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UNDP IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador in recent years has slowly advanced its human development, constrained by the persistence of inequality, poverty and territorial imbalances. It struggles with a deep and growing problem of violence and crime, and extreme environmental vulnerability as evidenced by several natural disasters. It has remained a highly centralized state, local government is weak and there has been sustained political polarization. Nevertheless, the

completion of three peaceful electoral processes points to a consolidation of democracy.

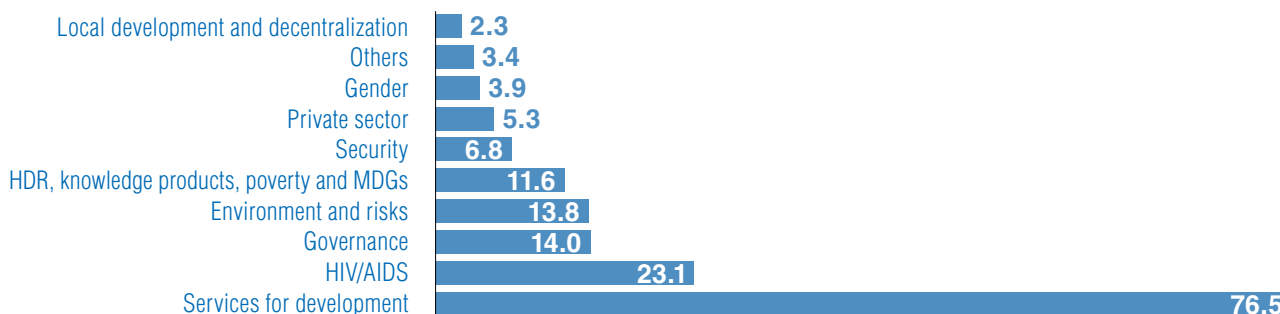
UNDP programmes have spanned support for governance, poverty reduction, the environment, risk management and natural disasters, and HIV/AIDS. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2010: \$134 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010



PROGRAMME BUDGET BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2010 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP made a number of contributions to sociopolitical development. Substantive contributions through governance support have been widely recognized by national actors, and include the creation of spaces for political dialogue on key issues such as political and electoral reform, taxation, economic and social policies, security and local development. UNDP contributed significantly to a better understanding of citizen security as a factor of development. The creation of the Economic and Social Council marked a milestone as the first space for permanent institutional dialogue.

Tangible contributions to policies for poverty reduction and, to a lesser extent, migration, built on knowledge products advocating human development. But implementation has been constrained by the lack of sustained support for building new capacities. UNDP advanced the incorporation of gender perspectives in its work, although the degree varied from substantial to cases where there was little concrete analysis of the drivers of gender equality and strategies to overcome them.

The environment portfolio contributed to climate

change mitigation and the reduction of ozone-depleting substances, and to a lesser degree, to progress on biodiversity, water quality and the integrated management of ecosystems. Interventions were aimed mainly at strengthening the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Challenges included excessive dependence on the resources of the Global Environment Facility, the need to promote sustainable development based on territorial planning, and the need to integrate environmental issues across UNDP programmes.

Contributions varied in the arenas of risk management and natural disasters. Emergency assistance interventions were timely and highly responsive. But effectiveness in recovery and rehabilitation processes was uncertain. In disaster management planning, UNDP has been relatively effective, but with limited sustainability.

On HIV/AIDS, UNDP backed an integrated and multisector response, helped position the issue as a national priority, and promoted respect for the rights of people with HIV. National capacities were strengthened in the central Government and civil society.

UNDP is appreciated for impartiality; the consistency and robustness of its analyses; the technical skills of its staff; and the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of its fund management procedures. Several factors have unfavourably affected its contributions, however. Levels of direct support to civil society have been insufficient, while a focus on the executive branch has limited connections with the legislative and other levels of government.

UNDP integrated South-South cooperation in different programme components, but despite its enormous potential, did not properly manage knowledge generated. In general, while knowledge produced by UNDP is high in quality, it tended to stay in small, mostly elite circles. Knowledge management faces many weaknesses and gaps. Systematizing experiences was satisfactory in the area of governance, but deficient in local development programmes, and varied in the environmental portfolio.

Important weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems prevented UNDP from obtaining evidence on the real impact of interventions, objectively demonstrating their effectiveness and coverage of the needs of vulnerable populations, and pursuing institutional learning.

Continued reductions in core and bilateral funds and

the gradual increase in co-financing by the Government merits deep reflection on the implications of this new equilibrium and the exploration of new modalities of financing. A key issue is that specialized technical staff members, who generated much added value, were funded with project funds. This puts at risk the continuity of a substantive technical contribution. Technical staff also faced difficult choices between operational work burdens and time-consuming requirements for strategic policy analysis and interaction with key actors.

The strategic relevance of UNDP was high in most areas. It focused on national priorities and responded to emerging demands without losing focus and programmatic coherence. However, after the 2009 change of Government ushered in a search for a model of economic and political life, UNDP, given its comparative advantages, had opportunities that were not sufficiently exploited. It faces challenges in developing new modalities of support aligned with new public management priorities, including those related to national leadership, institutional support in the medium term, engagement with actors at all levels, and more comprehensive management of the environment and natural risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform an organizational/institutional diagnosis that includes a process of reflection and a strategic debate on key issues of internal management and external positioning.
- Prioritize progress towards development of a strategy for long-term national capacity-building in accordance with UNDP guidelines.
- Solve deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation system.
- Promote a greater institutional approach with the Vice Ministry of Development Cooperation; contribute to local development, including in terms of political dialogue around decentralization; incorporate current and potential State compacts (fiscal, security, etc.) in advocacy; and strengthen institutions linked to gender equality.
- Optimize, consolidate and advance achievements in terms of South-South cooperation.
- Formulate, together with the other UN agencies, basic standards for interagency programmes on key issues such as planning, monitoring and evaluation, visibility, communication and coordination with counterparts.
- Prioritize mainstreaming of gender, environment and local development.
- Expand the use of existing knowledge and improve knowledge management through steps including a knowledge management strategy and greater capacity in the knowledge management unit.
- In work on poverty reduction, continue to support the application of human development approaches
- Consolidate and expand governance results, including by prioritizing capacity-building for civil society, establishing more institutionalized relationships with various national actors, increasing the participation of central government agencies in local initiatives, and strengthening support on justice and security.
- Build synergies between various environmental issues and between different work areas of UNDP, considering sustainable development and risk management holistically.
- Continue assistance to overcome the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

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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