

UNDP IN JORDAN

Jordan has invested heavily in its people; its performance on social indicators is very good compared to other countries with similar incomes. Yet further progress is hindered by a series of challenges, including economic stress; high unemployment, especially among young people and women; and environmental degradation. All of these are exacerbated by adverse conditions in the surrounding region, most notably the Syrian crisis.

UNDP democratic governance programmes have stressed enhancing the accountability of key public

institutions and promoting people's interactions with the State. Environment programmes have aimed to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework. Through socioeconomic programmes, UNDP has helped to realize national priorities related to poverty reduction, with a resilience component to respond to the mass influx of Syrian refugees. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2013 to 2017.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2013-2015: \$34.6 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2013-2015



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2013-2015 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the evaluation found UNDP's effectiveness in Jordan was mixed. The governance programme made some contribution to political and institutional reform. Examples include work with the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the property tax management system. The IEC effectively supervised parliamentary elections in 2013 and 2016. Voter turnout was much higher compared to the 2010 elections, which had low turnout and low public confidence. Interventions to bolster the capacities of political representatives, encourage citizen participation, and improve the relationship between citizens and representatives were less effective.

Under the environment programme, UNDP supported the preparation of policies, regulations and guidelines, but key stakeholders did not always find these relevant. The programme was overly project oriented, failing to cohesively group initiatives with similar objectives and partners.

UNDP aided the Government in developing strategies to address poverty reduction and food security, but implementation remained a challenge, including due to the pressures of the refugee crisis. Local interventions in a number of priority areas yielded mixed results. The cash-for-work programme, for example, increased incomes and a sense of community belonging, but the

number of beneficiaries has been limited. On vocational training and youth employment, UNDP took a demand-driven approach, learning from an earlier pilot project in which only a third of the participants joined the labour market. This time, the initiative identified labour market needs beforehand and applied on-the-job training. Around 90 percent of participants landed full-time jobs.

The Government integrated the development needs of communities hosting Syrian refugees within the humanitarian response; UNDP was instrumental in coordinating a resilience framework contributing to aid coordination and effectiveness. It is not clear, however, what will happen to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation's Secretariat for the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria crisis when external support comes to an end.

Gender mainstreaming results varied. In the environment programme, most interventions paid little attention to targeting women. Some positive contributions to women's empowerment occurred through the emergency employment programme.

UNDP and the Government share a common strategic framework for realizing the national development agenda, but the country programme suffered from various programme components being implemented in isolation. Aiming to shift from a project-based approach,

UNDP reduced the number of projects in the most recent programme cycle, yet it still consisted largely of individual projects.

Results achieved under larger interventions with explicit exit strategies and capacity-building components, such as in the governance and environment programmes, are likely to be sustained. The anti-corruption project has buy-in from key national partners, for example. Most environment interventions are funded by the Global Environment Facility, which mandates exit strategies and government co-financing.

Strong internal management practices put overall programme budget utilization rates above the corporate threshold for satisfactory utilization. Some challenges stemmed from frequent staff turnover, however, which interrupted implementation and resulted in loss of institutional memory. Coordination with other development

actors was not optimal, particularly in areas where other agencies have comparative technical strengths.

UNDP has benefited from large flows of humanitarian funding, and leveraged funding from bilateral partners and other sources for its refugee response and the rest of the programme, achieving a 130 percent increase in programme expenditure. Yet given projected decreases in funding flows, UNDP needs to re-examine some assumptions on partnerships. Stronger results-based management practices and skills could enhance fundraising potential.

Development stakeholders agreed that UNDP's comparative strengths are its neutrality, flexibility, responsiveness, local presence and strong delivery channels. UNDP needs to do more to build on these strengths to form and leverage strategic partnerships with governmental, non-governmental and donor partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Jordan's governance and socioeconomic reforms are unfinished business. The focus of the UNDP programme on democratic governance and public sector reforms, socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability will thus continue to be relevant into the next programme cycle. To increase its impact, UNDP should establish the causal relationships and intersections between the development challenges it aims to address, such as the connection between unemployment and poverty, between good governance and economic reform, and between environmental degradation and poverty.
- The Syrian refugee situation is likely going to extend over a longer period than was initially foreseen, and UNDP should continue to plan for this.
- The country office should prioritize gender mainstreaming in the next country programme. This should include preparing a gender strategy and a related implementation framework.
- The UNDP role as lead UN agency for coordination in Jordan needs to be strengthened.
- UNDP should use its comparative advantage with the Government to continue advocacy on sensitive issues, such as wider engagement of civil society in programme interventions.
- The country office should implement its gender strategy and correct the imbalance between men and women professional staff.
- While recognizing that a reduction in field office staff is inevitable, this kind of decision cannot solely answer to immediate financial considerations, but must also take into account UNDP's positioning as a privileged interlocutor for local authorities, its proximity to the poor it must serve as a priority, as well as future financing opportunities, for example, those that should ultimately result from the REDD+ or Peace Consolidation Programme process.
- The country office must strengthen its partnerships and improve its efficiency by working on its institutional culture, which is too bureaucratic and fragmented.
- At both the headquarters and country level, UNDP must improve its basket funds management skills and, to this end, reconsider some of the issues related to the management of these funds
- The UNDP country office must reorganize its monitoring and evaluation resources to provide for better synergy among M&E staff and greater independence of the evaluation function.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP's Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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