



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Conflict prevention and peace building in North Lebanon Mid-Term Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Lebanon*

Mid-Term: *September 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent Joint*

Technical Area: *ILO/CRISIS, economic reconstruction*

Evaluation Management: *UNMDG Team – Consultant: Sergio Lenci*

ILO Project Code: *LEB/09/50/UND*

Donor: *MDG Fund USD 5,000,000*

UNDP: 2,553,984 ILO: 876,539

UNRWA: 256,867 UNESCO: 154,429

UNFPA: 473,361 UNICEF: 684,820

Keywords: *Armed conflict, peace building, capacity building*

Taken from the Executive Summary of the MDG Joint Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

The MDG-F and the thematic window on conflict prevention and peace building

The MDG-F was established through a cooperation agreement between the Government of Spain and the UNDP, signed in December 2006 for a total of 528 million EUROS. In September 2008 an addendum to the agreement was signed for an additional 90 million EUROS for a thematic window on child nutrition.

The 19 Programmes in this window seek to contribute to the achievement of 3 of main goals through interventions tackling conflict prevention and violence reduction, livelihood improvements against youth violence, and the fostering of dialog. These outcomes represent a variety of direct and

indirect approaches to building peace and preventing conflicts. Many countries find themselves caught in a vicious circle of crisis, poverty and violence, which can fuel instability at all levels. Moreover, the development process may generate conflicts, as resources are allocated, national priorities redefined and new actors empowered. In this framework, addressing basic needs in terms of support initiatives to service provision and income generation with a “do no harm” approach is an important dimension of this thematic window and of its connection to the MDGs.

Objectives of the Midterm Evaluation

According to the Terms of Reference, this mid-term evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. To discover the programme’s design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve) and its external coherence with the UNDAF, the National Development Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, and find out the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.
2. To understand how the joint programme operates and assess the efficiency of its management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This analysis will seek to uncover the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks within the One UN framework.
3. To identify the programme’s degree of effectiveness among its participants, its contribution to the objectives of the PBCP

thematic window, and the Millennium Development Goals at the local and/or country level.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach. Starting from a base of quantitative information, financial and substantive (financial delivery and goods or services delivered by the Programme), the evaluation collected qualitative data that help to understand why the activities implemented and the outputs delivered are contributing or not to the expected outcomes of the JP.

Data were collected using different techniques, including: a) desk review; b) semi structured interviews, and c) direct observation.

The data collected were organized in blocks of information corresponding to the three dimensions of analysis on which the evaluation is focused and, within that, the lines of inquiry identified in the inception report. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from different sources were triangulated at different stages in the interview process, and in the final synthesis of the data collected. In so doing, the evaluator could systematically analyze the different blocks of information and identify findings and conclusions that reflect an impartial assessment while responding to the evaluation objectives and questions.

Context overview

Lebanon is on track to achieve many of its MDG by 2015 and has made much progress since the end of the civil war in 1990. Nevertheless, over the last 6 years the country witnessed high political instability and a number of violent clashes including, but not limited to, a war with Israel and an internal armed conflict between the Lebanese Army the armed insurgent Fatah al Islam in a Palestinian refugee camp. These Conflict events generated significant human and material losses. Lebanon may be resilient, but its social fabric is fragile and the hard-won national development gains are not equally distributed demographically or geographically. North Lebanon is a clear example of this. Tripoli City, Akkar/Minieh-Denneh, Jezzine/Saida and Hermel/Baalbek are home for two thirds of the extremely poor and half of the poor population despite the fact that they make up less than one third of the Lebanese population. Addressing these disparities is one of the key challenges for long lasting peace and this is what the JP aims to contribute to.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation confirmed the overall relevance of the Programme. Some of its components are well advanced and are beginning to yield some positive results, namely the youth component, the training of Palestinian Popular Committees and the socio economic initiatives in the Akkar region. However, the overall implementation is significantly delayed with respect to the original design and work plan. In fact, after 23 month the JP has not yet completed the activities planned for the first year of implementation. The total budget delivery rate of by the end of June 2011 was 94% of the first transfer and the actual disbursement over the same amount was 65.4% The interviews conducted during the country mission revealed a sense of frustration among some of the key stakeholders *vis a vis* the expectations raised in the initial phase. From this perspective, the implementation delay should be an issue of concern as it can potentially undermine the credibility of the Programme and its effectiveness in contributing to the expected outcomes, particularly as relates to sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms and processes. The factors that can explain this delay include a mix of design constraints, internal management issues and external political variables.

The evaluation also revealed that there is room for improvement in terms of more effective collective action on behalf of the UN organizations, so as to ensure greater coherence and maximize impact. Similarly, there is need for greater involvement of national and local counterparts in the strategic leadership of the Joint Programme and in coordinating operational activities, so as to enhance relevance, ownership and sustainability.

Recommendations

Considering that there are only seven months left for the implementation of the programme the evaluation proposes the following key recommendations:

1. It is recommended to ensure adequate leadership of State institutions in the strategic management of the Programme and participation of local actors in defining the content and methodology of operational activities, so as to enhance ownership

and sustainability. This may require greater effort to implement the management arrangements in line with their original design.

2. It is recommended to take quick action in establishing the Lebanese Palestinian dialogue forums by gathering local stakeholders around the planning and implementation of tangible services to be delivered by the JP within the time and resources available. These Forums should be chaired by the LPDC to ensure the back up of national institutions and create enabling conditions for sustainability once the programme is over.

3. It is recommended not to endorse the revision of the Programme strategy regarding the Lebanese – Lebanese dialogue Forum, named “Tripoli Initiative”, and to reallocate the remaining funds for the provision of basic services in the area, in line with the original strategy. In this connection, the NSC should assess if the nature of the relations established so far with the local Government and other local stakeholders is conducive for effective collaboration and timely implementation of such strategy. Should the NSC find that the situation is not conducive, it is recommended to drop this component and focus the remaining resources under other outputs that could yield more tangible results within the time frame available. This would reduce the scope of the Programme but maximize the impact.

4. It is recommended to follow up on the existing agreement between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, so as to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the Civic Education Programme which is proving to be an effective peace building intervention.

5. It is recommended to pay more attention to exploring windows of opportunities for external coordination and complementarities, particularly as regards other local development programmes being implemented by the UN in the Akkar Region and infrastructural projects being funded in the Refugee Camps and surrounding areas by the European Commission, USAID and other donors. In so doing, the leadership of national institutions and the engagement of UN senior management will be instrumental to establish an adequate political framework for inter-institutional cooperation. Along the same line, it is recommended to optimize potential synergies with the Lebanon Recovery Fund and the Peace Building Fund.

6. It is recommended to start as soon as possible the implementation of the Advocacy and Communication Strategy focusing on raising awareness on the MDG and deconstructing the stereotyped image of Palestinians as a security risk. The implementation of these components should start immediately, without waiting for the approval of the new Labour law. Should the latter not be approved by Parliament, the corresponding segment of the communication strategy should be revised so as to reinforce the other components.

7. It is recommended that UN participating organizations in dialogue with their counterparts put more effort in ensuring that the activities related to gender equality and women’s empowerment are mainstreamed in the different programme components, based on a shared approach and methodology.

8. It is recommended to define a clear exist strategy for the socio economic component in Akkar. Such strategy should be developed and approved in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders, including ILO, UNDP, local authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and the CDR, so as to make sure that it builds upon existing structures and mechanisms.

9. It is recommended to consider the possibility of a partial six months extension of the Programme, in case the deadline of March 2012 proves to be insufficient time to complete the planned activities, in particular: a) implement the demonstrative projects of the Strategic Plans for the Akkar region and b) implement the service delivery or infrastructure projects to be identified by the Dialogue Forums for inter and intra-community dialogue.

10. The extension should be issued under the following conditions: a) that the continuation of the activities does not imply further allocation of resources for salaries or honoraries of UN staff and consultants; b) that by December 2011 there is tangible substantive progress in the integration and functioning of the dialogue Forums, and in the implementation of the demonstrative projects in Akkar.