JOINT PROGRAMME

ON EMPOWERING THE VULNERABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN ALBANIA

Mid-Term Evaluation Final Report

July 2012

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# List of acronyms & abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CBO | Community Based Organizations |
| CPU | Child Protection Unit |
| CUP | Community Upgrading Projects |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| EVLC | Empowering the Vulnerable Vocal Communities |
| GoA | Government of Albania |
| JP | Joint Programme |
| JPCG | Joint Programme Coordination Group |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Science |
| MoLSAEO | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities |
| MTE | Mid-term Evaluation |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| R/E | Roma and Egyptians |
| RCPASN | Regional Committees on Planning and Assessing Social Needs |
| TIPA | Training Institute of Public Administration |
| TLAS | Tirana Legal Aid Services |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNFPA | United Nations Populations Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations Refugee Agency |
| UNHSTF | UN Human Security Trust Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| UNV | UN Volunteers |
| VC | Vulnerable Communities |

Executive Summary

Albania is one of eight countries to pilot a worldwide programme of UN reform known as the “One UN”. The initiative attempts to strengthen unity of purpose and coherence in management, while maintaining the distinct mandates and missions of the different UN agencies.

It is within this context that the Joint Programme on Empowering the Vulnerable Local Communities (JP-EVLC) was developed and has been implemented in Albania since July 2010 by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA in close partnership with UNHCR and UNV. UNDP is responsible for coordination of the JP-EVLC’s implementation.

The overall goal of JP-EVLC, is to improve the human security and access to rights of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian minorities, particularly of women and children.

The programme was designed to support three main objectives including:

1. *Supporting participation of vulnerable communities in local decision-making* - through identification of priorities and preparation of Community Development Plans, implementation of community upgrading projects in partnership with local governments, strengthening capacities and cooperation between Roma and Egyptian NGOs and their respective communities.
2. *Enabling vulnerable communities to access their rights and public services* – through civil registration, community policing, establishing and strengthening a network of Roma Mediators in areas of health, education, and child protection, and facilitating vocational training and employment.
3. *Promoting policies and institutional strengthening for social inclusion of vulnerable communities* – through capacity building and assistance to local and central government institutions and capacity building and partnership strengthening for Roma and Egyptian NGOs.

The overall objective of this independent mid-term evaluation is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, coordination, relevance and sustainability of the JP-EVLC with regard to enhancing Roma and Egyptian communities’ participation in local decision-making, accessing their rights and social/public services as well as to the institutional strengthening of social inclusion.

This report represents the findings of the independent evaluation conducted by an external evaluator during the period end of April 2012 to mid July 2012.

The main findings of this evaluation are:

Conclusions:

1. The JP-EVLC addresses relevant and critical challenges in Albania. It is designed based on the participation of a great number of stakeholders in the regions where it is developed, considering the wide participation of Roma/Egyptian community as the fundamental factor in order to increase the validity of this project. Its objectives are in line with the social and economic situation of the Roma Community.
2. The JP-EVLC results contribute towards overall UN goal for sustainable development and human security.
3. The project team has a high level of competence and motivation. However, it is our opinion that they should be allocated revised and greater competences in the process of gathering the information from the different UN agencies involved, and above all for the monitoring of the results of the project. These elements are very important given the One UN Approach selected to be the base of project methodology during implementation.
4. The participation of the representatives from Roma/Egyptian communities has been significant and has positively impacted the results of the project. Roma/Egyptian communities feel appreciated as proved by their collaboration and commitment.
5. The EVLC project is contributing significantly to empowering the Roma community and especially women and youth through establishment of CBO-s and providing professional trainings, important for the development of their skills and the professional experience, to improve access to rights and to raise the awareness of the community on the social services available to them.
6. The value and the contribution of the UNV and Local coordinators is been reflected in most of the activities and components of the project. They play a vital role in facilitating community-led activities, encouraging participation of the community, supporting the process of defining their priorities for the implementation of the Community Upgrading Projects.
7. The monitoring system in place did not fulfil the initial expectancies regarding the provision of timely, accurate, comparable, and easy to understand information, which is crucial for the identification of discrepancies and design of corrective measures.

The following lessons were identified:

1. Lesson No. 1: Inter-agency collaboration is more effective when based at the output level. Harmonizing operational, monitoring and reporting procedures can contribute to an efficient joint programme governance and delivery.
2. Lesson No. 2: Engaging national and regional institutions in programme implementation enhances programme relevance and increases the chances of long term sustainability
3. Lesson No. 3 : Flexibility aspect an added value
4. Lesson No. 4 : UNV and LCD involvement an added-value
5. Lesson No. 5 : Need for inception phase

The following recommendations are provided:

1. Recommendation 1 – Revise and update the Action Plan
2. Recommendation 2 – Revise the reporting and monitoring procedures
3. Recommendation 3 – A no-cost extension for at least six months, including the respective re-allocation of resources
4. Recommendation 4 – Increase visibility & dissemination of project deliverables
5. Long-term Recommendation 5 – Formalize an Inception Report phase
6. **Introduction**

## Background

Albania is one of eight countries to pilot a worldwide programme of UN reform known as the “One UN”. To enhance efficiency and responsiveness, the One UN Pilot Initiative aims to bring UN Agencies together with one programme, one budget and one leader. The initiative attempts to strengthen unity of purpose and coherence in management, while maintaining the distinct mandates and missions of the different UN agencies.

It is within this context that the Joint Programme on Empowering the Vulnerable Local Communities (JP-EVLC) was developed and has been implemented in Albania since July 2010 by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA in close partnership with UNHCR and UNV. UNDP is responsible for coordination of the JP-EVLC’s implementation.

The overall goal of JP-EVLC, is to improve the human security and access to rights of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian minorities, particularly of women and children.

The programme was designed to support three main objectives including:

1. *Supporting participation of vulnerable communities in local decision-making* - through identification of priorities and preparation of Community Development Plans, implementation of community upgrading projects in partnership with local governments, strengthening capacities and cooperation between Roma and Egyptian NGOs and their respective communities.
2. *Enabling vulnerable communities to access their rights and public services* – through civil registration, community policing, establishing and strengthening a network of Roma Mediators in areas of health, education, and child protection, and facilitating vocational training and employment.
3. *Promoting policies and institutional strengthening for social inclusion of vulnerable communities* – through capacity building and assistance to local and central government institutions and capacity building and partnership strengthening for Roma and Egyptian NGOs.

The programme adopts a cross-sectoral approach requiring a combination of expertise from UN agencies, which are best, positioned to address the relevant issues. The main Government partner responsible for coordination of the planned actions is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO). The regional and local authorities of Tirana, Durres, Fier and Elbasan are key partners in implementing the JP-EVLC activities at the local level.

The overall objective of this independent mid-term evaluation is to assess the process, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability of the JP-EVLC with regard to enhancing Roma and Egyptian communities’ participation in local decision-making, accessing their rights and social/public services as well as to the institutional strengthening of social inclusion.

The report is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction and background to the JP-EVLC midterm evaluation; Chapter 2 describes the description of the planned, ongoing and completed activities; Chapter 3 contains a description of the Levels of Analysis: Evaluation criteria and questions, followed by the Conclusions and lessons learned in Chapter 4 and Recommendations in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 contains the list of annexes.

## Purpose of the evaluation

This report represents the findings of the independent evaluation conducted by an external evaluator during the period end of April 2012 to mid July 2012. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation aims at the followings;

1. Analyze the programme’s design quality and internal coherence;
2. Provide guidance on the sustainability of programme interventions;
3. Provide feedback to the participating agencies and national counterparts on the soundness and impact of their approach in the JP-EVLC;
4. Evaluate programme outputs contained in the Work Plans and Programme Logframe;
5. Extract general lessons learned and recommendations for implementation;
6. Provide the donor with information on impact of their specific support through the joint programme, to the vulnerable local communities in Albania

The mid-term evaluation also focuses on how the human rights- based approach applied has influenced the achievement of the outputs and outcomes, half-way through the program implementation. The mid-term evaluation is expected also to provide recommendations for planning and formulation of the remaining phase of the Joint Programme - EVLC.

The conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation are addressed to its main users, the participating agencies, the Joint Programme Management Committee, UNHSTF and other partners involved in the programme implementation.

## Methodology used in the evaluation process

The object of study for this MTE was the evaluation of “Empowering the vulnerable local communities in Albania” programme, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that are detailed in the JP document. The evaluation assessed the planned, ongoing, or completed JP interventions to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The MTE was guided by the MTE Terms of Reference (Annex 1) and followed the Standards and Norms of the United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2008, UNEG/FN/ETH(2008). The evaluation process is independent and the opinions and recommendations in this report are those of the Consultant and do not necessarily reflect the position of the main UN implementing agencies and other national and regional partners.

The evaluation process generated information to address the issues identified in the respective TORs. Particular emphasis was put on the inter-agency coordination added value, current programme results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe taking into consideration the pace of implementation of activities. The Evaluator reviewed the overall methodology, the set of indicators, baseline values and targets established for tracking and monitoring progress.

Semi-structured interviews were mainly used, and were conducted and adapted to each meeting. Meetings were followed up through emails and telephone calls, when needed. They were mostly open-ended, and in the case of beneficiaries, some had the character of focus group discussions since more than one participant was present to the interview process. Confidentiality was guaranteed to participants and findings were triangulated and incorporated during the data analysis, and presented as such in the final report.

Based on the evaluation of the ongoing activities and outputs, the evaluation assessed the following levels of the programme:

***Relevance***

The Evaluator reviewed the relevance of the programme design and the extent to which the objectives of the JP were consistent with the needs and interest of the partners, end-users, and the needs of the country. It also examined the clarity of objectives and internal coherence and analysed whether the interventions implemented, addressed the issues that were identified in the situation analysis during the design process.

***Efficiency***

The efficiency of the overall JP management model was the main focus of the mid-term evaluation. It covered the extent to which resources/inputs have been turned into results in the analysed period; the coordination among participating UN agencies, and between the UN, the government and civil society; as well as how effectively the programme was monitored. The review also assessed the ownership of the process, including the extent to which the target population and the beneficiaries had taken ownership of the JP process and the respective results.

***Effectiveness***

This component assessed the effectiveness of the JP in meeting its expected outputs and its contribution to outcomes. Specific emphasis was put on the implementation timeline so as to assess if expected results would be achieved within the programme timeframe. The sustainability of programme achievements was also analysed in the long-term perspective.

***Sustainability***

With regards to national ownership, the evaluation identified lessons learned and best practices that can be promoted and transferred to other programmes through best examples. The evaluation also reviewed the contribution of the JP to the United Nations reform (“One UN”), by analysing how the principles of aid effectiveness were integrated into the JP.

***Coordination***

The main results concern the findings on the efficiency of its management and coordination model in planning, coordinating, managing, executing and monitoring the activities allocated for its implementation.

To that goal, a Questions Matrix and an Activity Monitoring Table per Sub-Question (Annexes 2 and 3) were prepared including the appropriate questions, the expected outputs, the agency in charge, the performance indicators, etc. This matrix served as the methodological base for the data collection, analyzing and reporting. Data collection was undertaken in accordance with the principles of participatory evaluations, confidentiality, independence and, triangulation of information from multiple sources. The following data collection instruments were used:

a) **Documentary review**. Background documents including the JP-EVLC document, official government policy and strategy documents, ONE UN Programme , GoA- UN Programme of Cooperation 2012-1016, UN agency programme documents, and JP-EVLC yearly reports were carefully and extensively reviewed and served to prepare the Inception Report. This Report was submitted to the Joint Programme Coordination Group (JPCG) for comments. The full list of relevant documents is attached as Annex 6 to this report.

b) **Meetings and interviews**. A carefully representative panel of stakeholders were identified and interviewed. A total of 41 key project stakeholders and JP partners including participating UN agency programme staff, Local Government officials and target beneficiaries were interviewed individually or in groups. The list of individuals consulted is shown in Annex 5 to this report.

c) **Field visits**. Field site visits were planned, organised and conducted as appropriate in Tirana, Fier, Elbasan and Durres districts. They served to offer to the Evaluator direct to primary sources of information from the field and programme end-users mainly to assess the relevance of the project in relation with the final beneficiaries.

d) **Debriefing of preliminary findings**. A meeting of the JPCG was undertaken to debrief the members on the preliminary findings and field observations, as well as provide an opportunity to validate information and obtain further inputs.

## Constraints and limitations on the study conducted

The level of analysis that has been achieved by this mid-term evaluation was restricted by:

1. Varying quality of interview responses: it has been difficult to obtain the exact answers to the Question Matrix. In many cases the interviewees has replied using their own indicators, definition of activities or even not providing information and data on the precise requested issue. This has rendered difficult the statistical homogenization of results and their adaptation to the initial project document.
2. Resources allocated to the evaluation in terms of time: due to the complexity of implementation methodology, the time allocated to the evaluation has been short. The main variables that have added to this complexity are the multi-layered multi-sectorial project design (capacity building / infrastructure / health / human security/ legal components / etc). Also each UN Agency has its own methodology of implementation and of producing reports on respective outputs.
3. Discrepancy between results as reported by the implementation bodies and the outputs as stated in the project document. This discrepancy has mainly affected the form than the results itself, however extra work has been needed to make them compatible.

The collaboration offered by the project staff and stakeholders was satisfying.

1. **Description of planned, ongoing and completed activities**

## Rationale of the project and short description of activities

The project was built on the relevant priorities of the Albanian Governments based on the needs of the target VC, as following: education & training, economy and employment, poverty reduction & social protection, health and infrastructure, and public order, justice and civil administration.

The above served as the benchmarks for the design of the project and its implementation as per strategy the UN criteria of more transparent and accountable governance, greater inclusive participation in public policy decision making, increase and more equitable access to quality basic services, and regional development.

The activities planned aimed at:

* Increasing participation of target VC in local decision making being with reference to: a) community mobilization for local development, b) infrastructure projects; and c) capacity building of Roma NGOs, and
* Increasing access of VC to their rights to public services with reference to: a) civil registration, b) personal security, c) health, d) education, e) employment services, and
* Reinforcing Albanian legislation and institutional framework with reference to the minority inclusion.

## Detailed description of ongoing & completed activities

1. Background

To assess & evaluate the efficassity of the project activities, a question matrix was prepared. The goal was to create an information gathering tool that would harmonize the data received from different UN agencies into one coherent framework, easy to interpret and draw conclusions from.

The first difficulty was encountered in the design of the action plan. The project provides for monitoring and measuring its activities. In the project document, the activity completion framework is controlled through the budget spending pace. Regarding the deliverables or performance indicators per activity, they can be measured only at the end of the budget spending period. In conclusion, the current project design allows you to assess the achievement of performance indicators only at the end of the budget spending period / respective activity. This methodology renders the mid-term evaluation difficult to deal with the efficasity principle, as in theory the requested indicators can be fulfilled at the last day of a given budget spending period. The project has updated the activity plan introducing timeline for activities, however this has changed quite often during the implementation period.

Another issue to be mentioned before the enumeration of the findings is the reporting procedures & protocols from different UN agencies involved. While it is undeniable that the One UN principle has produced synergies and increased impact to final beneficiary, there is further need for better coordination during the reporting to the project team. There is only a yearly report from the project implementation unit. The Joint Programme Coordination Group (JPCG) needs however to meet quarterly for overseeing and coordinating the programme implementation. Furthermore, a common monitoring framework, methodology and tools needed to be developed from the project implementation unit at the beginning of the project implementation. Although each agency manages and programs funds in relation to proper rules and regulations, a common reporting & monitoring will facilitate and enhance the use of the relative project output performance indicators per agency.

It has been noticed that the intermediary data is provided and reported by the implementing Agencies in their own format and at their own pace or as submitted by the subcontractors (i.e third parties implementing sub-components). This renders difficult the harmonization of data and their comprehensive treatment at the project level. Also very valuable information on the achieved results, especially those qualitative can be lost as not properly reported or taken on board.

The harmonization of reporting and the establishment of a proper reporting protocol with its own forms and timing is also a main element of the internal monitoring process.

In the following part of the chapter the Evaluator will make a comparison of what has been achieved to what has been planned only for the budgetary items. Regarding the performed activities and the ongoing or completed outputs the Evaluator will simply enumerate the findings.

1. budget disbursement milestones

The EVLC Joint programme was formally launched in mid April 2010 and the activities foreseen during the programme formulation phase took several months to kick-off (June 2010). The initial period was used to recruit project team in all four regions (Tirana, Fier, Durres and Elbasan), to set up four local offices and to formalize cooperation agreements with the local government units. A total of 14 people have been contracted from the beginning of the project:

* Tirana Office: 1 Project Manager, 1 Financial and Administrative Assistant, 1 Civil Engineer, 1 Civil Registration Coordinator, 1 Driver, 1 International UNV, 1 National UNV, 1 LCD Coordinator;
* Fier, Durres and Elbasan offices: 3 National UNVs and 3 LCD Coordinators.

Furthermore, 3 SSA and IC contracts were issued during the reporting period.

These processes caused some delays in the accomplishment of first year targets. After a slow initial uptake of funds the programme is now rapidly catching up. By December 2011 out of the total approved budget (US$ 2,749,600.40), 53% (or 1,448,341.00 USD) was disbursed.

**Table 1: JP-EVLC Financial status per objective as at 31 Dec. 2011**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Budget per objective | Agency | Total budget approved | Expenditures | Delivery - % of budget |
| 1 | Objective 1 Support participation of vulnerable communities in local decision-making | UNDP | 957,200.00 | 380,128.01 | 34% |
| 2 | Objective 2 Access to rights | UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA | 716,300.00 | 426,567.23 | 59% |
| 3 | Objective 3 Policies and institutional strengthening for minority inclusion | UNDP | 71,900.00 | 42,720.31 | 59% |
| 4 | Programme coordination | UNDP | 824,320.00 | 503,945.94 | 61% |
| 5 | Administration 7% | All agencies | 179,880.4 | 94.979.67 | 53% |
|  | TOTAL |  | 2,749,600.40 | 1,448,341.00 | 53% |

**Table 2: JP-EVLC Financial status per Agency as at 31 Dec. 2011**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Agency | Total budget approved | Total funds received | Expenditures | Delivery - % of transfers | Delivery - % of budget approved |
| 1 | UNDP | 2,337,650.4 | 1,644,033.6 | 1,014,332.99 | 61% | 43% |
| 2 | UNICEF | 358,450.00 | 322,070.00 | 265,527.90 | 82% | 74% |
| 3 | UNFPA | 53,500.00 | 37,450.00 | 35,750.53 | 95% | 67% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Total | 2,749,600 | 2,003,553.6 | 1,316,304.74 | 65% | 47% |

Based on the documentation provided, the Evaluator identified the following activities and outputs produced so far by the EVLC. The structure of presentation follows the programme objectives and outputs:

***Objective 1 - Participatory development planning in marginalized communities (UNDP in close consultation with UNV)***

**Output 1.1:** Communities mobilized for local development

The feasibility study was completed, through self-surveys and focuses groups, on the identification of baseline disaggregated data on community development, civic registration, community policing, health, education and labour market and set relevant targets. The identification of appropriate communication channels in the communities and on identification of relevant stakeholders in the communities and their roles has been completed and allowed for the rest of the actions to continue.

With strong partnerships established already, the programme has been able to conduct 39 community mobilisation activities equally distributed in the four regions.

Up to now, the programme assisted the establishment of 14 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that are highly functional in 4 regions of Albania, namely Tirana, Durres, Fier and Elbasan. Those CBOs, consisting of a total of 164 members, are continuously playing an essential role in proceeding and implementing their respective components of the programme.

Two exchange visits among different communities were held, one in Elbasan and one in Durres.

**Output 1.2:** Infrastructure projects implemented

Nine out of 20 projects have started and are either well advanced or completed. More specifically four of the identified small scale infrastructure projects have been completed in partnership with the respective local governments, and one in the final stage of the implementation of works. The needs for the infrastructure interventions were identified by the frequent discussions among CBO members, project staff and the local governments.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 3: Infrastructure development projects agreed for co-financing | | |
| Areas | **Infrastructure projects identified and agreed for co-finding with LGs** | **Status** |
| 1. Kamza Municipality in Tirana | Rehabilitation of communal sports facility | Completed |
| 1. Kamza Municipality in Tirana | Rehabilitation of health clinic and surrounding road | Preparation of the technical design |
| 1. Nenstacioni Quarter in Tirana | Construction of Community Service Centre comprised from health clinic, kindergarten and community meeting room | Pending finalization of city master plan |
| 1. Fushe-Kruja in Durres | Rehabilitation of main road in Roma neighbourhood | Completed |
| 1. Nishtulla quarter in Durres | Construction of sewage system | Finalization of tendering documentation |
| 1. Levan Commune in Fier | Construction of Community Service Centre comprised of kindergarten, health clinic, and community meeting room | Completed |
| 1. Driza/Roma village in Qender Commune, Fier | Construction of first phase sewage system at Roma village | Completed |
| 1. Peqin municipality in Elbasan | Reconstruction of a bridge, systematization and cleaning of the river | Finalization of tendering documentation |
| 1. Cerrik municipality in Elbasan | Construction of Community Service Centre comprised from health clinic, kindergarten and community meeting room | Final stage of implementation works |

The main problem affecting the quality and pace of implementation of the CUP has been the political alternance imposed by the local elections of 8 May 2011. Most of the staff in partner Communes, Municipalities and Regions did left its position and more time was needed for the newcomers to learn and adapt to the project activities and previous administration commitments.

The next issue is the co-financing. As the CUP encourage a 20% co-financing from the local government budget, its non-inclusion to the local government’s budget compromises the implementation of the infrastructure project. However in the design phase of the project, the UN team has foreseen these problems and has not condition the CUP by the cash contribution from the LGU. Nevertheless the project approach has always been to encourage local government to contribute financially in order to increase their ownership in the project.

In order to allow for careful implementation of the respective CUP, a longer time framework is required at this stage. It is up to the project implementation unit to provide a definitive action plan regarding the completion of the implementation of the infrastructure projects identified in the project document, together with the precise problems affecting each of them and the measures to be taken to this effect.

**Output 1.3:** Capacity and partnership opportunities raised for Roma and Egyptian NGOs

In December 2011 the “Capacity needs and trainings - Assessment of Roma/Egyptian NGOs” was finalized. This document provided a profile of Roma and Egyptian civil society organizations in the country. The assessment involved organizations operating for a long time as well as newly established ones, both in Tirana and in the regions. Based on the findings of the assessment, a training programme has been finalized. Topics such as NGO management, strategic planning, human resources management, fundraising, project cycle implementation, networking, advocacy and lobbying, community development are included in the training programmes. Trainings delivery evaluation will be covered in the next evaluation period.

The programme has continually partnered with Roma NGOs with the view to increasing their capacities and bringing their voice closer to decision-making process while strengthening their networking with other professional organizations and institutions. In this regard, 5 Roma/Egyptian NGOs (Amaro Drom, Romani Baxt, Romani Kham, Roma Active Albania, Romano Sezi) have been supported to work closely with Tirana Legal Aid Society (a professional legal aid organization) and civil registration authorities in order to resolve cases of unregistered Roma and Egyptian individuals.

Another important capacity building and partnership has been the partnering with Romani Baxt for organizing together a multi-ethnic concern titled the harmony for peace and prosperity. In this event, Roma musicians performed at City Metropol Theatre along with Balkan Chamber Orchestra. This activity can be promoted as a successful example of cooperation between Roma NGO, artistic institutions and the programme.

The forecasted grant scheme supporting eight joint proposals opened for the interested Roma and non-Roma NGOs. This activity is accompanied by a series of training on grant application & management. The grants target the support of small development projects and strengthen partnership among them and respective communities. This activity delivery will be covered in the next evaluation period.

***Objective 2 - Access to Rights***

**Output 2.1**: People registered through civic registration (UNDP and UNICEF under the technical guidance of UNHCR)

The baseline data on unregistered R/E communities has been collected during the feasibility study preparation and prepared for further proceedings.

The following civil registration support has been implemented through the subcontracting of five Roma NGO (Roma Active Albania, Amaro Drom, Romani Baxt, Romano Sezi, Romano Kham) during the evaluation target period:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 4: Types of resolved civil registration cases (individuals and families) in 2011 | | |
| Types | | Nr | |
| Birth registration (individuals) | 144 registered, 275 in process | 419 | |
| Transfer of residency (families) | | 4 | |
| Child custody | | - | |
| Registration as unemployed | | 480 | |
| Finalizing divorce in court (couples) | | 3 | |
| Child adoption | | 2 | |
| Certification of marriage (couples) | | 5 | |
| Stateless individuals seeking to regain Albanian nationality | | 4 | |
| Homeless applicants for social housing (families) | | 8 | |
| ID Cards (individuals) | | 154 | |
| Health cards | | 696 | |
| Change of surname | | 2 | |
| Economic aid | | 124 | |
| Pension plan | | 3 | |
| Property cases | | 1 | |
| Children registered in Pre-School Education | | 34 | |
| Children Registered in Public Elementary School | | 39 | |
| TOTAL OF RESOLVED CASES | | **1703** | |

A mapping of Roma children in Albania conducted by UNICEF has indicated gaps in the services directed to them. Here has been included also the remaining number of Roma children who do not figure as registered in Albania. This work will serve as a basis for future activities in the area of legal assistance to birth registration. So far 144 children born in 2011 have been registered while 275 others are in the process (JP-EVLC 2nd Substantive Report 2011).

In addition to the above figures, 52 economic aid officials have been trained on latest amendments to social assistance legislation, which allows for a greater number of people in need (most of whom are Roma and Egyptian individuals) to be eligible for social welfare.

In the framework of this activity, through UNICEF and Ministry of Interiors’ assistance, 256 personnel from civil registry offices have received relevant training on challenges and solutions to birth registration of vulnerable Roma/Egyptian communities.

The list with the selected maternity homes has been prepared, together with their needs regarding the process of birth registration and the implementation of the new law on birth registration. The respective training & capacity building will be delivered during 2012.

The programme also supported a series of expert consultations throughout 2011 in relation with the identification & implementation of practical solutions to the problematic issues of civil registration. The consultations focussed on the proper implementation of the Albanian legislation at the local level and the recommendations for changes in the relevant sub-legislation. The results of the above were followed up with advocacy by UNICEF and were reflected in the adoption and the promulgation of three government acts that facilitate the process of birth registration during 2011 as below:

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a memorandum of cooperation with the specialized NGO providing specialized legal assistance to facilitate the procedures for registering births occurred abroad. Registration of children born out of the country and encounter difficulties of registration when in Albania would be supported by the consular services of Albania.
2. A new format of the certificate of delivery in the maternity homes has been adopted by the Ministry of Health. The new format includes mother’s maiden name and her identity number (which can be found on the identity card and the certificate of birth).
3. The Ministry of Interior adopted a new formal template for use by the Police Directorate to facilitate registration of children abandoned by their mothers.

These are very tangible results of the JP-EVLC falling in the realm of a concrete policy change achieved through the support of the programme

**Output 2.2:** Community policing (UNDP)

In this component, the following outputs were produced:

* 40 community mediators and have been trained in the subjects of implementing joint safety and community policing activities;
* Five awareness-raising activities have been implemented jointly by community mediators and police authorities in close collaboration with health and education institutions in four regions (Fier, Durres, Tirana and Elbasan).
* A training manual on safety and community policing has been prepared and is serving as a guideline to police authorities for offering minority-friendly services to vulnerable communities;
* Several promotion material, i.e. posters, leaflets, calling for a safer and healthier living style have been produced and disseminated by R/E community mediators, in health centers, schools and to the public;

**Output 2.3:** Primary health care services accessed through health mediators and health providers (UNICEF and UNFPA)

A detailed assessment report with baseline indicators was prepared and training manuals and materials were finalized according to the areas and health mediators from the R/E community to be trained.

The programme trained 69 R/E health mediators (out of which, 40 were women) identified in the respective regions of intervention. 84% of health mediators were mobilised from individuals younger than 24 years old and women belonging to the R/E communities. Similarly to community policing, health mediators are trained to conduct intermediary work between community and local health authority. The trainings, in collaboration with UNDP and UNFPA, equipped Roma mediators with basic knowledge and practical skills on first aid treatment, reproductive health with focus on condom use, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS disease prevention, hygiene, drugs and alcohol, and health services and rights. All in all 44 training sessions were conducted.

At the same time 11 informative awareness sessions were held with community members on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues, alcohol and tobacco use with female and male participation. On the International Day of Youth in August, the programme facilitated a collaborative activity targeting young Roma and Egyptian community members on health. Focusing on the prevention on alcohol, drug abuse and smoking, a participatory discussion was held among 60 young community members, including health mediators, 24 representatives from the regional Department of Health, representatives of the Police, and the Department of Social Services in Durres.

The activities of the advocacy on health and theatre–based education peer education is ongoing.

After preparing and developing curricula on the primary health care services, with special accent to minorities and vulnerable groups, a total of 30 health care providers were trained on the above.

The primary health care activities were completed by workshops on immunization and vulnerable groups with paediatricians, nurses and vaccinators of Tirana city, day – vaccination campaigns, distribution of healthy food, anthropometric measurements events, health visits and lab testing for parasites, which were delivered in a Roma community centre – Center for Contemporary Roma Vision

Furthermore 590 Roma families were screened in a door to door approach. 1,222 children contacted, 636 children identified with no vaccination documents; 168 children were vaccinated with 334 doses of vaccine.

Leaflets and posters prepared with key messages in immunization and child health and nutrition, were distributed to the Roma families contacted during screening. Print and electronic media was used to pass on the information, and in addition Roma mediators and health personnel used as senders of information in interpersonal communication activities.

**Output 2.4:** Child protection provided through Child Protection Units (UNICEF)[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Municipality of Tirana supported by UNICEF has continued to run a multi-purpose centre to protect children from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. These services are provided through ARSIS (a local NGO) with the support of the municipality and UNICEF under the framework of the joint programme. The main services offered by the centre have been: Street Work undertaken in Tirana and its peri-urban areas identifying 279 children in difficult street situation; Provision of daily services such as the development of action plans aiming to minimize the risks and treat children in vulnerable situation; Provision of hygienic washing facilities to 321 children, the set up and functioning of the Emergency Shelter hosting children up to 72 hours per each case until a permanent solution would been found.

The Centre has offered as well case management to monitor and discuss the actions plans for cases to be followed up. The Centre facilitated during this year the registration of 25 children at the National Civil Register. Legal support has been provided by the Centre in 10 court cases that involve directly or indirectly 26 children and 18 adults. These cases are still under process.

Legal and administrative counselling and assistance has been provided in 52 cases among which 41 women benefited. They have been counselled/assisted on list of legal and administrative matters such as adoption procedures, immediate issuance of order of protection or issuance of order of protection, facilitation of temporary accommodation in particularly severe cases, facilitation on a list of procedures at the civil status offices, paternity objection, child custody, property law, judicial procedures, facilitation on documentation of economic/social aid and social housing.

The centre has offered a variety of services for 960 children.

A total of 54 (mainly Roma and Egyptian) of whom 30 are female and 22 are under 18 years of age have been provided with biometric Identification Cards. Furthermore 10 beneficiaries have already applied for ID and are under process.

Some 960 Roma children are currently receiving services of the municipal multifunctional center, which has been implemented multidisciplinary approaches for protecting children from abuse neglect violence established.

Municipal multifunctional centre staff has been reporting progressive increase of their capacities in case management, referral and identification throughout 2011. 12 staff members in Child Protection Unit reported the increase of their capacities in case management, referral and identification.

**Output 2.5:** Early learning and access to education ensured through pre-school education for Roma/Egyptian children (UNICEF)

The ”Early Development Instrument” is a teacher-administrated survey, which defines a complete list of children learning skills, in some domains, such as physical health and wellbeing, social-emotional development, linguistic and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge. It is expected that kindergarten activities contribute to children development in each of these areas. An assessment is carried out by UNICEF in frame of the project “Enhancing Early Childhood Development for Roma Communities in Albania”, July 2011-June 2012, in Saver/Lushnje, Morave/Berat, Korca and Baltez/Fier, using the EDI survey to the target community of 65 children located in Baltez/Fier and Saver/Lushnje, out of a total of 135 children.

Preparatory pre-school courses for children supported through the programme funding have resulted in the 100% registration rate of the 5 to 6 years old Roma children attending these courses in the first grade (60 children). It has served as an advocacy evidence for the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to consider the pre-school education as an important prerequisite for school attendance. The preparatory courses from Roma children have been organized in Elbasan and Durres (Keneta) in the areas identified as most needed for a pre-school facility.

90 children currently benefit from the activities aiming at early inclusion of Roma children and their social and academic preparation for school.

The Early Child Development (ECD) centers in Baltez and Saver have continued to offer pre-school, parent counselling and health check –ups. 27 children of school age coming from the Early Child Development (ECD) centres in Saver and Baltez registered at school (100% of school age children). 66 children in Baltez and Saver attending pre-school during academic year 2011-2012.

The project “Children ready for school, school ready for children”, has mainly worked in two directions: facilitating to prepare children for school and making schools more inclusive and ready to receive Roma children.

* 837 children benefitted from health screening;
* 301 children benefitted from specialized health check-ups;
* 540 parents benefitted from counselling services/trainings;

The “Mapping Roma Children in Albania” was produced instead of the initially planned “Study on the Impact of the Education Reform on Roma Children”. The webpage supported by UNICEF contains pertinent information on studies and research related to vulnerable groups of children in Albania. It will ensure a constant update in order to assist scholars, policy makers, NGOs with data and information to guide them in their work towards the fulfilment of children's rights agenda in Albania.

**Output 2.6:** Employability of Roma and Egyptians promoted through vocational training courses (UNDP)

The rapid labour market survey conducted by the programme has been prepared and the recommendations and conclusions need to be provided to the policy maker and the public. Based on the survey, which suggests collaborating with both public and private actors, the programme has negotiated and is partnering with National Employment Service, private employment agencies as well as other non-for profit organizations experienced in implementing employment assistance projects for vulnerable communities. However, a concrete action plan addressing the recommendations provided in the survey need to be produced, taking also into account the first results of the activities under Vocational training and employability within the project.

Trainings to staff of the Employment offices and Vocational Trainings Institutions on Roma rights and interculturalism have not been delivered yet. They have been postponed for first half of 2012, allowing time for the first Roma and Egyptian trainees to complete respective courses while in the meantime employment officials get familiarized with them and challenges encountered by them.

The first group of 23 trainees that have been receiving support contains both unqualified long- term unemployed individuals as well as university students. 18/23 is long-term unemployed Roma and Egyptian individuals who are enrolled in vocational courses such as electrical repair, tailor and cooking. 5/23 is Roma and Egyptian university students attending a social animator course. All courses have an internship period varying between one to two months nearby private companies or non-profit organizations.

Arrangements with National Employment Services are being made to reach an agreement so that Roma and Egyptian university graduates are accepted to do internships in public institutions such as municipality, employment office, vocational training centers, line ministries and other institutions providing socials and public services.

Consultations with professional associations & CCIs to identify & validate potential incentives for minorities in the private sector are not handled yet.

Raising of awareness & built capacities of trained Roma for regular life-stream income and facilitate employability of trained Roma in partnership with the government, employment offices and the private sector still to be delivered.

***Objective 3 - Policies and institutional strengthening for minority inclusion (UNDP)***

**Output 3.1:** Roma Secretariat supported though technical assistance to implement the priority areas of the Strategy and the Decade for Roma Inclusion

The draft progress report on Roma Decade Action Plan completed in September 2011 indicated the need for a unified monitoring and reporting system allowing for timely and results-based indicators, reporting from mandated regional and central authorities, and thus providing an accurate measuring of progress.

Technical Secretariat for Roma at MoLSAEO in close collaboration with UNDP, since April 2010, is implementing the component on strengthening of institutional capacities for minority inclusion at central level, and implemented at local level in partnership with regional councils and local government units. On February 2011 the programme started the project that aimed creating a web-based reporting and monitoring system, which will be utilized by Technical Secretariat to generate annual progress reports of the Roma Decade National Action Plan (NAP).

The information system shall be a centralized web application, located at MoLSAEO,  
that will work over the Internet or the government network (GovNet) where available.  
This approach ensures that:

* Data entered are immediately available to all interested parties, without need for costly and time-consuming data transfer from the local units to MoLSAEO.
* Indicators and reports are produced without delays, and available immediately to interested parties.
* Changes and improvement are implemented in the central server and are immediately available to all parties, without need for costly and time-consuming software installations in personal computers of the users.
* Reduction of needs for IT staff to administer the system. The system administrator is located at MoLSAEO. There is no need for system administrators in the local offices.

The trainings of the reporting bodies on use of the system is ongoing.

The programme assisted the establishment of 4 Regional Committees on Planning and Assessing Social Needs (RCPASNs) and Technical Sub-committees for Roma. The committees consist of representatives of the local institutions that fall under the priority of the National Action Plan for Roma Decade, namely, education, employment and social protection, housing and infrastructure, health, social inclusion and equal opportunity, and cultural heritage. The committees have been operational and meet on a quarterly basis to discuss on a progress made, share upcoming work plans and seek for further consultations on the outputs of National Action Plan for Roma respectively.

A total of 80 officials from line ministries, as well as Regional Departments of health, education, employment, and social services have been trained to use the newly established online reporting system, and are entering data, so that the system to generate progress reports of NAP for Roma. Trainings have been delivered jointly with Training Institute of Public Administration (TIPA) and IT Department of MOLSAEO in order to ensure their leadership in maintaining the system, following end of the programme support.

Journalists have also been part of such events by writing several articles, and bringing positive aspects from the life of Roma and Egyptian communities, which often is negatively portrayed in media.

**Output 3.2:** Roma and Egyptian development issues mainstreamed in the programmes of different local governments

To mainstream social inclusion of Roma at a regional level, the programme assisted the establishment of 4 Regional Committees on Planning and Assessing Social Needs (RCPASNs) and Technical Sub-committees for Roma. Those committees consist of the representatives of the local institutions that fall under the priority of the National Action Plan for Roma Decade, namely, education, employment and social protection, housing and infrastructure, health, social inclusion and equal opportunity, and cultural heritage. The committees have been operational and meet on a quarterly basis to discuss on a progress made, share upcoming work plans and seek for further consultations on the outputs of National Action Plan for Roma respectively.

Under such structures, the responsible institutions for the National Action Plan for Roma Decade will report to the Technical Secretariat for Roma through the newly established reporting and monitoring system, as has been described earlier. The strengthened local government structures are expected to accelerate the implementation process of National Action Plan for Roma Decade, while streamlining the reporting to the central government.

No Yearly public hearings have been organised as yet.

**Output 3.3:** Capacity among local and central government officials developed in order to effectively deal with specific issues of development, security and inclusion related to the target groups of the project

Organization of six training sessions (1 / region & 2 in Tirana) on Minority Rights and Intercultural Education has not been delivered yet.

Organization of one study tour for Central &Local government employees and project staff in other country is planned to be delivered in 2012.

## Conclusions on the current achievements

The Mid-Term Evaluation can conclude from the provided information that the up-to-now implementation period of the project has been productive – on top of the already produced outputs - mostly with the setting of the scene, establishment of the cooperation protocols and procedures amongst the many implementation agencies, local government and CSOs, identification of major actors and implementation and identification of best examples to multiply and use in the rest of the project. We consider that there are those qualitative outputs that constitute the major achievements for this period as they set the basis for the completion of the activities and achievement of the entire project forecasted outputs.

Concrete solutions were provided to civil registration cases, to reform of registration legislation and procedures as well as training of relevant authorities dealing with registration process. This project component is of a high relevance and has produced very concrete results for the target group of the project. Social public services have started becoming more accessible by a number of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian individuals. However, several challenges have been identified particularly in civil registration and integration of long term unemployed individuals in labour market. Other programme activities in the area of health and police mediations, as well as vocational trainings and child protection have contributed to raise awareness and provide positive changes in the perceptions of this community towards the distance to the provider of the social services. The employability component needs further attention for overcoming the emerged difficulties through institutional mechanisms and concrete measures.

Besides the strengthening of the Technical Committees for Roma at regional level initially in four regions, and within 2011 its expanding in other six regions has been a major achievement in involving local authorities in implementing and monitoring national polices targeting social inclusion, poverty reduction. The other important step during the project implementation remains the collection of data and figures on the gaps of service delivery and economic and social information on Roma and Egyptian communities.

Concluding, this achievement of indicators (even if partial) has also served to confirm the relevance of the project to the initial intentions of the UN and of the beneficiary country. It can be stated that the project is and remains relevant for the foreseen future.

1. **Levels of Analysis: Evaluation criteria and questions**

This chapter examines the performance of the JP-EVLC set against the Questions Matrix and the Activity Monitoring Table per sub-question detailed in Annexes 2 and 3.

***Design level - Relevance***

1. Compliance of the project activities & results with the current Albanian govt. policy towards VCs?

Albanian government has since 2003 adopted a National Strategy for Roma and in 2008 joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion Declaration. The National Action Plan for Roma was prepared under the former EVC Project support and is aligning the Strategy with the commitments under the Decade. The project up to now is assessed to be in line with the relevant priorities of the Albanian Governments based on the needs of the target Vulnerable Communities, such as education & training, economy and employment, poverty reduction & social protection, health and infrastructure, and public order, justice and civil administration. The European Union (EU) has conditioned the accession process of Albania into the EU with the fulfillment of 12 political criteria. In this regard, the Recommendation No. 11 “Reinforce the Protection of Human Rights” is the criteria imposed by EU for Albania to take concrete steps to reinforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma, and to effectively implement anti-discrimination policies. The first project results go in line with the actions of the GoA for the fulfilment of this criteria.

The fully establishment of a web-based reporting and monitoring system is in process and confirms the importance given to the quality of annual progress reports of the Roma Decade National Action Plan (NAP) from the Roma Technical Secretariat.

Moreover the activities implemented until now have contributed to:

* Ensure equal access to all level of the education system for children and youth from Roma minority
* Preserve and develop the cultural identity of Roma individuals
* Empower Roma community and raising awareness among the Roma population and health care and public health services;
* Enhance and maintain public order as well as increase the participation and commitment of R/E communities & individuals in the mainstream civil administration procedures and benefits.

All the above confirm the current relevance of the project activities to the priorities of Albanian government.

1. How important is the project for the target communities?

The Evaluator assessed the commitment of the target communities and their participation in the project activities. Both indicators showed satisfactorily. It is to be believed that when the project outputs will be delivered full steam, the perceived impact will be sensitively higher and the satisfaction rate will follow.

We would like to kindly mention the usefulness of measuring the satisfaction level of the final beneficiaries. This can be achieved through a modest budget by preparing a short questionnaire and distributing it through a representative panel selected amongst the beneficiaries. This experience can be planned to happen every six months so as to allow receiving very useful feedback information on the direct perceived impact of the project.

1. How the project complies with the UN Agencies strategic goals and programming targets in Albania?

The achieved as yet project outcomes and deliverables fall within the strategy the UN criteria of more transparent and accountable governance, greater inclusive participation in public policy decision-making, increase and more equitable access to quality basic services, and regional development.

***Process level - Efficiency***

The efficiency component has been assessed through the resources to output ratio, inter-UN agency coordination, and the monitoring of the project progress.

The resources to output ratio is difficult to measure in the mid-term evaluation. This is because the timeline of the activities planned to be completed before December 2011 has been extended, and as explained before, the indicators in the project document have been planned to be delivered and measured at the end of each activity. Due to the fact that most of the activities (except three) last beyond 31st of Dec. 2011, it is not possible at this stage to put a cost to each deliverable initially planned to be produced before that date. This exercise will be done at the final evaluation.

Regarding the inter-Agency coordination, it is clear that each agency has been better at delivering in the sector in which it is specialised. While the project has been designed using the subsidiarity principle i.e. each Agency is responsible and treats the problems raised up to its level and for its sector of expertise, more coordination in the reporting and the circulation of information is needed at the level of the project. The reporting issue is very visible when some actions have been subcontracted to local CSOs. In some cases the project reporting documents (i.e yearly substantive report) produced are not sufficient to provide data on the achievement rate corresponding to precise activity timing, geographical location and output benchmarks as per JP-EVLC project provisions. This has mainly to do with the agency reporting when subcontracted NGO-S report on a component which may include broader activities than those supported by the funds of JP-EVLC. Thus, unified project monitoring including clear benchmarks should be used by every Implementing Agency for gathering the foreseen data and producing standardized information. Also, when sub-contracting, overlapping of actions financed from different funding sources should be avoided.

The next logical step is the monitoring. The absence of a unified reporting methodology (including forms, templates, etc) renders the monitoring difficult. The project management unit regularly gathers data on the progress pace of the project however and reports it up, however a formalisation and optimisation of inter-Agency reporting would help in the early detection of any deviation and adoption of corrective measures. For ease of monitoring, the Evaluator would suggest include milestones referring to the timing of the expected delivery of the outputs to be measured through the indicators, rather than the current monitoring of the timeline of activities. Measuring the indicators rather than monitoring the activities will render the feedback loop more effective.

***Results level - Effectiveness***

The results achieved until now show a positive impact in the target groups in relation with the purpose of the project. The most important and visible changes affect all three desired outputs, as below:

* There is an observable increase in the participation of target VG in local decision making with ref. to community mobilisation for local development, infrastructure projects and capacity building of Roma NGO as indicated by the outputs developed until now.
* The VG have been accessing their rights to public services with ref. to civil registration, personal security, health, education, and employment services.
* Also the Albanian legislation and policy/institutional framework has been impacted positively by the project activities with reference to the minority inclusion.

At this stage in time, it can be stated that the project has been overshooting its allocated timeline by going slowly than initially planned. The main factors responsible for this can be classified as external and internal to the project. The main external factors include the local elections and the turbulence it created in the local authorities that were partners to the project, the difficulties in getting all the relevant technical documents & permits for the infrastructure projects. In the internal issues that have affected the pace of implementation of the project is mainly late start of project activities in the regions due to the time needed for hiring project staff and UNVs, the inter-Agency early monitoring & detection system, and respective correction of the pace of the action. Basically, each UN agency has observed its own monitoring & detection procedures, thus sometimes extra-time has been necessary to provide the necessary feedback to the JP-EVLC management body.

The outputs delivered so far are very important from a qualitative point of view, as they have served to create the base for the easier implementation and delivery of the planned results. Nevertheless, as stated above, they have taken more time that initially planned and consequently extension of the project implementation timeframe is necessary to allow for a complete delivery of the remaining outputs.

***National ownership - Sustainability***

In terms of the ownership of the project results, the information and dissemination and over all, the intensive work on the ground is having a positive impact in the sensibilisation of the target groups and its empowerment. The active and dynamic participation of the Roma CSOs in the project is a very good indication of the commitment showed by the civil society. The received benefits from the delivered outputs of the project by the individuals, such as health checks, education and training, civil registration has increased their positive self-perception and image, as well as presented a new range of opportunities that before were hidden or not available to the target group.

The target group will continue to receive the long term effects of the project without long term support by the very nature of these outputs, such as the civil registration done, education & training perceived, community centers built, etc,

***Coordination***

The evaluation noted a distinct need for improved inter-agency communication and information sharing procedures. While this is to be expected given the “stand-alone” nature of the programme components, there is still room for improvement. Too often, lack of communication is blamed on systemic issues related to agency differences in reporting cycles, and so on. The Evaluator underlines the importance of the preparation of the Joint programme Monitoring framework, of the revision of the action plan in order to proper monitor performance indicators with relation to timing, locations, output and agency, and the regular convening of the JPCG in charge of a quarterly coordination and overseeing of the programme implementation. During each meeting a quarterly activities report may be prepared and submitted for discussion, and the respective recommendations and corrections shall be provided, duly noted and incorporated in the updated plan of activities. This midterm revision of the project document or monitoring framework can serve to better address the delay with proper measures for the achievement of all the objectives of the programme.

Notwithstanding the issues of the coordination and reporting procedures, the JP has provided important lessons to UN agencies of areas where they can work together and the specific gaps that need to be addressed to strengthen inter-agency collaboration.

1. **Conclusions and lessons learned**
   1. Conclusions

Overall, at this stage the mid-term evaluation concludes that:

1. The JP-EVLC addresses relevant and critical challenges in Albania. It is designed based on the participation of a great number of stakeholders in the regions where it is developed, considering the wide participation of Roma/Egyptian community as the fundamental factor in order to increase the validity of this project. Its objectives are in line with the social and economic situation of the Roma Community.
2. The JP-EVLC results contribute towards overall UN goal for sustainable development and human security.
3. The project team has a high level of competence and motivation. However, it is our opinion that they should be allocated revised and greater competences in the process of gathering the information from the different UN agencies involved, and above all for the monitoring of the results of the project. These elements are very important given the One UN Approach selected to be the base of project methodology during implementation.
4. The participation of the representatives from Roma/Egyptian communities has been significant and has positively impacted the results of the project. Roma/Egyptian communities feel appreciated as proved by their collaboration and commitment. The close working relationship between the Central-Local Government -Community-Donors is an asset for the achievement of effective results that benefit all parties. During interviews representatives of the community stated that their participation in dialogue and activities as well as in defining their priorities is important to change their life and as direct beneficiaries of the EVLC project inspire others (Roma community members) to participate.
5. The EVLC project is contributing significantly to empowering the Roma community and especially women and youth through establishment of CBO-s and providing professional trainings, important for the development of their skills and the professional experience, to improve access to rights and to raise the awareness of the community on the social services available to them.
6. The value and the contribution of the UNVs and Local coordinators is been reflected in most of the activities and components of the project. They play a vital role in facilitating community-led activities, encouraging participation of the community, supporting the process of defining their priorities for the implementation of the Community Upgrading Projects.
7. The monitoring system in place did not fulfil the initial expectancies regarding the provision of timely, accurate, comparable, and easy to understand information, which is crucial for the identification of discrepancies and design of corrective measures. While more could be done in terms of harmonizing and strengthening the joint work modalities among partner UN agencies, the JP provides them a solid foundation for more inter-agency collaboration and ‘delivering as one’ through the lessons that it generates for both the UN and government. It is recommended that the collaboration of different agencies should cover even the smallest details and, wherever possible, the agencies should use the same project management & implementation tools, templates, reporting & monitoring methodology, etc. The joint monitoring and reporting need to be further developed and formalised. Some of the tools to this purpose may be reporting templates, reporting procedures including the timeline, specified and more present internal monitoring procedures by project staff with well specified monitoring & control competences.
   1. Lessons learned

The Evaluator identified five main lessons emerging from the experiences generated through this first phase of programme implementation.

***Lesson No. 1: Inter-agency collaboration is more effective when based at the output level. Harmonizing operational, monitoring and reporting procedures can contribute to an efficient joint programme governance and delivery.***

The starting point of the joint programme design can be at the project output level where respective agencies are specialised and have the relevant experience and expertise.

However without proper coordination during the implementation, the associated interventions will naturally tend to become more of “stand-alone” projects. This is inconsistent with the underlying purpose for joint programmes, namely maximizing synergies between natural partners, avoiding duplication, and reduction in transaction costs.

To avoid the above and increase the efficiency of the project, it is particularly relevant for the inter-agency reporting and monitoring components to be given special attention. UN agencies use different programming and operational approaches. Joint monitoring tools should be produced in order to proper monitor the success indicators per outcome. This will allow for a better reporting of project results and deliverables per output, early detection of discrepancies as well as their timely correction. Also this is very important with regards to meeting the conditions agreed with the donor and to avoid unnecessary friction in the governance of the joint programme.

***Lesson No. 2: Engaging national and regional institutions in programme implementation enhances programme relevance and increases the chances of long term sustainability***

National and regional institutions have a better understanding of the socio-cultural context of the development problems and are much more aware of the national collective experience of what works and what does not work in addressing those challenges. Therefore maintaining and promoting national ownership’ throughout the project design, inception, implementation and closure, enhances the potential for sustainability as well as the probability that the programme processes will be replicated in other areas of the country. This component should be clearly planned accordingly from the project design phase.

***Lesson No.3: UNV and LCD involvement an added-value***

Involvement of UNV and LCD per region demonstrated added-value for EVLC implementation and quality of outcomes. There has been expressed satisfaction with the commitment and quality of services provided by them.

The Evaluator assessed the commitment of the target communities and their participation in the project activities. The daily work of the UNV and LCD with the target groups can be useful to measuring the satisfaction level of the final beneficiaries. This can be achieved through a modest budget by preparing a short questionnaire and distributing it through a representative panel selected amongst the beneficiaries. This experience can be planned to happen every six months so as to allow receiving very useful feedback information on the direct perceived impact of the project.

***Lesson No. 4 : Flexibility***

Flexibility is one critical success factor for this type of programme. Once the strategy of the joint programme is approved, the planning of activities should be kept flexible to adapt to national priorities, regional contexts and emerging needs. It is only with a flexible approach that a programme of this nature can be fully responsive to national priorities and needs.

However, any change to the initial project must be duly justified and fall within the initial scope and purpose of the project.

***Lesson No.5 : Need for inception phase***

This type of joint programme needs an explicit inception phase with clear guidelines to review the design and adapt/update the programme to new realities. It should be finalized with an inception workshop and documented in an inception report that should be part of the project official design documents.

1. **Recommendations**

This Report recommends two sets of actions. One set of recommendations concerns the short-term recommendations, to be capitalized for the next implementation period of the project. The second recommendation is more about a long-term recommendation that focuses on the need to strengthen effectiveness and sustainability of Joint programmes in general.

**Recommendation 1 – Revise and update Action Plan**

An updated Action Plan should be prepared, based on the Questions Matrix and the Activity Monitoring Table per Sub-question and specifying the time when deliverables & success indicators per output will be produced. Intra-allocation amongst different budget lines may be done to adapt to this situation. Also the description of forecasted activities may be modified in order to reflect new realities. Furthermore, more attention should be paid to avoid overlapping between different UN agencies that may work on the same output. For example UNDP and UNICEF are requested to contribute to the same Output respectively under Activity 2.1.3 (UNDP): Facilitate registration of Roma/Egyptian, through specialized legal support with relevant institutions or government offices to be able to access basic services and social protection schemes and under Activity 2.1.5 (UNICEF): Provide legal assistance for the process of birth registration as well as in the school, kindergartens etc.

**Recommendation 2 – Revise the reporting and monitoring procedures**

The updated Action Plan must be accompanied with revised reporting & monitoring procedures. Those should include:

- the appropriate reporting & monitoring templates from the agencies to the programme management;

- the clear and unified timing of reporting & monitoring;

- include geographical location of the reported data;

- adapt and precise the competencies of the project coordination tasks related to it, if necessary;

The target group population of the four regions selected for the project implementation activities numerically justifies the selection of these locations instead of others in the country. With relation to the achievements performance indicators, the Evaluator underlines the importance of having outputs data organized per region in the yearly substantive reports. This allows for having a more complete view of regional situation of the target group concerned and better plans the needs and actions for future interventions of the regional government, national government and the donors implementing development and humanitarian actions.

Reporting mechanisms of subcontracted project components should be adapted to project needs and project performance indicators of the corresponding outcome. In certain subcontracted project components, the sub-contractor’s reports have been simply forwarded to the JP-ELVC project team without any further treatment from the UN Agency in charge. This is not very helpful as instead of providing information, the Agency supplies raw data that need special treatment from the project team. In all those cases, the sub-contractor report may be an annex, but cannot be substituted to the regular intra-Agency reporting.

Furthermore, the JPCG need to exercise its functions as stated in the project (meet at a quarterly basis) especially with regard to the provision of recommendations for monitoring and implementation of the project activities in order to fully achieve the outputs of the project and address difficulties encountered during project implementation.

**Recommendation 3 – A no-cost extension for at least six months, including the respective re-allocation of resources**

It is recommended to seek for a no-cost extension of the JP-EVLC for at least six months in order to achieve its predefined outcomes and results and impacts to be stronger, and implement the updated Action Plan.

The delay is due mainly to the electoral elections of May 2011 and the consequent administrative changes in the four regions (communes and municipalities). It took time for the new administration to take office and be aware of partnerships or commitments established from the previous administration. This has caused some delay especially with relation to the implementation of the Community Upgrading Projects that require also a regional co-financing. The Evaluator supports a no-cost extension to give more time to the implementation team to finalize adequately on-going activities with the remaining resources. This extension should be based on an analysis of the intra-budget line budgetary re-allocations in function of targets remained to be achieved in the suggested extension period.

**Recommendation 4 – Increase visibility & wider dissemination of project deliverables**

It is recommended to make the information produced by the JP – EVLC available for the public available to the public through the web-sites of the participating agencies or the One-UN Albania web site.

The JP - EVLC has supported some studies, assessments, surveys and other products, which provide precious information for national institutional decision-makers, the project stakeholders and for the public in general. In most of the cases, the visibility of these outputs products is low, the reports are only known by a few stakeholders. The JP Management Team needs to make these products available to the public through the web-site of participating agencies or the One-UN Albania web site. The main national Implementing Partner (MOLSAEO) may also take into account the possibility of publishing and making them available, to the main national institution covering the donor and national support to the Roma and Egyptian communities.

**Long term Recommendation 5 – Inception Report**

It is recommended to formalize an inception phase at the start-up of these joint programmes and document it in an inception report that should become part of the design documents.

An inception phase should be formally part of the implementation of these joint programmes to review and update the design that was initially approved. The objective of this inception phase should be to review the strategy of the joint programme, the performance monitoring framework, the management arrangements, the coordination mechanisms and participation of stakeholders, the review of risks and mitigation measures, and, finally the formulation of the first year work plan and its related budget.

This inception report, which should be prepared no later than 3 months after the start of the project, should be concluded with an inception workshop to review the output of the inception phase including the proposed changes to the design (given that high level results cannot be changed without an extensive and lengthy approval process). The inception report will document the requested and approved modifications and should become part of the “official” project/programme documents.

1. **Annexes** 
   1. Annex 1: Terms of References of Evaluation

**Terms of References of the Evaluation**

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|  |
| Background |
| Albania is one of eight countries to pilot a worldwide programme of UN reform known as the “One UN”. Part of ongoing United Nations efforts to enhance efficiency and responsiveness, the One UN Pilot Initiative aims to bring UN Agencies together – with one programme, one budget and one leader. The One UN pilot initiative attempts to strengthen unity of purpose, coherence in management, while maintaining the distinct mandates and missions of the different UN agencies. The corner stone of the One UN Pilot in Albania is the “One UN Programme” (2007-2012) which builds upon the existing UN Development Assistance Framework and aligns with the Government of Albania’s (GOA) goal of European integration and with the priorities contained in the new National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI).  The One UN Programme in Albania works in partnership with government and civil society to advance a system of democratic governance through: supporting the development of evidenced-based policies and programmes; deepening participation in public decision-making for all persons and facilitating social inclusion through building the representation and voice of marginalized groups; facilitating more transparent, responsive and accountable institutions at all levels of government; expanding men’s and women’s capacity to claim rights; and facilitating equitable access to quality basic services.  It is within this context that the Joint Programme on Empowering the Vulnerable Local Communities (JP-EVLC) under the One UN Programme – was developed and has been implemented since July 2010 by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA while UNHCR and UNV have played an important role for the registration and mobilization of communities, respective components. UNDP is responsible for coordination of the JP-EVLC’s implementation. The overall goal of the JP-EVLC is to improve the human security and access to socio-economic and civic rights of vulnerable communities (Roma and Egyptians) of Albania. The JP-EVLC has three specific objectives:  To support participation of vulnerable communities in local decision-making – through:   * identification of priorities and preparation of Community Development Plans; implementation of community upgrading projects in partnership with local governments, strengthening capacities and cooperation between Roma and Egyptian NGOs and their respective communities. * To enable vulnerable communities to access public services through civil registration; community policing; establishing and strengthening network of Roma Mediators in areas of health, education, and child protection; facilitating vocational training and employment. * To promote policies and institutional strengthening for social inclusion of vulnerable communities through capacity building and assistance to local and central government institutions; capacity building and partnership strengthening for Roma and Egyptian NGOs.   The main Government partner responsible for coordination of the planned actions is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO), with the focal point being the Technical Secretariat for Roma, under the Directorate of Cross-Cutting Strategies, taking the lead in coordinating the work with the other government agencies. The regional and local authorities of Tirana, Durres, Fier and Elbasan have also been the key partners in implementing the JP-EVLC activities at the local level.  The UN Joint Programme on Empowering the Vulnerable Local Communities reflects the framework of the One UN Programme in Albania and is drawing on the expertise of the participating agencies. Under the JP-EVLC’s Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, participating agencies have committed to carrying a mid-term evaluation. As such, UNDP will be recruiting a national consultant to conduct the mid-term evaluation of the Joint programme during March – April 2012.  The overall objective of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the process, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability (five OECD evaluation criteria) of the JP-EVLC with regard to: enhancing Roma and Egyptian communities’ participation in local decision-making; accessing their rights and social/public services; as well as to the institutional strengthening of social inclusion. |
| Duties and Responsibilities |
| The unit of analysis or object of study for this mid-term evaluation is the joint programme - EVLC, understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.  The mid-term evaluation shall be based on the standard evaluation criteria (as defined by OECD), human rights-based approach and results-based management (as applied by the UN). Specifically, the mid-term evaluation aims at the followings;  1. Analyse the programme’s design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve);  2. Provide guidance on the sustainability of programme interventions;  3. Provide feedback to the participating agencies and national counterparts on the soundness (defined as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) and impact of their approach in the Joint programme-EVLC;  4. Evaluate programme impact of implemented actions, contained in the Work Plans and Programme Logframe 5. Based on the analysis conducted over the experience of JP-ELVC, extract general lessons learned and recommendations for implementation;  6. Provide the donor with information on impact of their specific support through the joint programme, to the vulnerable local communities in Albania  The mid-term evaluation will also focus on how the human rights- based approach applied, has influenced the achievement of the outputs and outcomes, half-way through the program implementation. The mid-term evaluation is expected also to provide recommendations for planning and formulation of the remaining phase of the Joint Programme - EVLC.  The conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation will be addressed to its main users, participating agencies: the Joint Programme Management Committee, UNHSTF and other partners involved in the programme implementation.  EVALUATION METHODOLOGY  Evaluation methodology is framed around standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) plus two guiding principles for UN work (human rights based approach and results-based management).  The Evaluator will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR, the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, the Evaluator is expected to analyze all relevant information sources, such as annual reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents and any other documents that may provide evidence on which to form opinions. The Evaluator is also expected to use interviews as a means to collect relevant data for the evaluation.  The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in detail in the inception report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at a minimum, information on the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory techniques.  The evaluation will follow the Standards and Norms of the United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2008, UNEG/FN/ETH(2008).  TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES   * Working under the supervision of the JP-EVLC Programme Manager (Evaluation Focal Point) and under the guidance of the Joint Programme Coordination Group (composed of cluster/programme staff from the participating agencies such as UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, as well as UNV and UNHCR), the national consultant will undertake the following tasks: * Carry out desk-top review of relevant documents and reports (Joint Programme document, Annual Work Plans, One UN Programme and Results Framework, JP M&E Strategy, Annual Progress Reports, and other related documents to be provided by the participating agencies. agencies); * Prepare the inception report, containing the evaluation methodology and tools as well as the detailed calendar of actions, elaborated in consultation with the with the evaluation focal point and the Joint Programme Coordination * Field work (survey/ interviewing process of data gathering) in the regions of Tirana, Durres, Fier and Elbasan) to conduct meetings and hold key interviews with stakeholders; * Based on discussions and interviews, develop “Most Significant Change Stories” on behalf of the JP-EVLC and to be included as an annex in the mid-term evaluation report; * Submit draft final mid-term evaluation report as agreed upon in the evaluation schedule and reporting terms in English, including recommendations for consideration in the final programme evaluation; * Incorporate recommendation received from the Evaluation Focal Point and the Joint Programme Coordination Group, and submit final report;   DELIVERABLES:  The Evaluator is responsible for submitting the following deliverables:  Inception Report (to be submitted within five days of the submission of all programme documentation to the Evaluator)  This report will propose the methods, sources and procedures to be used for data collection. It will also include a proposed timeline/calendar of activities and submission of deliverables.  Draft Final Report  This report will be shared among the Joint Programme teams, the participating agencies and the Joint Programme Management Committee (JPMC). It will also contain an executive summary of no more than 4 pages that includes a brief description of the joint programme, its context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its main findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation Focal Point will coordinate with the Joint Programme Coordination Group and JPMC and will consolidate the comments for the draft final report to be submitted to the Evaluator.  Final Evaluation Report (to be submitted within five days of receipt of the draft final report with comments)  The Final Evaluation report will contain the following sections at a minimum:  1. Cover Page  2. Introduction   * Background, goal and methodological approach * Purpose of the evaluation * Methodology used in the evaluation * Constraints and limitations on the study conducted   3. Description of interventions carried out   * Initial concept * Detailed description of its development: description of the hypothesis of change in the programme.   4. Levels of Analysis: Evaluation criteria and questions  5. Conclusions and lessons learned (prioritized, structured and clear)  6. Recommendations  7. Annexes   * Most Significant Change Stories * A Power point presentation of the main findings and recommendations. |

* 1. Annex 2: Evaluation Questions Matrix

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| **Major Evaluation question** | **Question** | **Statement of data required** | **Data source** | **Survey method** |
| **Major Evaluation question 1** | **How important is the relevance of the EVLC with ref. to the VC in Albania ?** |  |  |  |
| Subq. 1.1 | How does the project activities & results comply with the current Albanian govt. policy towards VCs ? | Relevant priority for the government | Technical Secretariat for Roma; relevant Alb. Govt publications | Interview |
| Subq. 1.2 | How important is the project for the target communities? | Relevant for the target community | VC in Tirana, Fier, Elbasan and Durres | Group Interview |
| Subq. 1.3 | How the project complies with the UN Agencies strategic goals and programming targets in Albania? | Relevant priority for the UN country team | UN Agencies partners in the project | Interview |
| **Major Evaluation question 2** | **Are the objectives of the EVLC project being achieved?** |  |  |  |
| Subq. 2.1  (completed with monitoring sheet) | Is the participation of target VC in local decision making being increased, with ref. to: a) community mobilisation for local development, b) infrastructure projects; and c) capacity building of Roma NGO ? | a) activities 1.1.1 to 1.3.4. performed as per Activity Plan (AP); b) performance indicators 1 to 6 satisfied as per AP | a) EVLC project documents & products; b) EVLC monitoring reports; c) Roma & Non-Roma NGOs involved | Desk research; Interviews; on-site observation; |
| Subq. 2.2  (completed with monitoring sheet) | Are VC accessing their rights to public services with ref. to: a) civil registration, b) personal security, c) health, d) education, e) employment services? | activities 2.1.1 to 2.6.6 performed as per AP, and the respective performance indicators satisfied | a) EVLC project documents & products; b) Respective UN Agencies; c) relevant institutions, central & local government agencies including education, health, civil registration, CPUs and police; VC in four locations | Desk research; Interviews; on-site observation; Group Interview; Questionnaire |
| Subq. 2.3  (completed with monitoring sheet) | Is Albanian legislation and institutional framework being reinforced with reference to the minority inclusion ? | activities 3.1.1 to 3.3.2 performed as per AP, and the respective performance indicators satisfied | National Action Plan (any update); Annual Progress Reports of the National Roma Strategy; Annual National Conference proceedings; Regional / Municipal Coordination Committees minutes; | Desk research; Interviews; on-site observation; |
| Subq. 2.4 | What factors / parameters have affected the success / failure of objectives ? | Enumeration of clearly defined parameters causing the deviations | EVLC signed Document; all the above | Desk research; Interviews; on-site observation; Group Interview; Questionnaire |
| Subq. 2.5 | Has the project delivered its outputs in time so far? | Deviation in number of days per Output / Activity from the Project Document | EVLC signed Document; all the above | Desk research; Interviews; on-site observation; Group Interview; Questionnaire |
| **Major Evaluation question 3** | **Are the objectives being achieved economically?** |  |  |  |
| Subq. 3.1 | Is the budget of the project respecting the disbursement rates as forecasted? | The budget is in the expected interval of spending rate for the major sub-lines | EVLC Intermediary Financial Report | Desk research; interview |
| Subq. 3.2 | What factors / parameters can explain the discrepancies in time and amount? | Enumeration of parameters explaining the discrepancies | EVLC Intermediary Financial Report | Desk research; interview |
| Subq. 3.3 | Has the 2ry procurement satisfied the rules of UNDP? | The 2ry procurement has satisfied the UNDP rules | EVLC procurement documents for infrastructure | Desk research; interview |
| **Major Evaluation question 4** | **How is the sustainability of the intervention and its effects being insured?** |  |  |  |
| Subq. 4.1 | Is VC ownership / leadership being strengthened? | Target groups & institutions are incorporating the project results | Target group routines; target institutions new rules & procedures | Interviews |
| Subq. 4.2 | Is the target group of VC able to receive the long term effects of the project without long term support? | Target group of VC able to receive the long term effects of the project without long term support | Target group routines | Group interviews; interviews |
| **Major Evaluation question 5** | **How the coordination provided an added value / less value to the actions**? |  |  |  |
| Subq. 5.1 | What have been the UN inter-agency coordination pitfalls / benefits? | Enumeration of the UN interagency coordination pitfalls benefits | Internal monitoring reports | Desk research; interviews |
| Subq. 5.2 | Has any plan been prepared for the local coordination? Which are local partners and why have they been selected? Have they been incentivized and how? | List of local partners & relevant plans and collaboration / cooperation agreements | Collaboration / cooperation agreements | Desk research; interviews |
| Subq. 5.3 | Which local factors resisted coordination (if any) & why? | List of local factors resisting coordination & reasons | Project reports | Interviews |

* 1. Annex 3: Activity Monitoring Table per sub-question

Sub-question 2.1: Is the participation of target VC in local decision making being increased, with ref. to: a) community mobilisation for local development, b) infrastructure projects; and c) capacity building of Roma NGOs?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity Planned** | **Activity Performed** | **Discrepancy(ies) & Notes** |
|  | **OUTPUT 1.1. Communities mobilised for Local development** | | |
| 1.1.1 | Feasibility study, including self-surveys and focus groups |  |  |
|  | Identification of baseline disaggregated data on community development, civic registration, community policing, health, education and labour market and set relevant targets, |  |  |
|  | Identify appropriate communication channels in the communities |  |  |
|  | Identify relevant stakeholders in the communities and their roles |  |  |
| 1.1.2 | Organise awareness activities & disseminate information on community work on four regions |  |  |
| 1.1.3 | Support communities to get organised in CBOs |  |  |
| 1.1.4 | Design & implement training programs |  |  |
| 1.1.5 | Support two exchange visits among different communities |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 1.2 Infrastructure projects implemented** | | |
| 1.2.1 | Preparation of 20 CUP (TORs & Procurement File) |  |  |
| 1.2.2 | Implementing 20 CUP in four regions |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 1.3 Capacity building and partnership strengthened for Roma & Egyptian NGOs** | | |
| 1.3.1 | Capacity needs & training assessment of Roma / Egyptian NGOs |  |  |
| 1.3.2 | Develop training program & train |  |  |
| 1.3.3 | Develop partnership of Roma & non-Roma NGOs |  |  |
| 1.3.4 | Preparation of joint proposals for Roma & non-Roma NGOs |  |  |
| 1.3.5 | Eight joint SCPs implemented |  |  |

Sub-question 2.2: Are VC accessing their rights to public services with ref. to: a) civil registration, b) personal security, c) health, d) education, e) employment services?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity Planned** | **Activity Performed** | **Discrepancy(ies) & Notes** |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.1. People registered through civic registration and able to access public services and benefits in the area of social services, health, education, etc** | | |
| 2.1.1 | Raise awareness among communities on the need of civil registration |  |  |
| 2.1.2 | Refer individuals to the appropriate specialised legal organisations and monitor registration process |  |  |
| 2.1.3 | Facilitate registration of Roma / Egyptian through specialised legal support, for: |  |  |
|  | Registration of new residence |  |  |
|  | Registration as homeless |  |  |
|  | Registration in the social assistance scheme |  |  |
|  | Registration in the employment scheme |  |  |
|  | Registration in the public health system |  |  |
|  | Receiving new ID cards |  |  |
|  | Benefiting from Pension Schemes |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.2 Community policing introduced among Roma communities through police mediators** | | |
| 2.2.1 | Develop & promote the profile of police mediator |  |  |
| 2.2.2 | Develop & provide specialized trainings to police mediators in partnership with the Regional Directorates of Police |  |  |
| 2.2.3 | Implement educational awareness activities with young generation |  |  |
|  | Promote models of collaboration between the community and the police |  |  |
| 2.2.4 | Sensitize & train local police authorities to work with police mediators |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.3 Communities have better access to primary health care services through health mediators and health providers** | | |
| 2.3.1 | Training needs assessment for health mediators |  |  |
| 2.3.2 | Train health mediators & providers in reproductive health, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, maternity health |  |  |
| 2.3.3 | Advocacy on health & theatre-based peer education |  |  |
| 2.3.4 | Training of PHC personnel in planning outreach for Roma children |  |  |
| 2.3.5 | Conduct child-health days (immunisation, growth monitoring, nutrition advice, antenatal care) |  |  |
| 2.3.6 | Preparation of health education materials on mother & child care |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.4 Child Protection provided through Child Protection Units** | | |
| 2.4.1 | Identification / referral and management of cases of children at risk in coordination w. police, economic aid at municipalities, schools, health centres & civil society. |  |  |
| 2.4.2 | Advocacy with the local governments on child rights protection mechanisms |  |  |
| 2.4.3 | Increase capacity of employees of social services in the municipality on dealing w. children |  |  |
| 2.4.4 | Follow-up cases referred to and from CPU |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.5 Pre-school education services provided for Roma children to ensure early learning and access to education** | | |
| 2.5.1 | Preparatory courses for Roma children |  |  |
| 2.5.2 | Support for Roma Centers |  |  |
| 2.5.2 | Study on the Impact of Education reform on Roma Children |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 2.6 Minority Friendly Employment Services** | | |
| 2.6.1 | Rapid Assessment of Labour Market to Roma specificities |  |  |
| 2.6.2 | Provide training to Employment Office Staff on Roma rights & interculturalism |  |  |
| 2.6.3 | Enrol Roma / Egyptian in VET courses |  |  |
| 2.6.4 | Assess / Evaluate skills developed by VET |  |  |
| 2.6.5 | Consultations with professional associations & CCIs to identify & validate potential incentives for minorities in the private sector |  |  |
| 2.6.6 | Raise awareness & built capacities of trained Roma |  |  |

Sub-question 2.3. Is Albanian legislation and institutional framework being reinforced with reference to the minority inclusion?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity Planned** | **Activity Performed** | **Discrepancy(ies) & Notes** |
|  | **OUTPUT 3.1. Roma Secretariat & Roma Focal Points in line Ministries supported through TA to coordinate and monitor implementation of Roma Strategy & Roma Decade National Action Plan** | | |
| 3.1.1 | Develop the monitoring framework of the streamlined NAP |  |  |
| 3.1.2 | Assist and train Technical Secretariat to prepare National Roma Strategy with input from ministries |  |  |
| 3.1.3 | Organise Annual National Conference |  |  |
|  | Support the establishment of a data Collection System |  |  |
|  | **OUTPUT 3.2 Mainstreamed Rome and Egyptian development issues in the programmes of local governments** | | |
| 3.2.1 | Facilitate the establishment and sustaining of four Regional / Municipal Coordination Committees |  |  |
| 3.2.2 | Organize yearly public hearings at the local govt level on Roma issues |  |  |
|  | **Output 3.3 Capacities increased among local and central govt officials in order to effectively deal with specific issues of development, security and inclusion related to the target groups of the project** | | |
| 3.3.1 | Organise six training sessions (1 / region & 2 in Tirana) on Minority Rights and Intercultural Education |  |  |
| 3.3.2 | Organise one study tour for Central &Local government employees and project staff in other country |  |  |

* 1. Annex 4: Performance Indicators of achievements

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective 1. Participatory development planning in marginalized communities (UNDP in close consultation with UNV)** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Output** | **SMART Outputs** | **Responsibility** | **Observation/ Remarks** |
| **OUTPUT 1.1. Communities mobilised for Local development**  **OUTPUT 1.2 Infrastructure projects implemented**  **OUTPUT 1.3 Capacity building and partnership strengthened for Roma & Egyptian NGOs** | 1.Understanding of demographic composition and the priority needs of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the 4 regions | UNDP | Ongoing. |
| 2. Community based organizations took an active role in the identifications, design and implementation of the community infrastructure projects | Completed. |
| 3. R/E NGO leaders better equipped to represent the local community | Ongoing. |
| 4.Cooperative working relationship established between R/E and non R/E NGOs with SCPs in each of the 4 regions developed, funded and implemented | Not delivered yet. |
| 5.Number of Community infrastructure projects identified, designed and implemented | Ongoing. 9 identified, 4 completed. Delay in the implementation. |
| 6.Number of Joint SCPs developed, funded and implemented | On-going. Delay in the implementation |
| **Objective 2. Access to Rights** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Output** | **SMART Outputs** | **Responsibility** | **Observation/ Remarks** |
| **OUTPUT 2.1. People registered through civic registration and able to access public services and benefits in the area of social services, health, education, etc** | Baseline disaggregated data on registered Roma and Egyptians collected through the feasibility study | UNDP | Completed. |
| 400 Roma people benefit from specialized legal support in various registration processes | UNDP | Target achieved. Ongoing activity. |
| 200 children registered | UNICEF | Target achieved. (144 registered at birth, 73 registered at elementary and pre-school). |
| 240 staff from maternity homes and civil offices trained | UNICEF | Target partly achieved (256 personnel from civil registry offices trained, while Maternity homes staff trainings are expected to be delivered in 2012) |
| **OUTPUT 2.2 Community policing introduced among Roma communities through police mediators** | 12 police mediators (by community, region and gender) | UNDP | Target achieved. |
| Developed and provided 3 specialized trainings to police mediators | Ongoing. Beside the trainings programmes, 5 joint awareness activities were implemented. |
| Developed and provided 2 specialized trainings to the police | Not delivered. |
| **OUTPUT 2.3 Communities have better access to primary health care services through health mediators and health providers** | Over 80% of eligible children under 5 vaccinated (50% female) | UNICEF | Ongoing. |
| 100 professionals health workers trained (in order to provide R/E – friendly services) | UNFPA | Ongoing. |
| 50 community health mediators (50% female) | Target achieved. No. 40 female-29 male |
| 100 health professionals skilled in identifying R/E children missing out from immunization services and other child health services | UNICEF | Ongoing. 30 healthcare providers trained. |
| Over 50% of eligible children under 5, reached through basic child health immunization services including immunization | Ongoing. 636 children eligible children with no vaccination documents; 168 children were vaccinated. |
| **OUTPUT 2.4 Child Protection provided through Child Protection Units** | 960 children using services (50 % female) | UNICEF | Ongoing. Around 488 children using services (176 female). |
| 720 families using social services (economical aid, etc) | Ongoing. |
| 360 children/families referred to psychological support | Ongoing. |
| 12 municipalities staff with increased capacities in case management and referral and identification (number and evaluation of trainings) | Ongoing. |
| **OUTPUT 2.5 Pre-school education services provided for Roma children to ensure early learning and access to education** | 100 children attending kindergarten or prep up courses enrolled in school yearly (50% female) | UNICEF | Target achieved for two regions - 150 Roma / Egyptian children in Durres and Elbasan enrolled. |
| 500 parents with newly acquired skills in child rearing (50% female) | Target achieved. 540 parents benefitted from counselling services/trainings. |
| 100 children enrolled in school and have improved academic achievements | Achieved. |
| One study report indicating the trends of the education reform in Albania with regards to Roma children developed | “Mapping of services for Roma Children in Albania” was produced. |
| **Output 2.6 Minority Friendly Employment Services** | Proportion of people (by sex and age) in employable age from the community enrolled in and complete vocational training courses | UNDP | Ongoing. Assessment of Labour Market to Roma specificities conducted. Trainees are still running vocational training courses. Delay in delivering the workshops with staff of employment services and constraints encountered in handling concrete actions toward identification and validation of potential incentives from minorities in the private sector, through consultation with professional associations and CCIs. |
| Vocational training curricula by sector and type of profession | Evaluation of skills developed is ongoing. |
| **Objective 3. Policies and institutional strengthening for minority inclusion (UNDP)** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Output** | **SMART Outputs** | **Responsibility** | **Observation/ Remarks** |
| **OUTPUT 3.1. Roma Secretariat & Roma Focal Points in line Ministries supported through TA to coordinate and monitor implementation of Roma Strategy & Roma Decade National Action Plan**  **OUTPUT 3.2 Mainstreamed R/E development issues in the programmes of local governments**  **OUTPUT 3.3 Capacities increased among local and central govt officials in order to effectively deal with specific issues of development, security and inclusion related to the target groups of the project** | Monitoring report positively assesses streamlined and operational National Action Plan | UNDP | Ongoing. In delay compared to action plan. |
| Regional and Local Action Plans, designed in line with the National Action Plan, are being implemented | Ongoing. 4 Regional Committees on Planning and Assessing Social Needs (RCPASNs) and Technical Sub-committees for Roma established and on a quarterly basis to discuss the needs of the R/E community. |
| Local communities are confident that they are represented by their local regional coordination committee | Ongoing. Constant information to local and regional authorities is established and case by case issues are handled and provided solutions. |
| 1 streamlined operational and monitorable National Action Plan, serving the needs of the Strategy and the Decade. | Achieved. |
| Data collection mechanism developed, tested and institutionalized | Ongoing. In delay compared to action plan. |
|  |  |

* 1. Annex 5: List of Interviews

| Institution | Interviewee | Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| JP-EVLC Project Team | Bujar Tajo, JP-EVLC National Project Manager | 30/04/2012 |
| UNDP | Entela Lako, UNDP Cluster Manager | 14/05/2012 |
| UNFPA | Elida Nuri, National Programme Associate | 14/05/2012 |
| MOLSAEO | Ilda Bozo, Director | 16/05/2012 |
| UNV | Maylis De Verneuil, Country Director | 17/05/2012 |
| UNICEF | Mirlinda Bushati, Project Officer | 21/05/2012 |
| JPCG (Project structure) | UNDP, UNICEF, Project Team | 21/05/2012 |
| ACA | Holta Koçi, Executive Director | 22/05/2012 |
| JP-EVLC Project Team | Project Team (4) | 23/05/2012 |
| UNDP Local Development Community Coordinator - Tirane | Ms. Valbona Dervishi | 23/05/2012 |
| Regional Council, Elbasan | Blendi Gremi, Director Education Department | 6/06/2012 |
| UNDP Local Development Community Coordinator - Elbasan | Gjolek Mera | 6/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Elbasan | Ms. Mexhidije Ademi, Health Mediator, Civil registration | 6/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Elbasan | Ms. Lida Berati, Vocational course trainee | 6/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Elbasan | Serxhio, Internship | 6/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Cerrik | Ismet, Police Mediator | 6/06/2012 |
| Social Service Directory, Durres | Meme Xhaferraj, Head of Directory | 6/06/2012 |
| UNDP Local Development Community Coordinator - Durres | Bledina Bushi | 6/06/2012 |
| Regional Directory of Health, Durres | Evelina Balliu, Specialist | 6/06/2012 |
| Albkontakt | Edlira Pajuni | 6/06/2012 |
| Regional Council, Durres | Jovan Likja, Chief of Projects Office | 6/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Durres | Xhesi, UNV | 6/06/2012 |
| Vocational course trainees | 4 trainees | 6/06/2012 |
| UNDP Local Development Community Coordinator - Fier | Klodiana Tosuni | 8/06/2012 |
| Qender Commune - Fier | Mr. Harilla Mile, Head | 8/06/2012 |
| Vocational training centre | Mr. Agron Dule, Director | 8/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Fier | Mr. Panajot Alushi, Vocational course trainee, Police Mediator | 8/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Fier | Ms. Drita Alushi, Health Mediator | 8/06/2012 |
| CBO member in Fier | Ms. Farie Cela, Health Mediator | 8/06/2012 |
| TLAS | Rajmonda Bozo, Executive Director | 11/06/2012 |
| Regional Council, Tirane | Entela Lila, Specialist for Social Policy | 19/06/2012 |
| UNICEF | Mirlinda Bushati, Project Officer | 19/06/2012 |

* 1. Annex 6: List of Documents reviewed

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| --- | --- |
| Author | Title of Document |
| Project Document | EVLC signed project document |
| Project Progress Document | EVLC First Substantive Report |
| Project Progress Document | EVLC Second Substantive Report |
| Project Progress Document | Annual Work Plan (AWP) Jul. 2010 – Mar. 2011 |
| Project Progress Document | Annual Work Plan (AWP) April 2011 – March 2012 |
| Project Progress Document | Minutes of the Joint Programme Management Committee (JPMC) Meeting - 23 May 2011 |
| Project Progress Document | Minutes of the Joint Programme Management Committee (JPMC) Meeting – 15 October 2010 |
| Project Document | Work Plan (AWP) 2010-2013 |
| Elira Jorgoni, UNDP | Capacity needs and trainings Assessment of Roma/Egyptian NGOs |
| Project Progress Document | List of candidates enrolled to attend Tailoring Vocational Training at Public Vocational Training Centre no.4; |
| Project Progress Document | Vocational Training trainees for Durres region |
| Project Progress Document | Reports of Roma NGOs July 2011-March 2012 |
| ARSIS -Social Organisation for the Support of Youth, Albania Branch | Establish services to protect children from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation through the operation of the Multifunctional Community Centre, Municipality Unit No. 7 |
| UNION for Development and Integration of Roma Minority in Albania “Amaro Drom” | Report of the Assessment Instrument of early development of the Children in the kindergartens of Saver/Lushnje, Korca, Baltez Fier and Morave/Berat. |
| Albanian Community Centre | “Children ready for school, school ready for children”, July 2010 – April 2012 |
| UNDP project document | Rapid assessment for accommodating Roma and Egyptian communities in the labour market |
| UNION for Development and Integration of Roma Minority in Albania “Amaro Drom” | Enhancing Early Childhood Development Opportunities for Roma Communities of Albania, July 2011 - June 2012 |
| Useful to Albanian Women, Albania, Community Center “Today for the Future No1” Durres, Community Center “Today for the Future No2”Elbasan | “Children ready for school, school ready for children„ July 1st 2010 – June 30th 2012 |
| TLAS | “Increasing the access to legal and social services for the vulnerable children”, March 15, 2011– March 15, 2012 |
| ACA | Narrative Report April – December 2011 |
| Government of Albania | The Decade of Roma Inclusion |
| UNDP | Final Report “Empowerment of Vulnerable Communities in Albania” |
| UNEG | UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System |
| UNEG | Standards for Evaluation in the UN system |

* 1. Annex 7: Most Significant Change Stories

1. *Internship change story*

Serxhio, a young guy from the Roma community in Elbasan, is studying French language at the Elbasan University. Given his passion for foreign languages and his willingness to learn how external relations of Regional structure do function in practice, he was enrolled as one of the five members from the R/E community to attend unpaid internships at the Regional Council, Directory for foreign relations. He declared to have learnt how administrative work is done in the Department, how the Region of Elbasan participates to different EU regional and international networks/initiatives/programmes, how important is to establish new contacts for the start up of the professional curriculum. Sergio declared to be very satisfied from this new experience and to be sure that it gave a plus to its curriculum.

The EVLC programme facilitated the registration of 5 young people belonging to the R/E communities in Elbasan, Cerrik and Librazhd, to attend internships courses at the local and regional authorities. The Regional Council in Elbasan is intentioned to institutionalize the internship modality and seeing how to find appropriate budget in order to employ one of the representatives of this group in its structure, given the increasing importance of this community and the partnerships so far established for a well-functioning inclusion scheme of the community.

1. *Rebuilding trust change story*

Trust is an essential component when it comes to exchange, to handle and address day-to-day problems of the R/E community. This is especially true in Durres Region territory (especially Nishtulla quartier), where R/E NGO have been involved in the last 20 years in an increasing civil society action toward provision of humanitarian aid and implementation of development initiatives and programmes.

During interviews and meeting with the local stakeholders, including CBO members and regional authorities, it came out the breakup of faith experienced among the R/E community and the local government and programmes i.e. UNDP. The problem was identified in the misuse of funds from one NGO in the implementation of agreed and contacted development actions in the community and caused a break of the trust of the R/E community in the coming programmes and initiatives that acted in cooperation with the local government. It took several efforts and time for the UNDP regional team and local government to re-establish communication, partnership and carry out new development measures in conformity to agreed need assessment of the community.

In view of the well-functioning of the Regional Committees on Planning and Assessing Social Needs and of the Technical Group, of the re-builded trust of the R/E community and pro-active work of the Regional Team of the EVLC Programme, the Regional Government forecasted and allocated 1 MiO ALL for supporting projects coming from R/E NGOs that address needs of the community in line with the regional social action plan. Although the initiative is at the very beginning, it needs appreciation and support to be replicated at other local and regional authorities.

1. *Employment change story*

Driza is a very poor village bordering with Fier commune, whereas 70%-80% of the population lives through receipt of the economical aid. Most of the population belongs to the R/E community. Panajot Alushi, a Roma activist from Driza, has been involved in different volunteer activities of the EVLC project that brought him closer to people needs. He has been an attendee of the vocational course offered through the EVLC programme for plumbering. He has also participated to several trainings and awareness-raising campaigns related to health, education and child protection issues.

One of the Community upgrading projects in Fier was the construction of the sewage system in Driza. Through the facilitation and support of the EVLC team, he was enabled to attend an interview with the construction company and to get selected for the job for the entire duration of the construction work. Due to his work performance the company extended the contract to Panajot, even the CUP component under the company responsibility was delivered to the community and to the project.

The example is an example of good sustainability of the results achieved from the project with regard to the integration of the Roma community in the social and labour market that has additional indirect impacts in the community.

Modalities of well functioning and institutionalized partnerships among private and public sector shall be envisaged for further development actions for this community.

1. *Early childhood change story*

The communities of services in Durres (Keneta) and Elbasan have been offering a very good model of integrated early childhood services for Roma children and families. Using preschool as a niche for children‘s development, these centers have become very important reference points for the Roma communities. Capacity building, parent counseling, health checkups and psychosocial support are the services attracting the Roma parents in these centers. Roma and non Roma children are socially and academically prepared together through daily attendance of the kindergarten and a series of social events. Roma children, through attending preschool are offered the possibility to learn Albanian, one of the prerequisites for them to do well in school. Parents on the other side are provided with knowledge and techniques on how to assist and stimulate their children. The yearly evaluation tool used for measuring the preparedness for school of children shows a yearly progress on literacy and numeracy ad well as 100% school attendance when these children are in school.

* 1. Annex 8: A Power point presentation of the main findings and recommendations

The main findings of this evaluation are:

**Conclusions:**

1. The JP-EVLC addresses relevant and critical challenges in Albania. It is designed based on the participation of a great number of stakeholders in the regions where it is developed, considering the wide participation of Roma/Egyptian community as the fundamental factor in order to increase the validity of this project. Its objectives are in line with the social and economic situation of the Roma Community.
2. The JP-EVLC results contribute towards overall UN goal for sustainable development and human security.
3. The project team has a high level of competence and motivation. However, it is our opinion that they should be allocated revised and greater competences in the process of gathering the information from the different UN agencies involved, and above all for the monitoring of the results of the project. These elements are very important given the One UN Approach selected to be the base of project methodology during implementation.
4. The participation of the representatives from Roma/Egyptian communities has been significant and has positively impacted the results of the project. Roma/Egyptian communities feel appreciated as proved by their collaboration and commitment.
5. The EVLC project is contributing significantly to empowering the Roma community and especially women and youth through establishment of CBO-s and providing professional trainings, important for the development of their skills and the professional experience, to improve access to rights and to raise the awareness of the community on the social services available to them.
6. The value and the contribution of the UNV and Local coordinators is been reflected in most of the activities and components of the project. They play a vital role in facilitating community-led activities, encouraging participation of the community, supporting the process of defining their priorities for the implementation of the Community Upgrading Projects.
7. The monitoring system in place did not fulfil the initial expectancies regarding the provision of timely, accurate, comparable, and easy to understand information, which is crucial for the identification of discrepancies and design of corrective measures.

**Lessons:**

* Lesson No. 1: Inter-agency collaboration is more effective when based at the output level. Harmonizing operational, monitoring and reporting procedures can contribute to an efficient joint programme governance and delivery.
* Lesson No. 2: Engaging national and regional institutions in programme implementation enhances programme relevance and increases the chances of long term sustainability
* Lesson No. 3 : Flexibility aspect
* Lesson No. 4 : UNV and LCD involvement an added-value
* Lesson No. 5 : Need for inception phase

**Recommendations:**

* Recommendation 1 – Revise and update the Action Plan
* Recommendation 2 – Revise the reporting and monitoring procedures
* Recommendation 3 – A no-cost extension for at least six months, including the respective re-allocation of resources
* Recommendation 4 – Increase visibility & dissemination of project deliverables
* Long-term Recommendation 5 – Formalize an Inception Report phase

1. Child protection provided through Child Protection Units component is part of a broader programme implemented by UNICEF, and only a part of the respective activities has been funded by UNHTSF funds [↑](#footnote-ref-1)