

UNDP IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is a lower middle-income country that made progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But after a period of improvement, poverty rose in 2006. Development achievements are vulnerable to environmental challenges and natural disasters, armed struggles and persistent inequality. The positive effects of active representative democracy, a strong civil society movement, and a decentralization process are reduced by

ongoing allegations of corruption and a political party system that has not been fully established.

UNDP programmes have backed MDG achievement and poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and the environment, and crisis prevention and recovery. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2009.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2007: \$66 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2007



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2007 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP was well aligned with its own corporate as well as government priorities in the Philippines. It drew on its neutrality to operate skillfully in sensitive areas, including to help rationalize governance activities, and pursued innovations such as expanding support for crisis prevention and peacebuilding across the country. A key advantage has been in advocacy, which could be further enhanced around a number of important issues, such as the human security approach in crisis prevention.

Considerable achievements in advocacy for the MDGs included their incorporation into budgetary and statistical processes. The Philippines Human Development Reports have been influential in informing national debates and providing indicators for measuring human security. An early intervention to strengthen the micro-finance sector, now expanded by existing banks, was particularly successful and led to strong growth in the client base for three institutions.

Other assistance enhanced the capabilities of the national commission responsible for indigenous peoples' affairs, but it failed to attract support for a development fund, and issues arose regarding the location of the commission within the government structure.

UNDP contributed to agenda-setting in three areas of governance: justice and human rights, public administration and political development. Achievements included

a medium-term action plan to improve access to justice for the poor and marginalized, a national action plan for human rights as part of a rights-based approach to development, and most significantly, mobilization and support for the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and a related national action plan. Other accomplishments included introducing the MDGs in city planning and enhancing citizen participation, advocacy and monitoring.

Despite its achievements, the governance portfolio took on too many themes, activities and partners. In 2007, the programme focus narrowed to support human rights agencies and mechanisms. The new focus simplified the portfolio, enhanced government ownership and included the rights of disadvantaged women. The abrupt change from the previous focus, however, left a number of successful initiatives without an exit strategy and reduced the productive involvement of civil society organizations.

Results in the energy and environment area were mixed, although it had the largest financial resources and a large number of projects. One key contribution was the development of a framework to coordinate environmental policy with a series of strategies, actions and a legislative agenda that has already influenced government priorities and UNDP programme management. UNDP has also provided continual support for meeting obligations

under international environmental treaties.

South-South cooperation in environmental management of East Asian seas has seen several policy achievements, including a sustainable development strategy and integrated coastal management at specific sites. Support to land- and marine-protected areas made progress but difficulties remain in financing protected areas and identifying alternative livelihoods for affected persons. Assistance with policies and activities to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency saw significant progress.

Despite difficulties in completing a national plan for disaster risk management, there was enhanced cooperation among technical agencies and formalization of early warning systems through local government resolutions.

UNDP assistance to crisis prevention and recovery in Mindanao attracted major external funding and was generally effective in involving communities in rights-based peace and development efforts. Several local governments have established conflict transformation and peacebuilding structures. But income-generating results have been inconclusive, and poverty is still a major source of exclusion. There are built-in obstacles to women's participation, including a strengthening of traditional decision-making. UNDP has only recently developed a gender strategy to address these issues.

Application of gender perspectives was uneven across programmes. Many activities had more gender-disaggregated data, but gender issues were often not addressed

in analysis or work plans. Gender training was not fully successful in incorporating mainstreaming into management structures and processes. Similarly, although the language of a rights-based approach increasingly appears in programme documentation, application varied.

Although the country office continued to be involved in UNDP regional initiatives, with substantial results, there have been some missed opportunities for South-South cooperation, for example, in sharing experiences in the Human Development Report process, and in conflict prevention and resolution.

Some issues related to country programme management. Annual work plans often appeared after the year has started. Hybrid arrangements were developed to facilitate the mainstreaming of project management offices, but such changes still need preparation time. Record-keeping on programme activities was poor. Efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation capacity and systems had not yet addressed the quality of results frameworks.

Programme flexibility and innovation needed to be matched by greater resource mobilization, especially in the MDG and governance areas. UNDP could further leverage its policy work through partnering around the recent trend for policy-based lending by multilateral institutions. Since a key constraint on policy implementation is a lack of financial resources, the organization could also extend work to identify innovative financing

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should build on its achievements in institutionalizing the MDGs in government planning and budget systems.
- Re-open dialogue with cluster areas in governance that were terminated when the focus of the practice area was changed and reconsider a role in supporting political reform that would allow greater participation of the poor.
- Clearly define priorities for energy and environment activities around the environment and natural resource policy framework; seek a greater convergence of activities across practice areas for disaster risk management, with consideration of the coordination role with a dedicated staff member being taken by the crisis prevention and recovery practice area.
- Maximize the contribution to peacebuilding in Mindanao and other conflict areas.
- Establish mechanisms to generate and implement synergies across practice areas.
- Learn from the role of private-public partnerships in programme development and implementation.
- Maintain and strengthen the participation of civil society organizations in the country programme.
- Be more systematic in the generation and use of knowledge products.
- Enhance internal management structures to augment the impact of gender initiatives.
- Continue to improve monitoring and evaluation systems to provide feedback for programme management, including related to gender, a rights-based approach and capacity-building activities.

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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