

Project number	39915004
Title	Demokrati
Countries	DR Kongo, Kenya, Etiopien
Summary	<p>This study is about how faith-based approaches can add value to community-based democratic development. The purpose of the study it to deepen the understanding of how PMU and partners through a faith-based approach can add value to community-based democratic processes and democratic development.</p> <p>The study has focused on projects and programs linked to PMUs thematic area 'Democratic culture and governance' (Building Block 1 in PMUs thematic structure) in DR Congo and Ethiopia. It provides examples of how faith-based organizations linked to churches have approached democratic development, and exemplifies the resources and strengths they have at their disposal.</p> <p>The research methods used were; desk study of project documents and some related literature, interviews, focus group discussion and workshops with church leaders, project leaders and staff as well as project participants/beneficiaries in DR Congo, Ethiopia and Kenya and Sweden.</p> <p>Concept of democracy:  Democracy is perceived in many different ways; as something desirable, something unattained, something threatening, something imposed from a foreign power or as something that challenges and sometimes disqualifies old traditions and values. Democracy and democratic development becomes one more area in which donors assess recipient countries and decide what is good or bad. ☐</p> <p>Leaders and members:  Church leaders are important change agents, as they have respect and influence both within the church and in the community. But both leaders and members are important for change to happen. There has to be a connection between leaders and members.☐Church leaders can be motivated to work for good governance and democratic culture, but they also see challenges and fear losing control.☐Democracy as a concept needs to be unpacked to be understood and embraced. ☐</p> <p>Structures:☐  Churches have structures that can be used both as channels and as support for democratic endeavors. There are organizational structures; for decision-making and leadership. There are various regular meeting places for different groups in the church. There are physical structures; church buildings, schools etc. There are also relational structures; within and between church denominations; national and international. Umbrella bodies of different denominations have a particular advantage in working for democratic development as they embody diversity. ☐</p> <p>Arenas:☐  Churches have access to several arenas both within their internal structures and externally. The projects in DRC and Ethiopia intentionally used different arenas in their strategy to spread and mobilise for good governance and democratic culture; the church arenas, village presence and legitimacy, media, political arena. ☐</p> <p>Message and meaning:☐  There are notions in church teachings that are motivational for the church and for the individual member, such as being 'salt and light', 'leading exemplary life'. The church provides the believer with a context that gives meaning and motivation. When speaking democracy in the church there is a need to use a language the church understands. ☐</p>
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for a continued exploration of democracy flavored by faith and for supporting and pursuing democratic endeavors.</li> </ul>

- *Unpack the elements of democracy.* Democracy is a contentious word with many different meanings. Unpacking the elements of democracy as you interact with others will facilitate the cooperation and change. ☐
- *Start at home,* with your own church or organization and context. Then you can speak from experience and with conviction. ☐
- *Be involved and engaged in the community,* and share resources with the community; knowledge, materials, church buildings.☐ ☐
- *Be practical. Democracy needs to be experienced. You cannot cultivate democratic culture only in theory.* ☐
- *Initiate theological reflection* on elements of democracy and democratic culture, to deepen the understanding within your own organization, church and social context, but also the perceptions others may have. ☐
- *Embrace diversity and complexity.* Understand and accept that there are multiple versions and interpretations of democracy and let this inform and enrich your practice. This could mean finding ways to increase awareness about, and also challenge, your own perceptions of democracy. ☐
- *Find focus.* Identify concrete and focused entry-points for forwarding democratic culture. Example: good governance in the church and beyond, child rights, minority rights, women's rights, ethics. ☐
- *For church development and church mobilization.* Be aware, and acknowledge, that there are multiple categories of leaders and members in a church. Who has a voice? Who has not?
- *For project planning, follow-up and reporting* on democracy projects, it is advisable that the project organizers develop their own project indicators, relevant to their context, as this can help focus the strategy, and also contribute to new knowledge about how to plan and implement a democracy project. ☐
- *Create new knowledge;* about planning, monitoring and evaluating democracy-forwarding projects by initiating learning groups with partners.