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UNDP IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone has gone through significant transition in the past 14 years, recovering from the brutal civil war that ravaged the country from 1991 to 2002.

UNDP has provided assistance to democratic institutions; public sector reform, local governance and service delivery; access to justice and human rights; youth

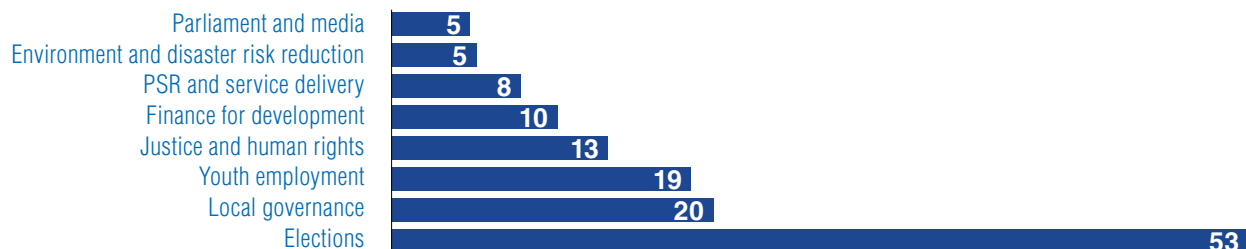
development and employment; finance for development and environmental cooperation for peacebuilding. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2008 to 2012.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008–2012: \$133.6 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2008-2012



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2008-2012 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has been a dependable, responsive partner in crucial sectors, playing a central role in the transition from a post-conflict to a development phase. Support to elections has been central and sustained, with the 2012 election setting a standard for peaceful, fair, transparent and credible polls. UNDP assistance to Parliament buttressed these gains and filled basic capacity gaps. Public sector reform and local governance activities focused on expanding capacities to reduce conflict, manage the equitable delivery of public services, and improve service delivery. Through review and rationalizing, civil service positions were reduced, and performance appraisal and modernized payroll systems were introduced.

At the local government level, UNDP, with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, backed fiscal decentralization, local level service delivery and the implementation of a cadastral programme to enable the more systematic application of property taxes. UNDP was the first donor partner to engage with the complexities of public administration reform and local development. This encouraged others to enter the arena, but a more strategic and cohesive approach would have enhanced programme effectiveness.

Support to the Human Rights Commission, work

on women’s property rights and the passage of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act are among the indicators of UNDP’s successful support to a fair justice system and respect for human rights. UNDP established a track record of undertaking the first generation of projects, which were then funded by other donors. One example was the establishment of Sierra Leone’s first Legal Aid Scheme, which informed the development of the National Legal Aid Scheme and Legal Aid Act 2012. In 2011, the DFID-funded Justice Sector Development Programme took over responsibility for supporting the pilot of the scheme.

Since 2010, UNDP’s access to justice programme has prioritized legal support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Special ‘Saturday Courts’ were specifically mandated to consider cases. For passage of the landmark 2012 Sexual Offences Act, UNDP provided capacity-building support for parliamentarians, seconded drafting experts to the Ministry of Justice and conducted significant advocacy. UNDP has almost exclusively targeted the prosecution side of sexual and gender-based violence cases, however, rather than ensuring the free and fair application of due process.

Youth employment is a critical ingredient for con-

tinued peace. While UNDP activities were relevant, a first-generation of projects to assist youth were scattered and poorly implemented. By 2010, the focus had shifted from employability to better linking training with business development and self-employment. Outreach to non-governmental partners, such as microfinance institutions, has been innovative, but there is a need to better monitor different partners, including towards considering replication and upscaling. UNDP helped the Government streamline its youth-oriented architecture and contributed to the development of the National Employment Policy, the Youth Employment Strategy and the 2012 Youth Report—the first of its kind. But programmes had a very limited impact on job creation.

Under the finance for development programme, UNDP contributed to some degree to coordination capacity, and took on the role of administrator of funds when sectors were fragile and capacities were weak.

The response to the UN joint vision priority of environmental cooperation for peacebuilding has been very modest, entailing a number of projects with finance from a variety of donors. These were designed to strengthen national capacities to mainstream environmental concerns into development plans and cope with natural disasters. UNDP collaborated specifically with the

Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Environment Programme and UN Habitat to address issues of biodiversity, land management, renewable energy and conservation, and tackle the nexus between housing and poverty. While projects were relevant, this area will require more concentrated and cohesive programming.

Donor funds largely drove UNDP programme priorities, leading to the spread of capacity and resources into areas not central to the transition, although some sharpening of focus in 2013-2014 augurs well. Insufficient attention was paid to careful programme and project design involving needs analysis and capacity assessment to ensure more relevant, targeted inputs in terms of capacity-building. Monitoring appeared spotty except for high-profile programmes such as elections.

UNDP provided operational support, such as salaries and physical rehabilitation of institutional facilities, that was crucial during early post-conflict recovery. But with a marked evolution towards a need for higher level technical assistance, it must be alert to the risks that could make it difficult to move into a more substantive role. Some stakeholders already believe that UNDP is lacking in terms of substantive guidance and policy content. Moving forward, it will need to acquire additional capacity to engage in sustained policy dialogue in priority areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- With the departure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, and given its track record and demonstrated results, UNDP should take on a lead role in the governance and security sector reform areas as an integral part of the One UN team.
- UNDP should also prioritize carefully and not spread itself too thinly. It should pay particular attention to transitioning from a programme that has provided operational support appropriate to addressing post-conflict needs, to one that focuses on the transfer and exchange of expertise and technology.
- The Resident Representative and the Country Director should take on higher profile advisory roles. The Country Office should have access to a team of senior advisers for this purpose.
- UNDP needs to urgently undertake an internal strategic analysis to determine key areas most likely to present threats to stability in the medium term and help devise preventive development interventions.
- In the access to justice sector, it is strongly recommended that UNDP supplement its current heavy emphasis on the prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence to improve access to justice more generally, thereby ensuring due process for both plaintiffs and defendants.
- In the critical area of youth employment, UNDP should collaborate closely with the International Labour Organization and other partners, and work on bringing together potential employers, the World Bank and African Development Bank as well as key ministries and commissions, to develop a more systematic and coherent strategy for the creation of jobs in the country while ensuring safety and standards.
- In order to consolidate peace and stability, UNDP should encourage the Government to further strengthen local governance and consider extending the pilot activities throughout the country.
- A clear internal policy should spell out measures to improve programme design, monitoring and evaluation.

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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