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UNDP IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire has experienced severe political instability since a coup in 1999, followed by civil war. While the situation has improved, work towards national reconciliation and security continues. Long economic deterioration and isolation have worsened poverty rates; unemployment and food insecurity are persistently high.

UNDP's programme in Côte d'Ivoire has focused on poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including in strengthening the HIV/

AIDS response as well as sustainable environmental management. A second emphasis has been governance, namely, reinforcement of public administration and local governance, the promotion of the private sector, peacebuilding and crisis prevention. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2013.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2011: \$179.6 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2011



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2011 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP demonstrated a great capacity to adapt during the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. Development interventions have been consistently aligned to evolving national priorities, including new efforts to fight poverty, crisis prevention and recovery, and governance initiatives. Successes are largely due to support provided to central and local governments in terms of frameworks and policy tools, which guided poverty reduction and national development planning as well as sectoral advances in areas including HIV/AIDS, employment and education.

In the fight against poverty and to achieve the MDGs, the most significant results came from the school meal programme, where school canteens were set up in food insecure areas. Tangible improvements resulted in food security (especially among children and, indirectly, parents) and school enrolment, especially for girls. This initiative, rightly regarded as a 'good practice', has attracted the interest of other countries in the region; Togo has implemented a similar model.

The strategy for income-generating activities was not always effective. Results were mostly positive for projects that focused on women and women's groups, but less convincing for the reintegration of former combatants. The absence of a holistic approach, the use of overly flexible criteria in the selection of beneficiaries and implementation partners, and the modest level of funding awarded to these projects, which tended to maintain a culture

of dependency, sometimes compromised sustainability.

Work on environmental protection resulted in some policy updates, such as on integrated water resources management, but implementation was hindered by resource constraints. Programmes also stopped short of tackling urgent structural problems such as land tenure issues and relationships with neighbouring countries.

A notable governance achievement was the successful organization of the 2010 presidential elections, despite a difficult context. This built on UNDP technical support to the Independent Electoral Commission and its assistance with an enduring dialogue between political parties and civil society. Difficulties were encountered with some donors on the management of funds for the electoral process, on reporting, and on administrative inefficiencies caused by factors beyond the control of the country office, such as changes in the dates of the elections. Another important step was UNDP's leadership in launching a process of decentralization in 2006 that has led to legislation devolving power to local authorities.

In crisis prevention and recovery, interventions to rehabilitate infrastructure, expand access to basic social services and provide income-generating activities improved living conditions and safety in communities. They restored an atmosphere of trust and strengthened social cohesion, especially in the west, where a sense of abandonment was felt after humanitarian organizations

left the country. The resurgence of conflicts in some regions, however, has threatened and sometimes even destroyed achievements related to infrastructure and the resettlement of internally displaced persons.

A gender policy ensured that gender issues were considered in all UNDP programmes and projects. But further efforts are required in terms of the participation of women in the country's decision-making and representation processes and bodies. Efforts to increase awareness on human rights have led to the creation of an entity responsible for human rights, but more needs to be done to prevent and punish human rights violations.

An outreach strategy adopted by UNDP from 2008 as a response to the crisis involved opening local field offices throughout the country. This was one of its most effective innovations, optimizing value for money. Involving local partners in project implementation and even monitoring increased efficiency, and helped achieve expected outcomes without generating additional costs. The strategy allowed activities to continue despite an uncertain and unpredictable environment. But some duplication and redundancy occurred, and the scope of activities remained modest compared to needs.

UNDP played an important role in the coordination of aid, yet strategic coordination was essentially non-ex-

istent among UN entities, and the search for synergies and partnerships in the field had mixed results.

A strategy for mobilizing resources during the period of crisis drew heavily on in-country donors and was effective at that time. Yet international aid now seems to be shifting towards direct budgetary support for the Government. The unpredictability of resources hinders effective programme planning and threatens sustainability. Without a systematic resource mobilization plan in place, the search for funds may occur at the expense of strategic advisory activities.

Throughout a protracted political crisis, UNDP was virtually the sole development partner remaining in Côte d'Ivoire. As Côte d'Ivoire moves towards recovery, the Country Office should assess its strengths and comparative advantages. By using its network of expertise and its position as a neutral multilateral agency, it is well placed to initiate national dialogue on fundamental issues such as job creation, the reform of government and public institutions, and social cohesion, among other issues. It can seek strategic interventions and use limited resources as a catalyst, coupled with advocacy for other development partners to replicate successful initiatives on a larger scale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support the Ivorian Government to ensure its transition towards development.
- Maintain a focus on well-defined areas of concentration, making the most of UNDP strengths, focusing on budget-friendly activities at the strategic level and activities at the operational level, and using resources in a catalytic manner.
- Pay greater attention to the management of natural resources and environmental protection.
- Play a more proactive role in coordinating aid, including by establishing a proper collaboration strategy with all UN agencies, with a joint action plan should another crisis arise. UNDP should play an intermediary role between the Government and all of its financial partners to ensure that aid is coordinated efficiently, and that better distribution and complementarity in the roles of each partner occur.
- Rethink the strategy for mobilizing resources so that it becomes an integral part of planning activities, and more predictable and less time consuming for the programme, to the detriment of more strategic activities.
- Take advantage of the transformative potential of the crisis so that UNDP can address the needs of communities, while also considering aspects of gender.
- Rethink the intervention strategy in the field. Choose a limited number of pilot interventions and adopt a holistic approach, based on preliminary studies and rigorous criteria for the choice of projects, service providers and beneficiaries, to produce lasting results, focusing on quality over quantity.
- Ensure greater visibility, including through a communication policy covering all programme stages.
- Pay more attention to ensuring that actions have lasting effects.
- Improve the functioning of operations in order to relieve the impact of bureaucracy and address the delays in disbursement of funds.

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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