

OUTCOME EVALUATION ON XIAOKANG/MDGS AND GENDER

**BASED ON FIELD MISSION IN
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BY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a mission undertaken in October and November 2010, this report is an outcome evaluation of UNDP China's recent efforts in supporting Xiaokang and MDGs, and promoting gender equity. Fourteen programs, with budgets totaling approximately \$3.3 million, related to the Xiaokang-MDG objective, while two, with funding of about \$250,000, supported the objective of gender equity.

Programs associated with Xiaokang-MDGs fall under two intended outcomes, integrating Xiaokang-MDGs into policy (Outcome 1), and supporting Xiaokang-MDG implementation (Outcome 2). Through the four programs under Outcome 1, UNDP was highly successful in contributing to cross-fertilization between the MDG and Xiaokang visions and using the convergent Xiaokang-MDG platform to advocate pro-poor policies and enhanced focus on social services. Outcomes resulting from these programs were very strong, and illustrate the effective deployment of UNDP's core competencies. The ten programs under Outcome 2 represent a diverse group focusing on supporting different vulnerable groups through capacity building as well as technical and institutional innovation at both national and sub-national levels. Five strategies – participatory decision-making, data-driven needs assessment, partnerships with CSOs, capacity building and “soft assistance” – were shared by many of the ten programs and made an effective contribution to achieving intended outcomes.

Five key factors contributing to UNDP's commendable success in achieving strong Xiaokang-MDG outcomes were: (1) relevance and ownership, (2) credibility and neutrality, (3) good working relationships and communication with partners, (4) intellectual leadership, and (5) knowledge-sharing. The unique convergence of the UN's MDG and the Chinese government's Xiaokang visions provides a valuable platform for ongoing cooperation. UNDP China should make Xiaokang central to its core message. A critical mass of government officials and experts was drawn into the Xiaokang indicator and other Xiaokang projects. The development of this “community of Xiaokang practice” is a sustainable result of these programs, and an important asset that UNDP should continue to nurture.

Although Outcome 5, gender equity, was supported by only two small programs, positive results were achieved in mainstreaming gender across practice areas. However, mainstreaming could have been more effective if it had been backed by dedicated resources. Overall, outcomes in the area of gender equity have been weak. This is because gender equity is not a high national priority, UNDP lacks strong national partners, and reflecting these constraints, UNDP's own gender efforts have been very modest. Three measures should be taken to promote stronger gender outcomes: first, collecting disaggregated data to enable evidence-based discussion of the role of gender, second, identifying a gender-related issue where UNDP can win the support of government and using this to establish a standalone program enabling multiple government ministries to work together on gender issues, and third, reaching agreement with government to earmark a certain percentage of resources specifically for gender equity.

Partners saw knowledge-sharing as central to UNDP's value proposition. Knowledge-sharing has been emphasized by UNDP for a long time, but has proven difficult to implement in practice. China's rapid development and declining international support for assistance to China presents UNDP with an especially pressing challenge to innovate or risk irrelevance. UNDP's financial contribution to China's development is already insignificant, but three decades of experience, credibility and partnership building should not be. The report concludes by recommending concrete steps to promote knowledge-sharing by UNDP China.