

bN/11/00y

L1_6~

Report of the Evaluation Mission: Support to Social Protection - BIH/991004

**Jafar Javan
Raisa Venalainen
November 2000
Sarajevo, BIH**

I. Background, Mandate, Scope, and Methodology of the Evaluation

A. Background

This initiative was designed to support the development of a sustainable social protection system in BIH. The critical dimensions of such a social protection system include:

- i) welfare-mix service structure;
- ii) community based and client oriented services; and
- iii) equal treatment of different groups in need.

This is a pilot project funded by a contribution of US\$ 1,840, 723 from the Government of Finland. The programme activities are executed by the International Bureau for the Humanitarian Issues (IBHI), an international NGO through its BIH operation.

The Programme short term objectives are: i) to restructure municipal social welfare policy in BIH to provide more effective management of social welfare issues in target municipalities; ii) to develop new approaches to social work to alleviate the situation of vulnerable groups; and iii) to promote the development of social policy thinking, planning and management.

To achieve its objectives, the programme has developed Municipality Management Boards (MMBs) in two municipalities of Travnik in the Federation and Prijedor in the Republic Srpska (RS). The MMBs are charged with the key responsibility of

assessing the needs of the most vulnerable population and guide the nature and the scope direction of various responses developed by local community-based groups (including the NGOs) to meet such needs.

The programme plans to share lessons learned from its activities within the two pilot sites with the surrounding areas. It is envisaged that sharing of information on lessons learned and exchange of experiences will further solidify policy discussion on social protection. It is expected that such strategy would improve inter-entity

cooperation as well as the harmonization of the social protection system in BIH. The programme plans to integrate and thus benefit from related past and ongoing efforts in the area of social protection.

B. Evaluation Mandate

Twelve months into the life of this pilot programme, to assess its performance, UNDP in cooperation with the Government of Finland and IBHI commissioned an independent evaluation team. The evaluation team is comprised of two evaluators with no previous involvement in the design and the implementation of programme activities. The evaluation team worked in BIH from 13-29 November 2000.

The evaluation team was mandated to assess the efforts of UNDP, IBHI and national counterparts, which have been carried out since the inception of the programme. This had to be done in an integrated manner to obtain a solid basis for recommendations for improving the programme quality and ensuring effective continuation of planned activities. The evaluation determined whether the following three short-term objectives of the programme have successfully taken place:

1. Development of Municipal welfare structure/boards in Travnik and Prijedor;
2. Implementation of Special Focus Projects on new ways to care for the vulnerable; and
3. Structured evaluation of these components such that it can be brought into policy discussions.

The evaluation provided recommendations on progress achieved so far for building the basis for a second and new phase beyond the pilot stage.

C. Scope of the Evaluation

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, evaluation assessed progress and performance related to the following key issues:

A) Issues that are related to the achievements of the project:

relevance of the project concept, (approach, strategy and mechanisms) within the current political and social environment; achievement of the project with respect to the success indicators as set up in the project document and introduce the new ones if needed;
quality, adequacy and timelines in production of the first draft policy suggestions;

7

main lessons that can be drawn from the project experience up to now that may have common application, the factors that affected the project implementation (both positively and negatively) and this that are likely to affect their success or failure;
assessment of the accomplishment of the main objectives of the Finland's development cooperation, i.e. poverty reduction, protection of environment, human rights, equality and democracy;

B) Issues that are related to the Institutional Context:

how and to which extent the existing political, social, economic context facilitate or constrain the performance of the project; capacity of the established and supported social protection network to recognize, assess, identify and bring up the needs and constraints of the target groups to the policy/decision making level, and to provide the proper follow-up and feed back to the beneficiaries;
capacity of the municipal governments to develop social policy activities, design solutions to problems and implement the Special Focus Projects;
capacity of the entity level government to adopt the policy suggestions that are developed within the project implementation; organizational structures, processes, resources and management practices which affects the way the individuals within their respective organizations accomplish their tasks. This will elaborate as well, the environment for individual professional development within the social protection network (training, proper utilization of professional and managerial skills)
identification of capacity development needs of the social protection network stakeholders and whether the project responds to that needs;
sustainability of the established/supported capacities within the existing social protection network (how does the social protection network functions, the nature of interactions between the actors involved);

C) Specific issues to be addressed:

possibility of replication of the project in the surrounding municipalities (Jajce,

Vitez, Novi Travnik, Kozarska Dubica, Novi Grad) / review of the actions that were undertaken with this respect;
role and function of the local media network that is established/supported within the project;
role and function of voluntary work and whether it was properly advertised and utilized;
assessment of possible implications to the ongoing process of return of refugees and displaced persons in the areas of the project implementation;

3

assessment of possible impact to the inter-entity contact, cooperation and networking among the actors involved in the project; assessment of similarities and disparities in project implementation in the two respective areas; assessment of relevance of the project in approaching a crosscutting issues like gender aspects, economic and financial feasibility, issues of ownership and participation assessment of the roles and functions of different stakeholders in project implementation (Project Management Team, local officials, other stakeholders);

- D) Issues to be assessed with respect to the execution modality:
role and function of IBHI in overall management of the project; evaluation of IBHI capacity to carry out key project activities as set up in the project document;
IBHI capacity to monitor the project implementation and the way of reporting on it;
IBHI capacity in ensuring proper use of the resources
whether the outcome of the internal evaluation, that was done by the executing agency, was further incorporated into the project implementation, and whether the proper follow-up was ensured; assessment of the cooperation between UNDP, IBHI and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

D. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation mission used the following methodology in its work:

Review all available documentation within the project, as well as available materials issued by other organizations working in the area of social sector development;
Conduct interviews with the relevant UNDP programmem staff, the projects national counterparts representatives and the key actors involved;
Meeting with the beneficiaries in Travnik, Prijedor and with representatives of the operating international organizations and donor community;
Analyze and incorporate in its findings the analysis of the questionnaire that was distributed to the key actors. Conduct meetings with all parties that are involved in social sector issue in BIH and incorporate their plans, findings, and observations. This is in particular related to the present and future World Bank and DFID activities in BIH. The findings, lessons learned and recommendations of th evaluation was shared with all important partners that

are being involved in social sector issues in BIH at the workshop that was organized at the end of the Evaluation Mission.

a

II. Key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations

The pilot nature of the programme provides an opportunity to implement innovative approaches to social protection and review their successes as well as shortcomings. It is envisaged that as a result of piloting new models, there will be need for fine tuning and reengineering some of the activities.

It should also be noted that the role of the pilot programme is to capture best practices emerged as a result of the programme for implementation in other regions. The lessons learned from best practices should form the central principles and direction of future policies and programmes. Therefore, the pilot characteristic of the programme significantly influences the nature and scope of the evaluation's findings, lessons learned and recommendations.

A. Findings

- The programme has succeeded in implementing key activities (in accordance with the Project Document) necessary to obtain the immediate objectives. However, due to its pilot characteristic, ambitious design, and short duration, it is too early to assess the impact of the programme to meeting its overall objective. Nevertheless it must be noted that the programme has played a significant role in creating a strategic and multi-faceted platform necessary to build a new model and innovative approaches to social protection policies and practices.
- The programme has contributed to the development of social protection as a multi-sectoral concept among stakeholders' i.e. municipal authorities and ministries in the FBIH and the RS. The multi-dimensionality of social protection has been transferred to the key actors at the local level i.e. social centers, municipalities and NGOs.

The programme has helped to formulate an approved Two Year Development plan for social protection in Travnik and Prijedor. These plans defined the priority areas and target groups for social protection. In the context of FBIH and RS this is a unique achievement as the concept of planning has not been fully mainstreamed within the work of local authorities.

- The Municipal Management Boards (MMBs) are multi-sectoral and multiethnic bodies responsible for project (Special Focused Projects) planning and monitoring have emerged as a result of this programme. These boards include representatives of municipalities, social center and various NGOs with membership of different ethnic groups. These Boards are now recognized by the Municipal Authorities.

- MMBs are ideal candidates to ensure that local ownership takes place. Through this programme MMBs have developed basic skills in planning, conceptualizing and monitoring. Appropriate and clear set of criteria and the provision of technical capacity to the MMBs would facilitate selection and approval of Special Focused Projects that clearly would contribute to the overall development of a comprehensive social protection.
- The limited duration of the programme has contributed to the fragmentation of a large number projects (SFPs). Due to the short period of the programme cycle, a number of stand-alone projects were quickly designed and approved. This has resulted in incoherent growth of disconnected initiatives in multiple priority areas. Although each project on its own merits recognition for serving its beneficiaries, as a whole they do not present an integrated and holistic approach to social protection.
- Although there has been some progress made to achieve financial sustainability (i.e. some private sector involvement, Solidarity Fund), at this time it is difficult to see financial sustainability taking place at the end of the programme cycle.
- Sustainability in the context of substance is attainable. The programme is in line with local policies and is implemented in the existing institutional framework both in FBIH and RS (i.e. CSW, Elderly homes). Participation of local stakeholders has been encouraged through SFPs.
- IBHI has played an important role in supporting local partners to design, implement and monitor activities. This in turn has contributed to building the basis for local ownership of the programme. This work should be continued in a more systematic and cohesive manner so the substantive capacity of project personnel for planning, execution and monitoring of activities are further developed and improved.
- The conceptual design of the project is relevant to the current social protection needs in BIH. The development of systematic strategies to respond to the unmet needs of the target beneficiaries in BIH remains central to the program's objectives. However, much work remains to be done in order to bring such responses in a clear, systematic and cohesive manner.
- The complexity of the political, economic and social system in BIH has limited the ability of this programme to influence policy for social protection at the macro level. Nevertheless, the programme has served as a stepping ground for initial policy formulation at the micro level (i.e. municipal and cantonal level).

D There is coordination between IBHI and UNDP. However, to a large extent this coordination seems to be focused on managerial issues more than substantial and programmatic factors.

- Cooperation between UNDP and other multi and bilateral development agencies (e.g. World Bank, DFID) in the area of social protection has taken place. Nevertheless, the scope of such collaboration has not yet reached the degree where comprehensive, harmonized and complementary interventions are jointly designed and implemented.
- This programme has contributed to cooperation between and among entities (FBHI and RS) through joint activities, which have included MMBs and social centers.
- The resources allocated through this programme to the localities have enabled the municipalities to implement some of their planned priorities. This funding has also assisted some of the local NGOs to continue ongoing initiatives and also develop new ones.

D The current management framework of the programme entails substantial personnel cost. This has influenced the programme to focus more on managerial and institutional issues than substance and technical know-how regarding new approaches to social protection.

- Reporting of programme activities including monitoring evaluation of workshops and financial reporting has been a cumbersome task for both, the producers and the end users of such reports. The focuses of these reports are manly concentrated on activities rather the substance and impact.
- There has been series of efforts to train local partners in computer skills including database development. This type of training should result in effective utilization of data for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

B. Lessons learned

In view of current social and political realities in BIH at this time, a national policy in social protection remains a long-term objective. If the programme is extended to a second phase it should focus on contributing to the development of a harmonized two-pronged social protection strategy: one for the Federation and another for RS.

Capacity development is attainable if key stakeholders such as municipalities and social centers are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of programme activities. Therefore

they should become the key targets for training programme, workshops and

seminars. In addition, every SFP should have an element for capacity development.

New partnership with the private sector in social protection is not feasible unless there are clear legal reforms to encourage private sector to participate in social protection issues.

- To respond to the needs of target communities, the beneficiaries should directly be involved in needs assessments, and programme identification. In other words, programmes should not be for the people but of the people. Programme implementation would better meet the local needs if more authority for planning of events such as workshops is given to the local actors.
- Clear strategy for public awareness cannot and should not rely only on mainstream and formal channels (e.g. television, radio, print media). The use of traditional awareness making vehicles should be further supplemented by promoting public awareness through alternative, innovative and informal methods.
- MMBs are essential mechanisms for transferring ownership to the local level. In view of this, to be fully effective, MMBs role must be reviewed. The multi-sectoral nature of social protection requires greater involvement of three main sectors (i.e. education, health and labour) in the MMB structure.
- The representation of some of the MMB members as both the proposing body as well as the selection and approval authority could create a conflict of interest in the final selection and evaluation of the projects.
- The role of the Project Management Board (PMB) remains unclear. So far there is very little evidence of PMB providing substantive guidance on the direction of programme and the SFPs. It is unlikely to see local ownership of the programme if the PMB role and its membership make-up is not revised.

The approach currently adopted by the SFPs has resulted in an image of beneficiaries as receivers rather than active and empowered citizens. Empowerment goals are complex and challenging. External partners cannot empower citizens, though they can create an enabling environment and facilitate the process needed for the local population to become key decision makers in their own communities.

- Sharing of information, knowledge and best practices could further be enhanced through improved coordination and cooperation among municipalities, centers and NGOs.

C. Recommendations

In view of the current immense unmet needs for social protection in FBIH and RS, and the programme's potential to contribute to the development of a cohesive strategy to meet such needs as demonstrated by the results of the pilot phase, this evaluation team recommends the extension of the current programme to a second phase. The extension is required in order to bring fruition to investments already made in this direction.

Recommendations are based on a number of critical factors: 1) programmes objectives; 2) key findings and 3) lessons learned. In line with the planned time frame of the programme cycle the following recommendations are divided into; short term and long-term. The short-term suggestions focus on the remaining six months of the project cycle and the long term are provided when and if the programme is extended to a second phase.

In relation to programme immediate objectives the following suggestions are made:

Short-term recommendations:

1. At this time the number of SFPs is 27. Prior to selecting and approving new interventions, it is suggested to first identify the value added contributions of each of the SFPs to the development of a comprehensive social protection model. In other words, the SFPs should critically assess and demonstrate their contributions to the development of a mixed social welfare model. This will illustrate whether attempts undertaken so far are in line with new thinking on how a progressive social protection model should function.
2. In collaboration with UNDP, the IBHI and the SFPs should work jointly to develop new reporting system with focus on progress rather than activities. This requires identifying basic benchmarks which progress can be measured. This task may include further training and consultation with Project Cycle Management and evaluation experts.
3. Experiences gained as a result the SFPs and MMBs should be further exchanged among partners at the local level and between the FBIH and RS.
 4. Strengthen ongoing efforts to assess project beneficiaries through a more systematic and cohesive approach.
5. To continue identifying innovative strategies to engage local resources in SFPs, both human (volunteers) and financial resources.
6. To finalize the computerized client registers and making sure that every SFP has access to at least one computer. This also requires ensuring that computer literacy is achieved by project personnel.
7. Develop and implement innovative methods for public awareness. And, support SFPs to become more proactive in publicizing their services to the

target beneficiaries.

8. Identify and assess the capacity development needs of social workers for effective client-oriented and multi-sectoral social protection.
9. In view of the above findings, lessons learned and recommendations, planning for the extension (second phase of the programme) should take place during the last three months of the pilot programme cycle, thus making experiences gained so far to become an integral part of planning for the new phase. The mapping out of the beneficiaries in the new project sites should become one of the initial exercises of the extension's planning phase.

Long-term recommendations:

1. Municipalities, Centers of Social Work and the NGOs are key institutions for social protection in BIH. Supporting the role of these actors as the driving engines of the initiative must be strengthened through promoting a facilitative role of the IBHI as an executing partner. The local actors should be further supported to become more proactive in taking initiatives and making decisions.
2. The Project Management Board (PMB) has assisted the initial start-up of pilot programme activities as far as institutional and managerial prerequisites are concern. However, this structure has not been too effective in performing its original mandate as highlighted in the project document. It is therefore recommended that the PMB should be replaced with a new more proactive body which will include not only UNDP and IBHI but also other key stakeholders such as municipalities, related ministries in both FBIH and RS, and NGOs.

The new multi-actor structure should be charged with the key responsibility of steering programmes direction and activities. This would include coordination programme activities, overall guidance to ensure that all SFPs are in line with main social protection objectives, selection and approval of SFPs are made through a transparent mode, and monitoring the overall progress of the operations.

3. During the initial phase of the extension, the membership in this Steering structure or the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) should include representatives from the Government of Finland, UNDP, IBHI, municipalities and ministries involved as well as NGOs in both FBIH and RS. However, the membership could be expanded later when other potential donors and local players become involved in the activities of the programme. The PSC

177

should operate on a rotating chair basis (quarterly rotation of chairmanship).

This mechanism presents an opportunity for tighter coordination of various activities undertaken by multitude of donors in engaged in social protection in BIH, and increased resources for the programme. Through this system, eventual local ownership is feasible when external donors are phased out and

replaced by domestic partners (e.g. ministries, municipalities, private sector).

4. In view of developing the capacity of MMBs, it is recommended to organize special Technical Teams (TT) for each of the priority areas for social protection as defined by the municipalities' two year development plans. The Teams could be clustered in five areas, for example 1) Children and Youth, 2) Elderly, 3) Refugees and displaced, 4) Returnees and 5) Disabled. Each TT should be responsible for not only providing technical assistance and advice to the MMBs for the purpose of SFPs selection and approval; they must develop a comprehensive strategy in their designated area of expertise. The strategy should include
 - policy and planning,
 - monitoring and evaluation,
 - service delivery,
 - institutional building and
 - public awareness.

The TTs contribution is intended to ensure that the selected SFPs are in line with the priority and strategic areas of a comprehensive social protection model. When needed, TTs should benefit from external advises and expertise available in other countries.

5. The proposed organisational structure must further be reviewed and discussed between all stakeholders and agreements about responsibilities and roles, including communication and reporting lines must be made.
6. New SFPs must have clear and measurable benchmarks necessary for monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness. This must be well integrated into the design of each SFP when submitted for approval. The TTs should assist SFPs in establishing benchmarks and to ensure that SFP proposals are based on common objectives for each of the priority areas.
7. Explore the role of the private sector in social protection planning and implementation through research.
8. Obviously the financial input of the Government of Finland has fueled the engine of this programme to initiate its work. Further substantive involvement and cooperation between Finland and other actors involved in this programme could positively enhance

tI

the effectiveness of the activities. For example, future involvement of Finnish social centers and NGOs could bring new dimensions and experiences to endeavor.

9. To reverse the current heavy investment (time and money) on managerial and institutional activities, the extension phase should benefit from the involvement of experts with appropriate knowledge and experience in each of the priority

areas. They should bring clear value added contribution to the development of new models for social protection.