

EVALUATION BRIEF

SEPTEMBER 2009



This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Assessment of Development Results (ADR) conducted in Uganda, with a time-frame covering country programmes; from 2001 to 2009. More specifically, the ADR provides forward-looking recommendations to assist UNDP Uganda and its partners in formulating an action plan for the next programming cycle (2010–2014).

UNDP Uganda has, over the past two programming cycles, provided policy and technical support to the government in order to further human and institutional development. Interventions in the areas of poverty reduction, governance and conflict prevention and recovery were in alignment with national policy frameworks and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The evaluation concludes that UNDP contributions to national development results have been a varied. While contributions have been significant in some areas, it is too early to judge their contributions to results because a number of programmatic interventions are still ongoing. There were missed opportunities, particularly in maximizing contributions to areas such as governance, and to a certain extent, interventions in conflict prevention and recovery, where UNDP is organizationally well positioned.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Uganda has made significant progress in social and economic development during the past two decades and is moving steadily towards sustainable growth and poverty reduction. In regions affected by conflict, Uganda is the process of recovery and reconstruction. There have been considerable achievements in ensuring a stable macroeconomic environment and progressing towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The government has adopted various national strategies to address development challenges and post-conflict reconstruction.

Despite important development efforts, certain challenges remain. Although Uganda is on track to meet several of its MDG goals, success in actually attaining them will require strong economic growth (at least 7 percent per annum), a significant reduction in the population growth rate, and an equitable distribution of growth and development. Simultaneously securing these three outcomes will prove a major challenge. Improved governance is one of the areas that need to be addressed in order to effectively implement policies and enhance transparency and accountability in public fund management. Environmental sustainability and the impact of climate change and its linkages to poverty reduction remains a major challenge for Uganda.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contributions have been significant in terms of responsiveness to national priorities and needs. Although many short-term outcomes were achieved, the contribution to long-term development results was moderate.

There were many positive features of the UNDP response in Uganda. Amid a competitive aid environment particularly predisposed to budget support, UNDP was

successful in maintaining its relevance. UNDP implemented programmes, largely through government agencies; responded to various requests for support from the government in development and post-conflict reconstruction; and supported the implementation of the PEAP and policies on post-conflict recovery and human security. Despite effectiveness in achieving the individual outputs outlined in country programme documents, the evaluation concludes that the overall development performance and effectiveness of the programme varied, particularly in terms of the sustainability and measurability of results achieved. There were limited synergies between various programme interventions. Intended outcomes were not fully realized and often did not complement similar efforts by the government.

UNDP contributions to post-conflict recovery had mixed results. While contribution to strengthening institutional mechanisms is a factor in achieving results, there were limitations in informing a holistic approach to recovery.

UNDP has been responsive to post-conflict needs and has made efforts to strengthen institutional capacities to better respond to post-conflict recovery and reconciliation. UNDP support also contributed to operationalising internally displaced person policy, and facilitating safe return. Despite achievements in short-term outcomes, contributions to results in the conflict prevention and recovery programme were mixed. UNDP was not effective in implementing the programme in a complex and fast-moving operating environment, which requires quick response and adaptability.

The comparative advantage of UNDP in addressing social development issues and policy was not fully realized. The efforts of UNDP were not optimal in developing strategic partnerships with international agencies and networks.

While UNDP has the potential to play a critical role in complementing the budget support (by, for example,

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providing policy and technical support), this was not fully optimized. UNDP programme support would have made better contributions to results had partnerships been developed with other agencies or had interventions been based on a careful analysis of ongoing support to the government from other agencies. UNDP did not have a programme strategy in a context where 71 percent of development cooperation is budget support. Clearly thought-out interventions and partnerships directed at addressing critical gaps in budget support, essential for strategic positioning, were lacking.

The participation of non-governmental and civil society organizations was not ensured in the UNDP-supported programmes. In seeking partnerships, UNDP largely overlooked civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations.

Uganda has a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), and some of them have the potential to complement government efforts in development and post-conflict reconstruction. When responding to national priorities, UNDP did not sufficiently develop partnership with NGOs and CSOs or facilitate their engagement in development processes. There were limited efforts to strengthen the capacities of NGOs.

The cross-cutting issues emphasized in the two UNDP country programmes are relevant in the context of Uganda and within the framework of national development strategies. However, the integration

of cross-cutting issues across interventions has been modest, both in programme design and in implementation. Similarly, the contribution was modest in supporting the government in furthering the integration of cross-cutting issues.

Though UNDP contributions to furthering government policies were important from the standpoint of individual interventions, there were limitations in enabling results. UNDP support to poverty monitoring and MDG reporting was not effectively aligned with government mechanisms. There were limitations in using programme interventions in the area of poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods to achievement of the MDGs.

Planning and implementing gender as a cross-cutting issue was not effective. While different projects took measures to include women as beneficiaries, the programme lacked a systematic framework to carry out gender analysis in order to guide programme design and to implement or to monitor progress in gender relations. UNDP made important contributions in informing government policy in addressing HIV/AIDS through policy studies. Incorporating HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue in UNDP programmes was however minimal. Environment and climate change impact did not receive adequate attention either as a programme area or a cross-cutting issue, and linkages with poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods appeared weak in both design and implementation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNDP interventions should support policy formulation and coordination in development and post-conflict recovery.
2. UNDP should be strategic both in developing partnerships and in identifying policy areas where its support would complement ongoing development efforts.
3. UNDP should enhance its support to the MDGs in order to address regional disparities in poverty.
4. Given the importance of linkages between sustainable environment and poverty reduction, UNDP should take specific measures to integrate environment and climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue across programme interventions, particularly in poverty reduction and disaster management interventions.
5. To make meaningful contributions to development results, UNDP should be strategic in using its resources and reduce the number of interventions. UNDP should develop a fund mobilization strategy to support programmes in critical areas. This strategy should include areas where UNDP would engage on a long-term basis.
6. The pilot approach should only be used for integrated approaches at the district level and with interventions that are both mutually reinforcing across practice areas and that are linked by a measurable and common objective.
7. UNDP should clarify what is intended by capacity development and outline support parameters. There should be a clear framework for implementing and monitoring capacity development.
8. UNDP should define the role it can play in coordination and more systematically engage in various coordination mechanisms in the country.
9. UNDP should extend continuous support to advocacy tools such as Human Development Reports, including taking steps to support regional Human Development Reports in the forthcoming programme.
10. UNDP should strengthen its partnerships with NGOs and CSOs in engaging in development and taking a proactive advocacy role.
11. UNDP should strengthen its presence at the local level. The capacities of area offices should be further strengthened and empowered in order to ensure that interventions play an effective role in programme implementation.
12. UNDP should substantially strengthen the results focus of the country programme. This should include a strong programme management system and a monitoring and evaluation framework, and there should be optimal use of the results-based management system.



The UNDP Evaluation Office provides systematic assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results by conducting independent thematic and programmatic evaluations.

Contact us at:

United Nations Development Programme • Evaluation Office • One United Nations Plaza • DC1-4th Floor • New York, NY 10017
Telephone: (212) 906 5095 • Fax: (212) 906 6008/6627 • evaluation.office@undp.org • www.undp.org/eo