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Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Outcomes within UNDP Montenegro Country Program 2005 – 2011

SUMMMARY

Commissioned by: UNDP Montenegro Country Office
April 13, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

In keeping with corporate commitments made as a part of the Montenegro Country Program Document (CPD) 2007-2011 and to facilitate the planning of the next country program cycle (2012- 2016) in collaboration with its national partners, in December 2010, UNDP Montenegro commissioned an external evaluation of Outcome 1: Social inclusion and poverty alleviation of the 2007-2011 Country Program Document (CPD) and Country Program Action Plan (CPAP).

The evaluation primarily examined all projects and interventions designed to contribute to Outcome 1 of the 2007-2011 CPD and CPAP. Outcome 1 focused on related to social inclusion and poverty alleviation. The two program outcomes assessed were: 1.1) *Poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable groups reduced through improved social security system, employment and economic and gender mainstreamed opportunities;* and 1.2) *“Gender issues mainstreamed through national development strategies, policies and legislation. Governmental gender mechanism in place to implement the National Action Plan (NAP), gender equality legislation, and gender policies”.*

The evaluation concluded that overall UNDP Montenegro’s Social Inclusion and Gender Equality has generated overall outcomes it set out to achieve in the 2005 – 2011 Country Program. Overall the Social Inclusion program as a whole is highly strategic in its approach, targets key institutions and has been providing timely inputs of technical and financial support where it can make the most impact.

The general approach being taken to Social Inclusion programming is a combination of support for policy dialogue, development and advocacy with building capacity to improve service delivery and to make diverse government services more accessible to vulnerable groups. This has included working closely with a wide range of NGOs as implementing partners to provide complementary services to those offered by the government and to enhance representation of specific vulnerable groups in policy dialogue. This approach appears to be quite appropriate for the Montenegrin context

In the future, however, there is, a need to broaden the scope of these results to build on these successes. This is in part due to the pilot nature of the project and as the target population is often quite difficult to reach. Consequently, while on the surface, the employment programming and identification support programming offered appears to be dealing with fairly small numbers of domicile Roma for a fairly high level of investment, this level of investment is appropriate to address the particular challenges of the Roma. In general, members of this vulnerable group require a lot of individual attention to achieve project results as they have face multiple barriers and challenges. There has also been a need to build the capacity of the related government organizations to be respond to the needs of the Roma population and other vulnerable groups appropriately. It is a notable success therefore that the project has been able to expand its coverage from three to ten municipalities over the course of its implementation. Funds permitting, the general approach used could be expanded in the next country program to provide national coverage.



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The main exception to this success appears to be in the area of “reducing poverty through gender mainstreamed opportunities”. The evaluation did not find consistent evidence of gender mainstreaming in the approaches being used in the diverse Social Inclusion projects and also found varying degrees of capacity in this area among both implementing partners and UNDP staff.

Social Inclusion Issues

For the Social Inclusion programming the evaluation also observed that:

Effectiveness and Efficiency

1. A key success factor that stood out throughout the entire process is the high level of cooperation and communication that exists between all of the UNDP staff involved and their national partners. Part of this can be attributed to the selection of highly committed and qualified staff, part to the small size of the country and most importantly, strong managerial leadership.
2. UNDP’s selection of national partners has been strong and there is general satisfaction on all sides with the working partnerships established in the Social Inclusion area. This is particularly significant given the relatively small pool of national partners that UNDP has had to draw upon, particularly in the NGO sector.
3. UNDP’s approach to building national partner capacity has also been effective, using local or national NGOs to provide training for other NGOs and bringing in regional expertise as needed. Capacity development initiatives have also focused on building the long term sustainability of these organizations. Also of note, has been UNDP’s practice to try and include new NGOs as implementing partners on an on-going basis to help strengthen the overall capacity of Montenegro’s NGO sector, as well as broaden government partner access to the perspectives that diverse NGOs can provide to the human development process.

External Support

4. The support of the Bratislava Regional Center and of UNDP Croatia has also been invaluable and UNDP Montenegro’s Social Inclusion program has both benefited and been able to share resources through this form of regional cooperation. This in and of itself stands as a model for effective cooperation in a post-conflict society and region.

UNDP Profile and Visibility

5. UNDP is generally perceived as the organization in Montenegro that has solid expertise in Social Inclusion and which has contributed significantly to government partner awareness of related issues.

Inclusive Approach

6. The inclusion of representatives from the different vulnerable groups involved works in project design and management has been a key success factor in the Social Inclusion program. UNDP has



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also helped bring national government and NGO partners together on policy dialogue and related action planning.

Stakeholder Ownership

7. One challenge UNDP faces is that the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) for the HIV/ AIDS and TB programs has not yet developed a strong sense of ownership for the projects it oversees. This, however, is not an uncommon phenomena in countries in transition from a centrally planned economy where it had been the norm for the majority of decisions to be made by higher authorities. It is hoped that when two members of the CCM take over the Principal Recipient role for the program's administration in two years that this will change.

Gender Equality

The Gender Equality program has been equally strategic in its approach to programming and has provided timely inputs using a flexible funding and programming mechanism that has made the most of highly scarce resources.

It has done so when working within an environment that is not particularly open to gender equality, and where there remains a prevailing belief, among government partners in particular, that there are no real gender equality problems in Montenegro because of the equality that women and men hold under the law. There is considerable evidence that there are several serious gender equality issues in the country and a strong need for UNDP to continue to use its leadership role to raise debate on these issues and serve as a gender champion.

The evaluation also found that there was a clear lack of capacity and knowledge related to gender equality and women's empowerment issues among national government and NGO partners, as well as among some UNDP staff. In the latter, the willingness to work in this area was clearly there, but they did not have the knowledge of how to integrate gender equality into regular programming and did not necessarily think it was their responsibility to make sure that this is done. This appeared to be partly due to a perception that all gender mainstreaming tasks were the responsibility of UNDP Montenegro's Gender Advisor as opposed to that of all UNDP program staff.

UNDP Montenegro's Gender Advisor has essentially been managing three jobs in one – that of Gender Program Coordinator, Gender Mainstreaming Advisor and Gender Focal Point and is to be given credit for having achieved as much as it has been possible within this context. However, there is a tendency for program and project staff in all the clusters to leave the main responsibility for gender mainstreaming to the Gender Advisor and to often ask for technical input on project or program design just a few days before the proposals are to be submitted for review. This timing generally leaves little room for the inclusion of adequate gender analysis or budgets for any recommended.

Summary

Overall the Social Inclusion and Gender Equality projects and programs are addressing priority needs within Montenegro in a fairly strategic way and the projects implemented since 2007 have built a solid foundation for the human development work needed from 2012 – 2016. This does not mean that the



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work in these areas are without some major challenges. However, UNDP Montenegro appears to be quite aware of what these are and is working actively to address these issues.

There remains a need to develop more programming to build national capacity to address the needs of people with disabilities and to integrate gender more explicitly and consistently within Social Inclusion cluster programs and the consideration of both gender and vulnerable groups across other UNDP clusters.