those that require funds should be prioritized where possible to ensure efficient running of the programmes and enhance effectiveness and impact. (Conclusion 9)</p>		
<p><b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted</p>		
<p><b>Management comments:</b>  The new OHCHR internal guidelines for fellowships should help better streamline the administrative processes. Timely delivery of stipends to fellows has been a systematic challenge in the past and improvements are expected.</p> <p>The study on multiple modalities of stipend payments, proposed as a key action, will be led by PSMS with the support of IPMS as proposed below by the evaluator. This is an administrative matter on which IPMS cannot take the lead.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Action(s)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsibility</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Timeframe</b></p>
1. To carry out a study to explore possibilities of multiple modality of payment of stipend for fellows and of provision of translation support in line with the UN Regulations and Rules.	PSMS with support by IPMS	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2022
<p><b>Staffing of the Programmes</b>  <b>Recommendation 5:</b> At least one additional professional staff member should be dedicated to the running of the programmes. (Conclusion 10)</p>		
<p><b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted (if sufficient funding is raised)</p>		
<p><b>Management comments:</b> This will depend on income generated by DEXREL and IPMS (there is no reassignment possible at this stage within IPMS)</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Action(s)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsibility</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Timeframe</b></p>
1. To review possibilities to assign one additional staff to increase capacity to provide sustainable and dedicated support for the Programme. Funding situation for additional funding needs to be reviewed for providing stable long term support.	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS and DEXREL	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2022
2. An increased fundraising effort will be undertaken by IPMS and DEXREL	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS and DEXREL	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2022
<p><b>Gender and Disability issues</b>  <b>Recommendation 6:</b> Specific focus on questions relating to gender and disability should be ongoing and enhanced within the programmes. (Conclusion 11)</p>		

<b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted		
<b>Management comments:</b> A training to Fellows on gender is already offered and sustained attention to this matter will continue. IPMS will enhance its measures to include more systematically fellows with disabilities in its programme.		
<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. To develop policy and guidelines for gender and disability inclusion in the programme.	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS and PPMES	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2022
2. To develop and design the modality for integrating training session in the early stage of the programme on gender and disability inclusion for enhanced awareness of fellows.	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS and PPMES	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2022
<b>Reprisals</b> <b>Recommendation 7:</b> The issue of reprisals should be continually revisited to ensure that the optimal responses can be made in case of threats or actual reprisals. (Conclusion I2)		
<b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Partially accepted (reservation on key actions)		
<b>Management comments:</b> IPMS will continue to work with concerned SPB, NYO and Civil Society Unit colleagues as well as external key stakeholders to prevent reprisals and to take action to protect fellows in case they are victims of reprisals and/or harassment.  Instead of adopting a specific policy for the Fellowship Programmes, OHCHR recommends to continue following existing OHCHR practices, mechanisms and policies in the field of reprisals and Human Rights Defenders. This approach has been adequate and effective so far and has avoided any form of duplication and/or confusion.		
<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. To continue relying on the Office's expertise, practice, mechanisms and policies, especially in working closely with SPB, NYO and Civil Society Unit colleagues as well as external key stakeholders to prevent reprisals and to take action to protect fellows in case they are victims of reprisals and harassment while seeking improvements when needed along the way	IPMS/RoLENDB with support by PSMS and PPMES	ongoing
<b>Funding</b> <b>Recommendation 8:</b> Given the overall very strong agreement regarding the importance of the programmes, they need increased visibility and a greater commitment of funding.		
<b>Management position on recommendation:</b> Accepted		

**Management comments:**

Since 2019 the Fellowship Programmes have gained visibility, including among Member States, civil society and Special Procedures mandate holders (in addition of course to indigenous peoples and minorities, themselves)

A second dedicated staff to the Fellowship Programmes would allow for committing much more work time to both visibility and fundraising, in coordination with the DEXREL and Communications teams.

<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1. To review the current funding arrangement of the programme to explore funding opportunities.	DEXREL with support by PSMS and IPMS/RoLENDB	2 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2022
2. To develop a new funding strategy under the lead of DEXREL for achieving improved visibility of the programme.	DEXREL with support by PSMS and IPMS/RoLENDB	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2022