

UNDP IN JORDAN

Jordan has made significant development progress, achieving macroeconomic stability and transforming the structure of its economy—now one of the strongest in the Arab region. The country has also intensified its efforts to make human development a national priority, with some success. Significant regional disparities in human development remain, however. Unemployment, especially among youth, is a major concern. Dependence on the markets of the neighbouring countries, scarce natural resources and high population growth resulting

from successive migrations reflecting the political situation in the region have all proved to be major constraints on development efforts.

UNDP has provided support for governance, including administrative reform; poverty reduction; community development; decentralization; environmental protection; and information and communications technology. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2007.

TOTAL PROGRAMME BUDGET, 1998-2007: \$42.3 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1998-2007



PROGRAMME BUDGET BY THEMATIC AREA, 1998-2007 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In collaboration with national partners, UNDP made several contributions to development results in Jordan. It took the lead in establishing the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group to coordinate aid between bilateral and multilateral donors and the Government, and played a catalytic role in attracting and leveraging donor support. It was pivotal in coordinating development interventions as a leader in the United Nations Country Team.

UNDP enjoyed a good reputation and relationship with the Government as a politically neutral agency. It was instrumental in supporting the strengthening of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation as the government agency responsible for coordinating and planning development initiatives. It served as an effective facilitator in supporting the Government in undertaking or joining regional development initiatives, particularly in environmental protection and management.

UNDP support was relatively strong in the governance sector, encompassing improvements in institutional development in Parliament, greater capacities to act against corruption and the creation of the first National Youth Strategy. Less progress was evident in having an effect on poverty reduction. Through overall community development, a strategic approach was taken to issues such as poverty reduction and environ-

mental protection. Both up- and downstream activities demonstrated the links between these two areas, and more generally, with governance.

Although decentralization has been a main focus and priority of the Government of Jordan, this goal was not integrated in project activities. The mainstreaming of both gender and human rights remained somewhat incomplete, and challenges arose in encouraging citizen participation. While some inroads were made in promoting the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations at the community level, UNDP has yet to expand collaborative efforts and partnerships with organizations without an official designation.

In leveraging funds and promoting development goals, UNDP fostered partnerships among various government agencies, donors and other stakeholders. Some constraints emanated from the complex issues facing the country, however, as well as from the interests and priorities of other players, including the Government, bilateral donors and, in particular, those with more extensive resources to invest in Jordan. Efforts may still be needed to link specific interventions.

Among UNDP programmes, issues arose from the fact that some had numerous and scattered projects. They were often focused on capacity-building and training

without strategically linking these efforts to longer-term institutional and organizational development. Exit and sustainability strategies were not integrated consistently.

While UNDP made relatively small contributions compared with the Government and other donors, the potential for sustainability was there, especially given the close working relationship with Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. Already, the Ministry's oversight of development activities has demonstrated that the Government is in a position to adopt and expand successful projects. The self-defined role of UNDP primarily as a catalyst and facilitator of development helps focus its strengths and contributions mainly in terms of policy dialogue, policy advice and advocacy, and successful pilot projects.

In recent years, UNDP has done an excellent job of strengthening staff capacity through courses and training in English, presentation and communication skills, and gender mainstreaming. Reprofiting the Country Office and implementing regular meetings involving both programme and operations staff has contributed

to strengthening intra-office communications. Effective implementation of the in-house learning system has generally strengthened management and leadership skills. Some concerns remain, however, about linking these advances to further training and capacity development in strategic thinking as part of institutionalizing a more holistic approach to programme development.

Monitoring and evaluation have not been fully integrated at either the programme or project levels. Efforts to undertake joint monitoring exercises with partners and integrate these into evaluations of outcomes and impact would be valuable. Special attention needs to be focused on adopting inclusive approaches and strengthening national counterparts' abilities in this regard.

Moving forward, articulating an overall strategic vision underpinning UNDP's programmes should help in further demonstrating the strategic positioning of the organization. This should be considered with regard to medium- and long-term goals, and closely aligned with Jordan's aspiration to achieve a strong knowledge-based economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen the strategic positioning and image of UNDP as a neutral player through effective dialogue and partnerships with a range of civil society organizations, private sector organizations and local communities.
- Strengthen the comparative and institutional advantage of UNDP by linking projects and activities with regional initiatives and relevant South-South Cooperation networks.
- Strengthen development results through a coherent strategy and holistic approach to intersections and overlap in the three thematic areas.
- Enhance the strategic focus on improving human development.
- Pursue systematic, gender-sensitive and consensus-building approaches to human rights issues.
- Explore the main development needs identified in the 2004 Jordan National Human Development Report as a programming guide.
- Strategize media messages, advocacy initiatives and campaigns to complement each other, and to reflect and strengthen UNDP institutional advantages, particularly the human rights-based approach.
- Promote the catalyst role and comparative advantage of UNDP as a knowledge broker and neutral agency supporting the human rights-based approach to development.
- Leverage the strategic position of UNDP in the United Nations Country Team and the Donor/Lender Coordinating Group, including for enhancing dialogue among key donors to mobilize resources.
- Develop strategies and approaches for more effective links between up- and downstream levels.
- Connect exit strategies with strategic entry points for institutional and capacity development.
- Consider and integrate options for sustainability into project design.
- Explore opportunities for joint evaluations.
- Integrate effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Conduct assessments or outcome evaluations at early stages.
- Correlate evaluative evidence to selected variables that determine the nature and intensity of intermediate and longer-term results and types of recipients.

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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