INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION OF THE UNDP GLOBAL ART INITIATIVE

ANNEX 8a - *A pilot qualitative impact evaluation of the UNDP ART program at local level: the example of Nariño, Colombia*

In this annex the results of a Structured Focus Group Discussion (SFGD) held in Nariño (Colombia) is reported.

This SFGD is part of a series of pilot qualitative impact evaluations of the UNDP/ART Framework Program administered at the local level in the three selected countries.

The UNDP/ART Framework Programs contribute to enhancing the functionings and capabilities of local development systems in order to facilitate Integrated Sustainable Human Development (ISHD) at the local level. This is achieved through the creation of conversion factors that promote flourishing [inter alia] (Sen, 1999; Biggeri, 2012). The analysis attempts to gauge the progress that would have been made in terms of ISHD at the local level in the absence of any interventions by UNDP/ ART REDES (other things equal).

The core analytical procedure in Nariño are four SFGDs that involve different stakeholders (individual beneficiaries, community stakeholders, national stakeholders) selected in accordance with the level of analysis[1].

In the Department of Nariño the UNDP/ ART REDES program on *Desarrollo para la construcción de la paz en medio del conflicto* had a highly relevant implementation. In Nariño the innovative actions and processes introduced by UNDP and the UNDP ART Program are confronted with a problematic and complex reality, as there are a variety of development actors in the region, involved in active processes of social mobilization: "Nariño traditionally presents institutional and social processes that have been able to lead new forms of community participation and of regional system building" (Estrategia Regional para la Cooperación Internaciónal Nariño 2008-2011, p. 19).

In Pasto (the main municipality of Nariño) 4 SFGDs were conducted with different groups of stakeholders. In the example presented here the SFGD mainly focused on local sustainable human development and involved 7 participants such as representatives of political institutions[2], local Universities, civil society organizations and producers and workers organizations[3]. The exercise was facilitated in the meeting room used by these local actors at UNDP office and lasted around three hours.
After the presentations, in the first part of the SFGD, participants were asked to discuss the dimensions (the functionings of the local system) of the evaluation matrix and to validate them[4]. Participants were also asked to assess the relevance of the dimensions by grading them on a scale ranging from 1 to 10 (see table X). In all cases dimensions were rated as highly relevant (10) and dimension numbers 1, 6, 7 and 15 were identified as the most important ones.
Following this exercise, participants were asked to assess the degree of functionings of the development system in the current period (column 2) and the degree of functionings 5 years ago (i.e. before the beginning of the ART program, column 3). It is clear that there has been an improvement in most functionings and capabilities at the local level with the exception of one dimension (number 9, capability to promote SMEs). Therefore, it is possible to identify a remarkable overall improvement in the level of functioning of the system[5]. Moreover, the level of functioning has gone from being insufficient to being at least sufficient in most dimensions. However, it is worth also noting that the potential for growth in the formal sector and the formalisation (upgrading) of the informal sector has remained largely stagnant (as the Department of Nariño observes). [6]
The participants underlined that limited capacity of institutions to understand the social and economic dynamics of the informal sector as one of the main causes of this key point. Other criticisms include the lack of the local

1 See the box on methodology in section 4.2
2 E.g. the councillor for economic development and the director of the Agency for Local Economic Development
3 E.g. a representative of the local milk producers cooperative
4 See table B1.1, column 1
5 Best results are for n. 1, 3, 7, 8 and 13
6 Dimensions n° 9, 11 and 12

system's ability to react to and transform the criminal economy, address conflicts and to generate opportunities for marginal groups (especially women and indigenous tribes). The system barely improved its capacity to function in these areas and was unable to weaken the vicious circle between social and economic exclusion on the one hand and the development of the criminal economy on the other. Nonetheless, the impact of ART has been perceived as positive and relevant for the improvements recorded between 2007 and 2012.

The participants were asked to assess the contribution of ART to the actual level of functioning across dimensions. In general (column 4), the role of the ART/REDES program is recognised as significant across all dimensions. The results are especially positive for the following functionings of the system: (1) Ability to Elaborate a Strategic and Shared View for Local Economic Development; (2) Access to Economic Opportunities for Marginal Groups; (3) Joint Involvement of Public and Private Actors in Local Development Programs; (4) Development and Promotion of Local Potentialities; and (7) Capacity Building for Worker and Producer Organizations. According to participants ART only played a limited role or no role in promoting the functioning of local systems in three dimensions. It is important to note that for most of the dimensions the role attributed to ART is often higher than for all other actors identified by participants[7] (i.e. international cooperation actors -excluding ART-, local government, national government, producers' guilds and small farmers' associations, values not reported here).

SFGDs participants were asked to identify the "perceived counterfactual", which is how the local system would have been able to function (now) without the implementation of the ART program (columns 5 and 6).

Table. X-Level of Functioning of the Nariño Local System and the Impact of ART

Dimension	(1) Relevance of the Dimension (1 – 10)	(2) Current Capability of Functioning of the System (1 – 10)	(3) Capability of Functioning of the System 5 Years Ago (1 – 10)	(4) Attribution to the program ART REDES (yes, no); (positive, negative); (1 – 10)	(5) Perceived Capability of Functioning of the System without ART REDES (1 - 10)	(6) Share of Change due to ART
(1) Ability to Elaborate a Strategic and Shared View for Local Economic Development	10	6	3	9	4	33.3%
(2) Access to Economic Opportunities for Marginal Groups	10	4	2	8	2	50.0%
(3) Joint Involvement of Public and Private Actors in Local Development Programs	10	6	3	8	5	16.7%
(4) Development and Promotion of Local Potentialities	10	8	6	8	6	25.0%
(5) Access to Services for SMEs	10	5	4	2	3	40.0%
(6) Investment for Local Economic Development	10	2	1	2	1	50.0%
(7) Capacity Building for Workers and Producers Organization	10	6	1	8	4	33.3%
(8) Capacity Building for Other Economic Actors	10	6	3	6	5	16.7%
(9) Promotion and Empowerment of SMEs	10	1	1	NO	1	0.0%
(10) Institutionalization of Economic Promotion Practices (international cooperation)	10	7	6	6	5	28.6%
(11) Creation of Opportunities of Employment in the Formal Sector	10	2	1	1	2	0.0%
(12) Upgrade of Informal Economic Activities	10	1	1	3	1	0.0%
(13) Access to Markets (int)	10	6	3	2	4	33.3%
(14) Information and Transparency	10	3	1	3	2	33.3%
(15) Ability to React to Conflicts and Criminal Economy	10	3	1	4	2	33.3%

The impact of ART\REDES is very strong in all dimensions concerning the ability to coordinate actors and elaborate strategic development plans through participative processes[8].

Indeed, in 12 of the 15 dimensions, the ART program had a positive impact ranging from 16% to 50%. In two dimensions – "Access to Economic Opportunity for Marginal Groups" and "Investment for Local Economic

7 For brevity these scores are not reported in the table.

8 Dimensions number1, 3, 4 and 14

Development" – this impact, although strong, has not been good enough to achieve a sufficient functioning. If we consider dimensions such as the "Ability to Elaborate a Strategic and Shared View for Local Economic Development", it is possible to observe a high contribution (33%). Moreover, it is interesting to note that this significant change is obtained through integrated action with other stakeholders.

In conclusion, the impact of ART/REDES program on the "software" of the system (the core of the program) is positive and extremely relevant. As indicated, ART should improve efforts to involve marginal groups through direct action and improving local institutional skills. A crucial issue is the system's low capacity to mobilize enough resources, as witnessed by the low degree of functioning in dimension no.6 – the improvement of which was negligible between 2007 and 2009. These positive results based on the structured FGDs reported here are confirmed by the other 3 SFGDs in Nariño and the ones in Morocco and Ecuador. In particular, when the group stakeholder is civil society, our attention focuses on sub-dimensions relating to the participation and inclusion of marginalised group and where the impact of ART has been even higher. Although further analysis is necessary, the preliminary results clearly indicate that the role of ART has been important for improving the capacity of the local development system to function and, thus, to foster sustainable human development at the micro level by increasing the dialogue amongst stakeholders at the local, national and international levels.